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THE EARLY XIA TRADITION: HISTORICITY AND TOPOS

上古俠傳統: 史實與想象

by

Jian Zhao

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of East Asian Studies
in the University of Toronto

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Jian Zhao
Doctor of Philosophy
Department of East Asian Studies
University of Toronto
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This thesis examines the early *xia* (俠) tradition from pre-Qin times to that of Wei-Jin and Northern-Southern Dynasties (魏晉六朝 220-581). It begins with the *xia* in history and then goes on to their reflection in literature.

Chapter One discusses the world in which the *xia* were to emerge, and the groups from whom the *xia* originated. Chapter Two discusses the emergence of the *xia* and the earliest writings about them. In Chapter Three, I try to show the development of the *xia* by reference to other pre-Qin social groups, to which the *xia* bore similarities and with whom they were sometimes confused. Chapter Four discusses the brief prominence of the *xia* in the the Western Han dynasty (206 B.C. - 24 D.C.) and their decline under the suppression. The *xia* in its classical form virtually disappeared as a historic entity during the Han, but also during the same period the *xia* myth, a spiritual quest of heroism, brotherhood and social justice, began to gradually take shape in the form of folklore, pseudo-history and even historical writing. Sima Qian's (司馬遷) *Shi Ji* (史記) was the most important source in transporting the *xia* from history to literature. Chapter Five discusses Sima Qian's role in building the *xia* image. Chapter Six discusses the romanticization of the *xia* theme in works usually considered historical, such as the *Yue Jue Shu* (越絕書) and *Wu Yue Chunqu* (吳越春秋), and the beginnings of *xia* literature, represented by the novella *Yan Dan Zi* (燕丹子) and *youxia* ballads. In works like these produced in the Wei-Jin period, the transformation of *xia* from a historical entity to a literary convention was completed.

Through this study I try to demonstrate that the *xia* from the pre-Qin to Wei-Jin were a mixture of reality and myth, and history and literature. I also try to show that when these often conflicting factors were reconciled, the *xia* tradition became a point of intersection between elite and folk culture. The tradition has been modified and re-modified ever since.

Table of Contents

1. Acknowledgements	v
2. Chronological Tables	vi
3. Introduction: Quest for the Tradition of <i>Xia</i>	
a. The early <i>xia</i> tradition: from its formation to transformation	1
b. An overview of <i>xia</i> research: past and present	2
4. Chapter 1: Heroic Tradition and Origin of <i>Xia</i>	
a. The Heroic tradition in Chinese myth and legend	25
b. The Military colonization of Zhou and position of <i>guoren</i>	30
c. Emergence of the <i>shi</i> community	38
d. Transformation of the <i>shi</i> community	43
5. Chapter 2: <i>Xia</i>: Emergence in History	
a. The warrior and codes of warrior conduct	50
b. Character and moral principle of the Chunqiu warrior	56
c. The <i>xia</i> prototype in the Chunqiu period	62
d. Han Fei on <i>xia</i>	68
e. The etymology of <i>xia</i>	71
f. The sword, swordsmanship and sword culture	73
6. Chapter 3: <i>Xia</i>: Historic Development	
a. Confucians and <i>xia</i>	85
b. Mohists and <i>xia</i>	91
c. <i>Xia</i> and bandits, vagabonds and outlaws	96

d. Background to development of <i>xia</i> and “noble <i>xia</i> ”	105
e. At center stage: <i>xia</i> in the siege of Handan	112
7. Chapter 4: <i>Xia</i> in the Western Han Dynasty	
a. <i>Xia</i> and the founding of the Han empire	119
b. <i>Xia</i> influence on early Han official behavior	127
c. <i>Xia</i> and their local influence	136
d. Guo Xie: the sophisticated Han <i>xia</i>	139
e. Suppression of the <i>xia</i> in the Han Dynasty	146
8. Chapter 5: On the Border of History and Literature	
a. Sima Qian and his composition of the <i>Shi Ji</i>	161
b. <i>Biographies of the Youxia</i>	167
c. Images of <i>xia</i> in biographies of the <i>youxia</i> and assassins	174
d. Other <i>xia</i> -spirited figures in the <i>Shi Ji</i>	182
e. Literary approach to the <i>xia</i> in the <i>Shi Ji</i>	188
9. Chapter 6: Romanticization of <i>xia</i>	
a. The way to literature: the <i>Yuejue Shu</i> and <i>Wu Yue Chunqiu</i>	201
b. Complete transformation from history to literature: the <i>Yan Dan Zi</i>	210
c. The <i>xia</i> in Wei-Jin literary anecdotes and novella	219
d. The <i>xia</i> in Wei-Jin <i>Yuefu</i> ballads	229
10. Conclusion: The Early <i>Xia</i> Tradition	244
11. Bibliographies	252
12. Index of Names	257

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Chronological Tables

Western Zhou Kings 西周列王

King Wen 文王	1099/1056-1050 B.C.	King Wu 武王	1049/45-1043 B.C.
Duke of Zhou 周公	1042-1036 B.C.	King Cheng 成王	1042/35-1006 B.C.
King Kang 康王	1005/03-978 B.C.	King Zhao 昭王	977/75-957 B.C.
King Mu 穆王	956-918 B.C.	King Gong 共王	917/15-900 B.C.
King Yi 懿王	899/97-873 B.C.	King Xiao 孝王	?872-866 B.C.
King Yi 夷王	865-858 B.C.	King Li 厲王	857/53-842/28 B.C.
King Xuan 宣王	827/25-782 B.C.	King You 幽王	781-771 B.C.

Dukes of Lu in *Chun Qiu* 春秋魯列公

Duke Yin 隱公	722-712 B.C.	Duke Huan 桓公	711-694 B.C.
Duke Zhuang 莊公	693-661 B.C.	Duke Min 閔公	661-660 B.C.
Duke Xi 僖公	659-627 B.C.	Duke Wen 文公	626-609 B.C.
Duke Xuan 宣公	608-591 B.C.	Duke Cheng 成公	590-573 B.C.
Duke Xiang 襄公	572-542 B.C.	Duke Zhao 昭公	541-510 B.C.
Duke Ding 定公	509-495 B.C.	Duke Ai 哀公	494-468 B.C.

Western Han Emperors 西漢列帝

Gaozu 高祖	202-195 B.C.	Huidi 惠帝	195-188 B.C.
Luhou 呂后	188-180 B.C.	Wendi 文帝	180-157 B.C.
Jingdi 景帝	157-141 B.C.	Wudi 武帝	141-87 B.C.
Zhaodi 昭帝	87-74 B.C.	Xuandi 宣帝	74-49 B.C.
Yuandi 元帝	49-33 B.C.	Chengdi 成帝	33-7 B.C.
Aidi 哀帝	7-1 B.C.	Pingdi 平帝	1 B.C.-6 A.D.

Eastern Han Emperors 東漢列帝

Guangwudi 光武帝	25-57	Mingdi 明帝	57-75
Zhangdi 章帝	75-88	Hedi 和帝	88-106
Shangdi 上皇帝	106	Andi 安帝	106-125
Shaodi 少帝	125	Shundi 順帝	125 - 144
Chongdi 沖帝	144-145	Zhidi 質帝	145-146
Huandi 桓帝	146-168	Lingdi 靈帝	168-189
Shaodi 少帝	189	Xiandi 獻帝	189-220

Wei-Jin and Northern-Southern Dynasties 魏晉南北朝列國

Wei 三國·魏	220-265	Shu 三國·蜀	223-263
Wu 三國·吳	222-280	Western Jin 西晉	265-316
Eastern Jin 東晉	317-420	Northern Dynasties	386-581
Southern Dynasties	420-589		

Introduction: Quest for the Tradition of *Xia*

The early *xia* tradition: from its formation to transformation

This thesis examines the early tradition of *xia* (俠). *Xia* has been translated in English literature as “knight”. While many of the early *xia* originated from the Chunqiu (春秋 770-476 B.C.) warriors or knights, not a few, especially in the times of Warring States (戰國 475-221 B.C.), Qin (秦 221-207 B.C.) and Han (漢 206 B.C.-220 A.D.), came from non-noble or non-warrior background. In order to prevent misleading associations the English word “knight” may arouse, I adopt the transliteration of the Chinese word.¹ *Youxia* (游俠), literally the wandering knight or knight-errant, is a term derived from the *xia*. While the *youxia* has been used frequently to refer to the same group of people as the *xia* in later ages, it was created, or at least in the *Shi Ji* (史記), its earliest appearance in the extant documentary literature, to refer to a specific group of the *xia*: the commoner *xia*, or *buyi zhi xia* (布衣之俠) termed by Sima Qian (司馬遷 145?-87? B.C.), the author of the *Shi Ji*. In this thesis, I use the *xia* as a general term, which covers personages from different social strata, and the *youxia* as a term referring to those from the lower levels of society.

This thesis begins with the *xia* in history and then goes on to its reflection in literature. It is difficult to define the *xia* in history. The earliest *xia* were not a school of thought and thus did not leave any documentation of their own to shed light on their social origin and ideology. The succession of masters and disciples characteristic of other pre-Qin schools is lacking with the *xia*. Consequently, I have to rely entirely on the records, accounts and interpretations of mainly historians and scholars of both contemporary and later ages.

Chapter One investigates the world in which the *xia* was to emerge, and the groups from whom the *xia* originated. Chapter Two discusses the emergence of the *xia* and the earliest writings on the *xia* as a social group. In Chapter Three, I try to show the development of the *xia* by reference to other pre-Qin social groups, to which the *xia* bore similarities and with whom sometimes were confused. Chapter Four discusses the brief prominence of the *xia* in the opening years of the Western Han dynasty (206 B.C.-24 A.D.) and their decline under the suppression culminating in the reign of

¹ General use of the word *xia* in this thesis is in plural (as in knights). On some occasions, it is used in singular (as in knight). While it in most cases refers to personage, it also refers to a mental outlook (as in knighthood).

Emperor Wu (漢武帝 r. 140-87 B.C.). As a historic entity, the *xia* in its classical form virtually disappeared during the Han, but during the same period the *xia* myth, a spiritual quest of heroism, brotherhood and social justice, began to take shape in the form of folklore, pseudo-history and even historical writing. Sima Qian was the most important figure in the preparation of transporting the *xia* from history to literature; in other words, from historicity to literary topos. Chapter Five discusses Sima Qian's role in building the *xia* image on the border of history and literature. Chapter Six discusses the romanticization of the *xia* theme in works usually considered as historical works, such as the *Yue Jue Shu* (越絕書) and *Wu Yue Chunqiu* (吳越春秋), and the beginnings of *xia* literature, represented by the novella *Yan Dan Zi* (燕丹子) and *youxia* ballads. I believe that in works like these produced in the late Han and Wei-Jin periods, the transformation of *xia* from a historical entity to a literary convention was completed.

One of the major objectives of this study is to survey the course of the *xia* from their birth to their complete transformation, and analyze the process by which this transformation occurred. The transformation was completed during the Wei-Jin period, at which point this study concludes. After the Wei-Jin, the *xia* was recreated and reflected mainly in literature, which requires a different research perspective and methodology.

Through this study I try to demonstrate that the *xia* tradition from the pre-Qin to Wei-Jin was a mixture of memory and imagination, reality and myth, and history and literature. I also try to show that when these often conflicting factors were reconciled, the tradition of *xia* became a point of intersection between elite and folk culture. Drawing on its own vision and value system, the elite remolded and softened somewhat the vigorous and unruly tradition of *xia* created by folk culture. This new creation was a fusion of two visions, value systems and ideologies. The tradition has been modified and re-modified over times up to the present day.

An overview of *xia* research: past and present

Once the *xia* became a prominent force in the time of Warring States, they began to draw the attention of upper society. Most mention of *xia* or *xia* activity in contemporary works was descriptive and impressionistic rather than definitive. There were three general types of approach adopted in research of the *xia* in the past: 1) critical, 2) sympathetic and 3) eclectic.

Han Fei (韓非 280-233 B.C.) was the first well-known critical scholar to directly and clearly define the *xia* and their behavioral characteristics. He took a completely negative attitude towards the *xia*. The core of his definition was the anti-law and order nature of the *xia*. While his political philosophy enabled him to diagnose the crux of the *xia* problem, his polemical and hostile stand prevented him from achieving a balanced and historical assessment of the *xia* phenomenon. For instance, he missed the moral side of *xia* activity and its potential to become an important part of plebeian ethics. However, Han Fei's works provide the first important documentation of the *xia*, and serve as credible witness of the early *xia* tradition despite Han Fei's noticeable bias.²

Han Fei set the official line for the treatment of the *xia*. Most of the official historians and orthodox scholars since the Han dynasty basically followed him in viewing the *xia* forces as disturbing and turbulent elements of society. The only obvious change was that they replaced Han Fei's Legalist rationale with that of Confucian ritualism (禮), whose central concern was how to harmonize a stratified society. They regarded the *xia* tradition as a threat to this endeavor. The Eastern Han historian Ban Gu (班固 32-92) in his *Youxia Zhuan* (游俠傳) described this stratified society as one where everyone from the Son of Heaven to the humblest commoner should stay in their own proper place to fulfill their differentiated duties. Commoners should serve their rulers and never covet what they do not merit.³ Ban Gu indicated that if the influence of *xia* spread unchecked, its result would be "abandoning the norm of upholding one's duties and serving one's superiors."⁴ He concluded that "the crime of *xia* deserves more than the penalty of death because as petty commoners the *xia* usurped the power of life and death [over other people]."⁵ Ban Gu's rewriting of Sima Qian's *Biographies of the Youxia* indicated that the true features of the Han *xia* were far removed from Sima Qian's original portrayal.

² See English reference to Han Fei in Bertil Lundahl, *Han Fei Zi: the Man and the Work* (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 1992). The work covers the historical and philosophical background of Han Fei's life and works.

³ Ban Gu, *Han Shu* (漢書) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959): v.92, <游俠傳>: "民服事其上, 而下無覬覦。" p.3679.

⁴ *ibid.*, "許公死黨之議成, 守職奉土之義廢矣。" p.3697.

⁵ *ibid.*, "以匹夫之細, 竊殺生之權, 其罪已不容於誅矣。" p.3699. See English reference to Ban Gu and his works in O.B. van der Sprenkel, *Pan Piao, Pan Ku and the Han History* (Canberra: The Australian University Centre of Oriental Studies, 1964).

Another major critical historian in the Eastern Han was Xun Yue (荀悦 148-209). Xun experienced the turbulent last years of the dynasty and witnessed the rapid development of non-government forces in lower society, among which the *xia* was a prominent one. He listed the sins of *xia* as “damaging the Way, corrupting morality, ruining the law and deluding the people.”⁶ Xun took a Confucian stand in attacking the *xia* for “neglecting to give precedence to one’s father and elder brother while lavishing courtesy on a guest, belittling the relationship of blood kin in favor of comradeship [with non-kin], and ignoring cultivation of one’s moral character to seek fame among the multitude.” He claimed that these were “the source of social disorder.”⁷ For Xun Yue, the *xia* movement in the Han dynasty constituted an antithesis to Confucianism, because filial duty and self-cultivation, which the *xia* disregarded, formed the foundation of Confucianism. In addition, Xun’s viewpoint also reflected the alertness of the ruling class and especially its intellectual wing to any threat from “the multitude” (眾人). Xun Yue’s investigation touched on other aspects of *xia* behavior, such as its psychological and social basis. He presented the most complete and thorough investigation of the *xia* movement since Han Fei.⁸

The second approach, the sympathetic one, taken by Sima Qian, aroused few echoes among official historians, both his contemporaries and those of later ages. The first approach, whether in the form of Han Fei’s in his emphasis on “the law” (法) or Ban Gu and Xun Yue’s on “the rites” (禮), was political and rational. Their opposition to the *xia* stemmed from their devotion to the social order. Sima Qian’s approach to the *xia* was spontaneous and poetical. His attitudes came from the Taoism of the early Han as transmitted by his father. It resulted in his tolerance of various value systems and his preparedness to find virtues beyond Confucian norms. His poetical attitude came from a mixture of his passionate temperament and tragic personal life. In this regard, his narrative of *xia* heroism and altruism served as a catharsis of his smoldering disappointment and frustration with an age lacking in these virtues.

Sima Qian’s *Biographies of the Youxia* (游侠列傳) and *Biographies of Assassins* (刺客列傳) are the two most important accounts about the historical *xia* of ancient times. Vivid images of commoner *xia* in the era of heroes are preserved in these accounts. Apart from these two chapters, Sima Qian

⁶ Xun Yue, *Qian Han ji* (前漢紀) (Guangzhou: Lingnan xuehaitang, 1876): “傷道害德, 敗法惑世.” p.3.

⁷ *ibid.*, p.3.

left description of and comment on the *xia* and *xia* conduct in many other chapters of the *Shi Ji*. It was Sima Qian's sympathetic view that helped the *xia* to reappear as major personages in literature after they had virtually disappeared from the political scene as important players in history.

While Sima Qian was basically accurate in his treatment of the *xia*, his approach was flawed by his efforts to convince the reader that his *youxia* were the mainstream *xia* in the Han dynasty. Although he strongly denounced the *haoqiang* (豪強) type of *xia* in his attempt to distinguish the *youxia* from them, his preoccupation with *xia* heroism and altruism dimmed his ability to see the damaging side of the *xia* towards people and society.

The third approach, an eclectic one, was adopted by scholars and historians in their attempt to find a middle road between the two opposing lines. In fact, I can discern this even in Ban Gu and Xun Yue, who basically sided with Han Fei's negative stand against the *xia*. Both of them realized that they could not simply repudiate everything about the *xia*, especially their prowess and altruism, and so tried to bring them into the line with Confucianism. Yu Huan (魚豢 fl. 3rd Century), a Wei (魏 220-265) historian, set the *Biographies of Gallant Xia* (勇俠傳) in his *Wei Lue* (魏略). These included those who were "famous as *xia* in their youth and toed the line of righteousness in their later lives," and those who were "brave and benevolent."⁸ Obviously Yu Huan tried to remold the *xia* image on Confucian moral ground. This mood indeed was general among the historians and writers of the Wei-Jin (魏晉 220-420) period. A typical hero for both historians and literary writers of the time was a man of righteousness who in his youth had been a *xia*. This even became a stereotyped theme in the Wei-Jin *xia* ballads¹⁰.

The Confucianization of *xia* and the *xia* spirit was completed in the hands of the Wei-Jin eclectic writers. From that time righteousness became the soul of the *xia* spirit. The Tang (唐 618-907) official-writer Li Deyu (李德裕 787-849) wrote a treatise entitled *Haobia Lun* (豪俠論), epitomizing this eclectic approach. He described the *xia* as unusual people who were faithful to their words and acted out of moral integrity. He claimed that "righteousness will not be achieved without the *xia* and the *xia* will not be *xia* without righteousness." Therefore, those who gave the rein to their

⁸ See English reference to Xun Yue in Chi-yun Chen, *Hsun Yueh (A.D. 148-209): the Life and Reflections of an Early Medieval Confucian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

⁹ Chen Shou, *Sanguo zhi* (三國志) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), v. 18, 魏書·關溫傳: "少稱任俠, 長遂蹈義, 勇而有仁者," p. 554.

passion without knowing righteousness were not *xia* but bandits.¹¹ In fact, Li Deyu's "*xia*" is the embodiment of "*qi*" (氣), "courage", and "*yi*" (義), "righteousness", the latter meaning Confucian moral propriety. "*Qi*" must be guided by "*yi*" and "*yi*" will not be realized without "*qi*". Each is indispensable.

In regard to the relationship between *xia* and *yi*, those taking the first approach saw the *xia* entirely as devoid of *yi*, since the *xia* were held to be a force entirely opposed to the authorities and the law. Sima Qian, who took the second approach, initially admitted that the *xia*, *youxia* in his term, exceeded the bounds of *yi*, or *zhengyi* (正義) as he termed it.¹² However, Sima Qian found in the *youxia* many traits worth commending (有足多者). He also maintained that virtues could exist beyond the bounds of *yi*, and that the *xia* could thus stand alone without necessarily toeing the line of *yi*. He implied that the *xia* had their own norms of propriety. His approach was intended to separate ethics from politics. But after the Eastern Han dynasty, it became uncomfortable for scholars and historians to praise the *xia* without alluding to the Confucian *yi*. So they simply put them together. They created a new image of the *xia* which had both the *xia* courage and Confucian propriety. The last obstacle for the *xia* to become a full size hero was thus removed.

While *xia* literature flourished through the Tang, Song, Ming and Qing dynastic periods, research on the *xia* was still limited to casual and desultory comments, lacking both originality and theoretical depth.

This situation began to change in the last years of Qing dynasty. Scholars and historians, acting under strong political motivation, began to exploit the *xia* theme in an attempt to "redeem the decadent customs of a declining age, and call back the fallen spirit of the heroic dead."¹³ Many scholars and historians attributed sinking social morale and weakening national strength to the loss of *wude* (武德), or martial morality. This *wude*, they believed, lay at the core of the *xia* spirit.¹⁴

¹⁰ See the discussion in Chapter Six.

¹¹ Li Deyu, *Li Weigong Huichang yipin ji* (李衛公會昌一品集) (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1937), p.264.

¹² *Shi Ji Huizhu Kaozheng* (史記匯注考證), v.124, <游俠列傳>: "今游俠, 其行雖不軌於正義." p.1317. The author put this as a concessive clause that is followed by an adversative conjunction word "然" to lead to what he regarded as the virtues of *youxia*.

¹³ Jiang Qiqun, *Chongding yuchu guangzhi* (重訂嶼初廣志) (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986 reprinting), <凡例>: "挽末世之澆風, 召垂喪之英魂." p.3-4.

¹⁴ Tang Zengbi, *Chong xia pian* (崇俠篇): "作匹夫之武德." See *Xinhai geming qian shinian jian shilun xuanji* (辛亥革命前十年間時論選集) (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1977) v.3, p.82.

Some even suggested that it was Confucianism that obstructed the further development of the *xia* in history. They concluded that Confucianism was the mainstay of dictatorship and the *xia* spirit was its main opponent. Only by abandoning Confucianism and advocating the *xia* spirit, would honesty and uprightness be regained and the people revitalized.¹⁵

Many radical intellectuals and revolutionaries in the years at the turn of this century were inspired by the *xia* spirit. The founding fathers of the Republic of China were inspired by the *xia* ideals in their struggle against the Qing dynasty. Wu Yue (吳樾 1878-1905), who died in his attempt to assassinate a group of Qing ministers, called himself "Mengxia" (孟俠). He wrote a book entitled *Ansha Shidai* (暗殺時代), publicly advocating assassination. Another well-known heroine, Qiu Jin (秋瑾 1877-1907), later executed by the authorities for her involvement in the assassination of a high profile Qing governor, called herself "Jianhu nuxia" (劍湖女俠).¹⁶ Under these circumstances, research into the history, character and ideology of the *xia* began to gain greater momentum.¹⁷

In 1899, Zhang Binglin (章炳麟 1869-1936), also known as Zhang Taiyan (章太炎), published his article *Ru Xia Lun* (儒俠論). He reexamined the history and virtues of the *xia* from a revolutionary perspective. He maintained that the *xia* originated in the Qidiao School of Confucianism (漆雕氏之儒), one of whose aspirations was to die for a just cause. Although the *xia* never had their own formal school, sudden crises in their time could not be resolved without their involvement, such as Beiguo Zi's (北郭子) rescue of Yan Ying (晏嬰) and Hou Ying's (侯嬴) salvation of Handan (邯鄲). He claimed that the *xia* assassins were indispensable in a troubled time. Only by means of these righteous assassins, could people rid themselves of dictators and other corrupt officials, since the laws failed to reach such tyrants.¹⁸ In his political essays in the *Min Bao* (民報), Zhang praised revolutionaries, who died on missions of assassination. He also claimed the nihilists were the

¹⁵ *ibid.*, pp.84-88.

¹⁶ The predecessors of the Nationalist Party (KMT), the Xingzhong Hui (興中會) and the Guangfu Hui (光復會), were secret societies practicing many *xia* ideas. The founder of modern China, Sun Yet-sen (孫中山 1866-1925), and his revolutionary associates had a very close relation with many *xia*-influenced members of secret societies.

¹⁷ According to Chen Mengjian's (陳孟堅) statistics, over 20% of the articles and illustrations in *Min Bao* (民報), the Shanghai-based organ of the Tongmen Hui, were related to the *xia* theme. See Chen's *Min Bao yu Xinhai Geming* (民報與辛亥革命) (Taipei: Zhengzhong shuju, 1982), v.2, pp.688-9.

¹⁸ Zhang Binglin, *Jian Lun* (檢論) (Shanghai: Gushu liutong chu, 1924), v.3, <儒俠篇>, p.11.

modern version of the *xia*. Zhang stated that his advocacy of the *xia* spirit was to encourage assassination of the “privileged” and evil “rich”. (狙擊特權，懲創富惡)¹⁹

At the same time, a more comprehensive and integrated treatment of the *xia* and the *xia* spirit was completed by another influential scholar, Liang Qichao (梁啟超 1873-1929). This is the *Zhongguo Zhi Wushidao* (中國之武士道) (1904), the *Chinese Way of Warrior*. The work consists of biographies of people from Confucius to Guo Xie (郭解), a *xia* figure in the early Han dynasty. In his preface, Liang expressed the main argument of the work. He claimed the martial spirit, which he regarded as the core of *xia* character, as part of the born nature of the Chinese people. Since the time of the legendary founding father of the Chinese people, the Yellow Emperor (黃帝), the Chinese people had been for three thousand years the fittest martial people in the Orient. This martial tradition perished in the Qin-Han, under the severe oppression initiated by the First Emperor of Qin (秦始皇 259-210 B.C.) and completed by Emperor Wu of Han. His conclusion was that the martial tradition was a product of the “struggle for political hegemony” (霸國政治), which culminated in the period of the Warring States. The world had entered a similar age, that of the “Warring Continents (合五大洲為一戰國), in Liang’s own time. The first priority for the nation’s rulers was to resuscitate the old martial tradition through collective efforts. In this regard, Liang offered examples of this glorious tradition in order to inspire people to their new mission.^{20E}

As important and eloquent as Liang’s preface were two prefaces written by his fellow monarchist reformers Jiang Zhiyou (蔣智由 1866-1929) and Yang Du (楊度 1874-1932). Jiang praised Mo Zi (墨子) and Mohists as the “real *xia*”(真俠). He indicated that what was important for the *xia* was “to become a great *xia* (大俠), not a petty *xia* (小俠)”, and “to fight for society (為公武), not to vent personal spite (為私武)”. He deeply abhorred what he described as “feuds among villagers” (鄉里械鬥), namely internecine strife over trivial disputes. In contrast to this, the Japanese warriors and commoners under the spirit of Bushido (武士道) exerted themselves to fight for their country. Jiang praised them highly and credited the rise of Japanese national strength to its practice of Bushido.^{21F} For his part, Yang Du examined the Chinese side and bitterly claimed that Confucianism in China was practiced only on the surface, while underneath the doctrine of Yang-

¹⁹ See Zhang Binglin’s essays in his *Wen Lu* (文錄) (Shanghai: Gushu liutongchu, 1924), v.2 and *Min Bao* (民報), No. 23 and No. 24.

²⁰ *Zhongguo zhi Wushidao* (中國之武士道) 自叙, pp.21-3.

²¹ *ibid.*, 蔣叙, pp.2-4.

Zhu (楊朱之學), or Chinese hedonism, had in fact been dominant in society. That was why Chinese *wushidao*, characterized as “esteeming death lightly and the *xia* spirit highly” (輕死尚俠), did not survive. So Yang preached the immortality of the soul and urged people to abandon their pursuit of sensory pleasure in order to preserve their integrity, even at the cost of their lives.^{22G}

Liang Qichao’s approach to the *xia* is notably traditional, although he was motivated and influenced by certain foreign intellectual trends such as the Japanese Bushido and Russian nihilism, and used foreign terms such as “feudalism” and “knighthood”. Liang constructed the work basically within the framework of biography. He attached commentary, but the work as a whole lacked a unifying theoretical thread. It was with the next generation of scholars that a breakthrough in methodology was achieved. From the early thirties of this century, modern and scientific research into the *xia*, especially their social origins, class nature and behavioral characteristics, began to take shape.

This era started with Tao Xisheng’s (陶希聖 1893-1988) *Bianshi yu Youxia* (辯士與游俠), first published in 1931. Tao was a participant in the current discussion of the nature of Chinese society, ancient society in particular, which had been initiated and remained dominated by Marxist-inclined left-wing intellectuals. He applied the theory of social development into his *xia* research and thus constructed a complete framework for his inquiry. For instance, he related the appearance of the *xia* to changes in the land ownership system and their economic development in the Warring States period, when the intermediary *shi* (士) class began to lose their social position and sink into restless, landless condition. He called these people “*yumin wuchanzhe*” (游民無產者), or the vagrant proletarians. Many of them came from former warriors and often “had the tendency to fight, as well as ambition, organizing ability, and capacity for leadership.”^{23H} These vagrant proletarians were the *youxia* and they could be divided into individual and group categories by the type of activities they engaged in. The former were the *cike* (刺客), or assassins, and the latter the *shike* (食客), or retainers.²⁴ Besides the new framework, Tao also brought a whole new set of terminology to *xia* research, such as class struggle (階級鬥爭), big industry (大工業) and communal consumers’ group (消費共產團體). As a whole, the *Bianshi yu Youxia* is a sketchy work whose large skeleton

²² *ibid.*, <楊叙>, pp.5-15.

²³ Tao Xisheng, *Bianshi yu youxia* (辯士與游俠) (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1931), p.74. The English translation is from J. Y. Liu’s *The Chinese Knight-errant*, p.2.

²⁴ *ibid.*, pp.75-8.

was scarcely clothed with substantial arguments and whose terminology on some occasions was not accurate. However, as a pioneering work in the field, it was illustrative of new methodology and approaches to the topic.

Since the publication of Tao's work, scholars and historians have focused on the relation between the *shi* class and the *xia*. Gu Jiegang (顧頡剛 1893-1980) in his article *Wushi yu Wenshi zhi Tuihua* (武士與文士之蛻化) indicated that the ancient *shi* class consisted of entirely warriors. They were ranked as junior nobles and had the authority to lead commoners in the defense of their states. Because of their special position in society, they were called "guoshi" (國士), or "state warriors". The warrior nature of the *shi* class remained intact until the time of Confucius, when the Confucian branch of the *shi* began to de-emphasize their military role and advocate in its place the cultivation of the inner self. The *shi* class then split into the military and scholar groups: the former was called the *xia*, while the latter was called the *ru* (儒). Subsequently, the centralized Han dynasty undertook sustained and severe suppression of the *xia*, who disappeared by the end of the Eastern Han.²⁵

Guo Moruo (郭沫若 1892-1978), Feng Youlan (馮友蘭 1895-1990) and Qian Mu (錢穆 1895-1994) also contributed to the discussion with their respective researches on the subject.²⁶ Although there were differences among these researchers, the approach they took was based upon a common assumption that social existence determined group consciousness, character and behavior. Their achievement was to offer an explanation of where, when, why and how the phenomenon of *xia* came into being. They provided a positivistic basis to what Liang Qichao and his generation had idealistically constructed as a tradition. The problem common to Gu, Feng and Qian was their

²⁵ Gu Jiegang, *Shilin zashi chubian* (史料叢刊初編) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1963), <武士與文士之蛻化>, pp.85-91.

²⁶ Guo Moruo also regarded the *xia* as one part of the ancient *shi* class. However, the *xia* often came from merchant background and had a strong sense of justice. See his *Shi Pipan Shu* (十批判書) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1954), <古代研究的自我批判>, Section 8, p.68. Feng Youlan believed that the *shi* class had not yet formed before the Chunqiu period. The people called *shi* were those who did not take part in production labor but were retained by the nobility as officials for their skills and abilities. After the collapse of the aristocratic system, these people were thrown down into the population of commoners, where they continued to live on their skills and abilities. Among them, the civil specialists became *ru*, while the martial specialists became *xia*. See his *Sansongtang Xueshu Wenji* (三松堂學術文集) (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1984), <原儒通>, pp.319-21. Qian Mu in his *Shi Xia* (釋俠) argued that the *xia* and the Mohists were separate groups and should not be mixed together. He dated the emergence of *xia* to the mid or late Warring States. He defined the *xia* originally as those who could shelter and retain the *menke* or *shike* or *cike* (門客, 食客, 刺客). Later these "ke" (客) were also called *xia*. The rise of these *xia* marked the rise of plebeian society (平民社會). See *Zhongguo Xueshu Sixiang Luncong* (中國學術思想論叢) (Taipei: Dongda tushu gongsi, 1977), v.2, pp.367-72.

mechanical application of social development theory and their oversimplification of complex issues such as the social origins of *xia* and the *xia* relationship with the other pre-Qin schools, notably the Confucian and Mohist groups. The single-mindedness of their approach also dimmed their ability to notice the incompatibility that sometimes occurred between theory and subject matter. Furthermore, they were much preoccupied by a later image of the *xia* when they set off on their quest for the *xia* at their formative phase.

Parallel with the research on ancient China done by Chinese scholars of Liang and Tao's time was that done by Japanese sinologists. Since the early years of this century, Japanese sinologists had conducted research on ancient China, focusing on features of the ancient institutional structure such as land ownership and taxation. Not a few of them noticed the ancient *xia* and, helped by the overall well-developed state of Japanese sinology, built up strong hypotheses in this regard. Miyazaki Ichisada (宮崎市定 1901-) in his 1934 work *Yukyu ni Tsuite* (游侠に就て) started with analyzing the etymology of the character *xia*, suggesting its close relationship with the warrior group. He then developed his views on the origin, emergence, life and transformation of the *youxia* during the pre-Qin and Han eras.²⁷ His research was carried further eight years later when he published his *Kanmatsu Fuzoku* (漢末風俗), in which he devoted a whole section to the Confucianization of the *youxia* in the Eastern Han dynasty.²⁸

Another noteworthy Japanese contribution to *xia* research was made by Professor Tatsuo Masubuchi (増淵龍夫 1916-). In *Youxia and the Social Order in the Han Period* (漢代はすける民間秩序の構造り任侠的習俗), he argued that the *xia* "were not a special social group, but simply men of chivalrous temperament."²⁹ His definition of *xia* has the advantage in explaining the fact that people who were called *xia* came from many social groups, not only from a specific fixed group as some researchers were trying to prove. This is true especially for the later period of *xia* development. However, when the focus is directed at the *xia* in their formative phase, the hypothesis that the earliest *xia* originated from the warrior, or the *shi* class, still holds its ground.

²⁷ Miyazaki Ichisada, *Yukyu ni Tsuite* (游侠に就て) in *Chugoku kodai shiron* (中國古代史論) (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1988), pp.251-71. See "Naming of the *xia*" in Chapter Two of this thesis for Miyazaki's etymological interpretation of the word.

²⁸ Miyazaki Ichisada, *Chugoku kodai shiron* (中國古代史論) <漢末風俗> "游侠の儒教化", pp.274-8.

²⁹ Masubuchi Tatsuo, *Youxia and the Social Order in the Han Period* in *Annals of the Hitotsu Bashu Academy* (一橋論叢) (Tokyo: 1951), v.26, No.5. See J.Y. Liu's translation in *The Chinese Knight-Errant*, p.3.

In English publications, Burton Watson published his translation of *Biographies of the Youxia* (游俠列傳) in his *Records of the Grand Historian of China: Translated from the Shi Chi of Ssu-ma Ch'ien* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961). Around the terminology used in this translation, such as "knight" and "wandering knight" for *xia* and *youxia*, some discussions were conducted.³⁰ Chu T'ung-tsu in his *Han Social Structure* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1972), which was completed before 1965, devoted a section "Yu-hsia" (游俠) in Chapter Five to extensively discuss the *youxia* in the Qin-Han period. He called the *youxia* "redressers-of-wrong". He noticed that Sima Qian in his *Biographies of the Youxia* presented "the ideal type" of the *youxia*. He indicated the *youxia* as a whole had a set of values not compatible with the general moral code of society, especially their illegitimate use of force. Chu also pointed out the organized nature of the *youxia* in the Han dynasty, and their assumption of a kind of leadership in the local community. The great number of *youxia* followers from a given area sometimes even constituted a threat to the Han military forces, such as in Ju Meng's (劇孟) case. The author concluded that this kind of powerful influence caused the Han to take drastic measures against the *youxia*. Although the author put his "youxia" section under the chapter "Powerful Families", he did not elaborate on the relationship between the *youxia* and the powerful families, which I regard as the most important issue pertaining to the Han *youxia*.³¹ Another section on "guests" (客) in this book is closely related to the *youxia*, since the latter often appeared in the pre-Qin and Qin-Han times in the form of "ke", either the *menke* (門客) or *cike* (刺客).³²

In the early 1960s, James Liu also began his research on the *xia* and their culture. In 1967, he published his research *The Chinese Knight-errant*, the first, and so far the lone, English treatise on the *xia*. Professor Liu admitted that he was inspired to apply to China the Western quest of "the spirit of protest and nonconformity". He regarded the *xia* phenomenon as an "important illustration" of this spirit in history. In his work he started with a discussion of the rise of the *xia* and inclined towards the view of Professor Masubuchi, which I introduced above. His conclusion was that being a *xia* was "more a matter of temperament than of social origin" - "a way of

³⁰ See Ho Ping-ti's *Records of China's Grand Historian: Some Problems of Translation in Pacific Affairs*, XXXVI, No.2 (1963), pp.171-82, pp.127-35.

³¹ See *Han Social Structure*, pp.185-95.

³² *Ibid.*, pp.127-35.

behavior rather than a profession."³³ He then introduced the ideological affinities and antipathies of the *xia* with respect to four major pre-Qin schools - Confucians, Legalists, Mohists, and Taoists. Historical examples of the *xia* from the Warring States to the Northern Song Dynasty (北宋 960-1127) were given to support his views. The work's main focus is upon the *xia* reflections in literature. His last chapter comparing Chinese *xia* and European knights in both history and literature is original and eye-opening. Liu's work, however, is more an interesting introduction to the topic than a full exploration of it. As a literary critic, the author was preoccupied with the literary image of the *xia* in his approach to the subject. He ended up joining the modern trend of idealizing the *xia*.

From the 1920s through the 1940s an extreme flourishing *xia* literature represented by the popular *wuxia* novel (武俠小說) came into being.³⁴ This provoked a strong reaction in communist circles. A group of communist literary critics, headed by such leading writers and revolutionaries as Qu Qiubai (瞿秋白 1899-1935), Shen Yanbing (沈雁冰 1896-1986) and Zheng Zhenduo (鄭振鐸 1898-1958), launched their attack on popular *xia* literature because of what they saw as its damaging social and political content. Their major argument was that the popular *xia* literature failed to reflect the real political situation of the time, and could not awaken the consciousness of the masses. They held the nature of *xia* literature to be reactionary and feudalistic, which would make a degenerate and ignorant nation more degenerate and ignorant.³⁵ The attacks were fierce, although they were largely ignored by the readership of the time. But after the communists came to power in

³³ *The Chinese Knight-Errant*, p.3. Liu's conclusion has its evident weakness. On the one hand, he claimed that the *xia* was a way of behavior or temperament and not a profession; on the other hand, he affirmed that the *xia* first appeared during the Warring States era. He did not explain whether and why the same temperament and behavior existed or did not exist in the previous Chunqiu period. If *xia* was "a matter of temperament" or "a way of behavior", he can not argue that it made its first appearance in the Warring States, since the same temperament and behavior were obviously to be found in the Chunqiu. See also Hou Jian (侯健) *Wenxue Sixiang Shu* (文學·思想·書) (Taipei: Huangguan chubanshe, 1978), pp.232-3, and Cui Fengyuan (崔鳳源) *Zhongguo Gudian Duanpian Xiaoyi Xiaoshuo Yanjiu* (中國古典短篇俠義小說研究) (Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiye gongsi, 1986), p.35.

³⁴ The *wuxia* novel was an important example of so-called "popular novels" (通俗小說) of the time. According to the statistics in Zhang Gansheng (張曠生)'s *Minguo Tongsu Xiaoshuo Lungao* (民國通俗小說論稿) (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 1991), about 150 novels belonging to this popular genre was published. According to the literary historian Zheng Yimei's (鄭逸梅) calculation, more than 60-70% of them were *wuxia* novels. See Cao Zhengwen (曹正文) *Zhongguo Xia Wenhua Shi* (中國俠文化史) (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1994), pp.87-8.

³⁵ Qu Qiubai (瞿秋白), *Jihede de shidai* (吉珂德的時代) in *Beidou* (北斗), v.1, No.2 (Oct., 1931). Shen Yanbing (沈雁冰), *Fengjian de xiaoshimin wenyi* (封建的小市民文藝) in *Dongfang Zazhi* (東方雜誌), v.30, No.3 (Feb., 1933), and Zheng Zhenduo (鄭振鐸), in *Haiyan* (海燕) (Shanghai: Xin Zhongguo shudian, 1932). See quotes in *Zhongguo Xia Wenhua Shi* (中國俠文化史), pp.128-9.

mainland China in 1949, the opinions of the above critics became the official orthodoxy. *Xia* literature disappeared almost entirely from the mainland, and *xia* research, both literary and historical, remained a blank for almost the next thirty years.

In Taiwan and Hong Kong, a “neo-*wuxia* novel” (新派武俠小說) trend started in the early 1950s and grew steadily over the three succeeding decades. It produced over fifty writers worthy of attention and over a thousand novels.³⁶ Some writers, such as Jin Yong (金庸 1925-), Liang Yusheng (梁羽生 1922-) and Gu Long (古龍 1936-1983), became household names. Their literary creativity gave forceful impetus to further research on the *xia*. The historical *xia* were now to be the object of study in order to throw light on the complexities of the current situation.

Taiwanese scholars have led research of the *xia*, on the history and culture of the *xia*. In their numerous articles and monographs they have established new perspectives and analytical frameworks. In 1973, Sun Tiegang (孫鐵剛 1943-) wrote his doctoral thesis *Zhongguo Gudai de Shi he Xia* (中國古代的士和俠) (Institute of Historical Studies, National Taiwan University), giving a comprehensive review and discussion of the origin and development of the *xia*. Tian Yuying (田毓英) published her *Xibanya Qishi yu Zhongguo Xia* (西班牙騎士與中國俠) in 1980. The author focused her efforts upon the comparison between the medieval Spanish knights, who she thought were representative of European knighthood, and the ancient Chinese *xia*. In this regard, she continued the comparative work between the Western knight and the ancient Chinese *xia* started by James Liu but she brought forward more specific and detailed case analysis. In the comparison, the respective characters of the Chinese *xia* and Spanish knight were highlighted. The work has its weaknesses, however, especially in its Chinese part. The most apparent one is the lack of historical depth. In this area, the author intended to explore the social origin and evolution of the Chinese *xia*, but in the end she only drew a sketchy outline of their development. Her romantic rhetoric often resulted in an overstated, impressionistic conclusion without sound historical support. Her enumeration of *xia* virtues was also oversimplified and ahistorical.

Other influential Taiwanese works in *xia* research were Hou Jian's (侯健 1926-) *Wuxia Xiaoshuo Lun* (武俠小說論) (Taipei: Dongda tushu gongsi, 1984) and Cui Fengyuan's (崔奉源) *Zhongguo Gudian Duanpian Xiayi Xiaoshuo Yanjiu* (中國古典短篇俠義小說研究) (Taipei: Lianjing chuban

³⁶ *ibid.*, see the bibliography of writers and works in pp.180-191.

gongsi, 1986). The former explores the origin of the *xia* from a literary perspective, while the latter intensively examines the ancient *xia* novellas from the Wei-Jin to the Ming (明朝 1368-1644). The introductory chapter of this work includes a comprehensive and insightful critique of the origins and development of the *xia* prior to the Wei-Jin. Cui was inclined to accept the view of both Masubuchi and Liu that the main defining feature of the *xia* was their temperament and behavior, but he differed from them by claiming that the *xia* first occurred in the Chunqiu and that the first representative *xia* figure was Cao Mo (曹沫).³⁷ He then summarized the characteristics of the *xia*.³⁸ Cui Fengyuan, however, shared the common failing of many other researchers: he concentrated on the later *xia* to the cost of the early history. For instance, when he disagreed with Qian Mu's view that the *xia* were those who "sheltered and retained private swordsmen" (俠乃養私劍者), he cited instances in the later *xia* literature where the *xia* often took the form of an individual hero and retained no one at all.³⁹ Cui missed the point of Qian Mu's argument, as it was concerned with the historical *xia* in their early phase.⁴⁰

The most impressive achievements of Taiwanese scholars are to be found in two later works: Gong Pengcheng's (龔鵬程 1956-) *Da Xia* (大俠) (Taipei: Jinguang chubanshe, 1987) and *Xia Yu Zhongguo Wenhua* (俠與中國文化) (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1993), a collection of research papers presented to a symposium on *xia* culture sponsored by Tamkang University.

Gong's work was, as the author claimed, a bold effort to restore the image of the *xia* to its original historical truth and to examine why and how the image of the *xia* had been modified and even distorted in history. At the beginning of his discussion, he pointedly warned his readers of the complications surrounding the *xia* image, which, he believed, was a combination of historical factuality and literary fabrication. This had been caused by people who often unconsciously imposed their impression of the literary *xia* on interpretation of the historical *xia*, filtering out all the elements not in accord with their preoccupation. He singled out Sima Qian as the culprit.

³⁷ Cui Fengyuan, *Zhongguo Gudian Duanpian Xiayi Xiaoshuo Yanjiu* (中國古典短篇俠義小說研究), p.38.

³⁸ Cui Fengyuan described the *xia* as "those who came from the common people and lived up to their personal code of brotherhood, and whose altruistic spirit made them ready to draw swords at the sight of injustice." They were prepared 1) to help others without expecting reward or requital, 2) to disregard wealth and value brotherhood, 3) to boast not of their abilities and brag not of the favors they had done for others, 4) to harm nobody to benefit themselves, 5) to help the weak, regardless the rights and wrong involved, and 6) to break the law and even take their own life in order to keep their word. See *Zhongguo Gudian Duanpian Xiayi Xiaoshuo Yanjiu* (中國古典短篇俠義小說研究), p.8.

³⁹ *ibid.*, "後世文學作品中的俠，都是以個人姿態出現，并無養俠的迹象。" p.10.

because his *Biographies of the Youxia* were determined by his own selections and interpretations, rather than historical fact.¹¹ He called this approach as the creation of “a myth of justice” (正義神話), expressed through the worship of heroes. Although Gong did not arrive at an unambiguous conclusion about the *xia*, he came close to asserting that the *xia* was the “robber or bandit” (盜匪), or the “bully” (暴豪). This is similar to Han Fei’s labeling of the *xia* some two thousand years earlier. Gong’s analysis of his subject matter was thoughtful and eloquent. The effective theoretical framework he set up to guide his analysis is also admirable. However, as a whole, the author raised more questions than he solved. In a few occasions he was overcritical, unnecessarily belittled previous research achievements.¹² The ten-chapter work lacked a balanced treatment of the *xia* through history, probably because the book was a side product of the author’s research on Tang cultural history.¹³ Nevertheless, Gong’s work overall marked a major step forward in demythologizing the *xia* and opening up new horizons for research.

The publication of *Xia Yu Zhongguo Wenhua* (俠與中國文化) stands as the most recent and most sophisticated contribution to the academic study of the *xia*. On May 17, 1992, the Department of Chinese Language and Literature, Tamkang University, held its fifth annual conference on the topic of “Chinese Society and its Culture” (中國社會與文化). That year’s theme was “the *xia* and Chinese society”. Several dozen papers were presented and twenty of them were collected in the conference proceedings. While most of the attendants were Taiwanese scholars, there were others from mainland China, the Czech Republic and South Korea. The conference considered three major topics 1) the historical position of the *xia* in Chinese culture, 2) the image of the *xia* in traditional Chinese literature, and 3) the contemporary social significance of *wuxia* novels. Many of the presentations were original and constructive. For instance, Fu Xiren (傅錫壬) explored the the *nuxia* (儒俠) and *daoxia* (道俠) from the different perspectives of Han and Tang society.

¹⁰ See Note 26 of this chapter for Qian’s viewpoint.

¹¹ Gong Pengcheng (龔鵬程), *Da Xia* (大俠), “司馬遷寫的, 根本不是什麼客觀的歷史, 里面充滿了意義的選擇, 判斷與對歷史的詮釋.” p. 12.

¹² In the postscript to his book Gong Pengcheng accused all research prior to his of “being nothing but nonsense.” (“論中國俠義傳統的著作很多, 但據我看, 幾乎全是胡扯.”) See *Da Xia* (大俠), p. 272.

¹³ *ibid.*, p. 272. The first two chapters of the work are too brief, only four pages each. In Chapter Seven he devoted over seventy pages to his favorite topic of the *jianxia* in the Tang dynasty (唐代劍俠), and in Chapter Eight another twenty pages to their cultural significance. Chapter Nine, which is about the evaluation practice of the literary writers, is only marginally relevant. The last chapter is about the relationship between the *Yuanyang Hudie* (鶯鶯蝴蝶), a literary group which produced many affectionate love stories, and the *wuxia* novels (武俠小說). The style of these two chapters is informal and impressionistic, inconsistent with the theoretical tone in the previous chapters.

demonstrating the inclination of *xia* to lower society.⁴⁴ Lin Baochun (林保淳) examined the evolution of the spirit of *xia* across the breadth of China's history. He found that the names *youxia* (游俠), *shaoxia* (少俠), *jianxia* (劍俠) and *yixia* (義俠) accurately reflected transformations being experienced by the *xia* as Chinese society underwent change. His paper provided a brief but clear line of evolution of the *xia* from the Warring States until the Qing.⁴⁵ Another contributor, Zhou Qinghua (周慶華) inquired into the mythical nature of the *xia* narrative and its social function. He pointed out that the fictional *xia* image was created as an antidote to the immorality and injustice of society. The heart of the matter, however, was the absence of a mechanism that would translate into reality the *xia* dedication to popular justice. People who expected the *xia* to uphold justice found that only personal justice had been done, and that the world as a whole was not better off. Zhou concluded that people could find a way out (出路) for the *xia* only by fusing their quest for personal justice with the establishment of "public justice" (國家正義), which was justice safeguarded by law and constitution.⁴⁶

Although most of the contributors were literary scholars, they had evidently taken great pains to apply diverse theories of history and approaches from other disciplines, such as myth theory and deconstructionism, to their research. Their biggest achievement was breaking through the borders between literature and history and between the ancient and the modern, and thus placing *xia* research within a much broader horizon.

In mainland China, publication and reading of the popular *wuxia* novel resumed in the early 1980s after being proscribed for over three decades. Hundreds of publishers became engaged in publishing *wuxia* novels of all kinds. They enjoyed a tremendously large readership, consisting of both the poorly and highly educated across the whole nation.⁴⁷ Besides the reprints of major Hong Kong and Taiwan novels, many new works have been produced by local Chinese writers. They have pursued their own distinctive paths, attempting to achieve realism and cultural significance in

⁴⁴ *Xia Yu Zhongguo Wenhua* (俠與中國文化), 儒俠與道俠, pp.149-69.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 從游俠、少俠、劍俠到義俠, pp.91-124.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 俠的神話性與神話功能, pp.1-14.

⁴⁷ The neo-*wuxia* novels, such as those of Jin Yong and Liang Yusheng, were often printed in runs of over a million copies. In 1985 alone, over 60 literary magazines, whose major content was the popular *wuxia* novel started publication. For instance, *Zhongguo Gushi* (中國故事), a magazine giving priority to *wuxia* novels, distributed around 700,000 copies of each issue during the mid-1980s. See Wang Chungui's (王春桂) paper in *Xia Yu Zhongguo Wenhua* (俠與中國文化), pp.57-73. Also see Dong Yan's (董彥) preface to

their works.⁴⁸ After the *wuxia* fever reached its peak in the mid-1980s, scholars began to produce their verdicts on the trend, intending to guide both the publisher and reader in what they thought a healthy and correct direction. They explored the field of *xia* research, both past and present, to determine its successes and failures in both style and content.

Wang Hailin (王海林 1942-) wrote *Zhongguo Wuxia Xiaoshuo Shilue* (中國武俠小說史略) (Taiyuan: Beiyue wenyi chubanshe, 1988), a pioneering work on the history of *wuxia* novels. This 5-chapter history started from the fountainhead of *xia* stories in the pre-Qin and went up to the author's time. Wang claimed the *wuxia* movement in literature passed through five stages of development. He provided brief descriptions of the writers and characteristics of these works. Some of the author's ideas were original and insightful. For instance, he suggested several causes for the changes in *xia* literature: among these the evolution of an urban lifestyle, the growth of a commodity economy, and the new consumption of literary goods were most important. He also indicated that since the time of Wei-Jin *xia* literature had always comprised two sometimes opposing tendencies: the anecdotal and artistic. The former was inclined towards realism while the latter was inclined toward fantasy.⁴⁹ Because its pioneering nature, the work has certain shortcomings. The spirit of *xia*, which the author emphasized as being formed in the pre-Qin time, was often mentioned throughout the introduction of the later *xia* literature. But the author devotes little discussion to when and how it was formed and what was really meant by it in its formative times. This made his subsequent discussion begin abruptly. On a number of occasions, the author either merely enumerated his sources or scratched their surfaces, quickly turning to the next item without further analysis or elaboration.

Two years later, Luo Liqun (羅立群 1957-) published his *Zhongguo Wuxia Xiaoshuo Shi* (中國武俠小說史) (Shenyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 1990) to make up the deficiencies in Wang's work. In this well balanced history, Luo devoted the first two chapters to discussing the source for the *xia* and *xia* literature in their formative stage. Luo was the first scholar to notice the influence of hero mythology upon the *xia* tradition, and he explained why the *Yan Dan Zi* (燕丹子) should be

his *Jian Han Qing Nuan Du Wuxia* (劍寒情暖讀武俠) (Beijing: Zhongyang guangbo dianshi daxue chubanshe, 1993), pp.I-V. Both analyze this phenomenon.

⁴⁸ The representative works were Liu Xi's (柳溪 1924-) *Dadao "Yanzi" Li San Chuanqi* (大盜“燕子”李三傳奇) (1984), Feng Yunan's (馮育楠 1935-) *Jinmen Daxia Huo Yuanjia* (津門大俠霍元甲) (1984), Nie Yunlan's (聶雲嵐) *Yu Jiao Long* (玉嬌龍) (1985) and Feng Jicai's (馮驥材 1942-) *Shen Bian* (神鞭) (1984).

regarded as the first *xia* novella. He was also the first scholar to emphasize the relation between *xia* and *dao* (盜). He argued that *xiadao* as an ideology (俠盜意識) of rebellion was the principal motif of the *Water Margin* (水滸), the monumental classical *xia* novel. Luo indicated that this spirit of rebellion was “the sign of humanity and human integrity”, and that it helped mold “the national character” and was “the brightest aspect” of that character.⁵⁰ This poetic praise is indicative of the author’s typical overstatement as a literary scholar, and of his lacking the critical spirit a historian often takes.

Published in the same year was another work on the early history of *wuxia* novels. Liu Yinbo’s (劉蔭柏 1941-) *Zhongguo Gudai Wuxia Xiaoshuo Shi* (中國古代武俠小說史) (Shijiazhuang: Huashan wenyi chubanshe, 1992). This history explored the literary evolution from the pre-Qin period to Qing dynasty (清朝 1644-1911) of the *xia* image and its inseparable symbolic shadow, the martial arts, especially swordsmanship. Since the author is also the writer of *wuxia* novel, he could readily grasp the literary merits and demerits of the early works. However, as a historian, Liu seems to lack a rigorous approach. The author has relied too much upon questionable and dubious historical sources. Some erroneous statements are to be found in this work, like the one on the relation between the *youxia* activity and the law in section 2 of Chapter One.⁵¹

The year 1992 produced a great harvest year for *xia* research in China with the publication of two very different but equally marvelous works: Chen Pingyuan’s (陳平原 1954-) *Qianggu Wenren Yiake Meng* (千古文人俠客夢) (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1992) and Chen Shan’s (陳山 1945-) *Zhongguo Wuxia Shi* (中國武俠史) (Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 1992).

Chen Pingyuan is an accomplished scholar of modern Chinese literature. In the late 1980s he began to explore the narrative transformation and typological evolution of the novel. He made the *wuxia* novel the object of his study because of its long course of development. He believed that the tension

⁴⁹ Wang Hailin (王海林), *Zhongguo Wuxia Xiaoshuo Shilue* (中國武俠小說史略). See the discussion in Chapter Two and Three.

⁵⁰ Luo Liqun (羅立群), *Zhongguo Wuxia Xiaoshuo Shi* (中國武俠小說史), “這種反抗精神... 是人類存在的表徵和對人性尊嚴的維護... 熔鑄了中華民族的性格, 成爲其國民性的最光輝的一面。” p.32.

⁵¹ Although, Liu said, many of the pre-Qin thinkers condemned the *youxia* for their anti-law activity, in fact, the activity of *youxia* did not always offend against the law, but sometimes was “the solemn complement of the laws” (“對封建社會中“法”的莊嚴的補充.”). He regretted that “this just complement” (這種正義的補充) was often not understood or appreciated by the authorities, who, instead, were intolerant of it. See *Zhongguo Gudai Wuxia Xiaoshuo Shi* (中國古代武俠小說史), p. 16.

between the sophisticated and popular was the important driving force in twentieth-century Chinese culture. The *wuxia* novel thus drew his attention and research interest as one of the most prominent genres of popular literature.⁵² Almost the first half of his book was about the historical evolution of *xia* literature, which, he thought, was a dream (夢) created and renovated by writers (文人) of the past millennial years (千古). Chen next analyzed the key scenes in *xia* literature, providing the reader with what he claimed was a “reading code” (解讀密碼). In his final chapter he presented his concluding interpretation of the *wuxia* novel from a typological perspective. The author made important contributions to *xia* research. For instance, he reached into the depths of the “unconscious substance” (無意識內容) of the *wuxia* novel, finding that the “desire for bloodshed” (嗜血欲望) and the “Taoyuan complex” (桃園情結) were the underlying but usually unadmitted creative compulsions of the *wuxia* writers.⁵³ Chen Pingyuan maintained that *wuxia* literature was “the dream of heroes in a heroless age” (英雄失落時代的英雄夢). He pointed out that the desire for “salvation” was the assumption basic to the whole of *wuxia* literature. Two fundamental concepts defined “salvation”: 1) praying for being saved, and 2) saving others.⁵⁴ This kind of view is to be found throughout the work and often prompts the reader to deep thought. However, since the author was more interested in searching for the cultural psyche behind and typological evolution of *xia* literature, it was not his intention to undertake a comprehensive and systematic research on the subject. In his approach, the source material often became more a note to his argumentation than an object of discussion. In his survey of ancient *xia* literature, Chen Pingyuan omitted the Yuan (元朝 1271-1368) and Ming periods without explanation. He thus missed an opportunity of discussing the *Sanguo Yanyi* (三國演義) and *Shui Hu* (水滸), both of which had enormous influence on later *xia* literature and helped shape the modern sense of *xia* and the *xia* spirit.

Chen Shan’s *Zhongguo Wuxia Shi* (中國武俠史) is the most comprehensive and well-designed work of historical research on the *xia*. The author’s basic assumption is that traditional Chinese culture was composed primary of two layers: the elite culture of higher society and the mass culture of lower society, with Confucianism and the *xia* ideology as their respective forms of expression.⁵⁵ Chen’s work focused on the historical aspect of the *xia* development. Since the *xia* were active as

⁵² Chen Pingyuan (陳平原), *Qianqu Wenren Xiake Meng* (千古文人俠客夢), pp.4-5.

⁵³ *ibid.*, Chapter Six: *Kuaiyi Enchou* (快意恩仇), pp.124-9, and Chapter Seven: *Xiaobao Jianghu* (笑傲江湖), pp.146-51. Taoyuan (桃園) is the place in novel, *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (三國演義), where Liu Bei (劉備), Guan Yu (關羽) and Zhang Fei (張飛) became sworn brothers. Later it became a symbol of brotherhood among the non-kin men for a common cause, often involved in rebellions or secrete societies.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p.200.

an important historical entity only in pre-Qin and Han eras, over two-thirds of the book was devoted to the ancient *xia*. The author located the fountainhead of the *xia* movement in the martial tradition of high antiquity. He then dated the birth of the *xia* from its *guoshi* (國士) parent in the late Chunqiu. His major contribution to *xia* research is his study of the first group of *xia* figures, such as Yu Rang (豫讓) and Zhuan Zhu (專諸), in which he analyzed their relations with their lords, their motives of service and their pursuit of spiritual value.⁵⁵ Another important contribution came from his inquiry into the changed nature of the Han *xia* and their conflict with the imperial authority. His explanation of the *xia* movement in lower society since the Eastern Han, especially during the Song dynasty, was also thoughtful. This movement was characterized by three aspects: 1) the sense of "equality" as a common moral bond, 2) its quasi-familial organizational structure, and 3) the awe-inspiring mystery of its rituals. These features were transmitted to and developed by the modern secret society. The author thus provided a historical perspective on the phenomenon of the secret society, the latter once more a major concern in Chinese society.⁵⁷ Chapter Seven, *Xia yu Zhongguo Wenhua* (俠與中國文化), is the best chapter of the work. In it the author discussed the tradition of *xia*yi (俠義傳統), especially among the masses. He concluded that this "sub-culture" (亞文化) resided deeply in the collective psyche of the common people and stood as the core of their moral code.

While the argumentation through the work is eloquent and often convincing, some of the author's views seem to be more artificial than factual. For instance, he overemphasizes the importance of the distant martial tradition and its creative role in shaping the spirit of *xia*. He claims that the *xia* shouldered an old and unsophisticated cultural tradition, whose values were out of step with the customs of the Warring States.⁵⁸ If such is the case, the author has failed to explain why the *xia* as a group were extremely active at that time, a fact he acknowledges. He also claims that the emergence of Confucianism, a younger, sophisticated and more flexible cultural tradition, is primarily responsible for the decline of the *xia* tradition.⁵⁹ It seems the author has overstated the differences between the *xia* and the Confucians. During the pre-Qin period, the divide between the two groups was not that serious. The *xia* tradition was not older than the Confucian tradition.

⁵⁵ Chen Shan (陳山), *Zhongguo Wuxia Shi* (中國武俠史), 引子, pp.1-3.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, 俠的誕生, pp.25-7.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, 秘密社會的俠迹, p.226.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, 戰國游俠的活躍, "俠平負載的是一個古老而浮囂的文化傳統, 他們的價值觀念顯然和戰國的世風是格格不入的。" p.33.

Since they came from the same *shi* (士) class of the Chunqiu period, their relationship was more complicated than that of two groups in conflict as described by the author. As a matter of fact, many pre-Qin *xia* had an ideology similar to that of Confucianism, while not a few Confucians had the temperament of the *xia*. They became opposites in the mid-Western Han dynasty, when Confucianism was remolded into a ruling ideology, whose major concern was the stability of society. Even in later ages, a primary two-line struggle between the *xia* tradition and the Confucian tradition never occurred. While the *xia* tradition existed in the lower levels of society and was often influenced and reshaped by the dominant Confucianism, it collided mainly with the authorities for political and economic reasons.

The last noteworthy work published to date in the mainland is Cao Zhenwen's (曹正文 1950-) *Zhongguo Xia Wenhua Shi* (中國俠文化史) (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1994). The author is not only a researcher of modern *wuxia* novels, but also a novel writer himself. Therefore his book is very useful to *xia* research in general, and modern *wuxia* literature in particular. The author's sensitivity to charms of the popular literature has led him to find a close relationship between the *xia* tradition and the commoner mentality (平民意識). While the work displays its merits in its straightforwardness and vividness, its lack of historical depth is also evident. It is more a work about the popular *wuxia* literature than a cultural history of the *xia* tradition, as suggested by the title

Taking an overall view of *xia* research in mainland China and overseas, it seems that work in the mainland since the late 1980s has achieved the higher level of attainment, in spite of its late start. Its achievements cover both the diachronic development of the *xia* image and the synchronic relationship of the *xia* with other schools and groups. As I have indicated in the above discussion, many researchers were highly conscious to approach their subject matter from a cultural or ideological perspective. This has successfully made *xia* research become an integral part of the macrocosmic quest for the nation's mental and psychic structure in past and present.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p.23. In another occasion he repeated this view by saying: “俠所負載的上古英雄時代的高武文化，在先秦社會的主體文化中，被儒所負載的三代王官文化擠出和壓入民間社會。” p.271.

序論所引原文

^A 簡父兄之尊而崇賓客之禮，薄骨肉之恩而篤朋友之愛，忘修身之道而求衆人之譽，……此亂所繇生也。（前漢紀）

^B 夫俠者，蓋非常人也，雖以然諾許人，必以節氣爲本，義非俠不立，俠非義不成，難兼之矣，……士之任氣而不知義者，皆可謂之盜矣，然士無氣義者，爲臣必不能死難，求道必不能出世。（會昌一品集·豪俠論）

^C 俠之不作，皆儒之爲梗，……儒爲專制所深資，俠爲專制之勁敵，舍儒而崇俠，清明寧一之風，剛健中正之德，乃有所屬，而民以興起。（崇俠篇）

^D 凌離氏之儒，不色撓，不自逃，行曲則無違於臧獲，行直則怒於諸侯，其學廢而閭里游俠興，俠者無書，不得附九流，然天下有亟事，非俠士無足屬：侯生之完趙也，北郭子之白晏嬰也，自決一朝，其利及朝野，……且儒者之義，有過於殺身成仁者乎？……天下亂也，義士則狙擊人主，其他借交報仇，爲國民發憤：有爲鴟梟於百姓者，則利劍刺之，可以得志，當世之平，刺客則可絕乎？尚文之國，刑輕而奸諛，恒不蔽其辜，非手殺人，未有考竟者也，康回滔天之在位，賊元元無算，其事陰沈，法律不得行其罰，……當是時，非刺客而巨奸不息，明矣。（檢論·儒俠篇）

^E 中國民族之武，其最初之天性也，……黃帝以來遺傳之武德，既已銷磨，而我族之對外，始不競矣，要而論之，則中國之武士道，與霸國政治相終始，春秋時代，霸國初起，始形成武士道之一種風氣，戰國時代，霸國極盛，……今者，……合五大洲爲一大戰國，……凡可以以人力破壞之物，必還可以以人力回復之，……今者愛國之士，莫不知獎厲尚武精神之爲急務，……吾故今搜集我祖宗經歷之事實，貽最名譽之模範於我子孫者，叙述始末，而加以評論。（中國之武士道·自叙）

^F 彼日本崛起於數十年之間，今且戰勝世界第一強國之俄羅斯，……考其所以強盛之原因，咸曰由於其向所固有之武士道，……觀於墨子，重繭救宋，其急國家之難若此，大抵其道在重於赴公義，而關係一身一家私恩私怨之報復者蓋少焉，此真俠之至大，純而無私，公而不偏，而可爲千古任俠者之模範焉，夫報復私怨，殺仇敵而快心，此野蠻時代之風，任俠者固已耻之，……要之所重乎武俠者，爲大俠毋爲小俠，爲公武毋爲私武，……夫南方鄉里之械鬥，……非不勇焉，惜乎其用之爲爭田水爭墳墓之一小故，……我國人多爲國家社會而不動，否則不爲國家社會而動，是兩皆非英雄之道也。（中國之武士道·蔣叙）

^G 合兩國之歷史比較而觀之，此中有一大問題焉：乃日本之武士道垂千百年，而愈久愈烈，至今不衰，……若吾中國之所謂武士道，則自漢以後，即已氣風歇滅，愈積愈懦，……現象之相反如此，此其故何哉？梁氏之論中國也，曰專制政體之故，楊度曰：豈獨政治，蓋亦學術之有以使之然者矣，夫日本本無固有之學術，自與中國交通以後，乃以中國之學爲學，直接而傳中國之儒教，間接而傳印度之佛教，舉國之人，無能出此二教之範圍者，夫此二教者，其義相反，而其用有相足者，……日本之所謂武士道者，實儒實佛，非儒非佛，幾於參合融化，兩取其長，而別成一道矣，……自漢以來，所謂尊崇儒教者，不過表面上欺人之詞，而其實則所行者非儒教而楊朱之教也，……《楊朱之論》皆絕望之語，陷於自暴自棄，流於放情縱欲，……故仁人君子，每遇其不得已之際，則毅然棄其體魄而保其精神，……死者其體魄，而生者其精神故耳。（中國之武士道·楊叙）

^H 他們之中，尤多舊來武士階級破落下來之成分，這些分子，仍帶有好勇斗狠，野心向上，組織活動，及首領的能力。（辯士與游俠）

^I 吾國古代之士，皆武士也，士爲低級之貴族，居於國中（即都城中），有統御平民之權力，亦有執干戈以衛社稷之義務，故謂之「國士」以示其地位之高，……自孔子歿，門弟子輾轉相傳，漸傾向於內心之修養而不以習武事爲急，寢假而羞言戎兵，……於是武士乃蛻化爲文士！以兩集團對立而有新名詞出焉：文者謂之「儒」，武者謂之「俠」，儒重名譽，俠重意氣，……及漢代統一既

久，政府之力日強，... 而游俠猶不馴難制，則惟有執而戮之耳。... 而俠遂衰。... 范曄作史，不傳游俠，知東漢而後遂無聞矣。（武士與文士之蛻化）

¹ 俠的主要成分是氣質與果敢的行動，并不是出於某一特殊階層。... 最早的俠，則在春秋初期封國之間的紛爭中出現，當推曹沫為第一個代表俠士了。（中國古典短篇俠義小說研究）

Chapter 1: The Heroic Tradition and the Origin of the *Xia*

What I propose to do in this chapter is to provide the background information to the study of the early *xia* tradition. I believe the *xia* originated mainly in the *guoren*, *shi* and Chunqiu warrior class and that they carried forward with them a large part of the code of warrior conduct. The *xia* spirit has much affinity with the tradition of hero myth and legend.

The heroic tradition in Chinese myth and legend

The early *xia* (俠) tradition had its own course of development and was not derived from mythology. But, as a military tradition, the heroism and altruism of the *xia* bore a close resemblance in spirit to hero myths and legends. The theory that makes the *xia* tradition part of a broader spiritual heritage from Great Yu (大禹), the legendary founder of the Xia dynasty (夏 21st-16th Century B.C.), through the Mohists (墨家) to the *xia* warriors has a plausible basis.¹ This greater tradition is especially relevant to the spirit of *xia*. Before historical records were kept, Chinese myth and legend, in the guise of fantastic and exaggerated descriptions, carried the heroic tradition of the tribespeople that was later to be identified with the *xia* tradition. For these reasons, the heroic tradition in Chinese myth and legend serves as the prelude to this study.

As with many other peoples in their formative period, the tribes of ancient China were preoccupied with war. Documentary records and archaeological discoveries are fully indicative of this fact. Fairbank's judgment that "Disparagement of the soldier is deeply ingrained in the old Chinese system of values"² should refer to the situation prevailing from the Eastern Han dynasty (東漢 25-220), and especially from the Song Dynasty (宋朝 960 - 1279), when Confucianism was established as the orthodox ideology. The bloody wars, far-flung conquests, fierce resistance, frequent rebellions and instances of bitter revenge to be found in Chinese mythology reflect a nation far from being "pacifistic". Even if the images in the mythology were more the reconstruction or even fabrication of myth-makers, most of whom lived in the Chunqiu (春秋 770-476 B.C.) and Zhanguo (戰國 475-221 B.C.) eras, than a true depiction of ancient reality, they at least reflect the time of the myth-makers, when war was one of the most important of public affairs.

¹ Zhang Weimin (張未民), *Xia yu Zhongguo wenhua de minjian jingshen* (俠與中國文化的民間精神) in *Wenyi Zhengming* (文藝爭鳴), No.2, 1988.

Ancient Chinese tribes lived in a hostile world, at the same time battling natural enemies and rival tribes. Thus the valiant and the heroic of the tribe drew tremendous respect and esteem from their fellow members, and often became leaders of the clan. They became the objects of worship and were continuously recreated as gods, demigods and superhumans who brought order to a chaotic world or resisted the tyranny of nature or the more powerful deities. The memory of their cultural success and military glory was the cohesive force of the tribe's unity and development. This memory of the primitive Chinese people was later reflected in mythology or legend. Its written version certainly underwent a long process of artificialization and accretion of commentators' views. Nonetheless, the more primitive way of thinking was preserved. For example, the mythical heroine Nuwa (女媧) was a respected tribal leader. She re-erected the fallen sky and repaired its holes. She also extinguished fires and curbed floods on the earth. Under her leadership, people drove away wild beasts and built their villages.^{3A} Her heroism in the face of hardship and especially her courage to mend the broken sky became an ideal in the human realm.

Another great savior of mankind in Chinese mythology is Great Yu (大禹), a demigod who was later historicized as the founder of Xia, the first hereditary dynasty. Great Yu was depicted in numerous myths and legends as a selfless and devoted hero, who saved people from a long and devastating flood. It is said that his footprints were to be found beside almost all the major rivers of the country, which he dredged to control the floodwater. "For ten years he had not taken a look at his own family. His hands failed to grow nails and his shanks failed to grow hair. He suffered from a wasting disease in half of his body, which left him incapable of lifting one leg past the other when he walked."^{4B} An account in the *Lie Zi* (列子) tells that "Great Yu never made benefit to himself. When his son was born, he could not take care of him; when he passed his home, he could not pay a visit."⁵ Mohists, the *xia* and other social activists whose aim was to free people from distress, identified themselves with his spirit of selflessness. Some scholars called this tradition the "Great Yu Tradition." (大禹模式)⁶

² Fairbank, John King. *The United States and China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), p.50.

³ Gao, You. *Huainanzi zhu* (淮南子注) (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1986), <覽冥訓>, p.95.

⁴ Shi, Jiao. *Shi zi* (尸子) (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1986), "卷下", p.375.

⁵ Zhang, Zhan. *Lie zi* (列子) (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1986), <湯朱>, "大禹不以一身自利, ... 子產不字, 過門不入." p.83-84.

⁶ See footnote 1.

Nuwa and Great Yu were worshipped as Savior Gods in Chinese mythology. Another category of gods was that of culture bearer, represented by Shen Nong (神農), the Divine Husbandman. In the *Baihu Tong* (白虎通), Shen Nong is described as a man who taught people to farm the lands when the population was growing beyond the limited food resources.⁷ Shen Nong was not only the Divine Husbandman, he was also credited with the invention of the pharmacopoeia. "He tasted the flavor of hundreds of herbs, and the sweetness and bitterness of the water of rivers and springs, in order to let people know what to avoid and what to take. In those times, he ingested seventy poisons in one day."⁸ The myth of Shen Nong preserved the collective memory of the advent of agricultural society, as primitive tribes slowly moved away from hunting and gathering.

The heroism of Nuwa, Great Yu and Shen Nong is demonstrated in their great courage in the face of hardship and disaster and in their cultural wisdom in building their homeland. Their fight with the archenemy, unruly nature, was less bloody, however, when compared to mythology of the Huang Di (黃帝), or the Yellow Emperor.

A main motif of pre-Qin (先秦) Chinese mythology concerns the struggles between the two sovereigns, the Huang Di and Yan Di (炎帝), the Fire Emperor. The Huang Di was a warrior-god and he established himself as God of Combat in the west. The Fire Emperor was a god in the east, at one time more powerful than the Yellow Emperor. The two threw their armies into battle at Ban Quan (阪泉), "with so much blood being shed as to float posts (for pounding grain)." (血流漂杵) After three fierce battles, the Yellow Emperor won the war.⁹ Then came the war between the Yellow Emperor and Chi You (蚩尤), the God of Combat in the east. According to some, Chi You was the Fire Emperor's subject, while some said he was his descendant. He rose and attacked the Yellow Emperor.¹⁰ They fought at Zhoulu (涿鹿), "with blood being shed all over an area of one

⁷ Ban, Gu. *Baihu tong* (白虎通) (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1936), v.1, p. 21.

⁸ *Huainanzi zhu* (淮南子注) (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1986), <修務訓>: "嘗百草之滋味, 水泉之甘苦, 令民知所避就, 當此之時, 一日而遇七十毒." p.331.

⁹ See *Zuozhuan* (左傳) (Taipei: Yuanliu chubanshe, 1982) "僖公二十五年", (635 B.C.) *Lushi chunqiu* (呂氏春秋) (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1986) <審兵> and *Jiazi xinshu* (賈子新書) <益壤> and others.

¹⁰ Yuan, Ke. *Shanhaijing jiaozhu* (山海經校注) (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1992), "炎帝之臣" "炎帝之後" "蚩尤作兵伐黃帝". p.260.

hundred leagues (流血百里).¹¹ Chi You was defeated. After fifty-two battles, the Yellow Emperor finally founded his empire in the Yellow River valley.¹²

The well-known saying that "He who succeeds is a king, and he who fails a bandit" (成王敗寇) seems to be a later formulation. In Chinese myth and legend, heroes who lost were sometimes admired as much as the victors. The Fire Emperor and Chi You were defeated by the Yellow Emperor, but the Fire Emperor was worshipped as one of the founding fathers of China from the times of Qin and Han, while Chi You was credited as the *bingzhu* (兵主), or the Lord of Warfare, and was offered sacrifices until the mid-Han Dynasty, or even much later.¹³

Since the Yellow Emperor was a culture-hero from the west, he probably took advantage of the floods, which flowed from the western plateau to the eastern plain, to defeat lowland rivals such as the Fire Emperor and his associate Chi You.¹⁴ The floods must have caused great damage to the people. Out of this arose the myth of Gun (鯀), which shows how a hero would sacrifice his own life to save people from disaster. In order to stop the floodwater, Gun stole the *xirang* (息壤), or the absorbing soil, from the Yellow Emperor to dam up the floods. The angry Yellow Emperor had him killed. But death could not stop his devotion to his unfinished work. From Gun's incorrupt body Great Yu was born to continue the battle with the floodwater until Gun's will was fully realized.¹⁵

Another failed hero is Gong Gong (共工), also an alleged descendant of the Fire Emperor. After Gong lost his contest for supremacy to Zhuan Xu (顓頊), a descendant of the Yellow Emperor, he angrily bumped against the Buzhou Mountain, causing the sky to collapse and the earth to rupture.¹⁶ He destroyed the world order out of revenge for his defeat. His spirit of rebellion and vengeance was later widely worshipped among those who rose in rebellion against their own rulers. Gong's great grandson Kua Fu (夸父), a heroic titan in mythology, inherited his strength and

¹¹ See *Shi ji* (史記) (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1987) "封禪書", *Shanhai jing* (山海經) "大荒北經" and *Zhuang zi* (莊子) (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1991) "盜跖" and others.

¹² See Guo Moruo *Zhongguo shigao* (中國史稿) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1976), v.1, p.124.

¹³ Gu, Jiegang. *Shilin zashi chubian* (史林雜識初編) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1963), "黃帝" and "蚩尤", pp.176-188.

¹⁴ Gao, You. *Lushi chunqiu* (呂氏春秋). <湯兵>. "兵自來者久矣, 黃炎故用水火 矣." 高注: "炎帝為火災, 黃帝滅之也." p.67.

¹⁵ *Shanhaijing jiaozhu* (山海經校注). <海內經>. p.536.

¹⁶ *Huainanzi zhu* (淮南子注). <天文訓>. p.35.

courage in fighting with nature. He is described as chasing the sun and catching it in a place called the Yu Valley (禺谷). But he was so thirsty that the water in the Yellow River was not enough to quench his thirst. He collapsed while rushing to the Great Lake (大澤) for water.¹⁷ It is said that a great forest called “Denglin” (鄧林) sprouted up at the place where he died.¹⁸ Kua Fu’s motive in chasing the sun was not explored in the myth, but the relation between his death and the forest of Denglin may suggest that he was fighting the scorching sun on a barren, parched land.

Gong Gong’s butting into the mountain was not just a gesture of defiance, it was also an act of revenge. Even the rebirth of Gun in the form of Great Yu and the metamorphosis of Kua Fu’s body into the forest were deeds of revenge. The difference was that Gong took a destructive way to break the cosmic order, while Kua Fu selected a constructive way to bring welfare to the world.

Sometimes a mythical figure’s defiance of his or her adversary was not sufficient to bring down the adversary, but the image and spirit of the struggle were often inspiring and encouraging, as in the Jing Wei (精衛) and Xing Tian (刑天) myths. Jing Wei was the youngest daughter of the Fire Emperor. She was drowned in the East Sea during a voyage. She metamorphosed herself into a bird and carried bits of wood and pebble in her beak ever after in the hope of filling up the sea.¹⁹ Her task of filling the sea was doomed to fail, but the spirit of resistance to one’s fate inspired many men of strong will to fulfill their difficult tasks in later ages. Xing Tian came from the defeated Fire Emperor’s clan and he challenged the Yellow Emperor for divine rulership. The Yellow Emperor cut off his head. But Xing Tian used his nipples as his eyes and his navel his mouth to continue his fight.²⁰ His challenge to the divine authority of the Yellow Emperor has been placed by many Chinese students of mythology in the framework of the opposition between the Fire Emperor and Yellow Emperor.

These myths formed the earliest tradition of heroes and heroism. While this tradition may preserve the fragmentary memory of a primitive people’s hero worship, it definitely contained the ideas of later myth-makers, especially those who put the oral tradition in the final written form, on what a hero was supposed to be and could be. In this regard, the most impressive characteristics of mythic

¹⁷ *Shanhaijing jiaozhu* (山海經校注), 大荒北經>, p.487.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, 海外北經>, “弃其杖, 化爲鄧林”, p.284, and *Lie zi* (列子) (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1986) <湯問> “弃其杖, 尸膏肉所浸, 生鄧林, 鄧林彌廣數千里焉.” p.56.

¹⁹ *Shanhaijing jiaozhu* (山海經校注), 北山經>, p.111.

²⁰ *ibid.*, 海外西經>, p.259.

heroes were their resistance to more powerful opponents, refusal to accept misfortune and defeat, and their spirit of revenge. These traits were essential in forming the ideal personality of the *xia* in the eras of Chunqiu and Warring States.

The military colonization of Zhou and the position of *guoren*

At the Battle of Muye (牧野), the Zhou army led by King Wu defeated only the main force of the Shang army. The Zhou had far from subjugated the whole Shang domain, especially the vast eastern areas that remained almost untouched in the war. Thus the Zhou conquerors found themselves living in a largely hostile territory. When Lu Shang (呂尚), one of the most important military leaders of the Zhou, was sent to Yingqiu (營丘) to set up a military base, he had to lead his army there secretly by night. Even so, when he arrived next morning, he was confronted by a local lord called Laihou (萊侯).²¹ The culturally more advanced Shang people of the Central Plains were slow to submit to the Zhou conquerors. The Zhou took another forty years of military expeditions to finally gain control of the Shang lands.

The measures taken by the Zhou conquerors consisted of two major approaches: military colonization of the central areas of the former Shang domain and political cooperation with the less hostile members of the old Shang aristocracy and other residents of the outlying areas.

The early Zhou rulers established a feudal political system based upon relationship within the clan to the royal house. In order to establish a stable hereditary system and thus consolidate their central control over their conquests, the Zhou decreed that only the eldest son of king or lord and his legal wife was next in line for succession to the title. This was central to the Zhou clan-law system (宗法制).²²

During the regimes of the previous Xia and Shang dynasties, the royal house could only loosely control the country through mainly non-related independent lords in the localities. The Zhou differed from them in enforcing a process of continuous military colonization. Prior to the conquest of the Central Plains, the Zhou had adopted the policy of sending a clansman with an armed force

²¹ Ma, Chiyong *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注) (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1987), v.3, <齊太公世家>:“夜衣而行, 黎明至國, 萊侯來伐, 與之爭營丘.” p.1505.

to establish a fief, or a city, on captured land in order to control it and its neighboring areas. Soon after the Zhou conquered the Central Plains, King Wu (周武王 r. 1049-1043 B.C.), and especially his successor King Cheng (周成王 r. 1042-1006 B.C.) and his brother Duke of Zhou (周公 virtually reigned 1042-1036 B.C.) established seventy-one colonial bases, also called vassal states, on the conquered lands, of these fifty-three were commanded by members of the royal house. This was termed “defending Zhou through enfeoffing relatives”.²³

Meanwhile, in order to gain cooperation from the still influential and powerful local lords, the Zhou authorities promised to protect their lives and their local authority so long as they were submissive to the Zhou.²⁴ The former Shang prince Wu Geng (武庚) was allowed to remain head of his sizable clan. Those who claimed descent from the legendary Yan Di, Huang Di, Emperor Yao (帝堯), Emperor Shun (帝舜) and Great Yu were all enfeoffed in different areas, as a gesture of reconciliation and unity. Many other cooperative lords from the previous regime were also allowed to keep their position and power.

It seems that the hostility towards the Zhou conqueror did not disappear quickly despite the above show of magnanimity. Immediately after the death of King Wu, the Shang people led by Wu Geng rose in rebellion. The uprising met with widespread support and forced the Duke of Zhou to admit that “the people have not yet been pacified”.²⁵

The Zhou rulers responded to the crisis by conscripting a great army. Within six years, the Duke of Zhou and King Cheng launched two large-scale offensives against the rebellious forces in the east, which were later called “*Dongzheng*” (東征), or Eastern Expeditions. The duke’s eastern expedition took almost three years. He established and consolidated three key colonial territories in the east: the state of Wei (衛) under his brother Kangshu (康叔), the state of Lu (魯) under himself, and the state of Qi (齊) under Lu Shang. These three states controlled the major part of the former Shang domain in the east. Then he built an eastern capital in Luoyi (洛邑) from which to administer these eastern colonies. He also forced the hard core of the defiant Shang people to migrate to this new

²² On the Zhou conquest of Shang and early Zhou colonial measures, see Du Zhengsheng (杜正勝) *Zhoudai chengbang* (周代城邦) (Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiye, 1979).

²³ Yang, Bojun. *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu* (春秋左傳注) (Taipei: Yuanliu chubanshe, 1982). ~ 僖公二十四年 (636 B.C.). “封建親戚以蕃屏周.” p.420.

²⁴ *Shangshu jinzhuzhu jinyi* (尚書今注今譯) (Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiye gongsi, 1984). <多士>.“亦維爾多士牧服。奔走臣我。多遜。爾乃尚有爾上。爾乃尚寧乾止。” p.135.

capital and live under direct Zhou surveillance.²⁵ King Cheng's eastern expedition mobilized at least eight army divisions (師), almost three times the size of the army raised by the Shang king. His army conquered 17 lords in the east and finally solved the problem of the rebellious Shang people.²⁷

During these expeditions, the Zhou began to build many other smaller cities or fiefs in the east as bases to pursue their military colonization. These cities became the political and military centers of the local area. Tall walls and fortifications were built around the cities/fiefs to defend their residents and to monitor their neighbors. This was referred to as "setting up fiefs in the east" (城彼東方) in the historical poem *Zheng Min* (蒸民).²⁸ The original meaning of *cheng* (城) was the wall of a city/fief, in contrast to its current meaning of a city in its entirety. The Zhou drew up standard rules for constructing cities of different size.

Both archaeological excavations and documentary evidence show that from the early Western Zhou a city/fief would be surrounded by two sets of walls: the interior wall (內城) called *cheng* (城) and the exterior wall (外城) called *guo* (郭). A *guo* would usually be twice the size of a *cheng*, e.g., a "cheng of three *li* and guo of seven *li*" (三里之城，七里之郭). Typically, a lord and his family would live within the *cheng*, along with his administrators and other supporting personnel. Later the craftsmen who produced articles for the aristocrats' daily use were included. Within the *guo* (郭), the whole area, including the *cheng*, was called *guo* (國). In the area between *cheng* and *guo* lived the major city residents. They were called the *guoren* (國人).

I can assume that the *guoren* as a significant stratum of society rose as a result of city development. Through its policy of military colonization, the Zhou built and enlarged many cities across the Central Plains and made the major residents of city, the *guoren*, extremely important members of Zhou society.

The formation of the *guoren* was a complicated process. The state of Lu can serve as an example of how the *guoren* were formed in the early Zhou. Lu was enfeoffed to the Duke of Zhou as a

²⁵ *Shangshu zhengyi* (尚書正義) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), <大誥>, "今臺，今翼曰民獻，... 民不靜，" p.198.

²⁶ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.1, <周本紀>, pp.116-7.

²⁷ The introduction here is based on the source materials in the *Zhongguo shanggushi lunwen xuanji* (中國上古史論文選集) and *Zhoudai chengbang* (周代城邦).

political and military center to enforce the colonial policy of Zhou in the rebellious east. Because of the early death of King Wu, the duke became regent and never had a chance to establish himself in his fief. Instead, his son Boqin (伯禽) became the actual founder of the state. Along with the land and assigned slaves, Boqin was given control of “six clans of Yin people” (殷民六族) who were natives of the area.²⁹ These included formerly noblemen, free farmers, and other men of free but lesser social rank from the previous Shang regime. Some of them were allowed to stay in Qufu (曲阜), then the capital city of Lu, and in other Lu cities. These people became the earliest *guoren* in Lu. According to a report on tomb excavations in Qufu, the earliest *guoren* lived in the western part of the city, where they tenaciously preserved their own way of life and refused to be assimilated by the Zhou colonists.³⁰ This situation prevailed right to the end of the Zhou regime. In the sixth year of Duke Ding of Lu (魯定公) (504 B.C.), the powerful minister Yanghu (陽虎) “formed an alliance with the duke and three Huan clans (三桓) at the Zhou Sacrificial Altar (周社), and formed an alliance with the *guoren* at the Bo sacrificial Altar (亳社).”³¹ The duke and the Huan clans were all descendants of the Zhou royal house. Bo once was the old capital of the Shang dynasty. It is not clear whether the *guoren* descended from the Shang were allowed to offer sacrifices at the Zhou altar or whether they insisted on performing the rites at their own sacrificial altar. But it is clear that at least the major part of the *guoren* of Lu came from the Shang people and that they had their own religious life.³²

Free farmers of the Zhou were another important component of the *guoren*. In the framework of the Zhou kinship system, these freemen had a blood relationship with the royal clan and its aristocracy. But after some generations had passed this relationship was so remote that they shared no power with the aristocracy. In undertaking military colonization, Zhou dramatically expanded their armies, and many rank and file clansmen were recruited to occupy lands in the east. Others

²⁸ *Maoshi zhengyi* (毛詩正義) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 大雅·蕤民, p.569.

²⁹ *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu* (春秋左傳注), 定公四年, p.1536.

³⁰ Yang, Kuan *Zhongguo gudai ducheng zhidushi yanjiu* (中國古代都城制度史研究) (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1993), p.63-65.

³¹ *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu* (春秋左傳注), 定公六年, p.1559.

³² The same thing also happened in other early colonies of the Zhou. From the same source in the *Zuo Zhuan* (左傳), we are told that Wei, another important state established to settle the Zhou people in the east, took over seven Yin/Shang clans. The State of Jin (晉), the feud of King Wu's brother Shuyu (叔虞), took over nine Huai clans (懷姓九宗) from the previous dynasty. People from these clans were all natives of the places and they formed the main body of the *guoren* class.

were sent with the army as settlers in the occupied lands. These Zhou people resided primarily in the cities and neighboring areas. They formed another wing of the *guoren*.

The *guoren*, because of their freemen status, were quite different from members of the subject class, like the *yeren* (野人), who lived in the remote countryside, and slaves, who were captured by military conquest. The *guoren* derived their importance partly from the old communal political system of the Zhou people. Within that system, the head of the commune, namely the king of Zhou, was obliged to consult with his people, both his aristocracy and commoners, in a way later indicated in the *Shang Shu* (尚書): "Whenever confronted by a grand problem, consult with your own conscience, your aristocrats, the multitudes and then undertake the divination."³³ The multitudes (庶人) were named immediately after the aristocracy (卿士), indicating that early Zhou society was still not far away from its communal political origins, and that aristocracy and multitudes were still closely related in the *guo* or city.

It was in their role as the principal component of the Zhou armed forces, however, that the importance of the *guoren* primarily lay.³⁴

According to documentary records such as the *Shang Shu* and *Shi Jing* (詩經), and excavated bronze inscriptions, the early Zhou regime kept a large armed force, consisting of the so-called "Xi Liushi" (西六師), or Western Six Divisions, and the "Chengzhou Bashi" (成周八師), or Chengzhou Eight Divisions. The Western Six Divisions were probably the main force of the Zhou army, composed of Zhou people from their power base in the west. The Chengzhou Eight Divisions were probably formed later during the eastern expedition of the Duke of Zhou. It is likely that this new army was partially composed of Shang people living in the area around the new capital Chengzhou (also called Luoyi 洛邑), because the Zhou were in a minority at the time and could not form an army entirely from their own population. Many historians believe that the Zhou army was organized on the decimal system.³⁵ The basic unit of it was *shi* (什), composed of ten soldiers. The next unit was *baifu* (百夫), literally a hundred soldiers, then *qianfu* (千夫), a thousand soldiers.

³³ *Shangshu zhengyi* (尚書正義) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), <洪範>: "有大疑, 謀及乃心, 謀及卿士, 謀及庶人, 謀及卜筮." p.191.

³⁴ About the Zhou's military formation and activity, see Hsu Cho-yun's *Ancient China in Transition* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965), Chapter 3: *Wars and Warriors*, pp.53-77.

³⁵ See for example Wang Guimin (王貴民) *Shang Zhou zhidu kaoxin* (商周制度考信) (Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1989).

Three *qianfu* made up a division. A division of the Zhou army therefore had three thousand soldiers. Thus in theory the early Zhou army numbered fourteen divisions and over forty thousand soldiers. These two armies garrisoned the two capitals and constituted the principal force of the punitive expeditions. There is no documentary evidence showing where the soldiers of these two armies came from, but it is likely that the soldiers were drawn from the capital areas after which the armies were named.

Military operations during the first half century of the Zhou were so frequent that the two central armies alone could hardly achieve the government's goals of pacifying the eastern territory and containing pressures from the nomadic people of the four quarters. A new army called the "Yin Bashi" (殷八師), Yin Eight Divisions, was subsequently formed. It was probably based in the east and was composed to a large degree of collaborative Shang people. According to bronze inscriptions from the early Zhou, the Yin Bashi were involved in many important military campaigns against both rebellious Shang groups in the east and border nomadic peoples.³⁶ In addition to the principal Zhou central armies, each colonial center, or vassal state, formed its own local armed force, called "zu" (族) in the bronze inscriptions.³⁷ The *zu* army was mainly composed of local *guoren* and sometimes dispatched to carry out short-term military missions with the central armies.

It is still unknown whether the early Zhou regime kept a standing army and, if it did, how large it was and how it was organized. Scholars have different hypotheses on the issue. Many believe that the existence of a standing army as large as the one mentioned above was hardly possible in the early Zhou. Even if a standing army was kept because of the constant warfare, it would not be what is now understood as a standing army. In other words, an army composed soldiers entirely separated from farming and living solely on army provisions had not yet come into being. It is likely that army formations such as the Xi Liushi and Chengzhou Bashi were maintained all year round no matter whether it was wartime or peacetime. But in peacetime the Zhou central army would likely not be kept at full strength, and only a few backbone warriors and officers, most of whom were aristocrats, would remain in camp. The majority of soldiers, consisting primarily of the *guoren*, would be demobilized and sent back to their farm lands.³⁸

³⁶ *Zhoudai chengbang* (周代城邦), p.42.

³⁷ *Zhongguo junshi shilue* (中國軍事史略) (Beijing: Junshi kexue chubanshe, 1992), p.62.

³⁸ *Zhongguo junshi shi* (中國軍事史) (Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 1983),v.3, <兵制>, p.20.

From the time of their remote ancestor Gong Liu, the Zhou had adopted the integrated peasant/soldier system, under which adult male members of the clan were soldiers in wartime and farmers in peacetime. In the course of the military colonization of the early Zhou, the army was greatly expanded and many rank and file clansmen were recruited into the military forces to occupy lands in the east. Others were settled in the occupied land alongside the army.³⁹

The *guoren* were the people who were engaged in military as well as agricultural affairs. Not a few pre-Qin works mention this combination of the two roles. According to the chapter “*Xiaguan Sima*” (夏官司馬) in the *Zhou Li* (周禮), military training of the *guoren*, organized by the aristocracy, was undertaken in the slack seasons throughout the year. In spring, the *guoren* were assembled in the field to practice battle formations with different weapons; in summer, they went on military maneuvers and practiced night fighting; in autumn, they carried out field exercises and mastered various levels of flags; and in winter, they were subject to general inspections and further combat exercises. Each season’s training ended with a hunt, varying in size.⁴⁰

Farming, however, was the *guoren*’s primary means of livelihood. Under Zhou feudalism, the royal house theoretically owned all land conquered by the Zhou armies. The Zhou kings then invested their nobility and other collaborators with land as well as the people on them, including *guoren*, *yeren* and slaves.⁴¹ The lands were thus called *gongtian* (公田), or lord’s land. The *gongtian* in the Zhou dynasty were probably organized into two systems for levying taxes from the two major

³⁹ The office of *situ* (司土) was set up to coordinate the military and agricultural affairs of the soldiers. As prescribed by the Zhou king, it had authority for “calling up soldiers and administering agricultural affairs for the army.” (司六師衆八師養) “Calling up soldiers” was its wartime function, “administering agricultural affairs” its peacetime function. This leads some scholars to believe the existence in the early Zhou of *tuntian* (屯田), a military system under which troops were stationed to open up fields for growing food. This remains speculation, but the close relationship between military service and farming in the early Zhou is evident. Military service and farming constituted the two major aspects of the *guoren*’s life.

⁴⁰ Cheng, Yuanmin *Sanjing xinyi jikao huiping: Zhouli* (三經新義輯考匯評 - 周禮) (Taipei: Guoli bianyiguan, 1986), <夏官司馬>, pp.403-408. Besides the annual training session and hunt, there was one large-scale military maneuver every third year, as noted in the *Zuo Zhuan*. See *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu*, (春秋左傳注), <隱公五年> (718 B.C.), p.42.

⁴¹ *Dayu ding* (大盂鼎): “先王受民受疆土.”

groups of occupants, the *guoren* and *yeren*. The system applicable to the *guoren* community was called *jingtian* (井田), or “well-field”.⁴²

However, besides the tax on land, which was called *shui* (稅)⁴³, the *guoren* had to undertake conscript labor and military service for their lord. This was called *fu* (賦)⁴⁴. In peacetime, *fu* was raised in the form of conscript labor for building walls, constructing roads and so on. In wartime, the *guoren* had to resume their soldiers’ duty, or to contribute armor, horses or even chariots to the army. Serving in the military was thus an obligation of the *guoren* to their lords, from whom they received lands to earn their living. But it was also a privilege for the *guoren*, and gave them their importance in the Zhou state.

Because of their communal organizational structure, military training and residence near the center of power, the *guoren* played an active role in political life. Publicly or privately commenting on and criticizing rulers became their tradition. When the rule of King Li of Zhou (周厲王 r. 878-842 B.C.) became brutal and tyrannical, the *guoren* began to criticize and condemn him. But the king reacted by taking even more oppressive measures against them. Three years later the king was exiled by the *guoren*.⁴⁵ It is reasonable to assume that the *guoren* in time became a vital third force in the Zhou, alongside the king/lord and the nobility.

During the Eastern Zhou, or Chunqiu, period, the *guoren* communities in many states became active in pursuing their interests. On many occasions, they even played crucial roles in political events. Accounts in the *Zuo Zhuan* show that the *guoren* often were a decisive force in the politics

⁴² Mencius has given a detailed description of this system. According to him, a parcel of *gongtian* was divided into nine fields, which resembled the Chinese character “*jing*” (井). It was cultivated by eight families. Each family had one field of a hundred *mu* (畝) to cultivate for its own support. The eight families were to cooperatively work the ninth field in the center, whose produce would go to their lord as his revenue. Mencius specifically indicated that this system was different from that governing the *yeren*. Given that *yeren* had to contribute two thirds of their produce from *gongtian* to their lord, the one-ninth taxation of the *guoren* was quite mild. See Mengzi zhushu (孟子注疏), v.5, <滕文公>, p.2703, and *Zhoudai chengbang* (周代城邦), pp.82-83.

⁴³ The left-hand radical of the script of *shui* is “crops” (禾), suggesting that the original meaning of the script was probably “tax in kind.”

⁴⁴ The left-hand radical of the character is “*bei*” (貝), or “cowries”. Cowries were widely used in pre-Qin China as a substitute for commodities in trade. The right-hand portion of the character is “*wu*” (武), or “military”. It is our conjecture that “*fu*” was a kind of tax *guoren* paid their lord in the form of conscript labor or military service. It was raised supposedly for a military purpose.

⁴⁵ Zuoqiu, Ming. *Guo Yu* (國語) (Taipei: Hongye shuju, 1980). <周語>: “厲王虐, 國人謗王. ...三年, 乃流王于彘.” p.9.

of vassal states. They were frequently involved in changing their aristocratic governors, or in engineering a major policy shift.⁴⁶

The modern scholar Xu Fuguan (徐復觀 1903-1982) concluded from his investigation of the active role played by the *guoren* at the time that: "In the upper level of government it was the lords and ministers who were most active; in the lower level, however, it was the *guoren* who were stirring up the whirlpool."⁴⁷ This is quite true. Because of their unique position, the *guoren* established close relations with both the higher and lower levels of society. Their dual functions of soldier and farmer enabled them to become the most active stratum of society. They formed the backbone of the city-state system of the Zhou dynasty.

Emergence of the *shi* community

As mentioned in the previous section, the *guoren* were the major component of the military forces, and were used on an occasional basis in the early Zhou. The Zhou kings and their vassal lords kept small conventional forces and mobilized the *guoren* whenever there was a need. The *guoren* farmed royal lands, took part in training during slack seasons and were available for military service on demand. As military affairs became more complex and battle more sophisticated, it became practical for a certain group of *guoren* to stay longer, or even permanently, in military service. They were called *shi* (士).⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Duke Ji of Lu (莒紀公) made Pu (僕) the heir of his dukedom. Later he had another son Jituo (季佗), whom he liked better than his legal heir. He deposed the crown prince and committed many other violations of feudal etiquette. Pu then led *guoren* to kill him. See the *Zuo Zhuan* <文公十八年> (609 B.C.), p.633. In another case, Zikong (子孔), the prime minister of Zheng, became tyrannical, causing the *guoren* much suffering. Zizhan (子展) and Zixi (子西), two *dafu*, led *guoren* to kill him. See the *Zuo Zhuan* <襄公十九年> (554 B.C.). In a third case, Duke Xian of Wei (衛獻公) tried to gain back his dukedom after an exile of twelve years. He sent his former *dafu* Ningxi (寧喜) and Youzai Gu (右宰谷) to attack Wei's capital. They were defeated by the defending army led by Sun Xiang (孫襄), who was injured and later died. *Guoren* then took Duke Xian's side and urged Ningxi to organize another attack. This time the defending army was crushed. See the *Zuo Zhuan* <襄公二十六年> (547 B.C.), p.113.

⁴⁷ Xu, Fuguan. *Zhou Qin Han zhengzhi shehui jiegou zhi yanjiu* (周秦漢政治社會結構之研究) (Hong Kong: Xinya yanjiusuo, 1972), p.34.

⁴⁸ Gao You in his *Huai-nan-zi zhu* (淮南子注) said: "Warriors were called *shi*. *Shi* was the term for warrior in the area of Yangtze and River Huai." (武, 士也, 江淮間謂士為武) See <覽冥>, p.89. Tan Jiefu in his *Mojing fenlei yizhu* (墨經分類譯注): "Shi were the clan members who initially farmed and fought, but later ceased to farm. They were called warriors (武士), and their stratum lay between those of officials and farmers". p.196.

The character *shi* can be found in bronze inscriptions, or *zhongding* (鐘鼎文) inscriptions.⁴⁹ As the *shi* evolved as a social group through the pre-Qin period, the meaning of the term changed. As a result, *shi* may refer to men ranging from junior nobles, warriors, and intellectuals to craftsmen and even ordinary persons. A diachronic survey may provide some information on its origin and development.

Gu Jiegang (顧頡剛 1893-1980), Lu Simian (呂思勉 1884-1957) and other modern scholars relate the *shi* directly to the *wushi* (武士), or warriors. Gu's discussion is comprehensive as well as convincing. The following are his main points:

The *shi* in ancient time were all *wushi* (武士), or warriors. The *shi* were junior nobles, who lived in *guo* (國), or cities. They had the authority to lead commoners and the obligation to carry arms to defend their country. They were thus called *guoshi* (國士) to show their high social status.....

Mencius said: “*Xiang* (庠), *xu* (序), *xue* (學) and *jiao* (校) were set to teach students. *Xu* means shooting.” As a matter of fact, “*xu*” is not the only term to refer to archery: the other three names convey a similar meaning as well. “*Jiao*” means military drill. A drill ground today is still called the *jiaochang* (校場). “*Xiang*” was also a place to learn and practice archery. “*Xue*” was shooting, and *xuegong* (學宮) was thus a place to perform archery. The *Zhou Guan* (周官) mentioned that the *Da Situ* (大司徒), or Grand Instructor, provided three types of training. The third was *liuyi* (六藝), or six skills, namely *li* (禮), *yue* (樂), *she* (射), *yu* (御), *shu* (書) and *shu* (數), or rites, music, archery, literacy and numeracy respectively. The *li* had *dashe* (大射) and *xiangshe* (鄉射). The *yue* had *chuyu* (騶虞) and *lishou* (理首). *Yu* was a supplementary skill used in hunting. They were all related to archery. The practice of archery in school and riding in the country was ostensibly for ritual and pleasure, but, in fact, its main function was that of military training.⁵⁰

According to Gu's analysis, the *shi* in the Western Zhou were warriors and junior nobles who came primarily from the *guoren* community, and who were highly skilled and capable of handling special

⁴⁹ He, Xin. *Zhushen de qiyuan* (諸神的起源) (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1986), <說士>, p.313.

problems. Gu's most valuable suggestion is that the principal function of the earliest schools was to train warriors. In this respect, Yang Kuan (楊寬 1914-) in his *Wo Guo Gudai Daxue de Tedian jiqi Qiyuan* (我國古代大學的特點及其起源), or *Characteristics and Origins of Our Ancient Colleges*, focused his research on the curriculum of this earliest school. He concludes that ritual and military training constituted the main content of instruction:

At the time (the Western Zhou) the indispensable knowledge and skills for nobles were what was called the "liuyi" (六藝), or the six skills: *li, yue, she, yu, shu* and *shu*. Since a "state's major affairs are sacrificial offerings and wars", it is these that were stressed.^{51K}

The author also indicates that *shi* (師), or teachers, originally referred to senior army officers, and that the other term for teacher, *fuzi* (夫子), originated from "qianfu zhang" (千夫長) and "baifu zhang" (百夫長), literally commanders respectively of one thousand and one hundred troops. The fact that teachers in the earliest schools were mainly army officers strongly supports the speculation that those schools were places where the elite group of *shi* were educated and trained.

In the Zhou dynasty the *shi* were often called upon to solve strategic problems. Feng Youlan (馮友蘭 1895-1990) maintains: "In its original meaning, *shi* seems to have been a general term for people of ability".⁵² The *shi* may have acquired their abilities from education and training. But while their training was primarily military, they also received knowledge of ritual. This is the most important internal cause for the later split of *shi* into *wushi*, or warriors, and *wenshi* (文士), intellectuals, in the Chunqiu period.

Yang Shuda (楊樹達 1885-1956) in his *Shi Shi* (釋士), or *Elucidation of shi*, explains the origin of *shi* from the perspective of an etymologist:

The *Shuowen Jiezi* (說文解字) explains: "*shi* (士) means inserting or transplanting (事)." In ancient times, *shi* was used to refer to the male, and "sticking in" referred to transplantation in farming. The *Biography of Kuai Tong* in the *Han Shu* (漢書·酈通傳)

⁵⁰ *Shilin zashi chubian* (史林雜識初編), pp.85-6.

⁵¹ *Gushi xintan* (古史新探) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), <我國古代大學的特點及其起源>, p.207.

⁵² Feng, Youlan. *San-song-tang xueshu wenji* (三松堂學術文集) (Beijing: University of Beijing Press, 1984.), 原備墨, p.320.

says: "I dare not stick your belly with my knife". Li Qi's (李奇) commentary reads: "Easterners regard sticking something into land as *shi* (事)". *Shi* (事) can be replaced by *shu* (畚). ... Farming is started with transplanting rice seedlings, which is what sticking something into land means. *Shi* (土), *shi* (事) and *shu* (畚) were pronounced identically in the ancient phonetics. *Nan* (男) consists of *li* (力) and *tian* (田), obtaining its meaning from its graph: while *shi* (士) is defined by its phonation.... *Shi* (士) is "上" in the oracle inscription. "上" signifies the earth, and "丨" is the image of rice seedlings sticking into the earth.⁵³

According to this elucidation, *shi* originally referred to men engaged in farming and is an exact synonym of *nan* (男), or man. Yang's conclusion has a sound etymological basis, although it is still speculative in nature. Based on his research, Xu Fuguan (徐復觀) has said that *shi* (士) and *si* (耜) are close in pronunciation and meaning. The latter was a plowing tool in ancient China. In its shape, *shi* (士) is the pictograph of a primitive tillage implement, like the one discovered in Banpo Village in Xi'an (西安半坡村). Xu thus put forward the following hypothesis:

Shi were originally farmers in the *guoren* community. Before the use of iron, those farmers who were able to till earth had to be strong and vigorous persons. Therefore, those especially vigorous farmers were called *shi*. At that time, such farmers were often selected to be warriors, and thus warriors were called *shi*. However, their occupation in normal times was still farming. In addition, the aristocrats selected people from their military to become their junior officials, namely so-called upper warriors (上士), middle warriors (中士) and junior warriors (下士). They gradually separated themselves from farming, and constituted the backbone of the army at the basic level.⁵⁴

Xu's perception of the relationship between the *guoren* and *shi* is plausible, but his claim that only the vigorous farmers could be selected to become *shi*, or soldiers, is arguable. Vigorous men were certainly prized and those who were physically strong might be more often chosen for special tasks. However, in the early Zhou era, conscription could hardly be systematic and orderly and men of all kinds were forced into military service, not necessarily just the strong ones.

⁵³ Yang, Shuda. *Jiwei ju xiaoxue shulin* (積微居小學述林) (Taipei: Datong shuju, 1971), 釋士, p. 72.

⁵⁴ Zhou Qin Han zhengzhi shehui jiegou zhi yanjiu (周秦漢政治社會之研究), pp.86-87.

Another important suggestion advanced by Xu is that the *shi* gradually separated themselves from the farmers because of their extended commitment to military service. This is where the *shi* differed from the *guoren* in nature. The *shi* were usually more well trained and professional as warriors and warrior-recruited junior administrators. Unlike the *guoren*, the *shi* lacked a close bond to the land when they matured as a social class during the late Western Zhou. Mencius once said: "Only the *shi* could achieve perseverance without land and property."⁵⁵ He was clearly talking about the *shi* class of his time, especially its intellectual wing. But this course of drifting away from the land started at a much earlier time, and possibly was completed before the Chunqiu period.

As for the position of the *shi* class in society, there is a very old theory of the *simin* (四民), or the four strata of the commonalty, namely "*shi* (士), *nong* (農), *gong* (工) and *shang* (商)", or warriors (junior administrators), farmers, craftsmen and merchants. Gu Yanwu (顧炎武 1613-1682), a prominent scholar of the early Qing, discussed the theory in his *Rizhi Lu* (日知錄), or *Record of Daily Thoughts*:

Shi, nong, gong and *shang* were called the four strata of the commonalty. This proposition was first advanced in the *Guan Zi* (管子). During the three dynasties of Xia (夏), Shang (商) and Zhou (周), the outstanding members of the commonalty would be chosen to attend local schools. Those who later entered *situ* (司徒), schools of the higher level, were called *shi*. Only one in more than a thousand was able to achieve this. Those who were called *shi* were usually the ones who held an office.⁵⁶

Gu suggested that the *shi* class was the head of the commonalty. This is probably true. Although documentary evidence is lacking for his claim that this situation prevailed through the whole three dynasties, it was certainly true of the Western Zhou and early Chunqiu. In the *Guliang Zhuan* (谷梁傳), a commentary work on Confucius' *Chun Qiu*, for the first year of Duke Cheng (成公元年 590 B.C.) the following statement is to be found: "There were four strata of the commonalty in high antiquity: namely *shi, shang, nong* and *gong*."⁵⁷ Although the farmer and merchant are placed in different order, the position of *shi* at the head of the four strata remains the same.

⁵⁵ *Mengzi zhushu* (孟子注疏), v.1, <梁惠王上>, "無恒產而有恒心者，唯士為能。" p.2671.

⁵⁶ Gu, Yanwu. *Rizhi lu jishi* (日知錄集釋) (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1962), v.7, <士何事>, p.168..

⁵⁷ *Shisanjing zhushu* (十三經注疏) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), v.13, <成公元年>: "上古者有四民: 有士民, 有商民, 有農民, 有工民。" p.2417. "Simin" as a term was also mentioned in *Guo Yu* (國語) and *Guan Zi* (管子).

Based upon the research carried out by the above scholars, I see the *shi* in the Zhou as a class that originated from the *guoren*, with a small number of them junior nobility as well. The original and primary task of the *shi* was to provide military service to the country and to assist the aristocracy in governing the commonalty. As the elite group of the *guoren*, they were trained to become specialists, mainly in military matters, and their direct relation with the land was gradually severed. They formed the intermediate layer between the aristocracy and commonalty in the society of the Western Zhou and early Chunqiu. Their intermediate position was a fluid one. In consequence, members of the *shi* class could ascend to the aristocracy or descend to a lower stratum of the commonalty.

Transformation of the *shi* community

The polity of the Western Zhou was aristocratic, and the so-called “feudal” (封建) system was brought to its peak during that time. It was a hereditary system, with the social class and the division of labor maintained strictly by inheritance in every walk of life. This order broke down with the advent of the Chunqiu, (770-476 B.C.). The ruling aristocracy began to lose its control over the political system and society at large. The *shi* class was driven out of its position between the upper and lower levels of society, and many of its members became unemployed as the old social order disintegrated. The *shi* class was forced to undergo its restructuring and transformation. The most remarkable change was its split into civil and military camps.

In order to survive in a chaotic time, members of the *shi* class utilized their particular skills to make a living. Education hitherto had been reserved to the nobility. Members of the *shi* class began to spread learning to the lower levels of society. Confucius was born to a *shi* family. His father Shuliang He (叔梁紇) was a warrior, who is said once to have held up a gate with his own hands to let besieged soldiers through.⁵⁸ Confucius was as vigorous as his father, and could also lift a city gate by himself, showing he was a warrior by training.⁵⁹ But instead of becoming a professional warrior, Confucius began his career as an instructor of rites, and taught not only the descendants of

⁵⁸ Ruan, Yuan. *Shisanjing zhushu* (十三經注疏), <春秋左傳正義>, “襄公十年” (563 B.C.), pp.1946-47.

⁵⁹ *Lie-zi zhu* (列子注) (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1986), <說符>, p.94. Although the *Lie Zi* should not be read as an authentic historical source, it is believable that Confucius received military training and mastered military skills. See also section “Confucians and *xia*” in Chapter 3.

the old nobility but also commoners. Most of his three thousand students came from the lower classes. Another well known teacher in the later Chunqiu period, Mo Zi (墨子), the founder of the Mohist School, was born to an obscure *shi* family, who were possibly craftsman. He was a tactician, and a master of military defense. These examples indicate the involvement of the *shi* in diffusing education, hitherto a privilege of the nobility, among the commonalty.

The split within the *shi* class was an indication that members of this class had developed different ways to adapt themselves to the new social conditions. While the traditional warrior element reacted in a less sophisticated way, other members of the group set themselves the task of solving the problems of the time by application of their intelligence, sophistication, learning and moral sense. Differences among the latter group resulted in the emergence of almost all the prominent schools of thought in Chinese history. The rise of these schools, especially Confucianism and Mohism, marked the emergence of the *shi* from being a purely warrior class. These schools provided new cultural models for China's institutions and civilization, contrasting with the old model of untamed martial tradition of the *shi* class. But the martial tradition was still far from disappearing. It was actually intensified in the Chunqiu and Warring States eras, when wars raged constantly among the states.⁹⁰ Warriors were destined to strike one more pose on the stage.

From these warriors of the old *shi* class there emerged a new type of warrior, characterized by his use of military skills to serve his lord on a freelance basis. Such warriors were variously called *yong* (勇), *xianliang* (賢良), *haoshi* (豪士) and *guoshi* (國士). They differed from each other in that some were better qualified for strategy and others for combat. The disintegration of the Zhou regime opened up new prospects for ambitious feudal lords. Warfare was much more frequent now. These new warriors, unlike their predecessors, were more specialized in warfare and more inclined to roam from place to place seeking patronage and employment. Their allegiance was more towards an individual lord or employer than towards a royal family or a state, as it had been in the past.

⁹⁰ It was estimated that there were at least 376 relatively big wars during the 295 years of the Chunqiu period. See *Zhongguo junshi shi* (中國軍事史), v.3 <兵制>, p.35. Guo Baojun in his *Zhongguo qingtongqi shidai* (中國青銅器時代) (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1963) recorded over 480 battles of size in 242 years of Chunqiu, p.171.

At the same time, lords of the vassal states became more enthusiastic to recruit and train brave and competent warriors. Recruitment specifications are recorded in the essay “*Yi Bing*” (義兵), or “*Debating Military Affairs*”, in the *Xun Zi* (荀子):

The rulers of Wei (魏) select their warrior on the basis of certain qualifications. They must be able to wear three sets of armor, carry a crossbow of twelve-stone weight (168 lb.), bear on their backs a quiver with fifty arrows, and in addition carry a spear. They must also wear helmets on their heads, a sword at their waist, carry three days’ provisions, and still be able to march a hundred li in one day. When men have met these qualifications, their families are exempted from corvée labor and are given special tax benefits on their lands and houses.⁶¹

Aspirants capable of meeting the requirement became *wuzu* (武卒), or warriors. This kind of recruitment became common in the virtually independent vassal states, because highly skilled warriors were needed everywhere in the struggle for military supremacy. Tests of new weapons and contests in the martial arts became commonplace, as depicted in the chapter “*Qi Fa*” (七法) of *Guan Zi* (管子):

The most excellent arms in the world were collected, and the sharpest weapons were evaluated. They were tested both in spring and autumn to select the very best ones. Weapons would not be used and stored without testing. The outstanding gallants and warriors in the country were assembled. They rose up like flying birds, moved like thunder and lightning, marched like wind and rain. Nobody could block them in the front, nor could hurt them from the back. They could come and go freely, without any resistance.⁶²

Iron was first produced at this time and it soon caused a revolution in the armament industry, feeding the high demand of the contending states for powerful weapons. However, Guan Zhong (管仲 d. 645 B.C.), the reputed Chief Minister of Qi (齊), appears to have been more concerned about obtaining excellent *shi*, from all over the country. For him, these warriors were the most

⁶¹ Wang, Xianqian. *Xunzi jijie* (荀子集解) (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1986), <義兵>, p.180. See translation in Burton Watson *Hsun Tzu: Basic Writings*, p.61.

⁶² Dai, Wang. *Guanzi jiaozheng* (管子校正) (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1986), <七法>, p.31.

effective weapon in winning a war. In the chapter *Xiao Wen* (小問), a conversation between him and his lord, Duke Huan of Qi (齊桓公 r. 685-643 B.C.), is recorded as follows:

The duke said, "I would like to ask what is the conquering weapon." Guan Zi answered, "If you select the bravest men, obtain people of highest ability, and recruit the most excellent craftsmen, you would possess the conquering weapon." The duke then asked, "How do we accomplish this?" Guan Zi said, "If you appoint and receive these men with great courtesy, and give them good treatment and honesty, the best *shi* (士) would all come to your court."⁶³

Guan Zi regarded employment of *shi* as the best strategy for a lord. He also initiated the development of "jiaoshi" (教士), or trained warriors, in forming his army.⁶⁴ Later Gou Jian, the King of Yue (越王勾踐 r. 497-465), formed an army of forty thousand *jiaoshi* and used it to conquer the state of Wu.⁶⁵ One account preserved in the *Mo Zi* is indicative of how the *jiaoshi* were trained for combat:

Gou Jian, the King of Yue, was fond of brave warriors. He trained his soldiers for three years. Because he did not know whether they had become brave and disciplined enough, he set his boat on fire and ordered his warriors to rescue it. The warriors in the front fell, and many died in the water or in the flames. But no warrior dared retreat without the order being given. To be burned to death is the cruelest thing to endure, yet they all suffered so. The King of Yue was pleased.⁶⁶

Gou Jian almost lost his lordship, when the state of Yue suffered subjugation for over twenty years. He finally wiped out the humiliation by triumphing in battle. His success could be credited in part to his well-trained and highly disciplined army of *jiaoshi*.

⁶³ *ibid.*, v. 16, <小問>, p.274.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, v.21, <立政九敗解>: "彼以教士, 我以稻象." p.338.

⁶⁵ Ma, Chiyang. *Shiji jinzhū* (史記今注), v.4, <越王勾踐世家>, "教士四萬人." p.1774.

⁶⁶ Sun, Yirang. *Mozi jiangū* (墨子問語) (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1986), <兼愛下>, p.79. *Hanfei zi* (韓非子) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974) <內儲說上>, *Lushi chunqiu* (呂氏春秋) <用民> and *Liuzi xinlun* (劉子新論) (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1988) <閱武> all mention the same incident.

Competent warriors were in high demand by all kinds of ambitious princes, lords and other great and small rulers, most of whom living in a state of apprehension and fear. Sun Bozong (孙伯宗 fl. 586-576 B.C.), an influential *dafu* (大夫), or minister, in Jin, was once warned by his wife to take measures to protect their family interests: “Will not disaster surely strike you? Why not immediately seek men of ability?”⁶⁷ Intelligent scholars and vigorous warriors were especially regarded as able men. It was almost a consensus among pre-Qin thinkers that retaining competent *shi* was how to remain undefeated. Mo Zi was a strong advocate of “esteeming the worthy” (尚賢). The first essay in the *Mo Zi* is entitled “Qin Shi” (親士), or “On behalf of the *shi*”. Here Mo Zi argued that retaining and esteeming *shi* is to be seen as a matter of life and death:

To rule a state without maintaining the *shi* is a way of losing the state: to meet a person who is worthy but not to retain him immediately is to fail in the responsibility of a ruler. Without the worthy, one cannot handle the emergency: without the *shi*, one cannot plan for one’s state. It has never happened that [a ruler] who neglected the worthy and forgot the *shi* could survive with his state.⁶⁸

On another occasion, Mo Zi advised Gongliang Huanzi (公良桓子), a Wei *dafu*, to turn his spending on carriages, horses and women’s clothes to the retaining of warriors. He claimed that by doing so, thousands of warriors would come under the minister’s banner, and he could surely safeguard himself when a crisis occurred.⁶⁹

The acquisition of *shi* and other talented people by lords, princes and other men of power was seen as the difference between success and failure. In the succeeding period of the Warring States, this notion was widely accepted by the nobility, who vied with one another for retaining men of talent to realize their political and military agendas. This heightened role for the *shi* was to be one of the most important contributing factors in the growth of the *xia* and their subsequent ascendancy during the era of the Warring States.

⁶⁷ *Guo Yu* (國語), ~晉語五~, “難必及于乎? 盍亟索士!” p.407.

⁶⁸ *Mozi jiangou* (墨子間詁), ~親士~, p.1.

⁶⁹ *ibid.* <貴義>, “吾以為不若蓄士之安也。” p.269.

第一章所引原文

^A 往古之時，四極廢，九州裂，天不兼覆，地不周載，火爛炎而不滅，水浩洋而不息；猛獸食顓民，鸞鳥攫老弱。於是女媧煉五色石以補蒼天，斷鯀足以立四極，殺黑龍以濟冀州，積蘆灰以止淫水。蒼天補，四極正，淫水涸，冀州平，狡蟲死，顓民生。（淮南子·覽冥訓）

^B 禹於是疏河決江，十年不窺其家，手不爪，脛不生毛，生偏枯之病，步不相過。（尸子·卷下）

^C 謂之神農何？古之人民皆食禽獸肉，至于神農，人民衆多，禽獸不足，於是神農因天之時，分地之利，神而化之，使民宜之，故謂之神農也。（白虎通義）

^D 洪水滔天，鯀竊帝之息壤以堙洪水，不待帝命。帝令祝融殺鯀於羽郊，鯀復生禹，帝乃命禹平布土以定九州。（山海經·海內經）

^E 昔者共工與顓頊爭爲帝，怒而觸不周之山，天柱折，地維絕，天傾西北，故日月星辰移焉；地不滿東南，故水潦塵埃歸焉。（淮南子·天文訓）

^F 夸父不量力，欲追日景，逮之於禺谷，將飲河而不足也，將走大澤，未至，死於此。（山海經·大荒北經）

^G 發鳩之山，其上多柘木，有鳥焉，其狀如鳥，文首，白喙，赤足，名曰精衛，其鳴自，是炎帝之少女，名曰女娃，女娃游於東海，溺而不返，故爲精衛，常銜西山之木石，以堙於東海。（山海經·大荒北經）

^H 形天與帝至此爭神，帝斷其首，葬之常羊之山，乃以乳爲目，以臍爲口，操干戚以舞。（山海經·海外西經）

^I 政治上層的激烈活動是諸侯、卿大夫；而在上層的下面，激蕩着一股強大的激流的則是國人。（周秦漢政治社會結構之研究）

^J 吾國古代之士，皆武士也。士爲低級之貴族，居於國中（即都城中），有統御平民之權利，亦有執干戈以衛社稷之義務，故謂之“國士”以示其地位之高。……孟子曰：“設爲庠序學校以教之。……庠者射也。”其實非特“庠”爲肆射之地，他三名皆然。“校”即校武之義，今猶有“較場”之稱。……“庠”亦習射地也。……所謂“學”者即射，學宮即司射之地耳。……〔周官〕大司徒以三物教民，“三曰六藝：禮、樂、射、御、書、數”，而禮有大射、鄉射，樂有騶虞、狸首，御亦以佐助田獵，皆與射事發生關聯，其所以習射於學宮，馳驅於郊野，表面固爲禮節，爲娛樂，而其主要之作用則爲戰事之訓練。（武士與文士之蛻化）

^K 當時貴族生活中必要的知識和技能，有所謂“六藝”：禮、樂、射、御、書、數，但是，因爲“國之大事，唯祀與戎”，他們是以禮樂和射御爲主的。（我國古代大學的特點及其起源）

^L 說文：“士，事也。‘士古以稱男子，事爲耕作也。……漢書蒯通傳曰：‘不敢事刃於公之腹者。’李奇注：‘東方人以物插地中爲事。’事字又作畝，……蓋耕作始於立苗，所謂插物地中也。士事畝古音并同。男字從力田，依形得義；士則以壘得義。……按士字甲文作，象地，象苗插入地中之形。（積微居小學述林·釋士）

^M “士本是‘國人’中的農民，在未使用鐵以前，以器插土，必須農民中之精壯者，故士原系農民中特爲精壯者之稱，當時常選擇此種精壯之農民爲甲士，故亦稱甲士爲士，但其平時職業依然是以

農耕為主。再由甲士中被選擇而為貴族的下級臣屬，即所謂上士、中士、下士，始漸與農耕脫離，但依然為軍隊組成的基層骨干。”(周秦韓治社會結構之研究)

^N 士、農、工、商謂之四民，其說始於《管子》。三代之時，民之秀者乃收之鄉序，升之司徒而謂之士，固千百之中不得一焉。……謂之士者大抵皆有職之人矣。(日知錄)

^O 魏氏之武卒，以度取之，衣三屬之甲，操十二石之弩，負服矢五十個，置戈其上，冠胄帶劍，贏三日之糧，日中而趨百里，中試則復其戶，利其田宅。(荀子·議兵)

^P 聚天下之精財，論百工之銳器，春秋角試，以練精銳為右，成器不課不用，不試不藏，收天下之豪杰，有天下之俊雄，故舉之如飛鳥，動之如雷電，發之入風雨，莫當其前，莫害其後，獨出獨入，莫敢禁圍。(管子·七發)

^Q 公曰：“請問戰勝之器？”管子對曰：“選天下之豪杰，致天下之精材，來天下之良工，則有戰勝之器矣。”公曰：“然則取之若何？”管子對曰：“假而禮之，厚而勿欺，則天下之士至矣。”(管子·小問)

^R 越王勾踐好勇，教其士臣三年，以其知為未足以知之也，焚舟失火，鼓而進之，其士偃前列，伏水火而死有不可勝數也。當此之時，不鼓而退也，越國之士，可謂顛矣。故焚身為其難為也，然後為之。越王說之。(墨子·兼愛下)

^S 入國而不存其士，則亡國矣；見賢而不急，則緩其君矣。非賢無急，非士無以慮國。緩賢忘士，而能以其國存者，未嘗有也。(墨子·親士)

Chapter 2: The *Xia*: Emergence in History

In this chapter I introduce the emergence of the *xia* as a historical entity. I begin by analyzing the Chunqiu warrior, who contributed to the creation of the prototype of the *xia* warrior, and go on to discuss the historical elements which underlie the early *xia* tradition. The earliest reaction to the emergence of the *xia* as a powerful social group, that of Han Fei, will be treated. Finally, various theories as to the etymology of the word *xia* will also be summarized.

The warrior and codes of warrior conduct

Warfare and sacrificial ceremonies are usually considered to be the two most important affairs of the Western Zhou aristocracy. The two were closely connected to each other. Western Zhou ceremony contained an important military component, while warfare was ritualized in each of its stages, from the declaration of war to its conclusion. It seems likely that military ritual in the Zhou was inherited from the previous Shang, or from even the earlier primitive communal system. But it was in the Zhou, and especially during the Chunqiu period, the ritualization of military reached its highest level. The Zhou ritualization of warfare has its own unique features, displayed mainly in two respects: the organization of armies by the kinship system and the ritual conduct of warfare itself.

In regard to military structure, Zhou armies were organized on the basis of the Zhou kinship system. As the head of the aristocracy, the Zhou king had sole authority over directing the armies and often served as chief-commander of the armies. The Zhou military, at both central and vassal state levels, was formed primarily of aristocrats, who served as standing members, and *guoren*, including *shi*, freeman farmers, artisans and merchants, who served as soldiers in wartime. The military hierarchy of nobles and *guoren* was determined according to their position within the kinship system. Many military titles, especially those higher ranks like *shi* (師) and *hang* (行), seem to have been hereditary among noble families, like the Guo clan (虢氏) in the early Zhou which produced three *shi* commanders in four generations.¹ Quite a few nobles eventually replaced their family names with their office title, like Shi (師) and Zhonghang (中行), probably because the offices were inherited by their clans. Through the kinship system the king of Zhou was able to

¹ *Shangzhou zhidu kaixin* (商周制度考信) (Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1989), p.274.

firmly control his armies, just as he controlled the royal house as head of the clan. With the central armies in his hands, the Zhou king could effectively maintain his suzerainty over his vassals, through whom he controlled the whole country.

Military rituals became systematized during the Western Zhou period. They were closely related to rituals of the kinship system and, to some extent, may be viewed as the extension of that system. In the military these rituals were embodied mostly in practices relating to deity/ancestor worship. They were present in almost every stage of conducting warfare. First, before sending or leading his army to war, the Zhou king must conduct the *gaomiao* ritual (告廟禮), that is, praying in the Ancestral Temple. This ceremony usually consisted of two separate acts. The first was to consult the deity and the king's ancestors through divination, which was practiced by various techniques, such as milfoil, tortoise shell and astrology, and to learn whether war should be declared and what might be the result. When a favorable response was interpreted, the king and his advisers would then discuss the military deployment. The second act of the ceremony was to utter prayers for blessings from the deity and ancestors. During the preparation period, other rituals were conducted in the temple. A declaration of war was made to the soldiers and people. That ritual was called "receiving the divine will at the ancestral temple" (受命於廟). Another ritual called "providing weapons [to soldiers] at the Grand Palace" (授兵於大宮) ensued. After this, other rituals like "*lei*" (類祭), "*yi*" (宜祭), "*jiao*" (郊祭) and "*maji*" (馬祭), involving deities of different kinds, were successively performed until the troops reached the battlefield. When the royal army won its battle, it would perform all the rituals over again on its way back in triumph to the Ancestral Temple. A grand ceremony would then be held in the temple. It was composed of rituals ranging from reporting the victory and presenting captives to the ancestral temple to celebrating the victory and rewarding the warriors with military exploits.²

Along with the Zhou expansion of its borders through military colonization of the east, some scholars believe that around the mid-Western Zhou a professional warrior class began to take shape, composed mainly of aristocrats and *shi*. Because of the insufficiency of documentary evidence in this regard, historians are not clear about the exact nature and ideology of the warrior

² This description is largely based upon accounts in <文王世子> and <曾子問> in *Li Ji* (禮記) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), <小宗伯> and <大司馬> in *Zhou Li* (周禮) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), <周軍禮> in *Kongcong Zi* (孔叢子) (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1937) and <周本紀> in *Shi Ji*, as well as upon a few inscriptions of the time.

class in its formative period. However, later available documentary evidence and archaeological finds suggest that these professional warriors bore a strong aristocratic imprint and that military affairs were highly ritualized. Many historians believe that schooling and military training were basically accountable for these features.

Military training became compulsory for young nobles and untitled descendants of the nobility, called *juizong xiaozi* (簪宗小子) in the inscriptions. Young members from the *guoren* class were also enlisted for training. They learned and practiced archery and charioteering in school to become competent warriors and officers. More importantly, they learned rituals and etiquette related to the military, which were supposedly designed and formulated by the reputed architect of Zhou culture, the Duke of Zhou, in order to become both “civilized and disciplined” warriors and officers. For instance, *sheli* (射禮), or the shooting ritual, a form of archery, was highly valued and generally practiced among the Zhou warriors. It was used to cultivate the warriors’ sense of morality and the spirit of the gentleman. The *Zhou Li* (周禮) stated its objective as “making students cultivate morality and learn principles.”³ Confucius once described the *she* ritual as the “competition among gentlemen.”⁴ His description further confirms the ritual function of this type of archery contest.

Although the purpose of the *she* ritual was to cultivate the spirit of the gentleman, performance of the ritual required tremendous physical capability. The chapter “*Pin Yi*” (聘義) in the *Li Ji* (禮記) has the following passage introducing the *pinshe* (聘射), a *she* ritual performed at the gathering of interstate lords: “The *pinshe* ritual is one of the most important rituals. Its performance starts in the early morning and is completed near to noon. Those who are not vigorous enough are not able to achieve this.”⁴ The *pinshe*, like all the other *she* rituals, was of a sporting and performing nature, but it also belonged to military ritual and in the end it served a military purpose.

The process of military ritualization, in the view of Chinese scholars, began after the expeditions of Duke of Zhou and King Cheng brought the whole country under Zhou control. They may, however, have begun later in the Western Zhou, with the completion of military colonization. By this time the Zhou aristocracy was fully developed and could afford to pay more attention to the education

³ *Zhouli zhushu* (周禮注疏) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), <夏官·諸子>, v.31, “使之修道學德。” p.212.

⁴ *Lunyu zhushu* (論語注疏) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), <八佾>, “君子無所爭，必也射乎？揖讓而升，下而飲，其爭也君子。” p.2466.

of its offspring. From then military etiquette began to be valued and proper demeanor in competition became crucial to a gentlemanly warrior. For a warrior, observation of military decorum became as important, if not more than, the acquisition of military skills.

It was from this code of military decorum that the code of warrior conduct was gradually formulated. Herrlee Creel in *The Origins of Statecraft in China* appropriately calls this code "chivalry", because of its relation with "cavalier", a warrior who rode in a horse-drawn chariot to fight.⁵ According to inscriptions and documentary literature, the Western Zhou armies, like those of their Shang predecessor, were composed of both mounted warriors and foot soldiers, with the stress on the former. Chariots were the major component of the Zhou armies. This situation remained unchanged during the Chunqiu period and through most of the Warring States period. During this long era, the size of an army was measured by its number of chariots. The ordinary Zhou chariot carried three warriors, usually nobles: a charioteer (御) in the middle, a spearman (矛) on the right, and an archer (射) on the left. It was followed by seventy-two foot soldiers.⁶

The code of "chivalry" was probably still in its formative stage in the Western Zhou. First, during the first half of the Western Zhou, the Zhou aristocracy was totally occupied by the difficult tasks of military colonization in the east and border warfare on the north. Only during the later years of the Western Zhou did the regime have the luxury to devote close attention to protocol and the rites. Second, since almost all the campaigns and expeditions launched by the Zhou armies were against the Yi people and border nomadic peoples, in other words non-Zhou peoples, the code of "chivalry" developed among the Zhou warriors was not applicable.

The situation changed during the Chunqiu period. As the influence of the Zhou royal house declined, the nobility in each major vassal state became more powerful. The nature of military conflict during this period also changed. Although campaigns against aggressive nomads continued in border states like Qin (秦) and Jin (晉), wars primarily broke out among the vassal states, formerly brother subjects of the Zhou house. These vassal states were originally organized under

⁵ *Liji zhengyi* (禮記正義) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), <聘義>: "聘射之禮, 至大禮也, 質明而始行事, 日幾中而後禮成, 非強有力者弗能行也。" p.1693.

⁶ *The Origins of Statecraft in China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), "The Military", p.257.
⁷ *Maoshi zhengyi* (毛詩正義) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), <魯頌·必宮>: "鄭箋注: 兵車之法, 左人持弓, 右人持矛, 中人御。" p.616. Also see citations from *Sima Fa* (司馬法), *Shang Shu* (尚書) and *Zuo Zhuan* (左傳) in *Xia Shang shigao's* (夏商史稿) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1987), p.580.

the Zhou kinship system. The nobility in each state continued to practice the same Zhou rites and they shared a common ethical code in their conduct of warfare. This code of chivalrous conduct in battle took further shape in the early Chunqiu. In theory, at least, the opposing sides in battle were trained, or shaped by social pressure, to observe the same code of conduct.

Many accounts of warfare in the *Zuo Zhuan* suggest that a true Chunqiu warrior would treat war "as a game played by gentlemen in which, while winning was important, it was even more important to abide by rules."⁸ For instance, the following incident occurred when the army of Jin (晉) was in flight from the army of Chu (楚): "A chariot belonging to Jin sank in a rut, and could not proceed. A warrior of Chu told the occupant to remove the frame for weapons. After this it advanced a little, and then the horses wanted to turn. The same warrior advised his enemy to take out the large flagstaff and lay it crosswise. When this was done the carriage was able to get out of the hole. Its occupant turned around and said to the enemy who had assisted him, 'We have not had so much experience as the men of your great state in the art of fleeing!'"⁹ This anecdote, like many others in the *Zuo Zhuan*, demonstrates the strong spirit of gamesmanship which prevailed among gentleman warriors.

The code of chivalry was probably the most important of these rules. Herrlee Creel based his summary in *The Origins of Statecraft in China* on seven accounts in the *Zuo Zhuan*, which cover almost the whole period of the Chunqiu from the 8th to 5th century B.C.:

The Chinese code of chivalry, as variously interpreted, called for refraining from injuring a ruler, even though he were an opponent in battle; not attacking a state in mourning for the death of its ruler; and not taking advantage of internal disorders within a state to attack it. Before battle was joined, messengers should pass between the two armies, and a stipulated time and place be arranged.¹⁰

⁸ *The Origins of Statecraft in China*, p.258. This is especially true during the early and middle periods of Chunqiu, but with the passage of time, the rules of decorum were changed and even ignored.

⁹ *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu* (春秋左傳注), <宣公十二年>, p.741. James Legge's translation in *The Chinese Classics*, v.5, p.320, with Herrlee Creel's modification in *The Birth of China*, p.152.

¹⁰ *The Origins of Statecraft in China*, p.259. This was not the case in the succeeding Warring States period.

These were formal rules in for the conduct of warfare. According to the *Zuo Zhuan* and other pre-Qin works, these rules seem to have been recognized in theory and generally observed in practice by the Chunqiu aristocrats and warriors. A proud Chunqiu warrior would abide by the code even at the cost of his own life, as one anecdote in the *Zuo Zhuan* shows. In 521 B.C., the exiled Prince Cheng (公子城) of Song (宋) led a Jin army to attack his enemies, the Hua (華) clan, in their home territory. Driving his chariot into battle, the prince found himself opposed to the warrior Hua Bao (華豹). Hua shot an arrow at the prince that narrowly missed and quickly had another ready to shoot before the prince could loose a single arrow. The prince then cried, "It is base conduct not to let me have my turn to shoot!" Hua held his shoot and took his arrow out of the bow. The prince shot his arrow and killed Hua.^{11B}

Sometimes I find the code carried to extremes. The famous "Battle at Hong between Song and Chu" (宋楚泓之戰) in 638 B.C., as rendered in Creel's translation, illustrates this well:

The Duke [Xiang] of Song (宋襄公) was to fight with the army of Chu at Hong. The men of Song were all drawn up in battle array before the forces of Chu had finished crossing the river, and the Minister of War said to the Duke [of Song], "They are many and we are few. I request permission to attack them before they have all crossed over." The Duke replied, "It may not be done." After they had crossed over, but not yet formed their ranks, the Minister again asked leave to attack, but the Duke replied, "Not yet." The attack was not begun until the enemy was fully deployed. The army of Song was disastrously defeated. The Duke himself was injured in the thigh, and his guards of the palace gates were all killed. The *guoren* [of Song] all blamed the Duke, but he said, "The gentleman does not inflict a second wound, or take the gray-haired prisoner. When the ancients fought, they did not attack an enemy when he was in a defile. Though I am but the unworthy remnant of a fallen dynasty, I would not sound my drums to attack an enemy who had not completed the formation of his ranks."^{12C}

The ambitious duke had dreamed of succeeding the deceased Duke Huan of Qi as chief lord of the Central Plains. He flaunted the banner of propriety and righteousness. He followed the rigid code

¹¹ *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu* (春秋左傳注), <昭公二十一年>, pp.1428-9.

¹² *ibid.*, <僖公二十二年>, pp.396-7. See translation in *The Origins of Statecraft in China*, p.258.

of warfare partly to take a moral high ground for himself, and partly out of overconfidence of victory. While such a degree of commitment to the code was likely rare even in the Chunqiu, there is no doubt that the warriors of the time had their code of chivalry. This code, I believe, was to profoundly shape the later code of the *xia*.

Character and moral principles of the Chunqiu warrior

Besides the external rules of warfare, the code of the warrior has another integral part, which I call internalized norms. Liang Qichao in his preface to the *Zhongguo Zhi Wushidao* (中國之武士道), or *The Chinese Way of the Warrior*, discussed the values he believed central to the code of conduct, especially as practised by pre-Qin warriors. The 18 characteristics of the Chunqiu warrior listed by him may be summarized as: devotion to the public interest, personal integrity, a strong sense of responsibility and justice, fidelity and loyalty.^{13D} Liang wrote in conclusion that: “The welfare of one’s state, friendship, public duty, promise, debts of gratitude and obligations of revenge, personal reputation and moral principle all outweigh one’s life.” Liang claimed that these merits comprised the highest and purest ideal of the warrior, and that this way of the warrior was commonly observed among warriors of the time.^{14E}

As I indicated in the Introduction, Liang’s image of pre-Qin warriors is poetical and sometimes overstated. Liang was living at a time when social reformers sought to educate a populace which they thought indifferent to its plight. Therefore, some of the concepts he advanced were not applicable to the pre-Qin era, such as the notion of “nation state”. However, Liang’s characterization of *wushidao*, or the Chinese way of the warrior, contains much truth. He championed an old tradition long dismissed by the autocratic political system and the dominant Confucian ideology. But in order to realize his immediate purposes, he colored and even distorted the original warrior image.

Liang’s *wushidao* includes not only professional warriors, but also people ranging from plebeians to scholars, officials, ministers, princes and kings. Liang explained that his inclusion of people

¹³ *Zhongguo zhi wushidao* (中國之武士道) (Taipei: Taiwan zhonghua shuju, 1971), pp.19-20.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p.20.

other than warriors was because “the *wushidao* at the time [of Chunqiu] was becoming a widespread social phenomenon, whose inspiration was limited not just to the warrior community.”¹⁵

The principal values of the Chunqiu code of the warrior are revealed in the following extracts, drawn mostly from the *Zuo Zhuan*:

Sense and devotion to duty. Shen Ming (申鳴 fl. late 6th century B.C.) of Chu (楚) enjoyed fame as a dutiful son of his state. The King of Chu appointed him to an office but Shen refused. Shen’s father asked him the reason for his refusal. Shen said that he wanted to fulfill his duty as a son. His father urged him to accept the appointment. Shen then left home and became a deputy army commander. When Baigong (白公) rebelled against the King of Chu, both the chief minister and army commander were killed. Shen led the Chu army to encounter Baigong’s rebel forces. Baigong kidnapped Shen’s father and sent a messenger to tell Shen to come over to his side, otherwise his father would be killed. Shen answered in tears, “I started as my father’s son, but I am now an officer of my lord. I am unable to fulfill my role as a dutiful son. But should I not be a loyal officer?” Shen then ordered his troops to attack the rebels. The rebel leader Baigong was killed, and so was Shen’s father. The King of Chu held a ceremony to reward Shen. Shen said, “I am an officer and receive a salary from my lord; if I absent myself from his difficulties, I would not be a loyal officer. In order to enforce the law of my lord, I have killed my father. I am not a dutiful son any more. I am grieved that I have failed to be a loyal officer and dutiful son at the same time. A life such as this is not worth living.” Shen then cut his throat and died.¹⁶ Shen Ming had been reluctant to become an army officer, which, he thought, would prevent him from fulfilling his duty as a son. Once he became an officer, he regarded his duty to the king as greater than anything else, even the sacrifice of his father. He was caught in a conflict of duties. As a warrior, he could not live having failed one of his duties. Death was his only alternative.

Another famous story in the *Zuo Zhuan* shows how far a warrior would go in fulfilling his duty. Zilu (子路 542-480 B.C.), Confucius’ warrior disciple, was the steward of Kong Kui (孔悝), chief minister of the state of Wei (衛). Kuai Kui (蒯聩), the exiled former crown prince of Wei, allied himself with his sister Kong Ji (孔姬), who was also Kong Kui’s mother, and tried to seize power from the lord of Wei. They kidnapped Kong in his residence and forced him to join them. Zilu

¹⁵ *ibid.*, “當時武士道成爲風氣, 其所感較不獨在軍人社會而已。” p.8.

heard of the incident as he was traveling outside the capital city. He rushed back to Kong's rescue. At the city gate, he met Zigao (子羔), another of Confucius' disciples and a *dafu* of Wei, who was fleeing from the coup. Zigao told him not to risk his life by going to the aid of Kong, since he had not been present when the coup occurred. Zilu replied, "Since I take his salary, I should not try to escape from his difficulties!" He then went to Kong's residence and tried to rescue him. During the fighting with two of Kuai's guards, Zilu was struck and the strings of his cap were cut. The dying Zilu said: "A gentleman would not let his cap fall to the ground when he dies." With this Zilu tied the strings and died.¹⁶ A modern audience may wonder why Zilu should have chosen death. He might have served his lord better by other measures. He must have known that he was doomed to die by rushing to his lord's rescue alone. But Zilu was more concerned with his principles and his deportment as a gentleman warrior. His death could thus be seen as a final effort to stand for principle and duty. His uncompromising rigidity of attitude towards principle and decorum is indicated in the detailed description of his tying the cap strings before his death.

Sense of honor. A Chunqiu warrior regarded his personal integrity as sacred. He would not tolerate the slightest violation of it, even at the cost of taking his own life, as in the case of Lang Shen (狼瞫). Lang was a Jin (晉) warrior living in late the 5th century B.C. In the battle of Xiao (緡之戰), the chariot of Duke Xiang of Jin was driven by Liang Hong (梁弘), with Lai Ju (萊駒) on the right as a spearman. The duke had one of the prisoners bound and ordered Lai to execute him. The prisoner shouted at Lai, who was startled and dropped his spear. Lang picked up the spear and executed the prisoner. The duke was impressed by his bravery and appointed him the spearman in his chariot to replace Lai Ju. Then, in the battle of Ji (箕之役), the Jin chief commander Xian Zhen (先軫) demoted Lang and appointed Xu Jianbo (續簡伯) in his place. Lang felt humiliated and angry. His friend asked him, "Ought you not die for this?" Lang said, "I have not found a place to die." His friend then promised to kill Xian Zhen on his behalf. Lang said, "It is said in the *Zhou Zhi* (周志) 'The brave who kills his superior shall have no place in the hall of the Ancestral Temple.' He who dies doing something unrighteous is not brave. He who dies in the public service is brave. Out of bravery I sought the place of spearman. It is proper to be degraded if I am regarded as not being brave. If I complain that my superior does not know me [and retaliate for the degradation], I could only prove that he was right to degrade me. Please wait and see." When the battle of Pengya (彭衙)

¹⁶ *Hanshi waizhuan jishi* (韓詩外傳集釋) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), p.363.

¹⁷ *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu* (春秋左傳注), ~哀公十五年> (480 B.C.), pp.1694-96. See the translation in *The Chinese Classics*, v.5, p.843.

took place, Lang perished in the charge of his soldiers at the army of Qin. The army of Jin then joined battle and emerged victorious over Qin. The author of the *Zuo Zhuan* praised Lang as a gentleman for sublimating his anger in service to the army instead of directing it against his superior.^{18H}

More than a few wars in the Chunqiu era were caused by violations of warrior honor, like the famous battle of An between Qi and Jin (齊晉案之戰). The prominent warrior of Jin, general Xi Ke (郟克), was sent to Qi as an envoy to arrange a meeting between the lords of the two states. Duke Qing of Qi (齊頃公) allowed his mother and her attendants to hide behind a curtain to view the reception. When the crippled Jin general ascended the steps, the women were heard laughing. The humiliated Xi Ke was indignant and swore when he left the Qi palace, “If I do not revenge this insult, may I not cross the He River again!”^{19I} Two years later, Xi Ke became the chief minister of Jin. He led the Jin army to defeat Qi. One of the two conditions he set for allowing Qi to make peace was that the mother of Duke Qing of Qi should be taken as hostage.²⁰

Only a few were powerful enough, like Xi Ke, to be able to avenge an insult. For most warriors, death was the price of defending their integrity, as in the case of Zang Jian (臧堅). Zang, a warrior of Lu (魯) living in 6th century B.C., was wounded in battle and captured by the Qi army. In order to humiliate Zang, Duke Ling of Qi (齊靈公) sent his eunuch to tell him that he would not be killed. To be granted a pardon by a eunuch was a serious insult to a proud warrior. Zang said: “My thanks for the order to pardon me. Perhaps your lord thinks the pardon alone is insufficient and has sent a castrated servant to convey the courtesy to an officer!” On this he drove a stake into his wound and died.²¹ This intolerance of insult, which was later expressed in the words “a warrior can be killed but cannot be humiliated” (士可殺不可辱), was the most important part of the warrior’s integrity.

Truthfulness. The Chunqiu warrior would stand by his word at any cost. Duke Xian of Jin (晉獻公r. 676-651 B.C.) summoned Xun Xi (荀息) to his deathbed and entrusted to him his young son

¹⁸ *ibid.*, <文公二年> (625 B.C.), pp.519-21. See the translation in *The Chinese Classics*, v.5, p.233.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, <宣公十七年> (592 B.C.), pp.771-2. Also see *The Chinese Classics*, v.5, p.333.

²⁰ *ibid.*, <成公二年> (589 B.C.), “晉人不可，曰：‘必以蕭同叔子爲質。’” p.797.

²¹ *ibid.* <襄公十七年> (556 B.C.), “堅稽首曰：‘拜命之辱，抑君賜不終，姑又使其刑臣禮於士。’以戈抉其傷而死。” p.1031.

Xi Qi (奚齊), whom the duke had favored over his elder sons to become crown prince. The duke knew that his elder sons and their followers would raise an insurrection on his death. He wanted Xun, a resourceful and widely respected minister, to protect the young heir. Xun vowed, "I will put forth all my strength and resources on his behalf, doing so with loyalty and devotion. If I succeed, it will be your blessing; if I do not succeed, my death should follow my endeavors." Soon after the duke died, Li Ke (里克), a powerful Jin general, informed Xun of his plan to kill the heir and suggested that Xun would not be able to prevent this. The general tried to persuade Xun not to die with the heir. Xun said, "I promised our departed lord [to die if I failed to protect his heir], and I must not say another thing now. Do you think I will be able to make good my word if I am afraid of death? Although my efforts may be of no use, how can I avoid death?" He died to fulfill his promise. The historian of the *Zuo Zhuan* quoted a verse from the *Shi Jing* to praise Xun's faithfulness to his word.²²

An ideal knight would even honor his unspoken promise, as Prince Jizha (季札) of Wu, whom was regarded as one of the earliest noble *xia*, did:

At the beginning of his mission as an envoy, Jizha paid a visit to Lord Xu (徐君) in the north. Lord Xu liked Jizha's sword but dared not say it. Jizha knew this in his heart, but he could not offer it to Lord Xu because he needed it for his diplomatic mission. When he came back from his mission, Lord Xu had already died. So he untied his sword and hung it on a tree in the lord's graveyard. His attendant asked: "Lord Xu has already died, there is no one to leave it to." Jizha said: "I cannot agree with you. I gave my promise at the very beginning to give the sword to him: how could I betray my promise because he has died!"²³

Jizha's commitment to his promise was regarded as typical knightly conduct. Jizha's chivalric character was later viewed by Sima Qian as one of the earliest expressions of the *xia* spirit.

Sense of righteousness. Since the Chunqiu warrior had a strong sense of principle, he would never engage in any action he thought unrighteous or wrong. If such an order came from his superior, his

²² *ibid.* <穆公九年> (651 B.C.), pp.328-30. The translation is based on *The Chinese Classics*, v.5, 154.

²³ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.3, <吳太伯世家>, p.1489.

sense of duty collided directly with his sense of righteousness, as in the case of Fenyang (奮揚). Fenyang was the marshal of Chengfu (城父), a border region of Chu (楚) where the Crown Prince of Chu, Jian (建), had been exiled by his father King Ping of Chu (楚平王 r. 528-516 B.C.). The king believed the slanderous rumor that the exiled prince was planning a revolt against him. He ordered Fenyang to kill his son. Fenyang sent a messenger to warn the prince to escape before his arrival. The prince fled to Song (宋), his mother's native state. The angry king called Fenyang back to the capital. Fenyang ordered himself tied up and escorted to the capital. When asked by the king whether he had revealed his order to the prince, Fenyang admitted to it and explained, "You formerly commanded me to serve the prince as I would serve you. I could not allow myself to deviate from this in any way. That is why I failed to execute your second order and sent the prince away. When this was done, I regretted it, but that was too late to be any of avail." The king asked, "How did you dare come here?" Fenyang said, "I was sent on a commission which I failed to execute: if I had refused to come when called here, I should have been twice a traitor. There is no way I could flee." The king forgave him.^{24L}

But in more cases, a conscientious warrior found that the only solution to a conflict between duty and conscience was to kill himself. Chu Mei (黜靡) was such a warrior. He was sent by Duke Ling of Jin (晉靈公 r. 620-607 B.C.) to assassinate the chief minister Zhao Dun (趙盾), who had made repeated remonstrance with the duke and had greatly annoyed him. Chu went to Zhao's residence very early in the morning but found the bed chamber already open and the minister in his robes ready to go to court. Chu stepped back and said to himself with a sigh, "A man who does not forget to be reverent and respectful in his duties deserves to be called a leader of people. To inflict injury upon such a man would be disloyalty to the people. But to disobey the duke's command would be bad faith. If I must be guilty of either of these faults, it would be better to die!" He dashed his head against a cassia tree and died.^{25M}

²⁴ *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu* (春秋左傳注) <昭公二十年> (522 B.C.), pp.1407-8. See translation in *The Chinese Classics*, v.5, pp.680-1.

²⁵ *ibid.*, <宣公二年> (607 B.C.), p.658. See translation in Burton Watson's *The Tso Chuan*, pp.77-8.

The *xia* prototype in the Chunqiu period

Since the pre-Qin *xia* originated in the pre-Qin warrior class, warrior ideals, such as preservation of personal integrity, repayment of obligation and requital through vengeance were well entrenched in the *xia* code

The *shi* class, consisting mainly of warriors and junior administrators, was an intermediate level of society under the hereditary system of the Western Zhou, which was still partially functional in the early Chunqiu. This system had been steadily weakened by the drastic changes occurring in all walks of life during the Chunqiu period. Many aristocrats lost social status and even their lives in the fierce power struggles, and their descendants lost many of the privileges originally accruing to the nobility. But this does not mean that the nobility as a privileged class became extinct. On the contrary, as the common overlord, the Zhou house, lost its suzerainty over the vassal states, the vassal lords across the country began to acquire political independence and territorial sovereignty. As a result of this movement towards greater independence, the noble class in the vassal states was actually greatly expanded. At the same time, the independent vassal lords sought to retain more warriors, strategists and other experts to defend the sovereignty of their states and to stay in power in a world in which the hereditary system could no longer effectively protect them from external challenges of rival lords and internal threats from their own ministers.

The recruitment, or retaining, of *shi* began to become a serious matter for the vassal lords, princes and other rulers in the Chunqiu period. The state of Qi (齊) was an example of this. Duke Huan of Qi (齊桓公 r. 685-643 B.C.), supposedly on the advice of his chief minister Guan Zhong (管仲 ca 720-654 B.C.), once retained eighty *shi*, “providing them with carriages, clothes and plenty of money and gifts, and sending them in all directions to recruit men of ability across the country.”^{26N} His son, Prince Shangren (公子商人), was described in the *Zuo Zhuan* as a person who “retained many men of ability, and thus exhausted all his family wealth and had to borrow from the state financial office to continue his commitment.”^{27O} He finally took over the dukedom from his nephew and ruled the state with the help of his warriors.

Duke Zhuang of Qi (齊莊公 r. 553-548 B.C.) was especially well known for retaining able men. Ruan Ying (樂盈), a Jin noble, was well-known for retaining *shi*. When Ruan was driven out of Jin by his chief minister Fan Yang (范鞅), who regarded Ruan’s influence over the *shi* as a threat to him,

²⁶ *Guo Yu* (國語), <齊語>, p.239.

²⁷ *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu* (春秋左傳注), <文公十四年> (613 B.C.), pp.602-3.

many of Ruan's *shi* retainers fled to Qi. Duke Zhuang of Qi readily gave them refuge. Proudly pointing to two of the Jin retainers, Zhi Chao (殖綽) and Guo Zui (郭最), He exclaimed, "They are my heroic warriors."²⁸

The duke's warriors lived up to their obligation of loyalty. When Duke Zhuang was killed by his minister Cui Zhu (崔杼) in 548 B.C., eight of his warriors fought to the death for him. Another by the name of Zhu Tuofu (祝佗父), heard of the duke's death when returning from a ceremony and took his own life immediately, without even changing his ceremonial robe. Another of the duke's warrior, Shen Kuai (申蒯), told his aide that he was going to die for the duke and asked him to take care of his wife. The aide refused, wishing to die with him. The duke's court scribe and his two brothers met death for condemning the killer in their record of the incident. Shen Xianyu (申鮮虞), a confidant of the duke, fled to Lu (魯) and hired people there to observe mourning for the duke. Three years after the incident (546 B.C.), two of Duke Zhuang's loyal retainers, Lupu Kui (盧蒲葵) and Wang He (王何), came back to Qi. They took part in the destruction of the Cui clan and they avenged the duke by exposing the corpse of Cui Zhu in the marketplace.^{29P}

One of the best known heroic warriors of the Chunqiu was Cao Mo (曹沫), a contemporary of Duke Huan of Qi. He was a general of Duke Zhuang of Lu (魯莊公 r. 693-662 B.C.), who thought highly of him because of his courage and strength. General Cao led the resistance to the invasion of Lu by its powerful neighbor Qi. After General Cao suffered three defeats in battle, Lu was forced to give up a further part of its territory to make peace. When the lords of the two states met to swear their covenant on an altar mound, Cao ascended it with a dagger in hand. He seized Duke Huan of Qi and forced him to promise the return of Lu's captured territory. Upon hearing the duke's promise, Cao dropped his dagger and descended the mound, remaining completely composed while everyone else was still stunned by what had happened.³⁰ Cao risked his life to do this out of his sense of justice, since Qi was a large and aggressive power that had trodden upon the sovereignty of its weak neighbor. I believe that he did this also out of gratitude to his lord, who so appreciated his ability that he allowed him continue to lead the army despite its defeats.

²⁸ *ibid.* <襄公二十一年> (552 B.C.), "是寡人之雄也!" p.1063.

²⁹ *ibid.* See the full story in p.1063, pp.1097-9, p.1138 and pp.1145-51.

³⁰ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.4, <刺客列傳>, p.2535.

This personal loyalty characterizes the new relationship between warrior and patron. The warrior was free to choose his patron. If he found one who was appreciative of his abilities, he was obligated to serve to the point of even giving up his life. The patron's understanding and commitment were crucial to this relationship. As mentioned earlier, when the Jin strongman Fan Yang expelled his political rival Ruan Ying, the latter's retainers all fled to Qi. Zhou Chao (州綽) and Xing Kuai (邢蒯) were among those fleeing. Fan's adviser Le Wangfu (樂王鮒) asked Fan to call them back, because they were "yongshi" (勇士), or brave warriors. Fan said: "They were Ruan's brave warriors, what can they be to me?" Le then said: "If you conducted yourself as Ruan did, they would all be your brave warriors!"³¹ Fan apparently did not take Le's advice. However, Duke Zhuang of Qi offered them his patronage, and was the first lord in the Chunqiu period to confer titles of nobility on such "brave warriors".³² Zhou Chao was probably given the title of "noble knight" by the duke, and he later willingly died for him.

This new relationship between lords and warriors appears to have been widely accepted by the late Chunqiu. A lord would reap what he had sown. A warrior's loyalty and commitment corresponded to how well he was treated and appreciated. Yu Rang (豫讓), a celebrated warrior in late 5th century declared: "A warrior will die for one who is appreciative of him". (士為知己者死)³³ This became the most important feature in the moral code of the warriors from whom the Warring States *xia* originated.

Yu Rang was a Jin native, whose early career is obscure. He served Fan (范) and Zhonghang (中行) successively, then left them and finally joined Zhibo's (智伯 d. 455 B.C.) camp, where he was greatly honored and appreciated. Zhibo headed the most powerful clan in the state of Jin, the Xun (荀), and controlled the state for many years. Eventually the three other large noble clans formed an alliance to overthrow and kill him. Zhibo's skull was made into a drinking vessel by his archenemy Zhao Xiangzi (趙襄子). Yu Rang fled first to a mountain where he plotted revenge:

Yu Rang said: "Alas! A knight would die for the one who is appreciative of him, as a woman dresses for the one who pleases her. Since Zhibo appreciated me, I must die to

³¹ *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu* (春秋左傳注), <襄公二十一年> (552 B.C.), p.1063.

³² *ibid.* "莊公為勇爵". Zhou was the one who competed for the appointment and was very likely ennobled. That is the reason he died for the duke. p.1063.

³³ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.5, <刺客列傳>, p.2538.

avenge him and to repay his appreciation of me. [By doing so] my soul will never suffer shame." Then he changed his name, disguised himself as a convict-laborer, and entered [Xiangzi's] residence to plaster the outhouse. He stuffed a dagger inside his clothes, intending to stab Xiangzi with it. When Xiangzi entered the outhouse, he became uneasy; when [his attendants] seized and interrogated the convict-laborer who was plastering the outhouse, it was Yu Rang, holding a dagger inside his garment. [Yu told them:] "I intended to avenge Zhibo on his foe!" The attendants prepared to execute him. Xiangzi said: "This fellow is a man of principle. I will just be careful to keep him away from me. Moreover, when Zhibo perished, he had no posterity, yet his vassal still seeks to repay his foe. This is one of the worthiest men in the world!" In the end he released Yu Rang and sent him away.

After a short time had passed, Yu Rang lacquered his body to produce skin ulcers, and swallowed charcoal to make his voice hoarse; having rendered his appearance unrecognizable, he went begging in the marketplace. His wife did not recognize him. On the road he saw his friend. His friend recognized him: "Are you not Yu Rang?" "I am." His friend wept for him: "With your talent, you could have laid down your pledge and served Xiangzi as a vassal; Xiangzi would have been sure to trust and favor you. Once he trusted and favored you, you could have done as you wished. Would that not have been easy? Then why have you crippled your body and afflicted your frame? To seek vengeance on Xiangzi through means such as this - is this not difficult?" Yu Rang replied, "After making one's pledge and serving a man as his vassal, if you then try to kill him, that is serving one lord while owing fealty to another. What I have done is most difficult, but the reason I have done it is to shame those of later generations, wherever they might be, who serve men as vassals yet owe fealty to another."

A short while after Yu Rang left [his friend], Xiangzi was about to leave his residence. Yu Rang hid under a bridge he expected Xiangzi would cross. When Xiangzi reached the bridge, his carriage horses flinched. "This must be Yu Rang!" he said and sent a man to question him. It was indeed Yu Rang. Xiangzi then berated Yu Rang: "Did you not once serve the clans of Fan and Zhonghang? Zhibo destroyed them both, yet you did not avenge them, but instead offered your pledge to serve Zhibo. Now Zhibo too is dead; why are you so determined to avenge only his death?" Yu Rang said, "I served the clans of Fan and

Zhonghang, and the clans of Fan and Zhonghang treated me as an ordinary man; therefore I repaid them as I would an ordinary man. As for Zhibo, he treated me as one of the *guoshi* (國士), the greatest knights of his state, and so I will repay him as I would one of the greatest knights of the state.” Xiangzi sighed deeply and wept: “Alas, Yu Rang! Your actions on behalf of Xiangzi have already made your name, and when I pardoned you before, that was enough. Consider how you wish to die, I will not release you again!” He had his troops surround Yu Rang. Yu Rang said, “I have heard that an enlightened ruler does not obstruct virtuous deeds and a loyal vassal has a duty to die for his good name. You generously pardoned me in the past, and the world praised you as a worthy lord. For today’s affair, I naturally accept punishment, but I hope that I might ask for your garment and strike it, to show that it was my intention to seek revenge. [If you grant this request,] then even though I die I will have no regrets. I hardly dare hope for this, I only desire to lay out my innermost desire.” Xiangzi thought Yu Rang a truly principled man. He had a man take his garment and give it to Yu Rang. Yu Rang drew his sword, leaped in the air three times, and struck the garment. “Now I can go down and report to Zhibo!” Then he fell on his sword and died. The day he died, when the resolute knights of the state of Zhao heard of it, they all wept for him.^{34R}

The story of Yu Rang offers a code of behavior that the *xia* were to identify as the essence of their character. Yu Rang may thus be regarded as the prototype of the *xia* in the Chunqiu period.

The relationship between a lord and a *xia* warrior, therefore, was primarily of a personal nature. In other words, the warrior served and fought for an individual lord rather than a royal house or state. He was at liberty to choose a lord who would win his loyalty through appreciation of his ability. Yu Rang left the first two lords who had retained him but when he encountered Zhibo, who regarded his ability highly, Yu Rang devoted himself totally to his lord. The reciprocal basis of the relationship could have equally negative consequence. Mencius (孟子) later expressed this well: “If a ruler looks upon his subjects as dogs and horses, his subjects will look upon him as a stranger; if a ruler looks upon his subjects as dirt and weeds, his subjects will look upon him as an enemy.”^{35S} The ruler’s enlightenment was crucial to the relationship.

³⁴ *ibid.* 刺客列傳, pp.2538-40. See the translation in Watson, *The Grand Scribe’s Records*, pp.321-3.

³⁵ Meng, Ke. *Mengzi zhengyi* (孟子正義), v.8, 卷下, p.2726.

In this kind of relationship, loyalty was more likely to be based on personal reasons than moral and ethical convictions. As long as the warrior was appreciated, he could be expected to give his devotion, even his life, to the person who appreciated him. The patron's moral virtues and ethical stance were not at issue. Zhibo, when he was in power, launched many unjustified battles against his rivals, neighbors and even his own lord. He drove out Duke Chu of Jin (晉出公 r. 474-458 B.C.) and replaced him with the puppet Duke Ai (哀公 r. 458-441 B.C.). His final attack on Zhao Xiangzi was motivated, in my view, by his greed for land and wealth.³⁶ Yu Rang, must have been fully aware of the unrighteous conduct of his lord, but that did not change his allegiance to him.

Another example is Duke Zhuang of Qi, whose appreciation of brave warriors was mentioned earlier. He committed adultery with the wife of his minister Cui Zhu, and further insulted Cui by giving the latter's personal belongings as gifts to his own bodyguards. Cui's resentment resulted in his killing the duke, an evil lord by the standard of the day. The notoriety of the duke was, on at least one occasion, raised to dissuade one of his loyal warriors from going to die for him. The chapter *Li Jie* (立節), or *Cultivation of Moral Integrity*, in the *Shuo Yuan* (說苑) contains the following anecdote:

When Cui Zhu of Qi killed Duke Zhuang, Xing Kuaigui (邢蒯賁) was on his way back from his mission to Jin. His attendant told him, "Cui Zhu has killed Duke Zhuang. Where will you go?" Xing said, "Go ahead! I will go to die to requite my lord." The attendant said, "Every one of our neighboring states has heard of the notoriety of our lord. Is it worth a person [of moral integrity] like you to die [for him]?" Xing said, "It is good of you to tell me this, but it is too late, though. If you had told me this earlier, I could have remonstrated with our lord: if he did not listen to me, I could have left him. However, neither did I remonstrate with him, nor did I leave him. I have heard that one who takes wages dies for his master. I have taken wages from an evil lord, so how can I find a virtuous lord to die for?" He then drove his carriage into the palace and met his death. His attendant said, "Although he had an evil lord, he died for him. As I had a virtuous master, how can I not die for him?" He killed himself in the carriage.³⁷

³⁶ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.4, <晉世家>, p.1706, <趙世家>, p.1825.

³⁷ *Shuoyuan jiaozheng* (說苑校證), <立節>, p.90.

Xing's death would appear to have been based on pure personal obligation rather than on moral principle, in that he did for a lord who was not a virtuous man.

It is of interest to look at the other representative reaction towards the above event. When the duke was killed, his chief minister Yan Ying (晏嬰 ?589-500 B.C.) was asked whether he intended to die with the duke or flee into exile. Yan said: "If a ruler dies for the sake of his state, then one should die with him; if he flees for the sake of his state, one should flee with him. But if he dies for personal reasons, or flees for personal reasons, then unless one is among his intimates or particular favorites, why would one presume to share his fate?"³⁸ Yan was voicing an old principle which underlay the aristocratic politics of the former Western Zhou and which was still followed by many Chunqiu ministers and professional warriors. But for warriors like Yu Rang and Xing Kuaigui, who put personal gratitude and allegiance ahead of any other considerations, Yan Ying's ethical code was no longer applicable. That is why Yu Rang died for Zhibo, and why so many of Duke Zhuang's warriors died for him as well. Most of these warriors did not share the vices exhibited by some of their lords. They probably did not endorse their lord's immoral behavior. They died for him for reasons of the personal bond. In other words, they died to requite their lord's appreciation of them. This later became a defining component of the *xia* code.

Han Fei on *xia*

The prototype of the *xia* is to be found in the Chunqiu period when the old feudal order was in the course of disintegration. However, the name, *xia* or *youxia* (游侠), was not used until the Zhanguo (戰國), or Warring States, period (475-221 B.C.).

The use of *xia* as a term referring a particular social group first appears in the works of Han Fei (韓非 280-233 B.C.), the most influential Legalist thinker of the pre-Qin era. In his caustic essay *Wu Du* (五蠹), or *The Five Vermin*, Han Fei emphatically condemned the *xia*, along with Confucians, itinerant scholars and others, as vermin which undermined the authority of the ruler and crippled the stability of society. "Confucians use their writings to confuse the law, while the *xia* resort to

³⁸ *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu* (春秋左傳注), <襄公二十五年> (548 B.C.), pp.1096-1098. See translation in Burton Watson's *The Tso Chuan*, p.146.

force to violate the prohibitions.”³⁹ Since the *xia* were frequently criticized by Han Fei in his works, they had clearly drawn attention by his time.

Han Fei may not, in fact, have been the first to use the word *xia*. The opinions of later historians and scholars on the *xia* differ. However, Han Fei is probably the earliest scholar to single out this active and important social group. Since it is Han Fei’s description that is to be found in the extant historical documents, and since Han’s view of the *xia* was long propagated as the official view, his interpretation of the *xia* may serve as the starting point of our discussion.

As a Legalist, Han Fei built his political system on two fundamental pillars: agriculture and war (耕戰) on the one hand, and respect for authority and fear of the law (敬上畏法) on the other. Any deviation from these became the target of his attack. Besides Confucians and the *xia*, the so-called five vermin included itinerant philosophers, idle courtiers, merchants and craftsmen. Han Fei’s measurement is quite clear and straightforward. If a person was neither a farmer nor a soldier, he belonged to the category of vermin. Since Confucians, philosophers, merchants and the *xia* all evaded farming and military service, they were parasites and harmful to society. They deserved to be exterminated like vermin. But the unfortunate reality was that these people gained the rulers’ favor and were extremely active in political life. Han Fei complained that the successes of such people had lured others away from their proper duties. Not surprisingly, the *xia* became the specific focus of his attack.

Han Fei charged that Confucians and the *xia* shared a common characteristic, which he called wandering (游, originally 有). They wandered away from farmland and battlefield. They wandered around amongst powerful ministers, princes and lords to promote their personal interests and spread their harmful influences. So he mockingly described the Confucians, along with the itinerant scholars, as *youxue* (游學), or wandering scholars, and the *xia* as *youxia* (游俠), or wandering knights.⁴⁰ Han Fei was the first scholar to use these terms.

³⁹ *Han Feizi jishi* (韓非子集釋), v. 19, <五蠹>, “儒以文亂法, 俠以武犯禁.” p.1057.

⁴⁰ *ibid.* v. 19, <五蠹>, p.1058. The term used by Han Fei was *you xia* (有俠). “You” (有) is the borrowing word for “you” (游).

Han Fei first defined the *xia* by occupation: “The *xia* are retained for their personal swordsmanship.”⁴¹ He claimed that “these swordsmen assemble followers, and flaunt their personal integrity in order to gain a name for themselves and to violate the laws set by government.”⁴² Lawlessness seems to have been the main crime of the *xia*. But to Han Fei’s dismay, this challenge to the authorities was widely accepted and even praised in his time because of the boldness of the offenders. In the *Five Vermin*, he addressed the confusion caused by this ambiguous attitude:

Because someone breaks the law, he is condemned, yet his being bold and fearless is counted for more. The administration of praise and blame or reward and punishment becomes an absurdity. The law deteriorates and the people become disorderly. If there is transgression against one’s brother, standing up for him is now considered honorable; if one’s friend is offended, to avenge him is considered loyal. But when honor and loyalty prevail rather than the lord’s law, the people will always be carrying on vendettas and the officials will never be able to control them. There are those who do not work for a living and yet eat and are clothed and we call them able; there are those who do not fight yet are given honors and we call them worthy; if this kind of ability and worthiness prevails, the army will be weakened and the lands will be deserted. If the lord is pleased by the acts of the so-called able and worthy and forgets the disaster of a weakening army and deserted lands, then private action will dominate and public benefit will crumble.⁴³

Han Fei’s definition of *xia* went beyond “*daijianzhe*” (帶劍者), “people who carry the sword”, to include people from non-military occupations. In his essay *Ba Shuo* (八說), or the *Eight Criticisms*, Han Fei defined those who “abandon their public duties in order to pursue private friendship”, “neglect their public duties” and “indulge in personal desires” as the *xia*.⁴⁴ These people were mostly officials and nobles who retained “*sijian zhi shi*” (私劍之士), or “private swordsmen”, in the capacity of “*simen zhi shu*” (私門之屬), “forces of private houses”, to spread their influence. Later they were called “*qingxiang zhi xia*” (卿相之俠), or the *xia* of nobles and ministers. These noble *xia* became the most important *xia* group in the Warring States period.

⁴¹ *ibid.* v. 19, <五蠹>, “群俠以私劍善,” p.1057.

⁴² *ibid.* v. 19, <五蠹>, p.1078.

⁴³ *ibid.* p.1057.

⁴⁴ *ibid.* v. 18, <八說>, p.972.

To sum up, Han Fei saw the *xia* as those who went their own way apart from the laws set by the authorities to govern society. Han Fei's description of the Warring States *xia* is in outline accurate but it is biased by his Legalist perspective. He had no interest in exploring the *xia* in terms of their personal morality and integrity, as Sima Qian and even Ban Gu would later do. His concern was law and order, and the authorities, especially the royal house, that enforced and maintained law and order. For Han Fei, the rise of the *xia* as a group constituted a direct threat to the royal authority and the state interest. He warned the rulers against encouraging and promoting the *xia*, but his arguments failed to arouse attention in a time when martial capability was especially valued. Strong measures against the *xia* were not initiated until the middle of the Western Han dynasty (西漢), when the centralized government could no longer tolerate challenges to its power.

The etymology of *xia*

An etymological analysis of the word “*xia*” (俠) may shed light on the original understanding of the word and how those who were called or called themselves “*xia*” were regarded by society. Xu Shen (許慎) (30-124), the most authoritative lexicographer of the Han dynasty, gave the word a very brief explanation in his *Shuowen Jiezi* (說文解字):

俠。俔也。從人。夾聲。⁴⁵

In his analysis, Xu used a method he called *zhuanzhu* (轉注), or mutual annotation, by which a synonym is used to annotate the word under consideration. The synonym of the word “*xia*” here is “*ping*” (俔). This explanation of “*ping*” helps little, because Xu used the same method of *zhuanzhu* to refer “*ping*” to “*xia*”. However, Xu identified the original component of “*ping*” as *ping* (粵). The second “*ping*” is composed of “*you*” (由) and “*kao*” (𠂔). It is obviously a so-called “*huiyi*” (會意) word, that is, a word of logical aggregates. Its top part “*you*” means “follow”, and its bottom part “*kao*” means “aspiration”. The combination therefore means “giving rein to one's passion.” This is very close to the term “*ren*” (任), frequently used in works of pre-Qin and Han times referring to the *xia*, and sometimes their activity. Xu further explained the word “*ping*” by quoting a remark that the people in the capital and its environs (Sanfu 三輔) called those who behaved generously and

⁴⁵ Duan, Yucai. *Shuowen jiezi zhu* (說文解字注), p.373.

viewed wealth lightly “*ping*”.⁴⁶ This conforms exactly to the structural composition of the word. Although Xu’s inquiry is more concerned with the etymology of the word “*xia*”, his description does reveal some characteristics of those who were called “*xia*”. His definition almost certainly provided the accepted view of the *xia* during the Western and Eastern Han.

There were scholars and lexicographers who sought the meaning of the word “*xia*” in more direct ways. They built their theories upon the structural composition of the word “*xia*” itself, especially its phonetic radical “*jia*” (夾).⁴⁷ The phonetic approach has proved to be one of the most useful and effective tools in Chinese philology. The early Tang etymologist Yan Shigu (顏師古 581-645) explained the character “*xia*” by taking this approach:

Xia (俠) can be read as *xie* (狹), which means using force to compel people to obedience. (俠之言狹也。以權力狹輔人也。)⁴⁸

Duan Yucai (段玉裁 1735-1815), the best known annotator of Xu Shen’s *Shuowen Jiezi*, further elaborated the above view. He quoted famous Han scholars to show that the phonetic radical “*jia*” was the core of the word:

Xun Yue (荀悅) said: “Those who boast of their integrity, abuse their power and make personal friends in order to establish their supremacy in the world are called *xia*.” Ru Chun (如淳) said: “Having faith in each other is called *ren* (任), and being indiscriminate toward right and wrong is called *xia*.” They are also known as those who “wield power in the localities and dispose of strength equal to the nobility”. Some have explained *ren* (任) as strength and *xia* (俠) as people who view wealth lightly. I think that *xia* can be simply read as *jia* (夾), and *jia* means “*chi*” (持), or “to grip”. In the classics and their commentaries, *xia* and *jia* are often mutually replaceable.⁴⁹

Duan read “*xia*” as “*chi*” from “*xiechi*” (狹持), which means “holding someone under duress.” His etymological analysis reveals the original idea behind calling people *xia*. The *xia* (俠) were those

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, “*丐*, 啜詞也。從粵, 從由。或曰: 丐, 俠也。三輔謂輕財者為丐。”, p.203.

⁴⁷ As Xu Shen’s analysis indicates, the word *xia* is composed of the radical *ren* (任), which provides the meaning, and *jia* (夾), which provides the pronunciation.

⁴⁸ Ban, Gu. *Han shu* (漢書), v. 季布傳, p.187.

⁴⁹ Duan, Yucai. *Shuowen jiezi zhu* (說文解字注), p.373.

who had the ability to do *xie* (俠). As Duan indicated, *xia* (俠) and *xie* (俠) were interchangeable in pre-Qin works. For instance, under the ninth year of Duke Yin (隱公九年 714 B.C.) in the *Chun Qiu* (春秋), there is mention of an official of the state of Lu (魯) in the entry “*Xie zu*” (俠卒), “the death of *Xie*”.⁵⁰ In the *Gongyang Zhuan* (公羊傳) and *Guliang Zhuan* (谷梁傳), two commentaries on the *Chun Qiu*, this is recorded under the variant reading, “*Xia zu*” (俠卒).⁵¹

The etymological search for the original meaning of the word “*xia*” has no doubt enriched our understanding of the people who were sociopolitically called *xia*. In this regard, the Japanese sinologist, Ichisada Miyazaki (宮崎市定), in his *On Xia*, has advanced an interesting speculation on the relation between *xia* (俠) and *jia* (劍):

If we admit the fact that the sword was already called *jia* (劍) [at the time], the word *xia* (俠) of *youxia* (游俠) must have some relation with the word *jia*, namely that a *xia* was a person who carried a sword.⁵²

This is insightful because it explains why the *xia* were, in Han Fei’s words, also called *daijianzhe* (帶劍者), or people who carry a sword, and *sijian* (私劍), or private swords. The image of sword carrying shows not only the close connection of the *xia* with the pre-Qin warrior class, but also the chief characteristic of the *xia*: the use of force.

The sword, swordsmanship and sword culture

The sword and the *xia* form an inseparable image. In the early stage of *xia* history, the sword as a weapon of war indicated the origins, character and ideals of this social class. Later, with the development of a *xia* literature, the sword became a cultural and aesthetic symbol which the *xia* carried in their legendary search for social justice. It is almost impossible to talk about the *xia* without talking about the sword.

In the section on mythology in Chapter One, I mentioned that Chi You was credited with being the inventor of weapons. His image in the Han Shandong brick inscription (漢山東磚畫) is of a monster

⁵⁰ *Shisanjing zhushu*, <春秋左傳正義>, (隱公九年) (714 B.C.), p.1734.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, <春秋公羊傳注疏>, “隱公九年”, p.2210; and <春秋谷梁傳注疏>, “隱公九年”, p.2371.

⁵² Miyazaki, Ichisada, “*On Xia*” in *Chugoku kodai shiron* (中國古代史論), p.252.

wearing every kind of weapon. This depiction belongs to later ages. The invention of weapons probably occurred during the stage of animal hunting. The first weapons were made primarily of wood, stone, horn and bone. In the Shang dynasty, weapons made of bronze were brought into use and quickly became dominant in warfare. Bronze weapons were widely used even after China entered the Iron Age in the *Chunqiu* and Warring States periods. The battle of Muye (牧野之戰) was the decisive engagement between the Zhou and Shang. From the speech in which King Wu of Zhou harangued his troops before launching the final attack, we can see the weapons which the Zhou army used: “Lift up your lances (戈), join your shields (干), raise your spears (矛), I have a speech to make!”⁵³ Our knowledge of Zhou weaponry is greatly enhanced by modern excavations of large quantities of bronze lances, spears and shields from the Shang, the so-called the Ruins of Yin (殷墟). While the lance and spear were the main weapons of combat in the field, swords were used primarily as a weapon of self-defense. After King Wu led his troops into the capital of Yin [Shang], he struck the corpse of King Xin of Yin with his “light sword” (輕劍). When he went to establish himself on the Yin King’s throne, he was escorted by his generals Sanyi Sheng (散宜生), Taidian (太顛), Hongyao (閔天) and others, who all carried swords as they guarded him.⁵⁴

The “sword” was defined in one of the earliest Chinese lexicons, *Shi Ming* (釋名), in this way: “*Jian* (劍), or the sword, is *jian* (檢), or defense. It is what one uses to defend oneself when facing unexpected incidents.”⁵⁵ Because of its use in the Shang and Western Zhou as a weapon of personal defense, the sword had to be of a length convenient for carrying. One of the earliest bronze swords excavated from a Western Zhou tomb at Zhangjia Po near Xi’an (西安張家坡) is 27 cm in length. Other swords believed to be from the same period are all shorter than that, like the one from Baicao Po No. 2 tomb (甘肅白草坡二號墓) 24.3 cm.⁵⁶ They are more like modern daggers in size.⁵⁷

With the development of metallurgy and the growing use of infantry, the sword gradually became the favorite light weapon both for combat and personal defense. This change became evident

⁵³ *Shangshu zhengyi* (尚書正義), <牧誓>“稱爾戈，比爾干，立爾矛，予其誓。” p.183. See translation in Clae Waltham *Shu Ching: Book of History*, p.119.

⁵⁴ *Shiji huizhu kaozhen* (史記會注考證), <周本紀>:“以輕劍擊之。... 散宜生、太顛、閔天皆執劍以衛武王。” pp.26-7.

⁵⁵ *Shi Ming* (釋名) (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1939):“劍，檢也，所以防檢非常也。” p.113.

⁵⁶ Yang, Hong. *Zhongguo gubingqi luncong* (中國古兵器論叢) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1980), pp.124-5.

⁵⁷ See *Zhouli zhushu* (周禮注疏) <考工記> “陶氏為劍” for the official description of swords of the Zhou Dynasty. Zheng Xuan (鄭玄), a Han scholar, made the comment: “此今之匕首也。” p.916.

during the Chunqiu period. First, manufacturing technology had been greatly improved. The bronze sword was now longer, sharper and harder. Second, carrying the sword was now becoming a fashion for men. In Chapter One, I quoted a passage from Xun Zi's *On Weaponry* (議兵) to show the procedure of selecting warriors. Xun Zi mentioned that an ordinary contestant would be required to "wear a helmet and carry a sword" (冠冑帶劍). This was seen as the basic military equipment of a warrior.

During the middle and late Chunqiu, the sword was more commonly used in the central and southern regions of China. Geographic conditions might be one of the reasons for this. In the north, i.e. the Central Plain (中原), warfare was conducted mainly between chariots with long hand-held weapons. In the south, the presence of river networks and jungle terrain placed severe limitation on chariot-fighting. Infantry thus developed quickly as the states in the south rose to rival the northern states in the mid-Chunqiu period. Short light weapons like swords were more effective for infantry. The technology of sword manufacture and the arts of swordsmanship also underwent major development. The episode in which the Lord of Xu (徐君) coveted the sword carried by Prince Jizha (公子季札 fl. 5th century B.C.) of Wu shows the high quality of sword-making in the south.

Whether the sword enjoyed wide usage among ordinary soldiers in the south is still a topic open to further research. But I believe that the sword became one of the favorite side-arms for the nobility. On many occasions they found the sword indispensable, as in the case of Prince Jizha's diplomatic mission. When Lord Xiangcheng of Chu (楚襄成君) was enfeoffed, "he was wearing a bright green robe, carrying a jade-handled sword and walking in silk shoes."⁵⁸ Decorating swords became a typical way for aristocrats to display their luxurious lifestyle. When the poet politician Qu Yuan (屈原 339?-278? B.C.) was driven out of the court of Chu to wander about in exile, he described himself as carrying "a long sword" and "a high hat".⁵⁹ The long sword was a symbol of his lofty aspiration, while the high hat suggested his uncompromising integrity.

The culture of swords, including their myths and legends, was also developed in the south. The sword could sometimes be seen as an incarnation of evil. It was recorded that whenever

⁵⁸Xiang, Zonglu. *Shuoyuan jiaozheng* (說苑校證) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987). <善說>: "襄成君始封之日, 衣翠衣, 帶玉劍, 履錦舄." p.277.

⁵⁹ Yuan, Mei. *Qu Yuan fu yizhu* (屈原賦譯注) (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1984). <九章·涉江>: "帶長劍之陸離兮, 冠切雲之崔嵬." p.147.

Yunchang (允常), the king of Yue (越), obtained a new sword, he would call in his sword appraiser Xue Zhu (薛燭). Once Xue asked his lord not to carry the sword called “Yuchang” (魚腸), since he found its texture was in a reverse direction, suggesting *nili* (逆理), or “violation of reason”, an omen of misfortune. The king then gave it as a gift to Prince Guang (公子光) of Wu, who used it later to kill his lord. King Liao of Wu (吳王僚 r. 526-515 B.C.).⁶⁰ Geng Yu (庚與), the Lord of Lu (莒子 r. 527-519 B.C.), was a collector of swords. Whenever his craftsmen made a new sword, he would test its cutting edge on human beings. This brought great misery to his people. His sharp swords failed to reverse his fate of being killed by a sharper weapon: rebellion of the people.⁶¹

Documents show that carrying the sword in the early Chunqiu was still governed by the Zhou rites. It is mentioned in the *Kaogong Ji* (考工記) that different sizes of swords were carried by people of different ranks.⁶² Common people were probably not allowed to carry swords. With the decline of the Zhou rites and the drastic social changes of the Chunqiu period, the sword became an item of dress for men of various social classes. Swords were no longer limited to high society: men from lower social ranks also carried them, though their swords were sparsely or simply decorated. Feng Xuan (馮諼), one of the best known *xia* of the Warring States, arrived in straw sandals when he heard Prince Mengchang (孟嘗君) was eager to acquire capable retainers. He was placed in the junior retainer house. Ten days later the prince asked the superintendent of the house what the newcomer had been doing. The superintendent said: “Feng is very poor and only owns a sword with its hilt wrapped in straw. He taps his sword and sings, ‘Long blade (長鋏), let us go home, for there is no fish for food.’”⁶³ Poor as Feng was, it seems that he still kept a sword to show his difference from other commoners. His sword embodied his virtue and his worth, and stood as a symbol of his identity.

In the south, where most swords were manufactured, the role of the sword became ritualized and even mysticized. He Lu (闔閭 r. 514-496 B.C., originally Prince Guang, later King of Wu), was an admirer of swords and the owner of a collection. His name is inscribed on a number of swords excavated in modern times. In the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* (吳越春秋) a story is recorded about a sword

⁶⁰ Xue, Yaotian. *Wu Yue chunqiu yizhu* (吳越春秋譯注), v.2, <闔閭內傳第四>, “魚腸劍逆理不順, 不可服也.” p.84.

⁶¹ *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu* (春秋左傳注), <昭公二十三年> (519 B.C.), “莒子庚與虐而好劍, 苟鑄劍, 必試諸人.” p.1444.

⁶² *Zhouli zhushu* (周禮注疏) <考工記> “陶氏為劍: “上制, 上士服之, ...中制, 中士服之, ...下制, 下士服之.” p.961.

⁶³ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.5, <孟嘗君列傳>, p.2381. Translation based on *The Memoirs of Pre-Han China*, p.197.

which he ordered from Gan Jiang (干將), the greatest swordsmith of the late 6th century. Gan Jiang and his wife Mo Xie (莫邪) “extracted the metal ore from the five mountains” (五山之鐵精), waited until “the sun and the moon met each other” (陰陽同光) to begin the smelting, and then “employed three hundred young boys and girls to work the bellows and load the coal”. Mo Xie thereupon cut her nails and hair and threw them into the furnace to meld with the bronze.⁶⁴ The smelting operation was ritualized in this description. In the same account, we are told of the old belief that “magical ore could be melted only with human sacrifice”.⁶⁵ The story relates that Gan Jiang’s teacher and his wife sacrificed themselves in order to smelt ore for swords.

In another account, Gan Jiang and Mo Xie, along with their friend Ouye Zi (歐冶子), were invited by another great sword maker Fenghu Zi (風胡子) to work for the King of Chu. They made three swords: Longyuan (龍淵), Tai-e (泰阿) and Gongbu (工布). It is said that the sword named Tai-e later showed its miraculous power in battle. The *Yue Jue Shu* (越絕書) has the following story: The allied forces of Jin (晉) and Zheng (鄭) had surrounded a Chu (楚) city for three years. After King Zhao of Chu (楚昭王 r. 515–489 B.C.) obtained the Tai-e sword, he ascended the gate tower and waved the sword to launch a counterattack. The morale of his troops was roused and the siege of the city was finally raised. The surprised king then asked Fenghu Zi: “A sword is merely something made of metal: why should it have a spirit like this?” Fenghu Zi explained that the sword was activated by what was called the “spirit of the metal weapon” (藏兵之神): when it encountered the “spirit of a great king” (大王之神), the sword could produce a miraculous power.⁶⁶

A more bizarre and interesting story in the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* suggests that a sword even possessed the ability to make moral judgments. He Lu, the King of Wu, owned a sword called *Zhanlu* (湛盧), which he carried at his side. One day it suddenly flew from him to King Zhao of Chu. King Zhao of Chu called Fenghu Zi in again for explanation. Fenghu Zi told the king: “Since the sword is made of metal extract (五金之英) and the essence of the sun (太陽之精), it is endowed with intelligence. It adds to the majesty of the one who carries it, and can be used to resist enemies. However, if the lord who owns it engages in an unethical plot, the sword will disappear.”⁶⁷ Swords were the only ancient weapon upon which such mysterious powers were bestowed.

⁶⁴ *Wu Yue chunqiu* (吳越春秋), v. 2, <闔閭內傳第四>, “使童男童女三百人鼓囊裝炭,” p. 74.

⁶⁵ *ibid.* “神物之化, 須人而成,” p. 74.

⁶⁶ Yuan, Kang, *Yuejue shu* (越絕書), v. 11, <越絕外傳記寶劍>, “夫劍, 鐵耳, 固能有精神若此否?” p. 3.

⁶⁷ *Wu Yue chunqiu* (吳越春秋), v. 2, <闔閭內傳第四>, p. 84.

Writers of the pre-Qin era were fond of using the sword to convey their political and moral ideas. They were also attracted to swordsmanship itself, which was understandable in view of the high level of development the art had reached. Lie Zi (列子) has left a vivid description of swordsmanship:

There was a person called Lanzi (蘭子), who sought favor from Lord Yuan of Song (宋元君) for his skills. Lord Yuan called him in and asked him to show his skills. Lanzi took two stilts, which were twice as long as his height. He tied them to his legs and walked and ran on them. He also played with his seven short swords. He juggled them, keeping five swords in the air at one time. Lord Yuan was amazed by his performance and granted him gold and silk right away.^{68CC}

The scene is reminiscent of an acrobatic show. Lanzi was a general term for itinerant entertainers in pre-Qin and Han times. From the story we can perceive the effectiveness of swordsmanship in impressing a lord.

The most famous pre-Qin story of the art of the sword is preserved in the Han work *Wu Yue Chunqiu*. The protagonist of the story, Yuenu (越女), a swordswoman from the countryside of Yue (越), was summoned by the King of Yue to train his soldiers:

On her way north to see the king, Yuenu met an old man, who called himself Yuan Gong (袁公). Yuan asked Yuenu: "I have heard that you excel in swordsmanship. Can you show me this?" Yuenu answered: "I do not presume to anything, test me as you wish." Yuan then pulled up a bamboo cane. It looked withered and its upper culm was broken. Yuenu took the broken culm, while Yuan took the lower culm. Yuan began to thrust at Yuenu, who warded off three blows. When Yuenu fought back, Yuan jumped up to a tree, where he turned into a white ape.^{69DD}

Apart from the fact that a woman could attain such skill in swordsmanship, this account is significant in two respects. First, this exhibition of swordsmanship was not displayed through the

⁶⁸ *Liezi zhu* (列子注). 說符, p.94.

use of actual weapons, but through a substitute, in this case a piece of withered bamboo. This rendering became archetypal in later *xia* literature. Second, the Yuan (袁) of Yuan Gong is phonetically identical to *yuan* (猿), apes, or sometimes monkeys. The ancient Chinese believed that the ape (or monkey) was a nimble animal in movement. In the story, the swiftness of the old man served as a foil to show the skill of Yuenu. The display of supremacy by the protagonist through triumphing over unusually skilled opponents also became a topos in *xia* literature. After her dramatic encounter with the old man, Yuenu was honored as a guest of the King of Yue:

The King of Yue asked: "What is swordsmanship?" Yuenu answered: "I was born in a deep forest and grew up in an uninhabited wilderness. There is nothing I have not practiced or understood. Lords of the great world are all fond of swordsmanship and they praise it endlessly. What I have mastered was not learned from people, but learned through my own sudden enlightenment." The King of Yue asked: "Then what is its way?" Yuenu said: "Its way is very subtle and simple, its meaning is very profound and deep. Every path has its own boundaries and also has its *yin* and *yang*. Adjusting the boundaries causes the movement of *yin* and *yang*. The way of swordsmanship is to keep one's full vigor inside and to show calm outside. In appearance the swordsman looks like a quiet girl, but when he moves he looks like a terrifying tiger. He positions himself carefully and controls his breathing; he moves in accord with his mind. He disappears like the far away sun, and he returns like a leaping rabbit. In a flash he pursues the form and chases the shadow. Nothing can restrain him from moving wherever he wishes. He sweeps effortlessly over the ground without any hindrance. With this swordsmanship, one man can withstand a hundred, and one hundred can withstand ten thousand!"^{69E}

By time the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* was composed at the end of Eastern Han dynasty, the skill described in the above story had been idealized. However, the culture of swords and swordsmanship displayed in the story is identical with those earlier stories in this section in essence. This culture of swords and swordsmanship has thus been embellished and enriched constantly by writers like the author of the above description. It became an essential part of *xia* literature.

⁶⁹ *Wu Yue chunqiu* (吳越春秋) (Tainjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1992), v.8, <勾踐鑿謀外傳>, p.347.

⁷⁰ *ibid.* pp.347-8.

Chapter 2: The *Xia*: Their Emergence in History

The transformation the sword from weapon to cultural symbol was now largely complete. In the post-Han period, mystery and symbolism surrounding the sword were intensified. This will be taken up in Chapter Five.

第二章所引原文

^A 晉人或以廣隊不能進，楚人教之脫肩，少進，馬還，又教之拔旆投衡，乃出。顧曰：“吾不如大國之數奔也。”（左傳·宣公十二年）

^B 公子城以晉師至，... 將注，豹則關矣，... 豹射，出其間，將注，則又關矣。曰：“不狎鄙。”抽矢，城射之，殲。（左傳·昭公二十一年）

^C 宋公及楚人戰於泓，宋人既成列，楚人未既濟。司馬曰：“彼眾我寡，及其未濟也，請擊之。”公曰：“不可。”既濟而未成列，又以告。公曰：“未可。”既濟而後擊之，宋師敗績，公傷股，門人殲焉，國人皆咎公。公曰：“君子不重傷，不擒二毛，古之為軍也，不以阻隘也，寡人雖亡國之餘，不鼓不成列。”（左傳·僖公二十二年）

^D 夷考當時武士信仰之條件，可得十數端：一曰：常以國家名譽為重，有損於國家名譽者，刻不能忍；... 一曰：國家交涉，有損於國家權力者，以死爭之，不畏強御；... 一曰：苟殺其身而有意於國家者，必趨死無吝無畏；... 一曰：己身之名譽，或為他人所侵損輕蔑，則刻不能忍，然不肯為短見之自戕，不肯為懷忿之報復，務死於國事，以恢復武士之譽；... 一曰：對於所尊長，常忠實服從，雖然，苟其舉動有損於國家大計或名譽者，雖出自所尊長，亦常抗責之不肯假借，事定之後，亦不肯自寬其犯上之罪，而常以身殉之；... 一曰：有罪不逃刑；... 一曰：居是職也，必忠其職，常犧牲其身乃至犧牲其一切所愛以殉職；... 一曰：受人之恩者，以死報之；... 一曰：朋友有急難以相托者，常犧牲其身命及一切利益以救之；... 一曰：他人之急難，雖無與於我，然認為大義所在，大局所關者，則亦銳身自任之，而事成不居其功；... 一曰：與人共事，而一死可以保秘密，助其事之成立者，必趨死無吝無畏；... 一曰：死不累他人；... 一曰：死以成人之名；... 一曰：戰敗，寧死不為俘；... 一曰：其所尊親者死，則與俱死；... 一曰：其所遇之地位，若進退維谷，不能兩全者，則擇其尤合于義者為之，然事過之後，必以身殉，以明其不得已；... 一曰：其初志在必死以圖一事者，至事過境遷以後，無論其事或成或不成，而必殉之，以無負其志；... 一曰：一舉一動，務使可以為萬世法則，毋令後人誤學我以滋流弊。（中國之武士道）

^E 要而論之，則國家重於生命，朋友重於生命，職守重於生命，然諾重於生命，恩仇重於生命，名譽重於生命，道義重於生命，是即我先民腦識中最高尚純粹之理想，而當時社會上普通制習性也。（中國之武士道）

^F 楚有士曰申鳴，治園以養父母，孝聞於楚。王召之，申鳴辭不往。其父曰：“王欲用汝，何謂辭之？”申鳴曰：“何舍為子乃為臣乎？”其父曰：“使汝有祿於國，有位於廷，汝樂而我不憂矣，我欲汝之仕也。”申鳴曰：“諾。”遂之朝受命。楚王以為左司馬。其年，遇白公之亂，殺令尹子西，司馬子期，申鳴因以兵之衛。白公謂石乞曰：“申鳴，天下勇士也，今將兵，為之奈何？”石乞曰：“吾聞申鳴孝也，劫其父以兵，‘使人謂申鳴曰：’子與我則與子楚國，不與我則殺乃父。”申鳴流涕而應之曰：“始則父之子，今則君之臣，已不得為孝子矣，安得不為忠臣乎？”援桴鼓之，遂殺白公，其父亦死焉。王歸，賞之。申鳴曰：“受君之祿，避君之難，非忠臣也。正君之法，以殺其父，又非孝子也。行不兩全，名不兩立，悲乎！若此而生，亦何以示天下之士哉？”遂自刎而死。（韓詩外傳）

^G 季子將入，遇子羔將出，曰：“門已閉矣。”季子曰：“我姑至焉。”子羔曰：“弗及，不踐其難。”季子曰：“食焉，不避其難。”... 乃入。... 大子聞之，懼，下石乞孟駭敵子路，以戈擊之，斷纓。子路曰：“君子死，冠不免。”結纓而死。（左傳·哀公十五年）

^H 戰於峭也，晉梁弘御戎，萊駒為右。戰之明日，晉襄公縛秦囚，使萊駒以戈斬之。囚呼，萊駒失戈，狼廙取戈以斬囚，擒之以從公乘，遂以為右。箕之役，先軫黜之，而立續簡伯。狼廙怒，其友曰：“盍死之？”廙曰：“吾未獲死所。”其友曰：“吾與汝為難。”廙曰：“《周志》有

之：‘勇則害上，不登於明堂。’死而不義，非勇也。共用之謂勇。吾以勇求右，無勇而黜，亦其所也。謂上不我知，黜而宜，乃知我矣。子姑待之。’及彭衙，既陳，以其屬馳秦師，死焉。晉師從之，大敗秦師。君子曰：‘狼狽於是乎君子。……怒不作亂，而以從師，可謂君子矣。（左傳·文公二年）’

¹ 晉侯使郤克征會于齊。齊頃公韓婦人使觀之。郤克登，婦人笑於房。獻子怒，出而誓曰：‘所不此報，無能涉河！’（左傳·宣公十七年）

¹ 初，獻公使荀息傅奚齊。公疾，召之，曰：‘以是藐諸孤辱在大夫，其若之何？’稽首而對曰：‘臣竭其股肱之力，加之以忠貞。其濟，君之零也；不濟，則以死繼之。’…及里克將殺奚齊，先告荀息曰：‘三怨將作，秦晉輔之，子將何如？’荀息曰：‘將死之。’里克曰：‘無益也。’荀叔曰：‘吾與先君言矣，不可以貳。能欲復言而愛身乎？’…荀息死之。君子曰：‘詩所謂‘白圭之玷，尚可磨也；斯言之玷，不可為也。’荀息有焉。’（左傳·僖公九年）

¹ 季札之初使，北過徐君。徐君好季札劍，口弗敢言。季札心知之，為使上國，未獻。還至徐，徐君已死，於是乃解其寶劍，系之徐君冢樹而去。從者曰：‘徐君已死，尚誰予乎？’季子曰：‘不然。始吾心已許之，豈以死倍吾心哉！’（史記·吳太伯世家）

¹ 《楚平王》使城父司馬奮揚殺大子。未至，而使遺之。三月，大子建奔宋。王召奮揚，奮揚使城父人執己以至。王曰：‘言出於余口，入於爾耳，誰告建也？’對曰：‘臣告之。君王命臣曰：‘事建如事余。’臣不佞，不能苟貳，奉初以還，不忍後命，故遺之。既而悔之，亦無及已。’王曰：‘而敢來，何也？’對曰：‘使而失命，召而不來，是再奸也，逃無所入。’王曰：‘歸，從政如他日。’（左傳·昭公二十年）

¹ 宣子繆諫，公患之，使鋤鹿賊之。晨往，寢門辟矣，盛服將朝。尚早，坐而假寐。鹿退，嘆而言曰：‘不忘恭敬，民之主也。賊民之主，不忠；弃君之命，不信。有一於此，不如死也。觸槐而死。’（左傳·宣公二年）

¹ 奉之以車馬衣裳，多其資幣，使周游四方，以號召天下之賢士。（國語·齊語）

¹ 公子商人驟施于國，而多聚士，盡其家，貸于公有司以繼之。（春秋左傳注·文公十四年）

¹ 齊莊公朝，指殖綽郭最曰：‘是寡人之雄也。’…[崔杼]遂弑之(莊公)，賈舉、州綽、邴師、公孫放，封具、鐸父、襄伊、僕堙皆死。祝佗父祭于高唐，至，復命，不說弁而死于崔氏。申蒯，侍漁者，退謂其宰曰：‘爾以桴免，我將死。’其宰曰：‘免，是反子之義也。’與之皆死。…大史書曰：‘崔氏弑其君。’崔子殺之。其弟嗣書，而死者二人。其弟又書，乃舍之。…崔氏之亂，申鮮虞來奔，僕貨于野，以喪莊公。…求崔杼之尸，將戮之，不得。…人遷莊公，殯于大寢，以其棺尸崔杼于市。（左傳·襄公二十一年，二十四年，二十八年）

¹ 知起、中行喜、州綽、邢蒯出奔齊，皆樂氏之黨也。樂王鮒謂範宣子曰：‘盍反州綽邢蒯？勇士也。’宣子曰：‘彼為樂氏之勇也，余何獲焉？’王鮒曰：‘子為彼樂氏，乃亦子之勇也。’（左傳襄公二十一年）

¹ 豫讓者，晉人也。故嘗事範氏及中行氏，而無所知名。去而事智伯，智伯甚尊寵之。及智伯伐趙襄子，趙襄子與韓魏合謀滅智伯，滅智伯之后而三分其地。趙襄子最怨智伯，漆其頭以為飲器。豫讓遁逃山中，曰：‘嗟乎！士為知己者死，女為悅己者容。今智伯知我，我必為報仇而死，以報智伯，則吾魂魄不愧矣。’乃變名姓為刑人，入宮塗廁，中挾匕首，欲以刺襄子。襄子如廁，心動，執問塗廁之刑人，則豫讓，內持刀兵，曰：‘欲為智伯報仇！’左右欲誅之。襄子曰：‘彼義人也，吾謹避之耳。且智伯亡無后，而其臣欲為報仇，此天下之賢人也。’卒釋去之。居頃之，豫讓又漆身為厲，吞炭為啞，使形貌不可知，行乞于市，其妻不識也。行見其友，其友識之，曰：‘汝非豫讓邪？’曰：‘我是也。’其友為泣曰：‘以子之才，委質而臣事襄子，襄子必近幸子。近幸子，乃為所欲，顧不易邪？何乃殘身苦形，欲以求報襄子，不亦難乎！’豫讓曰：‘既已委質臣事人，而求殺之，是懷二心以事其君也。且吾所為者極難耳！然所以

爲此者，將以愧天下後世之人臣懷二心以事其君者也。“頃之，襄子當之，豫讓伏于所當過之橋下。襄子至橋，馬驚，襄子曰：“此必是豫讓也。使人問之，果豫讓也。于是襄子乃數豫讓曰：“子不嘗事範中行氏乎？智伯盡滅之，而子不爲報仇，而反委質臣于智伯，智伯亦已死矣，而子獨何以爲之報仇之深也？”豫讓曰：“臣事範中行氏，範中行氏皆衆人遇我，我故衆人報之。至于智伯，國士遇我，我故國士報之。”襄子喟然嘆息而泣曰：“嗟乎豫子！子之爲智伯，名即成矣，而寡人赦子，亦已足矣。子其自爲計，寡人不復釋子！”使兵圍之。豫讓曰：“……今日之事，臣固伏誅，然願請君之衣而擊之焉，以致報仇之意，則雖死不恨，非所敢望也，敢布腹心！”於是襄子大義之，乃使使持衣與豫讓，豫讓拔劍三躍而擊之，曰：吾可以下報智伯矣！遂伏劍自殺，死之日，趙國志士聞之，皆爲涕泣。（史記·刺客列傳）

^S 君之視臣如手足，則臣視君如腹心；君之視臣如犬馬，則臣之視君如國人；君之視臣如上芥，則臣之視君如寇仇。（孟子·雜婁）

^T 齊崔杼弑莊公，邢蒯賈使晉而反，其僕曰：“崔杼弑莊公，子將奚如？”邢蒯賈曰：“驅之，將人死而報君。”其僕曰：“君之無道也，四鄰諸侯莫不聞也。以夫子而之死之，不亦難乎？”邢蒯賈曰：“善能言也，然亦晚矣。子早言我，我能諫之；諫不聽，我能去。今既不諫，又不去，吾聞食其祿者死其事，吾既食亂君之祿矣，又安得治君而之死之？”遂驅車入死。其僕曰：“人有亂君，人猶死之，我有治長，可毋死乎？”乃結轡自刎於車上。（說苑·立節篇）

^U 莊公通焉，驟如崔氏，以崔氏之冠賜人。侍者曰：“不可”。公曰：“不爲崔氏，其無冠乎？”崔氏因是怒公，...遂弑之，...晏子立于崔氏之門外，其人曰：“死乎？”曰：“...故君爲社稷死，則死之；爲社稷亡，則亡之。若爲己死，而爲己亡，非其私昵，誰敢任之？”（左傳·襄公二十五年）

^V 其帶劍者，聚徒屬，立節操，以顯其名而犯五官之禁。（韓非子·五蠹）

^W 以其犯禁也罪之，而多其有勇也。毀譽、賞罰之所加者相與悖謬也，故法禁壞而民愈亂。今兄弟被侵必攻者廉也，知友被辱隨仇者貞也，廉貞之行成，而君上之法犯矣。人主尊貞廉之行，而忘犯禁之罪，故民程於勇而吏不能勝也。不事力而衣食則謂之能，不戰功而尊則謂之賢，賢能之行成而兵弱而地荒矣。人主悅賢能之行，而忘并弱地荒之禍，則私行立而公利滅矣。（韓非子·五蠹）

^X 弃官寵交謂之有俠，...有俠者，官職曠也。...人臣肆意陳欲曰俠。（韓非子·八說）

^Y 荀悅曰：“立氣節，作威福，結私交，以立強于世者，謂之游俠。”如淳曰：“相于信爲任，同是非爲俠。”所謂“權行州里，力折公侯”者也。或曰：“任，氣力也，俠，俦也。”按俠之言夾也，夾者，持也。經傳多假俠爲夾，凡夾者用俠。（說文解字注）

^Z 已に佩刀を鋏と謂う事が認められるならば、游俠の俠は必然之と関係するものである。即ち鋏を帶する者が俠である。（中國古代史論·游俠に就て）

^{AA} 馮諼聞孟嘗君好客，躡鞶而見之，...孟嘗君置傳舍，十日，孟嘗君問傳舍長曰：“客何所爲？”答曰：“馮先生甚貧，猶有一劍耳，又蒯緌，彈其劍而歌曰：‘長鋏歸來乎，食無魚。’”（史記·孟嘗君列傳）

^{BB} 湛盧之劍，惡閭閻之無道也，乃去而出，水行如楚，楚昭王卧而寤，得吳王湛盧之劍于床。昭王不知其故，乃召風胡子，...風胡子曰：“臣聞越王元常使歐冶子造劍五枚，以示薛燭，燭對曰：“...一名湛盧，五金之英，太陽之精，寄氣托靈，出之有神，服之有威，可以折冲拒敵，然人君有逆理之謀，其劍即出，故去無道以就有道。””（吳越春秋·闔閭內傳）

^{CC} 宋有蘭子者，以技干宋元，宋元召而使見其技，以雙枝長倍其身，屬其脛，并趨并馳，弄七劍，迭而躍之，五劍常在空，元君大驚，立賜金帛。（列子·說符）

^{DD} 處女將北見于王，道逢一翁，自稱曰袁公，問于處女：“吾聞子善劍，願一見之。”女曰：“妾不敢有所隱，唯公試之。”公即挽林杪之竹，似枯槁，末折墮地，女接取其末，袁公操其本，而刺處女，處女應節入之三。女因舉杖擊之，袁公飛上樹，化爲白猿。（吳越春秋·勾踐陰謀外傳）

^{EE} 越王問曰：“夫劍之道則何如？”女曰：“妾生深林之中，長于無人之野，無道不習不達，諸侯竊好擊之道，誦之不休，妾非受于人也，而忽自有之。”越王曰：“其道如何？”女曰：“其道甚微而易，其意甚幽而深。道有門戶，亦有陰陽。開門閉戶，陰衰陽興。凡手戰之道，內實精神，外示安儀，見之如好婦，奪之似懼虎，布形候氣，與神懼往，杳之若日，偏如騰兔，追形逐影，光若佛仿，呼吸往來，不及法禁，縱橫逆順，值復不聞。斯道者，一人當百，百人當萬。”（吳越春秋·勾踐陰謀外傳）

Chapter 3: *Xia* : Historical Development

Scholars of later ages often associated the *xia* with Confucians, Mohists and bandits, because of various similarities between the *xia* and these groups. I propose to deal with the question in this chapter. Through analyzing the relations between these groups, I will show how the *xia* developed and eventually became a prominent political and military force during the era of the Warring States.

Confucians and *xia*

Confucians and the *xia* both arose from the *shi* when that class split into military and civilian camps in the early Chunqiu (770-476 B.C.). Society was then undergoing dramatic changes. The original highly hereditary system of public service (公室) was disintegrating.¹ Many warriors and ritualists could not find a career. They began to work for private houses (私門), many of which had replaced the old aristocratic houses to become the dominant forces in the former vassal states. From these warriors came the earliest group of *xia*, who provided services for their masters, such as fighting in battle or conducting an assassination. And from the ritualists came the earliest *ru* (儒), later called Confucians.

In many respects, Confucians and *xia* were different. Firstly, Confucianism was established as a school of thought, and Confucians were scholars interested in contemplation and persuasion, while the *xia* were commonly impulsive and inclined to use force to solve problems. Secondly, Confucians were more concerned about their own moral virtue and, if necessary, were prepared to resign themselves to a state of solitude and obscurity, while the *xia* were more anxious to be appreciated and to show their courage and ability. Thirdly, Confucians sought to construct an ideal society and thus had respect for the law and order of society, while the *xia* were inclined to challenge or even destroy law and order, and were prepared to sacrifice themselves for the sake of personal loyalty, integrity and comradeship.

¹ For changes in the Zhou society, see Cho-yun Hsu *Ancient China in Transition*, Chapter 2: *Changes in Social Stratification*, pp.25-52.

However, since both Confucians and *xia* originated from the same *shi* class, they bore some similarities. They shared certain ideological precepts, moral principles and behavioral codes. During the early development of Confucianism, many Confucians were either born into a warrior family or trained as warriors at a some period in their life. As mentioned in Chapter One, Confucius himself was well trained in archery and charioteering. There is an account in the *Li Ji* which says that, “when Confucius performed his archery in the Juexiang Garden (矍相之圃), spectators stood round like a wall.”² Military training was a basic part of the Confucian curriculum. It was common among Confucians to have a command of at least one martial art, such as archery or charioteering. However, Confucians, unlike warriors and the *xia*, believed that there were better ways to settle social and interstate conflicts and that the military way was usually the least desirable one.

Courage, keeping one’s promises and willingness to die for one’s convictions, which formed the core of *xia* morality, were also essential components of the ideal Confucian personality. When Zilu asked his master about true maturity (成人), Confucius gave the following answer:

At the sight of profit, the mature man would think about righteousness. In a critical moment, he would be ready to sacrifice himself for saving others. He would never forget the promise he made earlier. These three aspects form true maturity.^{3A}

These three traits of the ideal Confucian man can be expressed in the concepts: *yi* (義), *yong* (勇) and *xin* (信), or righteousness, courage and faith. These were also important elements of the ideal *xia* personality. However, despite the apparent similarity of these notions, further analysis reveals differences among them. When Confucians talked about righteousness, they meant “moral propriety” and “ethical behavior”, while the *xia* saw it as “personal loyalty” and “comradeship”. On many occasions, Confucius pointed out that the soul of courage was righteousness. He advocated courage that was guided by principle and righteousness. He made himself very clear on this point when he answered Zilu’s question about whether a gentleman should exalt prowess as a virtue: “A gentleman should exalt righteousness first and foremost. If a gentleman delights in

² Wang, Mengou. *Liji jinzhu jinyi* (禮記今注今譯) (Taipei: Taiwan shuangwu yinshuguan, 1984), <射義>, “孔子射於矍相之圃，蓋觀者如牆堵。” p.989.

³ *Lunyu zhushu* (論語注疏) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), <憲問>, p.2511.

prowess and lacks righteousness, disorder results; if an ordinary man delights in prowess, and lacks righteousness, banditry results.”^{4B} Confucius was very critical of those “who are by nature endowed with prowess but fail to use it to defend their state on the battlefield, and instead use it to infringe upon others and vent personal spite.”⁵ He included these people with four other groups as the “five *shi*” (士有五), an enumeration used later by Han Fei in his “five vermin” (五蠹). But compared to Han’s fierce attack on the *xia*, Confucius’ criticism was implicit rather than specified.

Confucius seems to have had his own model of courage. In answer to Zilu’s question about the ideal personality, he mentioned the “courage of Bian Zhuangzi” (卞莊子之勇).⁶ Bian was a warrior of Lu (魯). While his mother was alive, he suffered three defeats in battle and did not commit suicide as a warrior should. His friends all criticized him, and the Lord of Lu humiliated him. After his mother died, a war between Lu and Qi (齊) broke out. Bian went to the commander of Lu and asked to join the army. He said, “In the past, because I had to take care of my mother, I suffered three defeats. Now that my mother has passed away, it is time to atone for my defeats and to address my proper duties.” He went to the battle front and killed three Qi soldiers as his three acts of atonement. The army commander asked him to stop fighting for fear he would be killed. Bian said, “I have endured the humiliation of three defeats for the sake of supporting my mother. That was done out of my duty as a son. Now I have fulfilled my duty as a warrior. I have heard that a warrior of integrity will not live with humiliation.” He rushed back to the front and died after killing ten more enemies.^{7C} For Confucians, filial duty was the most fundamental duty of the human being. Bian Zhuangzi would endure humiliation in order to fulfill this duty. Later he also proved his competence and courage as a warrior. Confucius regarded this kind of principled courage as the highest courage.

Among the early Confucians, especially the disciples of Confucius, there was no lack of men of courage like Bian Zhuangzi. These men bore a resemblance to the *xia* in spirit and were called by later historians “*ruxia*” (儒俠), or Confucian *xia*. Some of them came from former *xia*, like Zilu. In his biography in the *Shi Ji* he is presented as follows:

⁴ *Lunyu zhushu* (論語注疏), “陽貨”, p.2526.

⁵ Han, Ying. *Hanshi waizhuan jishi* (韓詩外傳集釋) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), “資勇悍者，不以衛上攻戰，而反以侵凌私斗。” p.71.

⁶ *Lunyu zhushu* (論語注疏), <憲問>, “子路問成人。子曰：若... 卞莊子之勇。” p.2511.

⁷ Liu, Xiang. *Xin xu* (新序) (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1933), <義勇篇>, p.37.

Zilu was blunt. He delighted in prowess and strength and was forthright in disposition. Wearing a rooster-hat and carrying a sword ornamented with pig-skin, he bullied and humiliated Confucius. Confucius established the rites and gradually influenced Zilu. Later, Zilu dressed as a scholar, presented his pledge, and asked to become a student through one of the Master's disciples.^{8D}

Zilu's *xia* disposition remained unchanged after he became a Confucian. When asked what he liked best, he said that it was a long sword.⁹ When asked what his aspiration was, he said: "I wish my friends to share my carriage and clothes, and to have no regret even if they are used up."¹⁰ The practice of sharing was of course not limited to the *xia*, but for the *xia* it was a principal feature of their way of life. Courage and endurance were the outstanding traits in Zilu's character. Zilu once said:

I do not believe that a *shi* who is unable to bear hardship, disregard death and feel content with poverty can claim that he is able to carry out righteousness.^{11E}

Zilu's approach to life and death, which was mentioned in the previous chapter, proved that he lived up to his ideal. Confucius often praised his courage and resoluteness, and even once sighed: "If my social ideals do not prevail and I were to get upon a raft and float about the sea, Zilu will probably be the person to accompany me."¹² Confucius' remark might have been just a momentary burst of emotion, but there is no doubt that the master was deeply impressed by the prowess of his student. Upon hearing of Zilu's death, Confucius lamented: "Ever since I have had Zilu at my side, I have not heard malicious words."¹³ Zilu was a devoted Confucian but never hesitated in using his sword to defend his master and his principles as well.

⁸ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.5, <仲尼弟子列傳> (Teipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1987), p.2229. See translation in *The Grand Scribe's Records*, Volume VII: *The Memoirs of Pre-Han China*, p.67.

⁹ *Shuo yuan* (說苑) (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1933), <達本>: "孔子謂子路曰: '汝何好?' 子路曰: '好長劍.'" p.54.

¹⁰ *Lunyu zhushu* (論語注疏), <公冶長>, p.2475.

¹¹ *Hanshi waizhuan jishi* (韓詩外傳集釋), p.66.

¹² *Lunyu zhushu* (論語注疏), <公冶長>, "子曰: 道不行, 乘桴浮於海, 從我者其由歟。" p.2473. See translation in *The Grand Scribe's Records*, Volume VII: *The Memoirs of Pre-Han China*, Note 30, p.67

¹³ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.5, <仲尼弟子列傳>, "自我得由, 惡言不聞於耳。", p.2230. See translation in *The Memoirs of Pre-Han China*, p.69.

Dantai Mieming (澹臺滅明) (b. 512 B.C.) was another student of Confucius who is often used as an example of the *xia* disposition. After studying with Confucius, he went south to the region of the Yangtze River, where he formed a highly disciplined group of three hundred followers to promote Confucianism. His name spread widely across the vassal states.¹⁴ He became a legendary figure, leaving behind many memories of his exploits. One story tells of the time he encountered two flood dragons when he was on a boat carrying a very precious jade. He told the monsters that he would only yield to reason and would never submit to force. Then he fought with the monsters and killed them. He also destroyed the jade and threw it to the river.¹⁵ In this legend Dantai is remembered as a man of bravery and integrity.

There were other accomplished warriors among Confucius' disciples. In the eighth year of Duke Ai of Lu (魯哀公) (487 B.C.), the state of Wu (吳) invaded Lu. Weifu (微虎), a Lu *dafu*, recruited people from his seven hundred subordinates to form a private army to attack the King of Wu's camp at night. He finally selected three hundred capable warriors, Confucius' disciple Youruo (有若 508-457 B.C.) among them.¹⁶ Three years later, when Lu was invaded by Qi (齊), Ranqiu (冉求 b. 522 B.C.) led the Lu army and drove the invaders across the border, while Fanchi (樊遲 b.505 B.C.) stood beside him in the chariot as his assistant. Confucius was very proud of his two students.¹⁷ After the victory, Ranqiu was asked whether his capability as a commander was from training or from inheritance. He replied that he had received his military training from Confucius.¹⁸

According to Han Fei, after the death of Confucius the Confucian school was divided into eight groups or factions. One of these was the "Qidiao Confucians" (漆雕之儒). They were described as "accepting death with complete ease," and as "having the courage to denounce their lord when the truth is on their side."¹⁹ Mencius once described a Qidiao Confucian, Beigong You (北宮黶), as follows:

¹⁴ *ibid.* "南游至江，從弟子三百人，設取予去就，各施乎諸侯。" pp.2241-2.

¹⁵ *Shiji huizhu kaozheng* (史記會注考證) (Taipei: Hongshi chubanshe, 1977), <仲尼弟子列傳> quotes *Kuodi zhi* (括地志), p.885.

¹⁶ *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu* (春秋左傳注) (Taipei: Yuanliu chubanshe, 1982), <哀公八年> (487 B.C.), p.1649.

¹⁷ *ibid.* <哀公十一年> (484 B.C.), "冉求帥左師，... 樊遲爲右，... 孔子曰義也。" pp.1659-61.

¹⁸ *Shiji jinzhū* (史記今注), v.4, <孔子世家>,"季康子曰：「子之於軍旅，學之乎？性之乎？」冉有曰：「學之於孔子。」" p.1985.

¹⁹ *Han Fei-zi jishi* (韓非子集釋) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), v.19, <顯學>,"不色撓，不目逃，... 行直則怒於諸侯。" p.1085.

This was the way Beigong You nourished valor: when a thrust was made at his body, he did not dodge; when a thrust was made at his eye, there was not even a blink. He regarded a hair being torn from his head as a flogging in the open market place. He would accept no more from the lord of a powerful state than from an outcast. He looked upon the stabbing of the lord of a powerful state as no different from the stabbing of an outcast. He was unawed in the presence of a feudal lord. When he was cursed, he swore back.^{20H}

Modern scholars like Guo Moruo (郭沫若), Qian Mu (錢穆) and Ren Jiyu (任繼愈 1916-) all believe that Beigong came from the Qidiao Confucians. Guo and Ren further claim that the Qidiao Confucians were *xia*.²¹ The Qidiao Confucians deviated from the mainstream Confucianism of the time by taking a combative attitude towards society and its ruling class, which they thought corrupt. They had a radical ideology and advocated violence in opposing violent oppression. In their ideology and conduct, especially their resolute and steadfast disposition, we can find survivals of the warrior-dominant *shi* mentality. The Qidiao Confucians were the military wing of the Confucian school. In this regard, they were closer to the short-tempered and confrontational *xia*.

The radical ideology of the Qidiao Confucians can be traced back to early Confucianism, which itself had a close relationship with the military *shi* class. The *Ruxing Pian* (儒行篇), or *Behavior of A Confucian*, a Han text incorporating earlier sources, records Confucius as expressing his ideal in these words:

Though a Confucian may be offered valuable articles and wealth, or inundated with delights and pleasures, he would never disregard his sense of righteousness at the prospect of benefit; though he may be forced by a multitude or threatened by weapons, he would look death in the face without changing his moral principles. He would fight with fierce animals without regard to his own ability; and he would lift heavy tripods without regard

²⁰ Mencius. *Mengzi zhushu* (孟子注疏) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), v.3, <公孫丑>, p.2685. See translation in James Ware, *The Sayings of Mencius*, p.42.

²¹ See Guo Moruo *Shi pipan shu* (十批判書) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1954), pp.128-9, Qian Mu *XianQin zhuzi xinian* (先秦諸子系年) (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian 1992), pp.80-81, Ren Jiyu *Zhongguo zhexue fazhanshi: XianQin juan* (中國哲學發展史·先秦卷) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1983), pp.276-7.

to his own strength. He has no regret about what he has done in the past, nor does he hesitate about what he will do in the future.²²

If this were to be entitled “The *Xia* Ideal”, it would still be apt. Thus we can see why some scholars have suggested that the pre-Qin *xia* and Confucians (in particular a group like the Qidiao Confucians) were similar in their ideology, ethics and behavioral code. This similarity was ignored once the Han dynasty classified the *xia* as outlaws while reconstructing Confucianism to be the official ideology. Confucians and the *xia* were sharply contrasted to each other, as we will see in Chapter Four. But when the *xia* were idealized and remolded in later literature, the similarity between them and Confucians was explored anew. Many writers, consciously or otherwise, portrayed their *xia* heroes as infused with Confucian idealism.

Mohists and *xia*

Another prominent body of thinkers, known as Mohists, also originated from the *shi* class in the late Chunqiu period, but they appear to have come from the military wing of the *shi*. Feng Youlan in *The Origins of Confucians and Mohists* (原儒墨) claimed that after the collapse of the Zhou feudal system there arose a group of military specialists whose sole profession was fighting. Mohists, Feng said, came from this group.²³ His view is supported by solid documentary evidence and is today accepted by many researchers.

The Mohists originated contemporary to the Confucians, but they developed into a “*xianxue*” (顯學), or mainstream school, only some time later when Mo Di (墨翟) (c. 480-c 390 B.C.) became their leader. Mo Di is usually associated with such ideas as “universal love” (兼愛) and “anti-warfare” (非戰), but he devoted fully one-third of his long work, the *Mo Zi* (墨子), to military principles, especially those of defense. His solution to the problem of constant warfare lay in effective defense. He diagnosed seven problems as perils fatal to a state, three of them caused by an ineffective defense policy.²⁴ Therefore, strong defense should be the first priority of a state.

²² *Liji jinzhuyi jinyi* (禮記今注今譯) (Taipei: Taiwan shuangwu yinshuguan, 1984), <禮記>, p.951. See translation in James Legge, *Li Chi: Book of Rites*, p.404.

²³ *Sansongtang xueshu wenji* (三松堂學術文集) (Beijing: University of Beijing Press, 1984), <原儒墨>, p.321.

²⁴ Sun, Yirang, *Mozi jiangou* (墨子間詁) (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1986), <七患>, pp.13-4.

Mo Di had over three hundred disciples and followers, and it is well established that the major component of his curriculum was defense strategy and tactics. The following episode is recorded in his work. A native of Lu (魯) once sent his son to Mo Di to receive military training. Later his son was killed in a battle. The man put the blame on Mo Di for the loss of his son. Mo Di argued in response: "You sent your son to learn defensive skills and he did so. Now he is dead in battle and you are furious [at me]. That is like wanting to sell grain, but being angry when the grain is sold."²⁵ On another occasion, when he heard that the powerful state of Chu (楚) was about to attack its small neighbor Song (宋), Mo Di hurried to the King of Chu to prevent this, and sent an army of three hundred of his defense-specialist students to render aid to Song.²⁶

However, the Mohist group was not a group of mercenaries, who would fight for whoever employed them. Nor were they simply warriors. They prided themselves on being warriors of conviction who fought for a world of universal love (兼愛) and non-aggression (非攻). In his essay *Lu Wen* (魯問), or the *Lu Dialogue*, Mo Di writes:

I used to think about farming and feeding all the people, but at most what I could have done would be the work of a single farmer. If the produce was distributed to everyone in the world, no one would receive more than a liter of grain. Thus it is obvious that one liter of grain per person cannot end starvation in the world. I used to think about weaving and making clothes for all the people, but at most what I could have done would be the work of a single woman. If the cloth was distributed to the world, no one would obtain more than one foot of cloth. Then it is obvious that obtaining one foot of cloth cannot warm all those who are cold in the world. I used to think about wearing armor and carrying weapons to solve the princes' difficulties, but at most what I could have offered would be the service of one man. It is clear that one man cannot resist a whole army. I think it is better to recite the doctrines of the ancient kings and seek their meaning; and to know the sayings of the sages and examine their writings. First I should explain them to the lords and princes, next to the common people. If the lords and princes adopt my words, their states will be well managed; if the common people adopt my words, their conduct will be cultivated.²⁷

²⁵ *ibid.* <魯問>, p.286.

²⁶ *ibid.* <公輸>, p.293-5.

²⁷ *ibid.* <魯問>, p.286-7.

From this statement, a major difference between Confucians and Mohists emerges. Confucians emphasized the importance of cultivating individual moral character. They followed a route starting from cultivation of the self and management of one's household to running a state and bringing peace and order to the world (修身齊家治國平天下). Mo Di and his followers preferred to start their work at the top of the political order to achieve maximum success.

Mohists were closer to the *xia* but they differed from them in three major ways. First, Mohists did not believe the prowess of one warrior could change things significantly. They stood for the collective effort and moral consciousness of the *shi* class. Second, they fought for the public welfare and were strongly opposed to serving *sishi* (私室), the private houses, for reasons of personal gain. Third, they were well organized and highly disciplined. Mohist groups in the pre-Qin era displayed a strong esprit de corps, with which neither Confucians nor *xia* could identify.

Among the various pre-Qin schools of thought, Mohists were the most action oriented. Thus Mo Di and Mohists were later called "Moxia" (墨俠), or Mohist *xia*. The eminent Qing scholar Kang Youwei (康有為 1858-1927) even claimed that "the *xia* actually were Mohists", two different names existing for the same group.²⁸ In order to support his argument, Kang listed in his chapter "Research on the disciples and followers of Mo and Lao" (墨老弟子後學考) fifty-six Mohists from the Warring States period through the Eastern Han (東漢) (25-220) whom he claimed were concurrently *xia*.²⁹

More significantly, when the Mohist School disappeared from the mainstream thought after the Han dynasty, some of its teachings took root in the lower levels of society, and became an essential part of the ideology of the commonality. This coincided with the suppression of the *xia* by the Han authorities, after which the *xia* went underground, where they struggled to maintain their strength among the common people. Features of Mohism and the *xia* way of life, such as the sense of equality and spirit of rebellion, were gradually absorbed into the ideology of the Chinese peasantry.

From Mo Di's own words the following parallels between the Mohists and the *xia* may be made:

²⁸ Kang, Youwei. *Kongzi gaizhi kao* (孔子改制考) (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1920), 儒學最盛并稱考, v. 18, p.2.

²⁹ *ibid.*, 墨老弟子後學考, v.6, p.2.

Courage. Like the *xia*, the earliest Mohists were primarily from the pre-Qin warrior class, and courage was the kernel of the Mohist character. In his essay “*Xiu Shen*” (修身), or Self-Cultivation, Mo Di wrote: “Although a worthy warrior (君子) may be part of a formation in battle, courage is his soul.”³⁰ It was recorded that there were one hundred and eighty experienced warriors in the Mohist group who could be sent to any dangerous battlefield and would have no hesitation in fighting to their death.³¹ Mo Di and his disciples were best known for their defense of small and weak states.

Sharing. Both Mohists and *xia* developed the credo of “sharing with others”, especially those in poverty and distress. Mo Di once explained *yi* (義), or righteousness, as “using one’s physical strength to serve others, and sharing one’s personal wealth with others.”³² He further called on those who had extra wealth “to distribute it to the poor”, otherwise, he warned ill-fortune would be the result.³³ Mohists did not make comrades of people “who are rich but unwilling to share their wealth.”³⁴ Their goal was to establish an equal and mutually beneficial society. A story in the *Mo Zi* tells that Mo Di’s student, Geng Zhuzi (耕柱子), once obtained ten catties of gold which he gave to Mo Di as the common possession of the group.³⁵ To share good fortune with others (有福同享) later became a major component of the social morality followed by the *xia*, vagabonds, bandits and rebels.

Selfless comradeship. Ren (任): the spirit of *xia*. Apart from some members of the Logician school (名家), Mo Di was one of the few thinkers of the time who tried to explain and clarify the terms and concepts he used in his works. Many of his essays, such as *Jing Shang* (經上) and *Jing Xia* (經下), are of this type. Mo Di was probably the first major pre-Qin thinker to analyze the *xia* phenomenon in terms *ren* (任). The word is often used with *xia* as *renxia* (任俠), which can be read as “to conduct a *xia* act” (verb and object), or simply a reduplicative noun: “*ren* and *xia*” (noun and noun). In the *Jing Shang* Mo Di wrote: “*ren* means that a *shi* will jeopardize himself (if

³⁰ *Mozi jiangou* (墨子問詁), <修身>, “君子雖戰有陣, 而勇為本焉.” p.4.

³¹ *Huainanzi zhu* (淮南子注) (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1986), <秦族訓>, “墨子服役者百八十人, 皆可使赴火蹈刃, 死不還踵.” p.357.

³² *Mozi jiangou* (墨子問詁), <魯問>, “所謂義者, 亦有力以勞人, 有財以分人.” p.286.

³³ *ibid.* “多財則以分貧也, ... 多財而不以分貧, 二不祥也.” p.289.

³⁴ *ibid.* <修身>, “據財不能以分人者, 不足與友.” p.6.

³⁵ *ibid.* <耕柱>, p.258.

necessary) in promoting what he stands for.”³⁶ He further elaborated it as: “*ren* is doing what one abhors oneself to relieve the plight of others.”³⁷ Two points of clarification may be added: 1) Mo Di pointed out that it was the *shi* (士) whose conduct was characterized by *ren*. 2) The “others”, whose plight was to be relieved, were the comrades of the “*shi*”. This latter point is supported by Ru Chun’s (如淳) explanation of the word. “Having faith in each other is called *ren* (相與信爲任).”³⁸ Mo Di was obviously talking about the comradeship of *xia* warriors. Selflessness is the basis of *ren*. The spirit of *ren* reflected the best aspects of the warrior morality: self-sacrifice, comradeship, altruism and heroism. *Ren* was embodied in the moral codes of both Mohists and the *xia*.

Pursuit of reputation. Mohists were concerned about their good reputation. In his essay *Xiu Shen*, Mo Di wrote: “A name never comes from nowhere, nor does fame grow by itself.” Therefore, “a wise person is farsighted and never speaks too much, is vigorous and never boasts of his achievements; thus he can spread his fame in the world.”^{39M} For Mohists, a good reputation was crucial to promotion of their cause. They were also aware that extraordinary commitment and determination, sometimes even the sacrifice of their lives, might be required to gain reputation. In the *Lushi Chunqiu* (呂氏春秋), there is a story showing how Mohists gave up their own lives in order to fulfill their duty and maintain their reputation:

Meng Sheng (孟勝), the leader of a Mohist group, was a friend of Lord Yangcheng (湯城君) of Chu (楚). The lord entrusted Meng with the task of defending his fief. He cut a jade [into two halves] as a tally. [He gave one half of the tally to Meng] and told him “to submit only to the person who holds the other half of the tally.” When the King of Chu died, his ministers attacked General Wu Qi (吳起 440-381 B.C.) and killed him in the king’s cemetery. Lord Yangcheng was one of the attackers. The new king condemned them. Lord Yangcheng fled from the state. The king ordered that the fief be taken over. Meng said: “I have been entrusted with the fief, and have promised to give it to the person who has the other half of the tally. The tally has not been shown, but I do not have the strength to resist the seizure. The only proper course is for me to die.” His disciple Xu Ruo (徐弱) remonstrated with him by saying: “If your death will benefit Lord Yangcheng, it is proper

³⁶ *ibid.*, <經上>, “任, 士損己而益所爲也.” p.192.

³⁷ *ibid.*, <經說上>, “任, 爲身之所惡以成人之平急.” p.204.

³⁸ *Shuowen jiezi zhu* (說文解字注) (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1981), p.373.

³⁹ *Mozi jiangou* (墨子間詁), <修身>, p.6.

to die. [Your death] will not benefit him, but will bring an end to Mohist in the world. It is not right!" Meng said: "You are wrong. For Lord Yangcheng, I am his friend if not his mentor, or his subject if not his friend. If I do not die, from now on nobody will seek responsible mentors from our Mohists, nor will anybody seek worthy friends from our Mohists, nor will any lord seek good subjects from our Mohists. To die is to carry out the Mohist principles and to carry on the Mohist cause. I will pass the leadership to Tian Xiangzi (田襄子) of Song (宋). He is a worthy man. There is no need to worry that Mohists will perish from the earth." Xu said: "It is exactly as you said. I request that I die first to prepare the road for you." Then he killed himself in front of Meng. Meng sent two people to pass the Mohist leadership to Tian Xiangzi. He then committed suicide, followed by his one hundred and eighty-three disciples. After the two messengers had completed their mission, they wanted to go back to Chu to die for Meng. Tian Xiangzi tried to stop them going back by saying: "Master Meng has already passed the leadership to me!" But they did not listen, and returned and died [for Meng].⁴⁰

Meng Sheng and his Mohist followers valued duty, promise and reputation above their lives. As their founding master Mo Di once said: "Words must be kept faithfully and actions must be executed resolutely."⁴¹ Kang Youwei made a comment on this incident by saying: "The Mohists were knightly in manner. [Meng] died for a friend who lost his fief, and the number of Meng's disciples who died for him numbered to over one hundred. They disregarded their own lives and dedicated themselves to loyalty."⁴²

Xia and bandits, vagabonds and outlaws

The history of bandits, *dao* (盜), and vagabonds, *liumang* (流氓), is as old as that of the *xia*. In contrast to the *xia*, whose earlier generations were generally warriors educated and active in mainstream society, the former were considered to be social deviants coming mostly from the bottom level of society.

⁴⁰ *Lushi chunqiu* (呂氏春秋) (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1986). 雜俗覽·上總, p.243.

⁴¹ *Mozi jiangou* (墨子間詁), 兼愛>, "言必信, 行必果." p.73.

⁴² *Kongzi gaizhi kao* (孔子改制考), 墨老弟子後學考, p.3.

As already mentioned, cities in the early Zhou functioned as strongholds and castles of the Zhou conquerors, from which the armed colonization of neighboring lands was carried out. This situation changed in the time of Chunqiu. A city seems no longer to have meant *cheng* (城), or wall, but was now understood as a combination of *cheng* and *shi* (市), or market. Cities were not only political and military capitals but also commercial and trade centers, capable of accommodating a large population of permanent and floating residents. Expansion of cities provided the *xia* and vagabonds with the ideal atmosphere for their development, since both groups had broken away from farming and the land. At the same time, social upheaval had displaced many aristocrats and commoners, further increasing the flow of population to the cities.

It was primarily from displaced peasants and warriors that organized *dao*, or bandit, groups emerged. Besides these two sources, *dao* also came from the aristocracy itself, as the *Chunqiu Guliang Zhuan* (春秋谷梁傳), a pre-Qin commentary of the *Chun Qiu*, indicates: "There were three types of *dao* in the Chunqiu: those who murdered ministers secretly, those who took what they did not deserve, and those who deviated from the right way of the Central Kingdom (中國) to obtain benefit."⁴³ Many accounts in the *Zuo Zhuan* show where *dao* came from and how they were on occasion used as a significant force in power struggles. For instance, in about the tenth year of Duke Xiang of Lu (魯襄公十年 562 B.C.), the state of Zheng (鄭) was controlled by a powerful minister named Zisi (子驪):

Zisi and Weizhi (尉止) had had disputes in the past. When Zheng was preparing to resist the allied troops of the rival states, [Zisi] reduced the number of chariots which Weizhi was entitled to lead. When Weizhi took captives, Zisi had another dispute with him. Zisi accused him of "using chariots not prescribed by rite", and prevented him from presenting his captives. Formerly Zisi had seized lands from the Si (司), Du (堵), Hou (侯) and Zishi (子師) clans on the pretext of constructing an irrigation system. Therefore those five clans assembled all those who were discontented with Zisi, and allied themselves with the followers of the four princes, [who had been killed by Zisi two years earlier]. At this time Zisi as chief minister controlled the state, with [his protégés] Ziguo (子國) in the office of Sima (司馬), Zier (子耳) in Sikong (司空) and Zikong (子孔) in Situ (司徒). In the late fall of

⁴³ *Chunqiu guliang zhuan zhushu* (春秋谷梁傳注疏) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), "襄公四年" "春秋有三盜，微杀大夫謂之盜，非所取而取之謂之盜，辟中国之正道以褻利謂之盜。" p.2449.

the year, Weizhi (尉止) and his comrades led the rebels into the capital. They attacked the chief minister, who was having a morning meeting in the Western Palace. They killed Zisi, Ziguo and Zier and took Duke Zheng (鄭伯) as their hostage to the Northern Palace. Zikong knew their plan [so he did not go to the court meeting] and thus avoided being killed. The records called them “*dao*” because there were no *dafu* among them. When [Zisi’s son] Zixi (子西) heard of the rebellion, he immediately rushed to the place to lay his father’s body in a coffin and then to pursue the bandits, who were fleeing to the Northern Palace. ... When [Ziguo’s son] Zichan (子產) heard of the incident, ... he obtained his father’s body and then attacked the bandits in the Northern Palace. Ziqiao (子矯) led *guoren* to join him. All the rebels were killed. Zikong then seized power. He made a declaration, requiring all to submit themselves to his authority.⁴⁴

Zisi, Ziguo, Ziliang and Zikong were all *dafu* (大夫), or ministers, of the state of Zheng. Their opponents, Weizhi and four clans which had lost lands to Zisi, were all *shi*, warriors and junior officials. At the outset, Zisi arbitrarily reduced the number of Weizhi’s chariots and rejected Weizhi’s presentation of captives in the name of the Zhou rites. Then Zikong, who had hidden his knowledge of the plot from his colleagues, made himself the beneficiary of the rebellion by seizing power immediately after it was put down. The account suggests that the constant abuse of authority by Zisi was the direct cause of the incident. In other words, oppression and abuse of power forced people to become *dao*, or bandits. In this incident, the bandits were primarily the “people who were discontented and frustrated” (不逞之人), among whom were warriors, junior officials and followers of aristocrats who had been killed in political feuds. They formed an alliance against their common enemy, Zisi. Their rebellion was retaliatory in nature, with no clear political agenda or military preparation. As a spontaneous uprising, it was easily crushed. All the rebels were killed. They were called “*dao*” by Confucius in the *Chun Qiu*. The author of the *Zuo Zhuan* followed this in calling them bandits, but he also gave a detailed explanation of why and how such a bandit group had formed.

Although society was in the course of major change during the Chunqiu, it was still rigidly divided between the rulers and the ruled. A member of the ruled who tried to challenge the authority of the ruling class even for just cause was regarded as criminal and was thus treated as a bandit. A

⁴⁴ *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu* (春秋左傳注), 襄公十年, pp.979-81.

usurper or a murderer coming from the higher levels of society would be condemned on other charges; he would never be condemned as a bandit. Confucius created his own terminology. He defined bandit as a *xiaoren* (小人), or a petty man, who “delights in prowess and lacks righteousness.”⁴⁵

In the above *Zuo Zhuan* excerpt, Weizhi and his fellow rebels were described as *dao* because they rebelled against their noble superiors (君子). But Weizhi and his comrades were motivated to take revenge out of their desire to seek personal justice. Their rebellion was in response to the oppression of their rulers. Their action bore similarities to those of the *xia* warrior. This kind of incident shows that the distinction between the *xia* and bandit sometimes became blurred. Because of the indistinct border between the two groups, a new term *daoxia* (盜俠), or bandit-like *xia*, emerged to combine the concepts of *xia* and *dao*.

Daoxia were usually organized in military groups and were often anti-social in nature. Their major difference from the ordinary *xia* lay in their group organization, and their major difference from the ordinary *dao* lay in their systematic attacks on the wealthy and privileged classes.

There is a story in the *Lushi Chunqiu* (呂氏春秋), in which such a *daoxia* group appears. The carriage of Duke Mu of Qin (秦穆公 r. 659-621 B.C.) broke down during a trip and one of the horses was lost. The duke learned that it had been found by a group of peasants (野人). The duke and his guards tracked them to the south side of Qi Mountain (岐山), where they found the peasants eating the horse. Instead of reprimanding and punishing the thieves, the duke told them that it was harmful if they ate only horse meat without drinking wine. He then offered them a jug of wine and left. It is not clear what made the duke change his mind after such a long pursuit. Was it generosity? Or was it expediency? The account notes that the armed group consisted of over three hundred people. Presumably it was too big for the duke and his guards to overcome militarily. The author was not concerned about this question, however, his purpose was to present the encounter as a prelude to a second story, in which the duke's treatment of these people was later requited. In a battle between

⁴⁵ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.5, 仲尼弟子列傳: “小人好勇而無義則盜。” p.2229.

Qin and Jin, the duke was near capture, when the armed gang of thieves rushed into battle and fought to its death to save his life.⁴⁶

There are three points in this account worthy of special attention. 1) The armed group, consisting of displaced peasants, was a large one, capable of fighting on the battlefield; 2) The group obviously lived by plunder and had dared to target the duke; and 3) The group's ethical system required them to repay favors received, even at the cost of their lives. This episode is a classical case of *daoxia* behavior.

The existence of this kind of militant group is often mentioned in pre-Qin or allegedly pre-Qin works. Daozhi (盜跖), literally Zhi the Bandit, was probably a household name in the later Chunqiu and Warring States periods. According to Zhuang Zi, Daozhi was a contemporary of Confucius and also a native of Lu (魯). He was the brother of Zhan Qin (展禽), a respected Lu *dafu*, so he was born to a noble family. Later he became a bandit leader and at one time led an army of nine thousand bandits. His army swept through the states of the Central Plain, breaking into houses, plundering cattle, seizing women and committing cannibalism. Daozhi caused great trouble and panic among the local lords and their people.⁴⁷ Zhuang Zi, however, referred to Daozhi on one occasion as an intelligent and brave man capable of leading a large army.⁴⁸ In the chapter *Qu Qie* (祛箠), or *Breaking Cabinets*, Zhuang Zi relates the following interesting conversation:

One of Daozhi's followers once asked him: "Does the bandit have a Way?" Daozhi replied: "How could he get anywhere if he did not have a Way? Making shrewd guesses as to how much booty is stashed away in the room is sageliness; being the first one in is bravery; being the last one out is righteousness; knowing whether the job can be pulled off or not is wisdom; dividing up the loot fairly is benevolence. No one in the world ever succeeded in becoming a great bandit if he did not have all five!"⁴⁹

⁴⁶ *Lushi chunqiu* (呂氏春秋), v.8, <愛士>, p.82. The stories were also recorded in the *Huainanzi* (淮南子), v.13, <泛論訓>, p.229.

⁴⁷ *Zhuangzi yigu* (莊子譯話) (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1991), <盜跖>: "從卒九千人, 橫行天下, 侵暴諸侯; 穴室, 擅戶, 驅人牛馬, 取人婦女...膾人肝而饋之." p.621.

⁴⁸ *ibid.* "知維天地, 能辯諸物, ...勇悍果敢, 聚眾率兵." p.622. The chapter might be a later forgery, composed to mock Confucius and his followers. Since other sources of the time also mentioned Daozhi, the existence of Daozhi or his like is very probable.

⁴⁹ *ibid.* <祛箠>, p.177. Burton Watson's translation in *Chuang-tzu: the Complete Works*, pp.108-9, with minor modifications.

Although the conversation sounds more fictitious than factual, the message is clear enough to show the existence of bandit gangs and the bandit mentality. Their banner of gallantry and comradeship would have exerted a strong appeal to displaced members of a stratified society.

Daozhi's followers resembled the Chunqiu warriors, the Mohists and the *xia* in terms of prowess and comradeship. Feng Youlan once made an interesting comparison between Daozhi and Mo Di and concluded: Daozhi and Mo Di represented two different extremes in the warrior class. If Daozhi had led his followers to fight for lord and state, he would have become a warrior; and if he had gone further to apply what he practiced within his group to the whole society, he would have become a Mo Di.⁵⁰ In the changing Chunqiu society, a displaced or a dissatisfied warrior could easily become a bandit. On the other hand, a bandit could also become a loyal warrior. For instance, Confucius had a disciple named Yan Huiju (顏喙聚). Yan was the leader of a bandit gang in the Mount Tai (泰山) area, but later became "an outstanding warrior" (顯士) in his native state of Qi (齊).⁵¹ And when Zilu, the famous disciple of Confucius, first met his mentor, he was something of a mixture of *xia* and bandit.

The difference between the *xia* and bandit may be seen to lie in the degree to which the two groups observed their similar behavioral code. In this regard, Xun Yue (荀悅 148-209) in his *Han Ji* (漢紀), remarked on what he thought was the distinction between the two groups:

The essential nature of *youxia* comes from their prowess and fortitude. They never forget their earlier promises, and they are willing to sacrifice themselves, in order to relieve their comrades in distress. They will be regarded as men of prowess and fortitude if they carry these out properly (以正行之). Those who fail to do so will become bandits or rebels.⁵²

⁵⁰ *Sansongtang xueshu wenji* (三松堂學術文集), 〈原儒墨補〉, p.357. Feng may have overstated the point here. But his opinion that a similar code of conduct was followed by Daozhi, the Mohist and other warriors is insightful.

⁵¹ *Huainanzi zhu* (淮南子注) (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1986), v.13, 〈泛論訓〉: "夫顏喙聚, 梁父之大盜也, 而為齊忠臣。" p.225. In *Shi zi* (尸子) 〈勸學〉, a slightly variant account is: "顏喙聚, 盜也, ...孔子教之, ...為顯士。" p.367.

⁵² Xun, Yue. *Han ji* (漢紀) (Guangzhou: Lingnan xuehaitang, 1876), v.10, 〈孝武皇帝紀〉, p.4.

The key word used by Xun in the above passage is “properly” (正), which would appear to indicate the exercise of prowess and fortitude under the feudal code. If a man possessing such qualities did not respect the code or took it into his own hands, he became a bandit. Thus, Xun’s “properly” can be loosely equated to “legally”. As mentioned in the Introduction, Xun basically followed the line set by Han Fei in his view of the *xia* as a force antagonistic to feudal law and order. However, he differed from Han Fei in recognizing the prowess and fortitude of the *xia* as virtues and suggesting that these virtues could be exercised properly. (He may have been influenced by Sima Qian in interpreting *xia* behavior in a moral rather than a legal framework). In sum, the difference between the *xia* and the bandit was often vague. Frequently the distinction was determined by perspective: in other words, a *xia* act could be viewed as a bandit act, and vice versa, depending on the point of view.

Bandits and rebels like Daozhi were people who publicly challenged the law and order of their society. The so-called vagabonds (罷民), who also had a close relationship with the *xia*, were outlaws of a more humble type. During the Chunqiu and Warring States, vagabonds became a noticeable presence in society in terms of numbers and activity. They came mostly from landless peasants and masterless slaves, but also included displaced warriors, bankrupt merchants and indigent craftsmen. There were several factors contributing to the increase in the vagabond population. 1) The drastic changes in Chunqiu society displaced people from every social class, especially peasants, who were forced to leave their land because of war, famine, extreme poverty and other causes. 2) The emergence of cities which had a commercial as well as a political/religious function accommodated a wide range of inhabitants and absorbed large numbers of displaced people. The cities became asylums for political refugees, fleeing slaves and escaped criminals, and served as an ideal refuge for vagabonds and the like. 3) The weakening of the ruling order in many states loosened political and social controls, especially over the flow of population into the cities. Criminal organizations sprang up in the lower reaches of society.

The name given to this loose grouping of people in pre-Qin documents is *pimin* (罷民), or unproductive people.⁵³ The *Pimin* refused to follow social rules and thus brought trouble to the people, but their activities were not regarded as sufficiently serious by the state to merit application

⁵³ *Zhouli zhushu* (周禮注疏) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980). <秋官>“司圜掌收教罷民。” p.882.

of the “five punishments” (五刑).⁵⁴ The Qing scholar Sun Yirang (孫詒讓 1848-1908) suggested that the *pimin*, consisted mainly of commoners who did not engage in farming, were deficient in morality, and idly wandered about doing nothing.⁵⁵

After completing their military conquests, the Western Zhou had entered a stable period by the mid-10th century B.C., when society was reorganized under the Zhou kinship system. The majority of peasants lived with their clans on royal lands (公田) generation after generation. Under the kinship system, migration of population was not common and the movement of *pimin* was difficult, if not impossible. According to the *Zhou Li* (周禮), Zhou authorities also took measures to contain the *pimin* population. For instance, they set up a household registration system to control the flow of population. A *bizhang* (比長), or neighborhood official, would check newcomers’ *shoujie* (授節), a sort of travel document. Those who held no *shoujie* would be sent to prison.⁵⁶ The same source in the *Zhou Li* also lists other measures to punish the *pimin*. These measures may have effectively controlled the numbers of vagabonds until the Zhou began to disintegrate during the Chunqiu period.

The collapse of the old feudal land system stripped many peasants of the land they rented from their lords. Many states witnessed an increase in the number of landless peasants, most of whom moved to the towns to find a living. Some of them were involved in thievery, robbery, gambling and other urban crimes.

The *Zuo Zhuan* in several places states that “thievery and robbery were rampant” (多盜). In the state of Lu (魯), the chief minister Jisun (季孫) asked his minister in charge of public security, Zang Wuzhong (臧武仲), how to check the outbreak of robbery and thievery in the state. His minister told him bluntly that it could not be checked.⁵⁷ The situation in the state of Jin (晉) seemed even worse.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, “鄭司農云：罷民謂惡人不從化，為百姓所患苦，而未入五刑者也。” p.882.

⁵⁵ *Zhouli zhengyi* (周禮正義). Sun characterized *pimin* as “民不墜勞作”，“乏于德義” and “無行情游”。

⁵⁶ *Zhouli zhushu* (周禮注疏). <地官>: “若無授無節，則唯圍土內之。” p.719. The details as described in *Zhou Li* may be an idealized reconstruction of the past and should not be taken at face value, but the Zhou government in early times did effectively control the flow of population. See *The Origin of Statecraft in China*, Chapter 12, “Royal Techniques of Control”, pp.388-416.

⁵⁷ *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu* (春秋左傳注). <襄公二十一年> (552 B.C.): “魯多盜，季孫謂臧武仲曰：‘子盍詰盜？’武仲曰：‘不可詰也。’” pp.1056-7.

Robbery and thievery were such a great problem that its Chief of Protocol once had to warn his state guests of the danger of being robbed.⁵⁸

Evidence shows that vagabonds and thieves sometimes worked in coordination in order to counter actions taken by the authorities. For example, in response to the desperate conditions mentioned above, Duke Ping of Jin (晉平公 r. 557-532 B.C.) appointed Xi Yong (郟雍) to high office to purge the state of thieves. Xi possessed a special talent of discovering thieves in a large crowd of people and he never missed one. The duke was very proud of him and boasted that he would solve the problem of rampant thievery in Jin merely by obtaining the right person like Xi. His chief minister Zhao Wenzhi (趙文子) was not optimistic, however. He pointed out that one competent official would be not able to eliminate thievery. As a countermeasure, thieves in the capital city later successfully schemed to assassinate Xi.^{59†}

During the succeeding Warring States period, the population of vagabonds continued to grow. More and more peasants became victims of frequent wars covering whole states and many of them joined this population. At the same time, ambitious nobles in many states enlisted them in their own private forces. Each of the charismatic “four princes” (四公子) kept over three thousand retainers, many of whom were from the ranks of vagabonds. As indicated in the *Shi Ji*, “refugees, fugitives and criminals” (亡人有罪者) were an important source of Prince Mengchang’s retainers. The prince helped settle sixty thousand “*renxia jianren*” (任俠奸人), *xia* and villains, in his fief.⁶⁰ The “*jianren*” mainly referred to vagabonds. On one occasion the prince’s retainers, who could “steal like a dog and crow like a cock” (狗盜鷄鳴), helped him escape the house arrest imposed by his host, King Zhao of Qin (秦昭王 r. 306-251 B.C.).⁶¹ The prince, known as a noble *xia* (卿相之俠), sometimes behaved like a bandit or a vagabond himself. His biography in the *Shi Ji* has the following encounter:

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, <襄公三十一年> (542 B.C.): “敝邑以政刑之不修，寇盜充斥。” Zichan (子產), a minister on a special mission from the State of Zheng also complained of the rampancy of robbery and theft (盜賊公行). p.1186 and p.1188.

⁵⁹ *Liezi zhu* (列子注) (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1986), <說符>, p.92.

⁶⁰ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.5. <孟嘗君列傳>, “孟嘗君招致天下任俠奸人人薛中，蓋六萬餘家矣。” p.2382.

⁶¹ *ibid.*, “最下座有能為狗盜者，……客之居下座者，有能為鷄鳴，而鷄皆鳴。” See also in the translation of the story in *The Grand Scribe's Records*, v.7, *The Memoirs of Pre-Qin China*, p.193.

When Prince Mengchang visited the state of Zhao (趙), Prince Pingyuan treated him as a guest. The men of Zhao had heard that Prince Mengchang was worthy and came out to see him. They all laughed. “We thought at first that Prince Mengchang would be of stalwart build. Now that we see him, he’s just a tiny little fellow.” Prince Mengchang heard this and was furious. The retainers traveling with him dismounted and hacked, beat, and killed hundreds of people, laying waste to the entire county before leaving.^{62U}

While there were many upright warriors and *xia* like Feng Xuan among the prince’s retainers, many of them came from the ranks of the so-called “cock-crowing and dog-stealing” men. These latter types attached themselves to powerful nobles like Prince Mengchang basically for economic reasons. When the prince lost power and privilege, most of these retainers left him.⁶³

However, it was sometimes not easy to distinguish *xia* from vagabonds, because 1) some of vagabonds exhibited certain *xia* characteristics like comradeship and prowess; 2) vagabonds in many cases worked together with *xia* in mixed groups like the ones under the four princes; and 3) some vagabonds had been transformed into *xia*, and some *xia* into vagabonds, while some shared a dual character of *xia* and vagabond.

The organized groups of vagabonds of the pre-Qin era might possibly be regarded as Chinese secret societies in embryonic form. From the Eastern Han onward, the authorities rigorously tried to suppress them. As a result, *xia*, bandits, and vagabonds sought refuge in the *jianghu* (江湖: literally rivers and lakes, i.e., the underground), where they created a domain of their own. *Jianghu* later appears as the most common setting in *xia* literature.

Background to the development of *xia* and “noble *xia*”

As the previous sections have shown, the emergence of the *xia* was caused mainly by the changing society of the Chunqiu. The disintegration of the old feudal system affected people of all ranks and classes in society. A second important factor in the development of the *xia* was the presence of

⁶² *ibid.*, p.2377. See translation in *The Memoirs of Pre-Qin China*. p.194, with minor modifications of mine.

⁶³ *ibid.*, “諸客見孟嘗君廢，皆去。” p.2383.

many nobles who were unscrupulous in the realization of their ambitions. Under these circumstances, the *xia*, known for being quick and resolute in action, found ample scope to exercise their abilities.

During the late Chunqiu and Warring States a new territorial map came into existence. After long centuries of wars and annexations, there emerged out of the hundred variously sized vassal states seven evenly matched great powers. Unlike the Five Chunqiu Overlords (春秋五霸), whose political aspirations did not go beyond becoming chief prince under the banner of the Zhou king, these seven powers openly contended for the throne held by the near dormant Zhou regime. Unprecedented opportunity was opened up for all kinds of abilities and talents needed in building up economic and military power.

Along with the changing map came the emergence of large cities. The city was indispensable to the formation of the pre-Qin *xia*. Before the Warring States, cities in the vassal domains usually functioned as political centers, merely big enough to accommodate the lord's family, his feudatories and their supporting staff and servants. The largest city in most vassal states was its capital, called *guo* (國), which usually contained around 3,000 households and was about 5 square *li* (less than two square miles) in area according to the Zhou stipulations. Non-capital cities were not to exceed one-third of its size. When Gongshu Duan (共叔段), the brother of Duke Zhuang of Zheng (鄭莊公 r. 743-701 B.C.), expanded the wall of his city, his action caused the duke and his ministers to take action against him.⁶⁴

The situation began to change after the flight of the Zhou court to Luoyang in 771 B.C. and by the time of the Warring States many big cities became trade and distribution centers, like Qi's Linzi (臨淄), Han's Yangzhai (陽翟), Wei's Daliang (大梁), Zhao's Handan (邯鄲) and Chu's Ying (郢). To take Linzi (modern city of Zibo 淄博 in Shandong Province) for instance: the famous Warring States strategist, Su Qin (蘇秦 ?-317 B.C.), once estimated the city as "having seventy thousand households with no less than three adult males in each household."⁶⁵ He remarked further that "Linzi is rich and well supplied. Not one of her people does not play the flute, strum the zither, strike the harp, beat the drum, play cock-fighting and dog-racing, gamble at *liubo* (六博), or kick a

⁶⁴ *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu* (春秋左傳注), <隱公元年> (722 B.C.): "先王之制, 大都不過參國之一, 中五之一, 小九之一." p.11.

⁶⁵ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.5, <蘇秦列傳>: "臨淄之中七萬戶, 臣竊度之, 不下戶三男子." p.2282.

ball.”⁶⁶ The wealth of the city might be exaggerated, but the size of the city and its population are believable. The city might have been able to accommodate 350,000 people, 23 times more than the Zhou regulations allowed. The modern archaeological excavation of the buried Linzi city shows that it consisted of two sites. The smaller one was the royal city, 1.4 kilometers from east to west and 2.2 kilometers from north to south. The larger one was 14 kilometers in circumference, divided into some ten chessboard-like districts. The main road was 20 meters in width. The city’s drainage system was advanced, with the ditches, city moat and rivers all connected. The official residences were located in the south of the city, and the handicraftsmen’s workshops were scattered to the northeast and west within the city. In between were several markets.⁶⁷

This kind of vast and populous city provided the *xia* with an ideal arena for their activities and development if the ruler happened to be charismatic and ambitious. As the survival of the nobility became threatened in the Warring States, the leaders of each state welcomed to their side men of ability from the lower social orders. The “Four Grand Princes” (四公子) - Prince Xinling (信陵君), Prince Mengchang (孟嘗君), Prince Pingyuan (平原君) and Prince Chunshen (春申君) - were representatives of the nobility now seeking the services of the *xia*.

The retention by ambitious nobles of *shi* for their personal forces was inaugurated in the early Chunqiu, but the commitment remained small-scale and limited to a handful of aspirants, because it ran contrary to the etiquette and political ethics of the time. But with the increasingly heated struggle for possession of land and territory during the later Chunqiu, competition to recruit political, diplomatic, economic and military personnel of ability was launched in every state. During the Warring States period, the retaining of *shi*, both warriors and scholars, became common practice to the powerful lords and princes. It was prestigious for a noble to have many retainers at his disposal. According to the records in the *Shi Ji*, each of the “Four Princes” retained over three thousand men, among whom the *xia* were the most active.

These nobles were thus called “noble *xia*” (卿相之俠). The widespread existence of “noble *xia*” was the most important reason for the development of *xia* to such a high level in the Warring States.

⁶⁶ *ibid.* “臨淄甚富而實，其民無不吹竽鼓瑟，斗鷄走狗，六博蹋鞠者。” p.2282. See the translation in *The Memoirs of Pre-Qin China*, p.106, with minor modifications.

⁶⁷ Zhao, Qingyun ed. *Huaxia shengji* (華夏勝迹) (Jinan: Shandong jiaoyu chubanshe, 1993). p.88.

Sima Qian in his *Biographies of the Youxia* praised the “Four Princes” as “worthy men” (賢者) and compared them with his commoner *xia* heroes of the Han dynasty because of their identical *xia* spirit and character.

The characteristics of these young *xia* nobles were displayed in the following ways:

Readiness for self-sacrifice. Prince Chunshen once accompanied the crown prince of Chu (楚) to live in Qin (秦) as a hostage (為質) to ensure good relations between the two states. When the king of Chu approached death, the crown prince was not allowed to leave Qin. Prince Chunshen disguised the crown prince as the chariot driver of a Chu envoy, so that he could escape:

Prince Chunshen kept to the crown prince's quarters, constantly pleading illness for the crown prince. When he decided the crown prince was already long gone, and Qin could not pursue him, Prince Chunshen told King Zhao of Qin in person, “The crown prince of Chu has already returned. He is far away by now. I deserve to die. Please grant me death.” King Zhao was enraged. He intended to allow the prince to kill himself, when the prime minister of Qin said, “As a vassal, he comes to offer to die for his lord. When the crown prince ascends the throne, he is sure to employ him. It would be better to send him back without punishing him. By doing so, we ingratiate ourselves with Chu.” King Zhao of Qin thus sent Prince Chunshen home.^{68v}

His intelligence and spirit of self-sacrifice won Prince Chunshen not only the chief ministership of Chu but also the reputation of being able to draw many followers to him.

Unwavering loyalty. Prince Pingyuan and Wei Qi (魏齊), a Wei prince, were close friends. When Wei Qi was Chief Minister of the state of Wei, he once had his housemen beat Fan Sui (范雎), a junior official who was accused of divulging state secrets to enemy, until he was almost dead. Fan eventually escaped and later became Chief Minister of Qin (秦). King Zhao of Qin (秦昭王) heard of his ordeal and decided to give him vengeance on his enemy. When Wei Qi learned of this, he sought refuge with his old friend Prince Pingyuan. King Zhao of Qin found out where Wei Qi was hiding

⁶⁸ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.5, <春申君列傳>, pp.2415-6. See translation in *The Memoirs of Pre-Han China*, pp.227-8, with modifications of mine.

and invited Prince Pingyuan for a visit. When the prince came, the king asked him to send an envoy back to fetch the head of Wei Qi, or he would not be allowed to return home. Prince Pingyuan said the following to the king:

Those friends one makes when one has high rank are for the time when one is in a lowly position. Those friends one makes when one is wealthy are for the time when one is impoverished. Now Wei Qi is my friend. Even if he were at my house, I certainly could not put him out. But he is not even at my residence.^{69W}

Seeing the prince's unshakable loyalty to his friend, King Zhao of Qin turned to his brother, the King of Zhao, to arrange the delivery of Wei Qi's head. Prince Pingyuan braved death in its face, upholding his loyalty and refusing to betray his friend. He was thus called "a marvelous noble scion of this corrupt world."⁷⁰

Respect for *shi*: men of ability. Prince Mengchang retained several thousand men in his fief. His biography tells that he treated all his retainers the same as himself. When he talked to his retainers, he always had attendant scribes behind a screen to record his conversation with them. He often asked about their families and relatives. When the retainers left, he had already sent messengers to present greetings and offer gifts to their relatives. He treated his retainers so well that each man thought that the prince favored him.^{71X}

Prince Xinling was another renowned young noble who, disregarding the social etiquette of his class, searched for talent regardless of social origin. For instance, he made friends with Hou Ying (侯嬴) and Zhu Hai (朱亥), two of the most heroic *xia* to come from the lower ranks of society:

There was a hermit in Wei called Hou Ying. He was seventy years old, his household was poor, and he served as watchman at the Yimen Gate of Daliang (大梁). When Prince Xinling heard of him, he went to pay his respects, intending to present lavish gifts. Hou Ying refused to accept them and said, "Your servant has cultivated himself and kept his conduct

⁶⁹ *Shiji huizhu kaozheng* (史記會注考證), v. 79, <范雎蔡澤列傳>, 979. See translation in *The Memoirs of Pre-Han China*, p.244.

⁷⁰ *Zhongguo zhi wushidao* (中國之武士道) (Taipei: Taiwan zhonghua shuju, 1971), "獨世佳公子," p.42.

pure for decades; he will never accept your money because of his poverty as a gate watchman.” After this, the prince set out wine and assembled many guests. The guests having taken their places, the prince, leading horsemen and carriages, went to escort Hou Ying at the Yimen Gate himself, with the left side of his carriage vacant. Hou straightened his worn clothing and cap and, without any show of deference, mounted directly onto the position of honor in the prince’s carriage, intending thus to scrutinize the prince. “I have a friend among the marketplace butchers. I hope that you might trouble your carriages and horsemen to call on him.” The prince drove his carriage into the marketplace and Hou dismounted to see his friend, Zhu Hai; watching out of the corner of his eyes, Hou deliberately stood there for some time talking with his friend, secretly observing the prince. The prince’s countenance became even more well disposed. By this time, the generals, ministers, and royalty of Wei and their guests had filled his hall, and were waiting for the prince to present the wine. The tradesmen watched the prince holding the reins, and the attendant horsemen all cursed Hou under their breath. When Hou saw that the prince’s countenance had not changed, he took leave of his friend and mounted the carriage. When they reached the hall, the prince led Hou in, put him in the seat of honor, and introduced him to each of the guests. The guests were all astonished. When they were all in their cups, the prince rose and made a toast before Hou. Hou then told the prince: “Today I have done enough for you. I am a gate-keeper at Yimen Gate, yet you personally troubled your carriages and horsemen, escorting me yourself to this host of men and this sea of mats. It was inappropriate for me to ask you to make a detour [at the marketplace], but you allowed me to do that. Thus it was that I determined to make a name for you, and had your carriage and horsemen stand so long in the marketplace, calling on my friend while observing you. You were even more deferential. The tradesmen all thought me a small man (小人) and you a man of honor (君子) who was humbling himself before a *shi*.” At this the banquet ended and Hou became a senior retainer.⁷¹

Prince Xinling of Wei committed himself throughout his life to searching for worthy men from lower society. After he counterfeited an order from his lord and killed the commander of the Wei

⁷¹ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.5, <孟嘗君列傳>, p.2382. It is based on the translation in *The Memoirs of Pre-Han China*, p.192.

⁷² *ibid.*, <魏公子列傳>, pp.2400-1. See translation in *The Memoirs of Pre-Han China*, pp.215-6, with modifications of mine.

army in order to rescue the neighboring state of Zhao (趙) from the Qin (秦) siege, the prince had to remain in exile in Zhao for ten years. During these years, he continued to make friends in the marketplace. For instance, among his new friends Mao (毛) was a gambler and Xue (薛) a wine-seller. His friendship with these two people incurred criticism from his fellow nobles. He was called “a fool” (妄人) because of his disregard of social etiquette.⁷³

The great courtesy these nobles paid to men of ability was certainly an investment in their own ambitions. With his retainers’ help, Prince Xinling raised the siege of Zhao by Qin. Eventually he returned to his native Wei, where he assumed power. Sima Qian in his biography even claimed: “For over ten years, because of the prince’s virtues and his huge number of retainers, nobody dared to invade the state of Wei.”⁷⁴

Altruism. When Prince Chunshen planned the escape of the crown prince from Qin, he was fully aware of the serious consequences of this and was prepared to die. His survival was only through good luck. Prince Xinling accepted Hou Ying’s advice to steal the army tally from his lord and capture the Wei army on the border, in order to repel the Qin and raise the Zhao siege. Although Hou claimed this would be “an achievement worthy of the Five Hegemons”⁷⁵ (五霸之伐也), it was tantamount to political suicide for the prince. Nevertheless, he did not hesitate in carrying out the plan. For a *xia*-spirited noble, altruism was of the highest importance. Even without Hou’s advice, the prince would have rushed to attack the Qin army with his retainers, prepared to die for his reputation as a noble spirited hero whose mission lay in saving others from their difficulties (急人之困).⁷⁶

Generosity. This trait was also common to the young nobles. They usually resorted to two methods to gain large numbers of retainers: 1) by showing their respect and appreciation, as demonstrated in Prince Xinling’s association with the recluses, and 2) by using their personal wealth to retain men of talent and give them preferential treatment. Prince Mengchang kept several thousand retainers in his fief of Xue and “set aside his own income to care for them lavishly.”⁷⁷ The story is told that he

⁷³ *ibid.*, p.2406.

⁷⁴ *ibid.* p.2399.

⁷⁵ *ibid.*, “得虎符，奪晉鄙軍，北救趙而西卻秦，此五霸之伐也。” p.2404.

⁷⁶ *ibid.*, p.2403.

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, 《孟嘗君列傳》, “孟嘗君舍業厚遇之。” p.2381. See translation in *The Memoirs of Pre-Han China*, p.192.

once sent a retainer to collect debts. When this man found some debtors too poor to pay the interest, he burned the loan tallies and forewent the money in the name of Prince Mengchang, who later accepted the explanation graciously.⁷⁸ The prince's generosity was also demonstrated in his attitude towards those retainers who made serious mistakes. The *Zhanguo Ce* (戰國策) records such an episode. One of the prince's retainers had an affair with one of the prince's concubines. Someone reported it to the prince and suggested that the adulterous retainer be killed. The prince did not take the advice and, instead, forgave the retainer by saying: "To be attracted by a pretty face is only human, but please leave them alone and do not speak of it again." He later recommended the retainer to the Lord of Wei (衛君) to become an official of his. The shamed retainer later used his influence and his skill in diplomacy to avert an imminent combined invasion of Qi led by the state of Wei.⁷⁹

Competitions among young nobles in showing generosity were certainly aimed at obtaining more men of talent. Such men helped spread the *xia* influence in the higher society of the Warring States.

At center stage: *xia* in the siege of Handan

Living in an age that needed prowess, resolution and quick action more than any time before, the *xia* of the Warring States, under the patronage of chivalrous young nobles like the "Four Princes", found a larger world to display their ability and heroism. They emerged on stage as a mature and active force throughout this period. What differentiated them most notably from their predecessors in the early Chunqiu was that they came out of the shadow of the feudal lords and nobles, to exercise their own will and leave their own mark on many major events of the time.

The events surrounding the relief of Handan (邯鄲之圍) demonstrate how actively the *xia* involved themselves in the front-line military and political struggles of the day. In 257 B.C., the Qin (秦) army besieged the capital of Zhao (趙). Handan (邯鄲 in present day Hebei), after overwhelming the Zhao troops on the battlefield, Zhao's fate hung in the balance. The activities of the *xia* in raising

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, pp.2392-4.

⁷⁹ Zhang, Qingchang. *Zhanguo ce jianzhu* (戰國策箋注) (Tianjin: Nankai daxue chubanshe, 1993), <齊策三>: "睹貌而相悅者, 人之情也, 其錯之勿言也." p.253. See translation in J. I. Crump, Jr. *Chan-Kuo Ts'e*, p.186. The anecdote is likely a fiction, but it reflects a certain aspect of the prince's generous character.

the siege were undertaken on two fronts: they internally worked against those in the Zhao court who favored the surrender to Qin and externally searched for rescue from the neighboring states.

In response to the Zhao appeal, King Anxi of Wei (魏安厘王) (r. 276-243 B.C.) sent an army as part of the rescue mission. However, he ordered his general, Jin Bi (晉鄙), to stop once inside the border and proceed no farther for fear of a direct collision with the Qin army. The king sent General Xinyuan Yan (辛垣衍) to Zhao to persuade his besieged ally to make peace with Qin by acknowledging allegiance to the King of Qin. His argument was almost accepted because not one army as yet had arrived to help Zhao out of its predicament. At this moment, Lu Zhonglian (魯仲連 c. 305-245 B.C.), a *shi* from Qi who, according to his biography in the *Shi Ji*, “loved grandiose and extraordinary schemes, but was unwilling to serve as an official or to hold a post, delighting only in holding to his high principles”⁸⁰, came to meet Prince Pingyuan. Lu was strongly opposed to the idea of surrender. The hesitant prince then arranged a debate between his two guests. Lu started the debate by declaring:

Qin is a land that casts aside propriety and principle, and exalts merit that is measured in human heads [that a soldier can cut off in battle]. Its king handles its *shi* by trickery; he handles its people as slaves. If he should wantonly assume the title of emperor, or even worse, assume rule over the world, I would have no choice left but to drown myself in the Eastern Ocean! I could not bear to be his subject.^{81CC}

He then argued forcefully about the dangerous consequences of acknowledging allegiance to Qin and proposed how to raise the siege. He successfully convinced Xinyuan to abandon his mission and he strengthened the prince’s resolve to continue the defensive battle. Xinyuan even praised him as the “world’s greatest knight (天下之士).” After the siege was raised, Prince Pingyuan offered Lu a noble title and one thousand pieces of gold as a reward for his assistance. Lu declined to accept and gave the reason:

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, v.83, <魯仲連列傳>: “魯仲連者, 齊人也。好奇偉倜儻之畫策, 而不肯仕宦任職, 好持高節。” p.1000. All the translations of the biography are from *The Memoir of Pre-Han China*, pp.281-6, with modifications of mine.

⁸¹ *ibid.*, p.1001.

What I value in the knights of the world is how they avert troubles, resolve dilemmas, and cut tangled knots for others without ever receiving anything for this. If they received something, that would be a transaction of shopkeepers and traveling peddlers. I could not bear to do this.^{82DD}

It was said that Lu thus left Zhao and never met the prince again. Lu's biography in the *Shi Ji* told that about twenty years after the siege of Handan Lu was still active as a *xia*, busy "averting troubles". His final known feat was to help recapture Liaocheng (聊城), a city in his native state of Qi, from the occupation of a Yan (燕) general. When he heard of the upcoming conferment of a title of nobility for his role in the victory, Lu fled into hiding by the seashore. His last words to the world were: "I would rather be poor and humble, mock the world and do as I will, than be rich and noble, but oppressed by others."⁸³ Lu Zhonglian thus became a model for *xia* of later ages, both the real one of the world and the imagined one of literature. His rescue of people in distress without expecting reward, his flight to avoid the embarrassment of being repaid, his fearlessness in the face of formidable enemies, and his utter indifference to wealth and power were viewed as the essence of the *xia* spirit. His image appeared frequently in the literature of later ages, especially in the Tang dynasty.

In seeking further outside forces to raise the siege of Handan, the *xia* also played a crucial role. Prince Pingyuan led a group of twenty retainers to seek help from Chu (楚). The prince met the King of Chu and requested his military intervention in the conflict. When the prince talked with the king for half a day but failed to make progress, Mao Sui (毛遂), one of the prince's *xia* retainers, rose from his seat:

Mao Sui put his hand on his sword, went up the steps without pausing, and said to Prince Pingyuan, "The advantages and disadvantages of alliance can be put in two sentences and decided on. Why is it then that the two of you have spoken of alliance since sunrise and not yet decided by noon?" The King of Chu asked the prince, "Who is this retainer?" The prince says, "This is one of my housemen." The King of Chu shouted at Mao: "Why do you not go down? I am talking with your lord. Who do you think you are?" Mao put his

⁸² *ibid.*, p.1002.

⁸³ *ibid.*, "魯連逃隱於海上曰：「吾與富貴而諛於人，寧貧賤而輕世肆志焉。」"p.1004.

hand on his sword and stepped forward: "Your Majesty shouts at me because you have the forces of Chu behind you. But within these ten paces you cannot rely on the forces of Chu. Your life hangs in my hands. My lord is before you, what do you mean by shouting at me?....." The King of Chu said, "Yes, yes. It is just as you have said. We will respectfully present ourselves at our altars of the soil and grain and will there ally ourselves with you." Mao Sui said, "Shall alliance be sworn?" "It shall," said the King of Chu.^{84EE}

An army of Chu was thus sent to rescue Zhao from the Qin siege. After the withdrawal of the Qin army, Prince Pingyuan praised his retainer for "having a silver tongue that was mightier than a force of a million".⁸⁵ Mao's action was a repetition of an event 400 years earlier when Cao Mo, a Chunqiu warrior, forced Duke Huan of Qi (齊桓公) to return an occupied territory to Lu (魯).

Besides Zhao's efforts to form an alliance with Chu to raise the siege of Handan, another major rescue plan was also masterminded by the *xia* gate-keeper, Hou Ying, who was introduced in the previous section. When Handan was besieged, Prince Pingyuan wrote to his brothers-in-law, the King of Wei and Prince Xinling, urging them to rescue his state. But the king was so frightened by his aggressive neighbor Qin that he dared not carry out a rescue mission. The desperate Prince Xinling could see nothing other than to lead his retainers into a suicidal collision with the Qin army. At this moment, Hou Ying worked out a rescue plan for the prince. The plan was successfully carried out. The prince was able to lead the Wei army to raise the siege of Handan. Although it cost the prince his noble privileges in his native state, it won him fame for his altruism.

From their accounts of the series of events surrounding the siege of Handan, the historians, both the original recorders and Sima Qian, would appear to see *xia* figures like Hou Ying and Mao Sui as the main players in the drama. They masterminded the rescue plans, executed them in their own ways, sacrificed themselves to carry forward their cause, and refused to accept reward, even disappearing from the scene after their plans were fully realized. The shining images of these *xia* stood out boldly in contrast to the selfish kings and indecisive nobles of the time.

⁸⁴ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.5, <平原君列傳>, p.2389. See translation in *The Memoirs of Pre-Han China*, p.205.

⁸⁵ *ibid.*, "毛先生以三寸之舌, 運於百萬之師," p.2390.

第三章所引原文

- ^A 見利思義，見危授命，久要不忘平生之言，亦可以為成人矣。（論語·憲問）
- ^B 子路曰：“君子尚勇乎？”子曰：“君子義以為上，君子有勇而無義為亂，小人有勇而無義為盜。”（論語·陽貨）
- ^C 卞莊子好勇，養母，戰而三北，交游非之，國君辱之，及母死三年，冬，齊與魯戰，卞莊子請從，見於魯將軍，曰：“初與母處，是以三北，今母死，請塞責而神有所歸。”遂赴敵，獲一甲首而獻之曰：“此塞一北。”又入，獲一甲首而獻之曰：“此塞再北。”又入，獲一甲首而獻之曰：“此塞三北。”將軍曰：“毋沒爾家，宜止之，請為兄弟。”莊子曰：“三北以養母也，是子道也，今士節小具而塞責矣，吾聞之：節士不以辱生。”遂反敵殺十人而死。（新序·養勇篇）
- ^D 子路性鄙，好勇力，志伉直，冠雄鷄，佩豕豚，陵暴孔子，孔子設禮稍誘子路，子路後儒服委質，因門人請為弟子。（史記·仲尼弟子列傳）
- ^E 士不能勤苦，不能輕死亡，不能恬貧窮，而曰我能行義，吾不信也。（韓詩外傳）
- ^F 黃河水至此，為之延津，昔澹臺子羽資千金之璧渡河，陽侯波起，兩蛟龍夾舟，子羽曰：“吾可以義求，不可以威劫！”操劍斬蛟，蛟死，乃投璧於河，三投而輒躍出，乃毀璧而去，亦吾怪意，即此津也。（括地志）
- ^G 微虎欲宵攻王舍，私徒屬七百人三羅於幕庭，卒三百人，有若與焉。（左傳·哀公八年）
- ^H 北宮黝之養勇也，不膚撓，不目逃，思以一毫挫於人，若撻之與市朝，不受於褐寬博，亦不受於萬乘之君，視刺萬乘之君，若刺褐夫，無嚴諸侯，惡聲至，必反之。（孟子·公孫丑）
- ^I 儒有委之以貨財，淹之以樂好，見利不虧其義；劫之以眾，沮之以兵，見死不更其守；鷙蟲攫搏不程勇者，引重鼎不程其力；往者不悔，來者不豫。（禮記·儒行）
- ^J 魯人有因子墨子而學其子者，其子戰而死，其父讓子墨子，子墨子曰：“子欲學子之子，今學成矣，戰而死，而子慍，是猶欲輕，輕售則慍也。”（墨子·魯問）
- ^K 翟慮耕而食天下之人矣，盛，然后當一農之耕，分諸天下，不能人得一升粟，籍而以為得一升粟，其不能飽天下之饑者，既可睹矣，翟慮織而衣天下之人矣，盛，然后當一婦人之織，分諸天下，不能人得尺布，籍而以為得尺布，其不能暖天下之寒者，既可睹矣，翟慮被堅執銳，救諸侯之患，盛，然后當一夫之戰，其不御三軍，既可睹矣，翟以為不若誦先王之道，而求其說；通聖人之言，而察其辭；上說王公大人，次匹夫徒步之士，王公大人用吾言，國必治；匹夫徒步之士用吾言，行必修。（墨子·魯問）
- ^L 俠即墨也，孔墨則舉姓，墨俠則舉教名，其實一也。（孔子改制考）
- ^M 名不徒生，而譽不自長，...慧者心辯而不繁說，多力而不伐功，此以名譽揚天下。（墨子·修身）
- ^N 墨者鉅子孟勝善陽城君，陽城君令守於國，毀璜以為符，約曰：“符合聽之。”荆王薨，群臣攻吳起，兵于喪所，陽城君與焉，荆罪之，陽城君走，荆收其國，孟勝曰：“受人之國，與之有符，今不見符，而力不能禁，不能死，不可。”其弟子徐弱諫孟勝曰：“死而有益於陽城君，死

之可矣；無益也，而絕墨者於世，不可！”孟勝曰：“不然，吾於陽城君，非師則友也，非友則臣也。不死，自今以來，求嚴師必不於墨者矣，求賢友必不於墨者矣，求良臣必不於墨者矣。死之，所以行墨者之義，而繼其業者也。我將屬鉅子於宋之田襄子。田襄子，賢者也，何患墨者之絕世也？”徐弱曰：“若夫子之言，弱請先死以除路。”還歿頭前於孟勝，因使二人傳鉅子於田襄子。孟勝死，弟子死之者百八十三人。以致令於田襄子，欲反死孟勝於荆。田襄子止之曰：“孟子已傳鉅子於我矣。”不聽，遂反死之。（呂氏春秋·上德）

^o 墨道尚俠，以友失國之故而為之死，弟子以其師故而為死者至百余人，輕身尚氣。（孔子改制考·墨老弟子後學考）

^p 初，子駟與尉止有爭，將御諸侯之師，而黜其車。尉止獲，又與之爭。子駟抑尉止曰：“爾車非禮也。”遂弗使獻。初，子駟為田洫，司氏、堵氏、侯氏、子師氏皆喪田焉。故五族聚群不逞之人，因公子之徒以作亂。于是子駟當國，子國為司馬，子耳為司空，子空為司徒。冬十月戊辰，尉止、司臣、侯昏、堵女父、子師僕帥賊以入，晨攻執政于西宮之朝，殺子駟、子國、子耳，劫鄰伯以如北宮。子孔知之，故不死。書曰盜，言無大夫焉。子西聞盜，不傲而出，尸而追盜。盜入于北宮，乃歸，授甲，臣妾多逃，器用多喪。子產聞盜，為門者，庀群司，閉府庫，慎閉藏，完守備，成列而后出，兵車十七乘。尸而攻于北宮。子蟠帥國人助之，殺尉之，子師僕，群盜盡死。侯昏奔昏，堵女父、司臣、尉駟、司齊奔宋。子孔當國，為載書，以位序，聽政辟。（春秋左傳·襄公十年）

^q 秦穆公出游而車敗，右服失馬，野人得之。穆公追而及之岐山之陽，野人方屠而食之。穆公曰：“夫食駿馬之肉而不還飲酒者，傷人，吾恐其傷汝等。”遍飲而去之。處一年，與晉惠公為殽之戰。晉師圍穆公之車，梁由靡扣穆公之驂，獲之，食馬肉者三百余人，皆出死為穆公戰于車下。遂克晉，虜惠公以歸。（淮南子·泛論訓）

^r 跖之徒問于跖曰：“盜亦有道乎？”跖曰：“何適而無有道邪？夫妄意室中之藏，聖也；人先，勇也；出后，義也；知可否，知也；分均，仁也。五者不備，而能成大道者，天下未之有也。”（莊子·胠篋）

^s 游俠之本，生於武毅不撓，久要不忘平生之言。見危授命，以救時難而濟同類。以正行之者謂之武毅，其失之甚者，至于為盜賊也。（漢紀·孝武皇帝紀）

^t 晉國苦盜，有郟雍者，能視盜之貌，察其眉睫之間而得其情。晉侯使視盜，千百無遺一焉。晉侯大喜，告趙文子曰：“吾得一人，而一國盜為盡矣，奚用多為？”文子曰：“吾君恃伺察而得盜，盜不盡矣。且郟雍必不得其死焉。”俄而群盜謀曰：“吾所窮者郟雍也！”遂共盜而殘之。（列子·說符）

^u 孟嘗君過趙，趙平原君客之。趙人聞孟嘗君賢，出觀之，皆笑曰：“始以薛公為魁然也，今視之，乃渺小丈夫耳。”孟嘗君聞之，怒，客與俱者下，斫擊殺數百人，遂滅一縣以去。（史記·孟嘗君列傳）

^v 楚太子因變衣服為楚使者御以出關，而黃歇守舍，常為謝病。度太子已遠，秦不能追，歇乃自言秦昭王曰：“楚太子已歸，出遠矣，歇當死，願賜死。”昭王大怒，欲聽其自殺也。應侯曰：“歇為人臣，出身以徇其主，太子立，必用歇，故不如無罪而歸之，以親楚。”秦因遣黃歇。（史記·春申列傳）

^w 貴而為交者為賤也，富而為交者為貧也。夫魏齊者，勝之友也，在，固不出也，今又不在臣所。（史記·范雎蔡澤列傳）

^X 孟嘗君在薛，... 食客數千人，無貴賤一與文等。孟嘗君待客坐語，而屏風后常有侍客，主記君所與克語，問親戚居處。客去，孟嘗君已使使存問獻遺其親戚。... 士以此多歸孟嘗君。孟嘗君客無所擇，皆善遇之，人人各自以為孟嘗君親己。（史記·孟嘗君列傳）

^Y 魏有隱士曰侯嬴，年七十，家貧，為大梁夷門監者。公子聞之，往請，欲厚遺之，不肯受，曰：“臣修身潔行數十年，終不以監門困故而受公子財。”公子於是乃置酒大會賓客，坐定，公子從車騎，虛左，自迎夷門侯生。侯生攝敝衣冠，直上載公子上座，不讓，欲以觀公子。公子執轡愈恭，侯生又謂公子曰：“臣有客在市屠中，願枉車騎過之。”公子引車入市，侯生下見其客朱亥，睥睨故久立，與其客語，微察公子，公子顏色愈和。當是時，魏將相宗室滿堂，待公子舉酒，市人皆觀公子執轡，從騎皆竊罵侯生。侯生視公子色終不變，乃謝客就車。至家，公子引侯生坐上座，遍贊賓客，賓客皆驚。酒酣，公子起，為壽侯生前，侯生因謂公子曰：“今日嬴之為公子亦足矣。嬴乃夷門抱關者也，而公子親枉車騎，自迎嬴於眾人廣座之中，不宜有所過，今公子故過之，然嬴欲就公子之名，故久立公子車騎市中過客，以觀公子，公子愈恭，市人皆以嬴為小人，而以公子為長者能下士也。”於是罷酒，侯生遂為上客。（史記·魏公子列傳）

^Z 公子聞趙有處士毛公藏於博徒，薛公藏於賣漿家，公子欲見兩人，兩人自匿不肯見公子，公子聞所在，乃閑步往從此兩人游，甚歡。平原君聞之，謂其夫人曰：“始吾聞夫人弟公子天下無雙，今吾聞之，乃妄從博徒賣漿者游，公子妄人耳。”（史記·魏公子列傳）

^{AA} 《信陵君》致食客三千人，當是時，諸侯以公子賢，多客，不敢加兵謀魏十餘年。（史記·魏公子列傳）

^{BB} 公子自度終不能得之於王，計不獨生而令趙亡，乃請賓客，約車騎百餘乘，欲以客往赴秦軍，與趙俱死。（史記·魏公子列傳）

^{CC} 彼秦者，弃禮義而上首功之國也，權使其士，虜使其民，彼即肆然而為帝，過而為政於天下，則連有蹈東海而死耳，吾不忍為之民也。（史記·魯仲連列傳）

^{DD} 於是平原君欲封魯連，魯連辭讓，使者三，終不肯受，平原君乃置酒，酒酣，起，前，以千金為魯連壽，魯連笑曰：“所貴於天下之士者，為人排患，釋難，解紛亂而無所取也，即有所取者，是商賈之事者也，而連不忍為也。”遂辭平原君而去，終身不復見。（史記·魯仲連列傳）

^{EE} 毛遂按劍歷階而上，謂平原君曰：“從之利害，兩言而決耳，今日出而言從，日中不決，何也？”楚王謂平原君曰：“客何為者也？”平原君曰：“是勝之舍人也。”楚王叱曰：“胡不下！吾乃與而君言，汝何為者也！”毛遂按劍而前曰：“王之所以叱遂者，以楚國之眾也，今十步之內，王不得恃楚國之眾也，王之命懸於遂手，吾君在前，叱者何也？”……楚王曰：“唯唯，誠先生之言，謹奉社稷以從。”毛遂曰：“從定乎？”楚王曰：“定矣。”（史記·平原君列傳）

Chapter 4: *Xia* in the Western Han Dynasty

The anti-Qin rebellion and founding of the Han revitalized the *xia* and also changed the nature of the classical *xia*. In this chapter, I propose to discuss the development of the *xia* in the Western Han dynasty, focusing on their position in society and their relationship with authority.

Xia and the founding of the Han empire

The founding of the Qin Dynasty in 221 B.C. was one of the most significant historical events in Chinese history. It marked the end of a long period of chaotic wars and social instability, and the beginning of two millennia of primarily unified and centralized imperial regimes.

Under the repression of the First Emperor of Qin's reign (221-210 B.C.), the *xia*, who had been extremely active in the arena of interstate conflict, seem to have been forced underground. However, along with the loyalists of the defeated former feudal states, they were waiting for their season to come again. This happened unexpectedly soon. The Qin regime lasted only fifteen years before it was toppled by the a joint uprising of peasants and aristocrats of the former feudal states. The *xia* immediately joined the growing tide against the Qin and actively involved themselves in the battles among rival warlords.

At the head of the uprising against the Qin stood the Xiang family. This family had produced a long line of men with military careers in the former state of Chu (楚). Its last prominent member during the Warring States was Grand General Xiang Yan (項燕 d. 224 B.C.), who was killed in the war between Qin and Chu. His son Xiang Liang (項梁 d. 208 B.C.) was compelled by the Qin to move his family from his native place after killing a person there. In his new location in Kuaiji (會稽 in present day Zhejiang) he retained many men and privately gave them military training. His commitment to the welfare of the locality as a self-appointed organizer and benefactor earned him support from both landowners and general populace.

Two months after Chen Sheng (陳勝 d. 209 B.C.) launched his uprising, Xiang Liang assassinated the chief of the prefecture and formed an army of eight thousand men to join the rebel forces north

of the Yangtze.^{1A} In taking upon himself matters of local welfare, he was behaving somewhat like a *xia*. But he was different from the pre-Qin *xia* and warriors in his brutality, trickery, ambition and manipulation. I believe that he was driven more by his appetite for power than by his sense of justice. His aristocratic family background and his life as a commoner made him a combination of the noble and commoner *xia*, demonstrating a new aspect of the post-Qin *xia*, which will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Unlike the other prominent members of the family, Xiang Liang's younger brother Xiang Bo (項伯 d. 192 B.C.) is said to have been mild tempered. He was committed more to loyalty in personal friendship. When the Xiang family had to leave its native town, Xiang Bo fled to his friend Zhang Liang (張良 d. 189 B.C.) for refuge. Later Zhang became an important advisor to Liu Bang (劉邦 r. 202-195 B.C.), the arch-rival of the Xiang family. When Xiang Bo became aware that his nephew Xiang Yu (項羽 232-202 B.C.) intended to destroy Liu Bang's forces, he went to see his friend Zhang Liang and asked Zhang to return with him. When Zhang told him that he was obliged by his conscience to stay with Liu, Xiang Bo agreed to persuade his nephew to give up the plan to attack Liu Bang. As on many later occasions, Xiang Bo successfully protected Liu Bang and his family.^{2B} He placed the code of brotherhood and personal loyalty over the interests of his family, typical conduct of the *xia* of the pre-Qin era.

Xiang Liang's nephew Xiang Yu, commander of the rebel forces for almost five years, is described by Sima Qian as heroic and vigorous. He learned swordsmanship after failing to become a scholar as his family had expected. He was more ambitious and egocentric than his uncle Xiang Liang. When he saw the First Emperor on an inspection tour, he declared that the arrogant emperor could be replaced, causing his uncle to cover his mouth for fear his words would be overheard.^{3C} Although Xiang Yu cannot simply be labeled a *xia*, he possessed some of the characteristics that were associated with the *xia*, such as bravery, determination and personal integrity. Liang Qichao in his *Zhongguo zhi Wushidao* (中國之武士道), or *The Chinese Way of the Warrior*, listed three of his encounters to show the development of his image as a heroic knight:

¹ *Shiji jinzhū* (史記今注), v. 1, <項羽本紀>, that was in September of 208 B.C., pp.264-6.

² *ibid.*, pp.275-7 and p.289. At the famous Hongmen Banquet (鴻門宴), Xiang Bo shielded Liu Bang from the intended attack of Xiang Zhuang (項莊) with his own body. On another occasion, when the furious Xiang Yu ordered the captured father of Liu Bang to be killed, Xiang Bo prevented it.

³ *ibid.*, “秦始皇帝游會稽，渡浙江，梁與籍俱觀，籍曰：‘彼可取而代也。’梁掩其口曰：‘毋妄言，族矣！’” pp.264-5.

With his newly assembled motley army, he challenged the awe-inspiring Qin by rushing to the rescue of the state of Zhao. Is that not chivalrous (義俠)? Unable to endure any longer the people's suffering from wars, he challenged Liu Bang to a duel. Is that not benevolent and heroic (仁勇)? When besieged at Gaixia (垓下), he refused to escape to his home base across the Yangtze for feeling too ashamed to see his elders. This is the countenance of a true knight!^{4D}

Liang's account is somewhat romanticized. Xiang Yu's rescue of Zhao, I believe, was more likely driven by his ambition to resume the leadership of the uprising following the death of his uncle. The suggestion of a once-and-for-all duel between him and Liu Bang was entirely unrealistic when his armies faced certain defeat. However, Xiang Yu's refusal to retreat to his home district did show the true color of a hero, who was convinced that ill fortune had doomed him, despite his military efforts and personal bravery. Remaining calm and undaunted, he awaited his fate. In this respect, Xiang Yu was close in temperament to the classical *xia*. Yet at the same time, Xiang Yu and those like him introduced new elements, like political ambition and an overbearing manner, into *xia* behavior and also increased the level of brutality and rebelliousness. As will be seen later, the development of the Han *xia* was primarily in this less noble direction.

Zhang Er (張耳), a native of Wei and one of the leaders of the anti-Qin uprising, was Prince Xinling's retainer in his youth. He had to leave his home town, probably because of violating the Qin law. He later became rich in his place of exile by marrying a woman from a wealthy family. He then began to retain people from a distance beyond even a thousand *li*. Among his retainers were Chen Yu (陳餘), later an important leader in the uprising, and Liu Bang, then a commoner. After Qin annexed the state of Wei, both Zhang and Chen were declared wanted by the Qin government. All their property was confiscated and they went into hiding. Later they used assumed names to make their living as gate-keepers until the revolt began.^{5E}

Ji Bu (季布), a general in Xiang Yu's army, became famous in Chu for he was depicted as "acting recklessly and chivalrously" (為氣任俠). There was a common saying: "A hundred catties of pure

⁴ Liang, Qichao. *Zhongguo zhi Wushidao* (中國之武士道), p.52.

⁵ *Shiji jinzhhu* (史記今注), v.5, <張耳陳餘列傳>, pp.2593-4.

gold are not as good as one of Ji Bu's promises." On the battlefield Ji Bu several times pushed Liu Bang into a tight corner. Liu thus held a bitter grudge against him for his humiliation. After Liu Bang defeated Xiang Yu's forces and subjected all the remaining lords to his rule, he offered a reward of a thousand catties of gold for the capture of Ji Bu. The emperor ordered that whoever dared protect him would be killed along with his whole family. However, many people risked their lives not only to hide Ji Bu but also to help him escape his misfortune. Among them were the most famous *xia* of the time, Zhu Jia (朱家) and the chivalric general Xiahou Ying (夏侯嬰). The latter successfully persuaded Liu Bang to pardon Ji Bu.^{6f} The incidents surrounding Ji Bu's rescue seem to demonstrate that the *xia* character and *xia* behavior were broadly accepted both among the common people and officialdom.

The anti-Qin forces consisted in the main of four components: peasants like the initiator of the uprising Chen Sheng, city vagrants and scoundrels like Han Xin (韓信 d. 196 B.C.), junior government officials like Liu Bang and former nobles like Xiang Yu and Tian Heng (田橫).

The former nobles who participated in the anti-Qin uprising almost succeeded in reviving the old order of independent states. The classic way of the *xia* of the previous Warring States era was also partially preserved among the members of this group. Like Xiang Yu, Tian Heng was one of the famed warriors from the nobility. As members of the former royal family of Qi, Tian Heng and his brothers took advantage of the uprising to seize back the power they had lost in the Qin unification of the country. However, when caught between the forces of Xiang Yu and Liu Bang, they had to take side with one of the rivals in order to survive:

A year or so later, when the lord of Han destroyed out Xiang Yu and became Supreme Emperor, he made Peng Yue (彭越) Lord of Liang (梁王). Tian Heng, fearful of punishment, journeyed with 500 or so of his followers to the seacoast and took refuge among the islands there. When the emperor received word of this he considered that, since Tian Heng and his brother had originally controlled Qi, he must have many worthy men of Qi among his followers and that if they were left to themselves in the islands there would be danger of their revolting later. Therefore he sent an envoy to pardon Tian Heng for his offenses and summon him to court. Tian Heng, accompanied by two followers, set off

⁶ *ibid.*, <季布樂布列傳>, pp.2738-9. See also Watson's translation in *Han Dynasty I*, p.250.

by relay carriage to appear before the emperor at Luoyang (洛陽). When they reached the carriage station at Shixiang (尸鄉), some thirty *li* away from Luoyang, Tian Heng apologized to the envoy and, explaining that “when a subject is to appear before the Son of Heaven, it is proper for him to bathe and wash his hair,” he stopped at the station. Then he said to his two followers, “Once the Lord of Han and I both faced south and called ourselves sovereigns. Now the Lord of Han has become the Son of Heaven, and I have become a captive fugitive. How great would be my shame were I to face north and acknowledge him as my ruler! ...The only reason His Majesty wishes to see me is so that he may for once have a look at my face. That is all. Since he is now in Luoyang, if you cut off my head and hasten with it the thirty *li* from here to there, my features will not have decayed and he may still observe them.” Then, ordering his followers to bear his head and hurry with the envoy to present it to the emperor, he cut his throat. “Ah!” exclaimed the emperor, “it was no accident that this man rose from the rank of commoner and that he and his brothers all three in turn became lords! Was he not a worthy man?” And he wept for him. He honoured Tian Heng’s two followers with the rank of colonel and ordered out 2,000 soldiers to give Tian Heng a burial as a lord. When the burial was completed the two followers of Tian Heng both scooped holes in the side of the grave mound and, cutting their throats, followed him to the world below. When the emperor heard of this he was astonished and concluded that all of Tian Heng’s followers must be worthy men as well. “I have heard that the rest of the 500 men are still in the islands,” he said, and sent an envoy to summon them. When the envoy arrived and the men heard that Tian Heng was dead they all committed suicide. From this one may see what fine men Tian Heng and his brothers were able to attract.^{7G}

Like Xiang Yu, Tian Heng was the classic noble warrior. He treated his people so well that they were all willing to die for him. And he gave up his life so heroically that his death became a source of inspiration to the braves of later ages. Liang Qichao ardently praised Tian and his five hundred followers and claimed that it was their heroic deeds that brought the eight-hundred-year history of Qi to a glorious termination.⁸

⁷ *ibid.*, <田儂列傳>, pp.2663-5. See also Watson’s translation in *Han Dynasty I*, pp.201-2.

⁸ *Zhongguo zhi Wushidao* (中國之武士道): “以五百人者結八百年之局。” p.53. It was approximately eight hundred years from the founding of Qi in the early Zhou to the suicide of Tian Heng.

Liu Bang, the founder of the Han Dynasty, was quite a different kind of person. His immediate origins were part city rogue and part junior government official. Unlike his arch-rival, Xiang Yu, who was from a prominent warrior family, Liu Bang came from an obscure peasant family. According to his biography in the *Shi Ji*, he had no intention to becoming a farmer like his father and elder brothers. He became a junior official but was not really devoted to his work. Instead he indulged himself in wine and women and led an idle life. However, he was also generous and his easy temperament made him attractive to many people. Once he was sent on a mission to escort a batch of labor-draftees to Lishan (驪山) for hard labor. Many fled on the way. It seemed to him that very few would be left when they reached their destination and no doubt he would be punished for his failure to bring them all there. Liu Bang decided to let the remaining criminals go and to hide himself. A small number of the men were willing to follow him. He thus became the leader of a gang of outlaws even before the uprising. Once the uprising occurred, Liu Bang's former colleagues found him, and together they built a force of local people to join the tidal wave against Qin.⁹

In his behavior, Liu Bang reflected his lower social origins, while Xiang Yu exemplified more the style of the landowning aristocracy. But they seem to have had one thing in common: their ambition. Sa Mengwu (薩孟武 1898-) wrote that in the course of China's history there were two kinds of people who had the ambition and capacity to contend for the throne. One consisted of members of influential noble families, that is *haozu* (豪族), the other consisted of rogues. His explanation was: "Influential noble families could take advantage of their privileged position to obtain power; while scoundrels and rogues had no scruples and would gamble everything."¹⁰ Most contenders for the throne came from the former group. Those in the latter group usually had their chance in a widespread, chaotic peasant uprising. Liu Bang's success was the most famous example of this second type.

It is noteworthy that many of Liu Bang's military associates came from a similar background. Ban Gu in his preface to *Han Shu* (漢書), or *Han History*, listed a few of them: "Han Xin (韓信) was a man who struggled along on the verge of starvation, Ying Bu (英布) a criminal with his face tattooed, Peng Yue (彭越) a bandit, and Wu Rui (吳芮) a man of low social status. They all rode on

⁹ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.1, <高祖本紀>, pp.298-305.

¹⁰ Sa, Mengwu. *Shuihu yu Zhongguo shehui* (水滸與中國社會) (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1987): "此蓋豪族有所憑借, 便于取得權力, 流氓無所顧忌, 勇于冒險。" p.3.

the tide of the time and became nobles.¹¹¹ Almost all of Liu Bang's prominent aides except Zhang Liang (張良) came from humble origins.

Zhang Liang, Liu Bang's senior adviser, was born to a noble family in the state of Han (韓). For five generations, members of his family had served as chief ministers. When the state of Han was annexed by Qin, Zhang Liang was still a young man who had not yet started his career. He sold off all his family's property to hire an assassin to kill the First Emperor of Qin. He put his plan into operation when the emperor was on an eastward inspection tour. However, the assassin attacked the wrong carriage. Zhang Liang escaped, changed his name and hid in a place called Xiapi (下邳). His biography in the *Shi Ji* has the following note: "During the years he stayed at Xiapi, he conducted himself as a *xia*. When Xiang Bo killed a man, he hid himself in Zhang Liang's place." When the uprising started, Zhang quickly organized hundreds of young men to respond to it.¹²¹

Among the important assistants of Liu Bang, Chen Ping (陳平), Wang Ling (王陵), Luan Bu (欒布), Chen Xi (陳稀) and Fan Kuai (樊噲) all possessed the *xia* temperament. The young Chen Ping was so poor that his house even lacked a door, but in front of it wealthy and influential people often left their carriages when they visited Chen.^{13K} Wang Ling offended Liu Bang in defending his friend Yong Chi (雍齒). This almost cost him his noble title.^{14L} Luan Bu's loyalty to his former lord Zang Tu (臧荼) almost cost him his own life.^{15M} Chen Xi admired Prince Xinling and like him kept a huge number of retainers. He once passed by Handan on his way home and took with him over one thousand carriages of retainers, who filled up all the official guest houses in the town.^{16N} Fan Kuai was the most heroic of Liu Bang's warrior. At the critical moment in the Hongmen Banquet (鴻門宴), it was Fan Kuai who bravely rushed to the rescue of Liu Bang.^{17O} Together these men brought the *xia* temperament and life style into early Han officialdom.

The Han Dynasty was founded as a result of prolonged military struggle. After two decades of quiescence under the severe Qin dictatorship, the *xia* across the land returned to the center of the stage, which they had occupied in the Warring States period. But in comparison to their Warring

¹¹ *Qian Han shu* (前漢書), <叙傳下>, p.393.

¹² *ibid.*, v.4, <留侯世家>, pp.2083-5.

¹³ *ibid.*, <陳丞相世家>, pp.2101-2.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p.2112. See also Watson's translation in *Han Dynasty I*, p.124-5.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, v.5, <季布欒布列傳>, pp.2742-3. See also Watson's translation in *Han Dynasty I*, pp.251-2.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, <韓信盧綰列傳>, pp.2655-7.

States predecessors, the *xia* and *xia*-like figures who founded the Han Dynasty were different in several ways.

Most important are the following: 1.) They were not as closely allied with the *shi* (士) class, and came largely from the lower levels of society. Consequently, the culture and education usually present in a Chunqiu *xia* were diminished or simply non-existent. Xiang Yu, Liu Bang, Han Xin and Lu Huan are all said to have had some “scholar training” (學書) when they were young, but they did not pursue this. Liu Bang’s training was enough for him to pass the selection test to become a junior official (試爲吏), but he was notorious for his anti-scholar attitudes. 2.) The *shi* class had changed. In the past it had been composed largely of warriors, but now it consisted mainly of intellectuals. Most of the Han *xia* came from other social classes. The *shi* were no longer the major source of *xia*. By the founding of the Han, the *xia* were on their way to being more of a lifestyle and spiritual inclination than a concrete social entity. 3.) Most of the *xia* involved in founding the Han were ambitious. The unification by Qin remodeled Chinese society and uprooted the old feudal system. Officials appointed by the government replaced the hereditary nobles: prefectures and counties replaced the feudal states. When the suppressed *xia* were suddenly freed from the Qin tyranny in the country-wide rebellion, they found themselves cast into the political arena without allegiance to any individual persons or groups. The uprising created the unprecedented opportunity for them to become generals and even lords in their own right. In this regard Sima Qian made an interesting observation at the end of Ji Bu’s biography:

The Grand Historian remarks: with a spirit like that of Xiang Yu, Ji Bu made a name for daring in Chu. From time to time he commanded armies and several times seized the enemy pennants. He deserves to be called a brave man. Yet he suffered punishment and disgrace and became a slave and did not commit suicide. Why did he stoop to this? Because he chose to rely upon his abilities. Therefore he suffered disgrace without shame, for there were things he hoped to accomplish and he was not yet satisfied. Thus in the end he became a renowned general of Han. Truly the wise man regards death as a grave thing. When slaves and scullery maids and such mean people in their despair commit suicide it is

¹ *ibid.*, 《樊鄴滕灌列傳》, pp.2666-9 and 《季布梁布列傳》, p.2739.

not because they are brave; it is because they know that their plans and hopes will never again have a chance of coming true!^{18P}

In general, switching loyalty to the enemy of one's former lord was unacceptable for classic warriors and *xia* as well. This does not mean that there were not cases where a warrior or a *xia* in the pre-Qin period might shift his loyalty. But when he found a lord who appreciated his ability and service, he would rarely change his loyalty, regardless of what fortunes befell his lord. Yu Rang, the famous Chunqiu *xia*, shifted his loyalty twice before he found a lord who appreciated his ability and recognized him as a *guoshi*, or a state knight. His first two lords had paid little attention to his existence. He thus felt no obligation to take revenge for them and actually shifted his loyalty to their killer, his third lord, Zhibo. When Zhibo was later killed, Yu Rang took great pains to plan revenge on the murderer. When his plan failed, Yu Rang took his own life. Despite Yu Rang's steadfast loyalty to his dead lord, no historical record mentioned his contribution as a *guoshi* when Zhibo was in power. He never tried to stop Zhibo's suicidal policy of making enemies everywhere. His sole virtue was his uncompromising loyalty.

In the early Han, loyalty was still regarded as an important ingredient of the *xia* personality, but self-fulfillment was gaining more weight, as was the further development of a warlike character. In Ji Bu's case, the transfer of loyalty caused apparently no embarrassment to either Ji Bu or the historian, because Ji Bu's full expression of his abilities outweighed his commitment to personal loyalty. Ji Bu's change of loyalty and Tian Heng's choice of death to preserve his integrity demonstrate the common pursuit of individual goals from two seemingly opposite ends. While Ji Bu endured all kinds of humiliation in order to survive, Tian Heng maintained that the only way to defend his dignity was to die. Both indicate the awakening of *xia* individualism. As we will see in the following sections, this was to add a new element to the original simplicity of the *xia* personality.

***Xia* influences on early Han official behavior**

As the previous section has shown, many *xia* and *xia*-tempered figures were involved in the anti-Qin uprising and the founding of the Han Dynasty. They became generals, ministers and even lords

¹⁸ *ibid.*, 季布樂布列傳, p.2744. See also Watson's translation in *Han Dynasty I*, p.253.

in the new regime. The *Shi Ji* describes the situation in the early Han as follows: “There were sporadic outbreaks of wars. Even after all within the four seas were pacified, education was still not an urgent matter of the moment. During the reigns of the Emperor Hui (惠帝 r. 195-187 B.C.) and Empress Lu (呂后 r. 188-179 B.C.), nobles and ministers were all vigorous veterans with meritorious military service.”^{19Q} The Qin Dynasty had adopted Legalism as its official ideology and banned almost all the other philosophical schools. From the collapse of Qin to the establishment of Confucianism as the official ideology of Han Dynasty under the reign of Emperor Wu (漢武帝 r. 141-87 B.C.), there was toleration of different opinions and lifestyles. For many of the former rebels and military veterans who now made up officialdom and who were searching for a new identity, the chivalric and uninhibited lifestyle of the four princes in the Warring States held out a fascination. Furthermore, since most of these nobles came from the lower strata of society, they bore a natural affinity for *youxia* ethics, as revealed in the spirit of brotherhood and the demands of revenge. Thus a mixture of noble *xia* and commoner *youxia* characterized early Han officialdom.

Liu Bang’s dislike of scholars (文士) is well known. There were only a few prominent scholars in his camp. The first to join was Li Yiji (酈食其). When he went to see Liu wearing his scholar’s robe and hat, Liu said he was busy with matters of great importance and had no time to meet scholars. It was only after Li angrily claimed he was actually a drunkard that he met Liu Bang and became his advisor.^{20R} The second example was Shusun Tong (叔孫通), an “erudite” (博士) in the Qin court. He became Liu Bang’s advisor and pleased his new lord by changing his scholar’s robe to a shorter gown. He never recommended his scholar peers to Liu Bang. Those he recommended were exclusively former bandits and *xia*, because he thought Liu Bang needed *zhuangshi* (壯士), or heroic warriors and knights, to assist him in his bid for the throne.^{21S} Even after Liu Bang put the crown on his head, he still sought *zhuangshi* to defend his newly founded regime. Once after he had drunk much wine in his native town, the emperor sang a song of his own making, while playing the *zhu* (築), a local instrument: “The great wind rose to blow away the clouds. With my glory covering the whole country I return home. Now how to find brave warriors to guard the territory of the country?”^{22T} It is natural that in the early days of the Han Dynasty the noble class was still highly militant in spirit and attracted to heroic deeds. Even in the presence of the emperor, the nobles,

¹⁹ *ibid.*, v.6, 儒林列傳, p.3144.

²⁰ *ibid.*, v.5, 酈生陸賈列傳, pp.2717-8.

²¹ *ibid.*, 劉敬叔孫通列傳, p.2731.

²² *ibid.*, v.1, 高祖本紀, p.343.

most of whom were formerly *zhuangshi*, would drink wine and dispute with one another as to the ranking of their military exploits. When they became high spirited under the influence of alcohol, they brandished their swords and struck the pillars of the palace, while a din filled the whole court.²³

These scenes evoke recollections of the Warring States. Many historians noticed the similarity between the two periods. The author of the *Hou Han Shu* (後漢書), or *History of the Later Han*, Fan Ye (范曄 398–445), described the time as follows:

After the founder of Han rose with his sword, warriors grew vigorously in number. [In the early Han] the law was lenient and the rites were simple. Inheriting the boldness of the four princes, the people harbored disobedient thoughts in their mind. They despised death and valued their personal integrity. They would requite any favor they received and avenge any insult they suffered. Orders from private houses were enforced and authority was usurped by commoners. *Xia* conduct had become the custom.²⁴

Fan Ye's observation refers to the activities of the *xia* in both upper and lower society. During the Qin regime *xia* activity was limited mainly to the lower ranks of society. After the victory of the rebels and the founding of the Han Dynasty, *xia* behavior spread into upper ranks of society as the former warriors and *youxia* became ministers and nobles. The penetration of higher society by the *xia* during the Han Dynasty, in particular the early Han, can be seen in three areas.

First, *xia* behavior was common to many nobles, ministers and ranking officials. Zhang Er, who I introduced in the previous section as a *xia* and a prominent military leader in the rebel forces, was appointed Lord of Zhao (趙王) by Liu Bang. When he died two years later in 198 B.C., his son Zhang Ao (張敖), who married Liu Bang's daughter Princess Luyuan (魯元公主), succeeded him as Lord of Zhao. In 196 B.C. Liu Bang stayed with him during an inspection tour. Zhang waited upon the emperor day and night like a son. The emperor treated him rudely by often scolding him in the presence of his subordinates.

²³ *ibid.*, v.5, <劉敬叔孫通列傳>: “群臣飲酒爭功, 醉或妄呼, 拔劍擊柱.” p.2732.

²⁴ Wang, Xianqian. *Hou Han shu* (後漢書集解), v.67, <黨錮列傳>, p.782.

Guan Gao (貫高), the premier of Zhao, Zhao Wu (趙午), and others, men over sixty who had formerly been retainers of Zhang Er and were inclined to be strong willed, were infuriated. "Our lord is a weakling!" they said and went to talk to Zhang Ao. "When the brave men of the world rose in arms," they said, "those with real ability became lords first. Now you wait upon the emperor with the utmost courtesy, but he shows no regard for etiquette. We beg to kill him for you!" Zhang Ao bit his finger until he drew blood and replied. "How can you speak in such error! When my father lost his state, it was by the aid of the emperor that he recovered it. Now the goodness of the emperor has extended to me, his heir. Every particle I possess is due to the emperor's power. I beg you, speak no more of this!" Guan Gao, Zhao Wu, and a number of others talked among themselves. "We were at fault. Our lord is a virtuous man and will not betray a debt of gratitude. But we believe that the just should suffer no insult. We were enraged that the emperor should insult our lord, and therefore we thought to kill him. We surely had no thought of staining our lord's reputation. If we succeed, we will attribute it to our lord, but if we fail, we alone will face trial."

Guan and Zhao then plotted to assassinate the emperor when he came through their state during his Dongyuan (東垣) inspection tour. The emperor avoided assassination because he changed his tour schedule. He found out about the conspiracy only later.

The emperor had the Lord of Zhao, Guan Gao and all the others seized. The other dozen men were hurrying to cut their own throats, but Guan Gao cursed them angrily: "Who was it that made you to do it? Our lord had nothing to do with the plot! Yet now he has been arrested with the rest of us. If all of you are dead, who is to testify that the lord is innocent?" They were put into the caged carts and brought under lock to Chang'an (長安) along with their lord. An investigation into the lord's guilt was begun. Although the emperor issued an edict warning that any of the ministers or retainers of Zhao who dared accompany their lord would be executed along with their families, Meng Shu (孟舒) and a number of others shaved their heads, put collars around their necks and, disguised as slaves of the lord's household, accompanied him to the capital. When Guan Gao was brought before the inquisitors he told them, "I and my group alone are responsible. The lord knew nothing about it!" The prison officials, hoping to force a confession, gave him

several thousand lashes and pierced him with needles until there was no spot on his body left to pierce, but he would say nothing more.

When the Minister of Justice told the emperor of the interrogation of Guan Gao, the emperor was impressed by Guan's bravery. He sent a friend of Guan's, Xiegong (泄公), to find out whether the lord was personally involved in the scheme. Guan convinced him that the lord was truly innocent. The Lord of Zhao was then released.

The emperor greatly admired Guan Gao for standing by his word so faithfully and sent Xiegong to inform him that Zhang Ao had already been released and that Guan Gao was pardoned as well. "Has my lord really been set free?" asked Guan Gao joyfully. "He has," replied Xiegong. "And because the emperor admires you," he added, "he has pardoned you as well. "The reason I did not choose death before, but suffered every torture that my body could endure, was so I could bear witness that Lord Zhang was not disloyal. Now that the lord has been released, my duty is fulfilled and I may die without regret. As a subject I have incurred the name of a would-be usurper and assassin. With what face could I appear again before the emperor? Though he might spare my life, would I not feel shame in my heart?"^{25v}

For Guan Gao and his comrades, the dignity of their lord was as inviolable as their own. Dignity was most sacred to a man of *xia* temperament. Once it was violated, he would either avenge himself on the offender or, if forced by circumstance, commit suicide. In the above case, revenge against the emperor was the intent. When the plotters' scheme failed, Guan Gao took upon himself the task of proving the innocence of his lord, while the others committed suicide. Guan gained wide fame for his conduct in the incident. The emperor was himself moved by Guan's bravery and loyalty. He pardoned Guan, the chief plotter, and promoted those who defied his order by accompanying their unfortunate lord to trial to be state premiers and prefectural governors.

Yuan Ang (袁盎) was a highly important and influential official in the early Han period. His father was also a former rebel (故群盜) in the rebellion against the Qin. Yuan Ang was said to be a man of unyielding integrity and principle. When he worked as a junior advisory official in the court of

Emperor Wen (漢文帝 r. 179-157 B.C.), he directed criticism at the emperor's favorite brother, the emperor's chosen concubine, the prime minister, and even the emperor himself. At the same time, he made many friends among local community leaders (諸陵長者) and fellow officials during his official career. Among them, a few were prominent *xia*. Ji Xin (季心), Ji Bu's younger brother, enjoyed equal fame with his brother for his bravery and *xia* character. Ji Xin once killed an enemy and fled for shelter to Yuan Ang, who was then premier of Wu.^{25w} Another leading *xia* of the time, Ju Meng (劇孟), was also Yuan's close friend. One of Yuan's friends warned him that Ju was merely a gambler and wondered why Yuan should keep a friend like him. Sima Qian recorded Yuan's answer:

Ju Meng is a gambler, but when his mother died the carriages of over 1,000 guests appeared to attend her funeral. So he must be something more than an ordinary man. Moreover, everyone sooner or later finds himself in serious trouble. But if one morning you were to go with your troubles and knock on Ju Meng's gate, he would not put you off with excuses about responsibility to his parents, or try to avoid the issue because of the danger to himself. The only men you can really count on in the world are Ji Xin and Ju Meng.^{27x}

Yuan touched the essence of *xia* behavior in his remark. Giving help to people in distress without thought of personal gain or loss formed the kernel of *xia* behavior. Yuan was famed for his outspokenness. When one of his important proposals was not adopted by Emperor Jing (漢景帝 r. 157-141 B.C.), he asked for leave on account of his poor health. Although Emperor Jing's envoys continued to consult him on policy matters, Yuan immersed himself in lower society, attending cockfights and dog-racing with his friends and followers. Because he opposed the appointment as crown prince of the emperor's favorite brother, Lord Xiao of Liang (梁孝王), the latter sent an assassin to kill him. The assassin was so impressed by Yuan's popular renown as a worthy man that, instead of killing Yuan, he told him of his secret mission. However, in the end Yuan did not escape assassination because Lord Xiao sent someone else to perform the task.^{28y}

²⁵ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.5, 〈張耳陳餘列傳〉, pp.2604-7. See also Watson's translation, *Han Dynasty I*, pp.142-4.

²⁶ *ibid.*, 〈季布樂布列傳〉, pp.2741-2.

²⁷ *ibid.*, 〈袁盎晁錯列傳〉, p.2753. See also Watson's translation, *Han Dynasty I*, p.461.

²⁸ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.5, 〈袁盎晁錯列傳〉, pp.2745-54.

The second point of note with regard to the new role of the *xia* is the return to the practice in the early Han of retaining *shi* (士), both scholars and *xia* were included as *shi*. They served in both official and military capacities. In the early Han, nobility and officialdom both realized that by retaining *shi* they could increase their power. The practice of retaining *shi* also demonstrated their personal wealth and magnanimity. Ban Gu in his preface to *Biographies of Youxia* (游侠傳) summarized the situation in the following statement:

When Han was newly founded, the law was lenient. [The habitual practice of retaining personal followers represented by the four princes in the Warring States] was not rectified. For this reason, Chen Xi, premier of Dai (代), could be followed by a thousand carriages, while the lords of Wu (吳) and Huainan (淮南) could all engage retainers up to thousands. The imperial kinsmen and ministers like Dou Yin (竇嬰) and Tian Fen (田蚡) competed in the capital with each other [seeking retainers], while the commoner *youxia* like Ju Meng and Guo Xie (郭解) ran wild in the alleys and lanes. Their influence was exercised in the regions and their strength was greater than that of lords and marquises. Their fame and prestige were highly regarded and they became the envy of the populace.^{29Z}

The Lord of Wu (吳王) was Liu Bang's nephew. He ruled Wu's three prefectures and fifty-three cities for over forty years. During that time, he welcomed refugees and fugitives from all over the country and used them to work the copper mines and salt pans in his state. With his wealth he attracted "heroes of the world" (天下豪杰) to his court. When other prefectures and states requested extradition of their escaped criminals, he ordered his officials to refuse all demands. This was regarded at the time as conduct typical of the noble *xia*. When the central government attempted to reduce the territory and powers of the vassal states, he allied himself with six other states and raised an abortive rebellion against the Han.^{30AA}

The Lord of Wu was not alone in this regard. Retaining *shi* was a common practice among the lords of the vassal states, especially those with inordinate political ambitions. There was an institutional reason for this. In the early Han, imperial kinsmen were normally appointed as lords of the vassal states, the size and location of the state being determined according to their position in

²⁹ *Qian Han shu* (前漢書), p.343.

the royal house. But their power was limited because administration, law enforcement and military operations were administered by officials such as the *xiang* (相), *neishi* (內史) and *zhongwei* (中尉), who were directly appointed by the central government. Only with the consent of these imperial appointees could a lord execute his orders. Emperor Jing's son, Lord Jing of Zhongshan (中山靖王), once reflected upon the normal life of a vassal lord. He criticized his brother, the Lord of Zhao (趙王), for taking the duties of his officials into his own hands, declaring that a lord should instead devote himself daily to recreational activities.³¹ However, there were many lords like the Lord of Zhao. His senior relation, the Lord of Wu, was able to turn the central government's appointees into mere figureheads. What was a problem for the vassal lords was mobilizing the state army. Even if they brought the commanders over to their side, the local armed forces were not strong enough to resist armed intervention by the central government. So the lords retained and recruited warriors, *youxia*, migrants and even criminals at large to form their personal forces, which they used either to further their influence or protect their own interests.

Lord Xiao of Liang (梁孝王) is an example of the first case. As Emperor Jing's brother, he was determined to be the successor. He retained a huge number of *haojie* (豪杰), or vigorous men, from all over the country. The treasury and wealth he amassed were greater than that of the central government. Several hundred thousand weapons were privately manufactured in his state so that he could arm a future military.^{32BB} The Lord of Hengshan (衡山王) illustrates the second case. He also built a secret armed force, but for a different purpose. He could not get along with his brother, the neighboring Lord of Huainan. Upon hearing that his brother was preparing for an uprising against the central government, he reacted "with determination to recruit retainers of his own" out of fear that he would become the first target of his ambitious brother.³³

The retention of *shi* by non-royal family nobles was also politically motivated, although they were less ambitious since by practice they had no potential to become lord or emperor. For them, *shi* consolidated their position and extended their influence. As mentioned in Ban Gu's statement above, Dou Ying and Tian Fen were two prominent ministers in the court of Emperor Wu and both committed themselves to retain large numbers of *shi*. The number of *shi* they retained was

³⁰ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.6, <吳王濞列傳>, pp.2838-40.

³¹ *ibid.*, v.4, <五宗世家>, "兄爲王, 專代吏治事, 王者當日聽音樂聲色," p.2149.

³² *ibid.*, <梁孝王世家>, pp.2131-3.

³³ *ibid.*, v.6, <淮南衡山列傳>, "衡山王聞淮南王作爲叛逆, 反具, 亦心結賓客以應之, 恐爲所并," p.3117.

indicative of their political rise and fall. Dou was Empress Xiao Wen's cousin. Sima Qian in Dou's biography specifically pointed out that he "liked to keep retainers" (喜賓客). After he led the imperial forces to defeat the rebel army of seven vassal states, he was given the title of Marquis Weiqi (魏其侯). Many *shi* rushed to pledge allegiance to him. But his prestige was waning and he was challenged by Marquis Wuan (武安侯), Tian Fen, Empress Jing's brother. They competed with each other to win more *shi* and other followers to broaden their influence. The more shrewd Tian won out over Dou and became prime minister. A large number of *shi* and nobles across the country attached themselves to him, among them many of Dou's former retainers and followers.^{34CC}

The third point in regard to the role of the *xia* in the early Han is that besides retaining *shi* to form their private forces, the nobles and ministers took pride in associating with renowned *xia*. Wei Qing (衛青), Emperor Wu's chief commander of his armies, had a friendship with Guo Xie (郭解), the most well known *youxia* of the time according to Sima Qian. When the emperor began to contain the *youxia* and other regional powerful groups by moving them to places under the government's direct supervision, Guo's name was one of those on the list. General Wei talked to the emperor on Guo's behalf, claiming his friend should not be included. The general's plea made the emperor more determined to remove Guo, because he did not wish to see a commoner have such great influence. One *Shi Ji* scholar observed that only twice in his life had General Wei interceded with the emperor on behalf of a friend.^{35DD}

Making friends with prominent *youxia* was not rare among high profile generals in the early Han. Emperor Jing's general commander Zhou Yafu (周亞夫) acted the same way. When the Lord of Wu and six other vassal lords began their rebellion against the Han central government, Zhou was appointed *taiwei* (太尉), Defense Minister, to lead the army to put down the rebellion. When the army reached Luoyang, he met the renowned *youxia* Ju Meng and they became friends. General Zhou later made this comment: "Since Wu and Chu started their rebellion without support from Ju Meng, I know they will not succeed!" Sima Qian's comment on this incident reads: "When the country was put in a turmoil, the significance of obtaining Ju Meng for the Grand General was like winning a victory over an enemy state."³⁶ Sima Qian may have overstated the significance of

³⁴ *ibid.*, <魏其武安侯列傳>, pp.2856-61.

³⁵ *ibid.*, <游俠列傳>, p.3229.

³⁶ *ibid.*, "天下騷動，宰相得之，若得一敵國云。" p.3225.

Zhou's befriending Ju, but this episode indicates that at certain times the *youxia* played important roles in the power struggles within the ruling class.

Xia and their local influence

When the *xia* first emerged on the Chunqiu stage, they reflected largely the moral and behavioral features of the warrior class of that time. The *xia* and their variant, *youxia*, consciously acted upon principles that can be summarized as altruism, courage, personal loyalty, integrity, sense of honor and generosity. The period of the Warring States witnessed the rise of the noble *xia*. After the founding of the Han, many former rebels became nobles of the new regime. They brought their *xia* temperament and behavior into the court and officialdom. At the same time, *xia* influence was also reaching down into the local levels of society. Local families of landowners joined the *xia* to form a combined force that to some extent shared power with local authorities in regional affairs. A new variant of *xia* appeared in the early Han. It was called *haoxia* (豪俠), or powerful *xia*. Its worst form was *haoqiang* (豪強), which may be translated as "local bully".

The bullying inclination of the *xia* can be found earlier in the Warring States. The *Lie Zi* has a following story: Yu (虞氏) was a wealthy man of Liang (梁), the capital city of Wei (魏). One day he was entertaining friends at his residence which overlooked a big street. His guests were drinking, playing games and listening to music. A group of *xia* came along the street and passed by the building. One guest burst into laughter when he won his game. Meanwhile, by coincidence, a bird flying by dropped a dead rat onto the head of one of the *xia*. The group thought the dead rat was purposely thrown by Yu and vowed to take revenge. They set a date to come back with their comrades. They later attacked and killed the whole Yu family.^{17EE} The story shows the ease and willingness with which *xia* would take offense, sometimes on false grounds as in the above story, and their brutality in settling such matters. Even Prince Mengchang once led his *xia* retainers to massacre hundreds of people out of personal spite, because the victims had expressed their disappointment upon seeing the prince's short and slight stature.

As shown in the previous section, in the early Han the nobles, especially the young princes, were attracted to the lifestyle of *xia* models like the four princes of the Warring States. However, most

¹⁷ *Lie zi zhu* (列子注), 說符, 96-7.

of these young princes lacked the qualities which the four princes frequently displayed. They were said to be pampered and high-handed. The Lord of Wu's bitter relationship with the imperial house was initiated by the death of his son and heir. He once sent his son to the court of Emperor Wen. The young Wu prince was an arrogant and bellicose man. When he played chess with the crown prince, the future Emperor Jing, the prince of Wu acted belligerently and showed no respect to his host. The equally overbearing crown prince knocked the prince down and killed him with the chessboard in a rage. The tragic incident made the Lord of Wu resolve to take vengeance against the central government.^{38FF}

I found that arrogance and imperiousness were almost the defining mode of the young princes during the early Han period. Liu Qian (劉遷), the crown prince of Huainan, was a notorious ruler in his vassal state. He monopolized state power, detaining his subjects arbitrarily and seizing their land and property. He was also a skilled swordsman, thinking himself the best in the world. When he heard Lei Pi (雷被), an official of the state, was also adept in swordcraft, he summoned him to practice together. Lei yielded several times but finally hit the prince by mistake. Lei knew the prince was angry with him and asked to join the national army on the border. The prince blocked his departure in order to punish him.³⁹ Some princes even rode roughshod over their own people to fulfill their unusual desires. A further example is the Lord of Jidong (濟東王), son of Lord Xiao of Liang. He was so fascinated with the lives of bandits that he led his domestic servants and other juvenile desperadoes to loot and kill his own subjects at night. Over a hundred people fell prey to his sport.^{40HH}

However, a local *haoqiang* more often would conduct himself subtler ways. Guan Fu (灌夫) is an example. His father, an army officer, was killed in a battle with the rebel troops of the Lord of Wu. He is said to have led a squad of soldiers to gallop off to the encampment of the Wu army. He killed many enemy soldiers and returned alone with a number of serious wounds on his body. His bravery earned him the reputation of a hero. He was stubborn and outspoken in character, despising any kind of flattery. He paid little respect to those powerful and influential royal relatives who were socially his superiors, and often picked quarrels to insult them. To those who were socially inferior, he always showed great respect and treated them as his equals. Sima Qian in his

³⁸ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.6, <吳王濞列傳>, p.2839.

³⁹ *ibid.*, <淮南衡山列傳>, p.3106.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, v.4, <梁孝王世家>, p.2138.

biography depicted Guan as a man who “liked to conduct himself as a *xia* and was absolutely true to his word.” Nevertheless, his friends were primarily *haoxia* and *haoqiang*. With his huge amount of wealth, he could keep dozens of retainers daily in his residence. His kinsmen and retainers tyrannized the local people, securing lands and property from them by force and trickery. The Guan family is said to have become an evil force in the region, giving rise to the folk saying: “When the waters of the Ying run clear, the Guan family is at ease; but when the waters run muddy, the entire Guan family will be beheaded.”⁴¹

Although there were *haoqiang* like Guan Fu who used their political power and influence to exploit and tyrannize the people within their areas, the majority of *haoqiang* came from the lower levels of society. Their influence extended widely. Ban Gu, who was critical of the expansion of *xia* influence, once estimated that: “They could be found everywhere across the prefectures and states.”⁴² Even in the capital city Chang’an, “at the height of *haoxia* influence, they could be found in every alley and lane.”⁴³ Sima Qian defined their spheres of influence in the four suburbs of the capital in his time: “There are the Yao family (姚氏) in the north, the Du clan (諸杜) in the west, Qiu Jing (仇景) in the south and Zhao Tuoyu (趙他羽) in the east.”⁴⁴ In *Kuli Liezhuan* (酷吏列傳), or *Biographies of Stern Officials*, he also mentioned the Xian clan (閑氏) in Jinan (濟南), which consisted of over three hundred families. This clan was powerful and the local authority was unable to control it.⁴⁵

Sima Qian further divided the *haoqiang* into two major groups and described their characteristics. First were those who “form cliques among the powerful clans, and use their wealth to enslave the poor. They tyrannically and cruelly oppress the helpless and weak to fulfill their desires and seek their pleasure.”⁴⁶

The Xian clan, the four families in the suburbs of Chang’an, and most of the *haoqiang* in the prefectures and states, would fall into this group. They no longer wandered from place to place as did the *youxia* in the Warring States but established themselves locally as major players. They

⁴¹ *ibid.*, v.6, <魏其武安列傳>, pp.2863-4.

⁴² *Qian Han shu* (前漢書), v.92, <游俠傳>, “郡國豪杰, 處處各有,” p.343.

⁴³ *ibid.*, “長安熾盛, 街闕各有豪俠.”

⁴⁴ *Shiji jinzhū* (史記今注), v.6, <游俠列傳>, “北道姚氏, 西道諸杜, 南道仇景, 東道趙他羽公子,” p.3231.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, <酷吏列傳>, “濟南閑氏, 宗人三百餘家, 豪猾, 二千石不能制,” p.3162.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, <游俠列傳>, “明黨宗強比周, 設財役貧, 豪暴侵凌孤弱, 恣欲自快,” p.3223.

formed alliances with other influential local families to curb the influence of the authorities and to maintain their local interests. Their *xia* style of life helped consolidate their cliques and attract more followers. Basically, they controlled the neighborhood through their wealth and influence without openly challenging and breaking the law. In many cases, these influential families colluded with corrupt officials to pursue their joint interests.

The second group consisted primarily of unruly youths. Sima Qian described them as follows:

When the youths of the lanes and alleys attack passers-by or murder them and hide their bodies, threaten others and commit evil deeds, dig up graves and coin counterfeit money, form gangs to bully others, lend each other a hand in avenging wrongs, and think up secret ways to blackmail people or drive them from the neighborhood, paying no heed to the laws and prohibitions, but rushing headlong to the place of execution, it is in fact all because of the lure of money.⁴⁷

These were ruthless young thugs, who ganged together to commit crimes against society. While most of them came from poor families and ended up as criminals and outlaws, a few succeeded in climbing into upper society, like two of Emperor Wu's important law enforcement ministers, Yi Zong (義縱) and Wang Wenshu (王溫舒).⁴⁸

Guo Xie: the sophisticated Han *xia*

The above two groups of *haoxia*, had close connections with each other. The thuggish behavior of the latter often served the interests of the former, while the former would often protect the latter when cornered by the authorities. Many *haoxia* in the first group originated from the latter group when they were young. The life of Guo Xie, the most prominent *haoxia* in Sima Qian's time, shows how these two groups were interlinked and how they developed their influence. Guo was one of the figures Sima Qian openly admired. The historian tried to distinguish his beloved commoner *xia* model from the notorious local bullies, who were regarded by most of the historian's contemporaries as the mainstream *xia*. Sima Qian was successful to some extent in making a

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, 貨殖列傳, pp.3327-8. See also Watson's translation in *Han Dynasty II*, pp.446-7.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, 酷吏列傳, p.3178 and pp.3183-6.

distinction in his description of Guo Xie, but in so doing he revealed quite a few characteristics of the *haoxia*.

Guo's detailed biography provides one of the most complete portraits of a *haoxia*. For purpose of analysis, the entire biography, based on Burton Watson's translation, is presented here with my comments interspersed.

Guo Xie, whose polite name was Wengbo (翁伯), was a native of Zhi (軹). He was a grandson on his mother's side of the famous physiognomist Xu Fu (許負), who was skilled at reading people's faces. Guo Xie's father was executed in the time of Emperor Wen because of his activities as a *xia*. Guo Xie was short in stature and very quick-tempered; he did not drink wine. In his youth he was sullen, vindictive, and quick to anger when crossed in his will, and this led him to kill a great many people. In addition, he would take it upon himself to avenge the wrongs of his friends and conceal men who were fleeing from the law. He was constantly engaged in some kind of evil, robbing or assaulting people, while it would be impossible to say how many times he was guilty of counterfeiting money or looting graves. He met with extraordinary luck, however, and no matter what difficulties he found himself in, he always managed to escape or was pardoned by a general amnesty. When he grew older, he had a change of heart and became much more upright in his conduct, rewarding hatred with virtue, giving generously and expecting little in return. In spite of this, he took more and more delight in daring and chivalrous actions. Whenever he saved someone's life, he would never boast of his achievements. At heart he was still as ill-tempered as ever, however, and his meanness would often flare forth in a sudden angry look. The young men of the time emulated his actions and would often take it upon themselves to avenge his wrongs without telling him.

The above description displays two new features of the Han *youxia*. The first one is that *xia* behavior was passed on from father to son. Guo came from a *youxia* family and followed his father's footsteps to become a *xia*. Even his father's execution by the authorities did not intimidate him into giving up his *xia* style of life. The second is that he was an outlaw, who committed various kinds of crimes against the authorities and society, before becoming a renowned *youxia*.

The son of Guo Xie's elder sister, relying upon [Guo] Xie's power and position, was once drinking with a man and tried to make him drink up all the wine. Though the man protested that it was more than he could do, Xie's nephew threatened him and forced him to drain the cup. In anger the man drew his sword, stabbed and killed the nephew, and ran away. Xie's sister was furious. "For all my brother's so-called sense of duty," she exclaimed, "he allows his own nephew to be murdered and will not even go after the culprit!" Then she threw her son's corpse into the street and refused to bury it, hoping to shame Xie into action. Guo Xie sent men to discover where the murderer was hiding and the latter, fearful of the consequences, returned of his own accord and reported to Xie exactly what had happened. "You were quite right to kill my nephew," said Xie. "He was at fault!" Then he let the murderer go and, laying the blame for the incident entirely on his nephew, took the corpse away and buried it. When men heard of this, they all admired Xie's righteousness and flocked about him in increasing numbers.

The crude and overbearing actions of Guo's nephew were typical of Han *haoqiang* descendants. Guo's reaction to the incident showed that the *xia* side of his character predominated over the *haoqiang* side of cruel-heartedness. This is where Guo Xie was different from the ordinary Han *haoqiang* and why he was admired by his fellow men and the historian as well. Forbearance and vindictiveness created a tension in his character. Sima Qian called this *yinzei* (陰賊), and he used the term twice in the first paragraph of Guo's biography to indicate that this tension was fundamental to his character.

Whenever Guo Xie came or went, people were careful to get out of his way. Once, however, there was a man who, instead of moving aside, merely sat sprawled by the road and stared at Xie. Xie sent someone to ask the man's name. Xie's retainers wanted to kill the man on the spot, but Xie told them, "If I am not respected in the village where I live, it must be that my virtue is insufficient to command respect. What fault has this man committed?" Then he sent secret instructions to the military officials of the district, saying, "This man is very important to me. Whenever his turn comes for military service, see that he is let off!" As a result, the man was let off from military service every time his turn came, and the officials made no attempt to look for him. The man was baffled by this and asked the reason, whereupon he discovered that Xie had instructed that he be excused. The

man then went to Xie and, baring his arms, humbly apologized for his former disrespect.. When the young men of the district heard of this, they admired Xie's conduct even more.

In Han China, streets would be evacuated for passage of ranking officials and imperial tours. Guo's fellow townsmen gave way to Guo whenever he was about, and it was regarded as unusual when someone failed to do so. He exercised his influence not only over the common people in his neighborhood, from whom he would neither expect nor tolerate any challenge, but also over the local officials, with whom he would collude to arrange things in his favor. Connection with government officials of different levels was a major source of Han *haoqiang* power. Guo Xie's influence was not limited to his neighborhood, it reached to other areas as the following passage shows:

In Luoyang there were two families which were carrying on a feud and, although ten or more of the worthy and eminent residents of the city had tried to act as mediators between them, they refused to accept a settlement. Someone asked Guo Xie to help in the matter and he went at night to visit the hostile families, who finally gave in and agreed to listen to Xie's arguments. Then he told them, "I have heard that the gentlemen of Luoyang have attempted to act as mediators, but that you have refused to listen to any of them. Now, fortunately, you have consented to pay attention to me. However, I would certainly not want it to appear that I came here from another district and tried to steal authority from the virtuous men of your own city!" He therefore went away the same night so that people would not know of his visit, telling the feuding families, "Pay no attention to my advice for a while and wait until I have gone. Then let the eminent men of Luoyang act as your mediators and do as they say!"

Guo's sophistication is shown in how he mediated between the feuding families. He demonstrated his ability to unite the different *haoxia* and *haoqiang* groups to pursue their common interests in the locality. This was rarely seen among the pre-Qin *xia*, who acted more out of straightforward impulsiveness. The Han *xia*, especially the *haoxia* type, preferred using their influence and diplomacy to resorting to force.

Guo Xie was very respectful in his behaviour and would never venture to ride in a carriage when entering the office of his district. He would often journey to neighbouring provinces or states in answer to some request for aid. In such cases, if he thought he could accomplish what had been asked of him, he would undertake to do so, but if he thought the request was impossible, he would go to pains to explain the reasons to the satisfaction of the other party, and only then would he consent to accept food and wine. As a result, people regarded him with great awe and respect and vied with each other in offering him their services. Every night ten or more carriages would arrive at his gate bearing young men of the town or members of the eminent families of neighbouring districts who had come begging to be allowed to take some of Xie's guests and retainers into their own homes.

His relation with the local authorities was one in which each used the other for their own ends. This coexistence with the authorities was crucial to him, as well as to the Han *haoxia* in general, in order to maintain their influence over the common people. Since only rich people and officials could ride in carriages at the time, Guo entered the district office always on foot to show his modesty. Like Guo, the Han *haoxia* sought to share power and influence with the authorities. They accomplished it usually by ensuring they did not alienate the latter. This was another characteristic of the Han *haoxia*. While the authorities may have needed the *haoxia*'s cooperation in the local area to carry out duties such as collecting taxes and conscripting labor, the *haoxia* needed the authorities' backing, more often their tacit permission, to legitimize their activities.

When the order went out for powerful and wealthy families in the provinces to be moved to Maoling (茂陵), Guo's Xie's family was exempted, since his wealth did not come up to the specified amount. He was so well known, however, that the officials were afraid they would get into trouble if they did not order him to move. General Wei Qing spoke to the emperor on his behalf, explaining that Guo Xie's wealth was not sufficient to require him to move. But the emperor replied, "If this commoner has enough influence to get you to speak for him, general, he cannot be so very poor!" So in the end Guo Xie's family was ordered to move, and the people who came to see him off presented him with over 10,000,000 cash as a farewell gift. The man who was responsible for originally recommending Guo Xie for transportation to Maoling was a district official named Yang,

the son of Yang Jizhu of Zhi. In retaliation for this, the son of Guo Xie's elder brother cut off the head of Yang, and as a result the Yang and the Guo families became bitter enemies.

It is not surprising that Guo had friends like the grand general Wei Qing, since befriending *xia* and *youxia* was not rare among the generals in the Western Han period. The chief commander of the army, Zhou Yafu, had willingly made himself a friend of the renowned *youxia* Ju Meng. The astonishing fact is that Guo's family dared to kill the law enforcement official whom they regarded as the mastermind of their forced migration, without causing the local authorities to look into the incident. If the family of the official had not lodged a complaint directly with the throne, it seems that Guo would have escaped scot-free. The local authority's avoidance of the matter shows how great Guo's influence was in the district.

After Guo Xie entered the Pass, the worthy and eminent men within the Pass, both those who had known him before and those who had not, soon learned of his reputation and vied with each other in making friends with him. Some time after this, Yang Jizhu, the father of the official who had recommended that Xie be moved to Maoling, was murdered. The Yang family sent a letter of protest to the throne, but someone murdered the bearer of the letter outside the gate of the imperial palace. When the emperor learned of this, he sent out the legal officials to arrest Guo Xie. Xie fled and, leaving his mother and the other members of his family at Xiayang (夏陽), escaped to Linjin (臨晉). Ji Shaogong (籍少公), who had charge of the pass at Linjin, had never known Guo Xie. Therefore, when Xie assumed a false name and asked to be allowed to go through the pass, Ji Shaogong gave him permission. From there Xie turned and entered the region of Taiyuan (太原). Whenever Xie stopped anywhere in his flight, he would make his destination known to his host, so that as a result the law officials were able to trail him without difficulty. When his trail led to Ji Shaogong, however, Ji Shaogong committed suicide to keep from having to give any information. After some time, Guo Xie was captured, and a thorough investigation made of all his crimes. It was found, however, that all the murders he had committed had taken place before the last amnesty.

Ji Shaogong was an official in charge of issuing exit permits to those who had legal documents to leave through the Pass. Although he and Guo Xie were completely unknown to each other, Ji killed

himself when he learned that the person he let go was Guo Xie. In Sima Qian's opinion, he did this to eliminate any clues as to Guo's movement. Sima Qian and his contemporary historians did not leave any further information about Ji Shaogong. But he was obviously an official with *xia* spirit. Sacrificing oneself to rescue a friend or comrade was central to the *xia* code. Ji knew what would happen to him under Emperor Wu's severe penal code if it were found that he let Guo go through the Pass. In addition, possibly as a *xia* himself, Ji may have felt indebted to Guo for telling him where he was going, because this had given him the opportunity of informing the searchers of Guo's whereabouts. Ji also may have felt offended by Guo's leaving him a way out. He therefore took his own life to show that he was a true *xia* and would never betray the *xia* code, even though Guo tempted him to do so by telling him his next destination.

There was a certain Confucian scholar from Zhi who was sitting with the imperial envoys at Guo Xie's investigation. When one of Xie's retainers praised Xie, the Confucian scholar remarked, "Guo Xie does nothing but commit crimes and break the law! How can anyone call him a worthy man?" The retainer happened to overhear his words and later killed the Confucian scholar and cut out his tongue. The law officials tried to lay the blame on Xie, though as a matter of fact he did not know who had committed the murder. The murderer disappeared, and in the end no one ever found out who he was. The officials finally submitted a report to the throne declaring that Xie was innocent of the charges brought against him, but the imperial secretary Gongsun Hong objected, saying, "Xie, although a commoner, has taken the authority of the government into his own hands in his activities as a *xia*, killing anyone who gave him so much as a cross look. Though he did not know the man who murdered the Confucian scholar, his guilt is greater than if he had done the crime himself. He should be condemned as a treasonable and unprincipled criminal!" In the end Guo Xie and all the members of his family were executed.^{19LL}

The Confucian scholar was merely stating the obvious in refuting the claim that Guo was a virtuous man. His refutation had little influence on the imperial envoys investigating Guo's case. Nevertheless, he was not spared by the Guo's followers. This was too much for a regime which sought to expand its authority. Gongsun Hong's rationale for executing Guo well expressed the mentality of the regime: It could not coexist with a force which rose from the grass-roots level of

¹⁹ *ibid.*, 游俠列傳, pp.3226-30. See also Watson's translation in *Han Dynasty II*, pp.413-7.

society and stole from it a part of its authority in ruling the land. The Han authorities had every reason to think the *xia*, and their variant forms *haoxia* and *haoqiang*, were the kind of challenge they must respond to ruthlessly.

Suppression of the *xia* in the Han Dynasty

Sima Qian depicted the social situation in the early Han in the following remark: "At that time, the net of the law was slack and the people were rich. It was possible for men to use their wealth to exploit others and to accumulate huge fortunes. Some, such as the great landowners and powerful families, were able to do anything they pleased in the countryside."⁵⁰ Sima Qian here was primarily referring to the *haoxia* and *haoqiang* groups, who had banded together with the influential local families, and gangs of unruly youths. These non-official forces challenged the power of the government in the locality. Their suppression became inevitable.

The large-scale suppression of these local forces was initiated under the reign of Emperor Jing (漢景帝 151-141 B.C.). The previous half century witnessed the Han empire moving from recovery to prosperity. Economic development paved the way for political expansion of the central government. Emperor Jing was a strong-willed and harsh ruler. Right after he ascended the throne, he launched a campaign to reduce the power and territory of his vassal lords. This caused the rebellion led by the Lords of Wu and Chu. The emperor suppressed the rebellion, finally eliminating the threat to the center from the recalcitrant vassal states headed by members of the royal house. After removing the main obstacle to his political goals, the emperor turned to make the *youxia* and *haoqiang* his second target of attack.

The method usually taken by Emperor Jing to suppress these forces was to send what were known as stern (or "cruel") officials (*kuli* 酷吏) into the areas where *xia* or *haoqiang* influence constituted a threat to his government. Zhi Du (鄴都) was the first such official entrusted by Emperor Jing. The *Biographies of Harsh Officials* in the *Shi Ji* record that:

The Xian clan of Ji`nan, consisting of over 300 households, was notorious for its power and lawlessness, and none of the 2,000 picul officials could do anything to control it.

Emperor Jing thereupon appointed Zhi Du as governor of Ji`nan. As soon as he reached the province, he executed the worst offenders among the Xian clan, along with the members of their families, and the rest were all overwhelmed with fear.^{51MM}

The emperor also appointed other stern officials such as Ning Cheng (寧成) and Zhouyang You (周陽由) to the regions to wipe out *xia* or *haoqiang* forces. However, the suppression of local *haoqiang* influence achieved only superficial and temporary results. Sima Qian put it ironically in the *Biographies of the Youxia*:

At the time the Xian clan of Ji`nan and the Zhou Yong (周庸) family of Chen (陳) were both noted for their great power and influence. When Emperor Jing heard of this, he sent an envoy to execute all the members. After this, Han Wupi (韓無辟) of Liang (梁), Xue Xiong (薛兄) of Yangdi (陽翟), Han Ru (韓諸) of Shan (陝) and various members of the Bai clan (諸白) of Dai (代), came to prominence.^{52NN}

In fact, many noble families, local government officials and *haoqiang* were bound by common economic and political interests, although they were often in conflict in local power struggles. The members of the first two groups not only protected the interests of the *haoqiang* when they were in conflict together with the central government, but also involved themselves in *haoqiang* activities. With the help of the two ruling groups, *haoqiang* used every avenue of influence to strike back at individual officials who were sent by the central government to diminish or eliminate their influence. Almost all the so-called *kuli* listed in Sima Qian's biographies who established their fame through suppressing local *haoqiang* (and sometimes even in-laws of the royal house) were eventually executed by imperial order. Zhi Du's harsh interrogation of the Prince of Linjiang (燕江王), who had been deposed as crown prince to Emperor Jing, forced the young man to kill himself. The prince's powerful grandmother, Empress Dowager Dou, resented this bitterly and eventually found an excuse to put Zhi Du to death. With Zhi Du's death, those powerful families and *haoqiang* (宗室豪桀), who once suffered from his terror, resumed their old vices.⁵³ The emperor's campaign against the *haoqiang* relied chiefly upon a handful of harsh and ruthless

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, v.3, <平準書>, “當此之時, 窮疏而民富, 役財驕溢, 或至喪身, 豪黨之徒, 武斷於鄉曲.” p.1449. See also Watson's translation in *Han Dynasty II*, p.63.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, v.6, <酷吏列傳>, p.3162. See also *Han Dynasty II*, p.381.

⁵² *ibid.*, <游侠列傳>, p.3226. See also *Han Dynasty II*, p.413.

officials. However, by the time of his death the emperor had not succeeded in curbing the influence of the *haoqiang*.

Emperor Jing's successor, Emperor Wu (漢武帝 r 141-87 B.C.), continued his father's undertakings in this respect. He readjusted his father's anti-*haoqiang* policy and coordinated it with other measures. First, Emperor Wu promoted many stern officials to key posts of law enforcement at both the central and local levels. Ning Cheng and Zhouyang You, the two most notorious stern officials from Emperor Jing's reign, were promoted by Emperor Wu. Zhouyang was described at the time of Emperor Wu's enthronement by his contemporary Sima Qian as a "most cruel and tyrannical official". He would twist the law to have people he favored set free even if they were serious criminals and he would bend the law to any lengths to destroy those he hated. His record of killing *haoqiang* in his tenure of various local offices drew the attention of the emperor.⁵³ Because of the emperor's encouragement and advocacy of harsh governance, his officials became cruel and often bloodthirsty. Sima Qian stated that "the officials for the most part were men of the same type as Ning Cheng and Zhouyang You."⁵⁴

Zhang Tang (張湯) was the most repressive of Emperor Wu's official. He undertook the investigation and trial of many important cases such as those of the Lord of Huainan and the Lord of Jiangdu. On every occasion he was able to "uproot all the adherents" (深竟黨與) and "go deep to the bottom of the case" (皆窮根本). He was thus highly regarded by the emperor, who appointed him deputy prime minister and kept him in that post for seven years. Zhang masterminded many specific measures against law-breakers, such as those who failed to report their holdings accurately under the Declaration of Property Decree (告緡令). Eliminating local *haoqiang* forces was the rationale behind these measures.⁵⁵

Emperor Wu also deliberately put officials who had formerly been *xia* or *haoqiang* themselves in charge of suppressing the *haoqiang*. Yi Zong and Wang Wenshu, mentioned in the previous section, were examples of this. The first action Yi took after assuming office in Henei (河內) district as *duwei* (都尉: chief commander for local security and law enforcement) was to execute the whole

⁵³ *ibid.*, v.6, <酷吏列傳>, "鄧都死, 後長安左右宗室多暴犯法," p.3163.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p.3164. See also *Han Dynasty II*, p.384.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, "自寧成, 周陽由之後, 事益多, 民巧法, 大抵吏之治類多成, 由等矣," p.3165. See also *Han Dynasty II*, p.384.

family of the local *haoqiang* Xiang (穰氏). Later the emperor appointed him governor of Dingxiang (定襄) Prefecture, where *haoqiang* forces were rampant. Soon after he arrived in his office, he sent troops to surround the prison and seized over two hundred men accused of major and minor crimes, along with another two hundred or so of their friends and relatives who had slipped into the jail to visit the prisoners. He accused the latter group of plotting to free those prisoners who deserved to die, and ordered all of them executed along with the two hundred prisoners. After this massacre, the remaining *haoqiang* in the area were all obedient to his rule.⁵⁷⁹⁹

Wang Wenshu, the most feared legal official of Emperor Wu, also began his life as a youthful *xia*. He carried the ruthlessness and cruelty of his past into his later career as a law enforcement official. His biography contains the following account:

The emperor heard of his achievements and transferred Wang to the post of governor of Henei Prefecture. Wang Wenshu had already learned during his stay in Guangping (廣平) who all the powerful and lawless families of Henei were. When he reached his new post in the ninth month, he got together fifty privately owned horses from the prefecture and had them disposed at the various post stations between Henei and the capital for later use. In appointing his officials he followed the same strategy that he had used in Guangping and had soon arrested all the powerful and crafty men in the prefecture. By the time they had been investigated and tried, over 1,000 families were implicated in their guilt. He then sent a letter to the throne asking that the major offenders be executed along with the members of their families, the lesser offenders put to death, and all their estates confiscated by the government to compensate for the illegal gains which they had gotten in the past. He forwarded the letter by means of the post horses he had stationed along the way, and in no more than two or three days an answer came back from the emperor approving his proposal. He proceeded to carry out the sentence at once, and the blood flowed for miles around. The whole prefecture was astounded at the supernatural speed with which his proposal had been carried to the capital and approved, and by the time the twelfth month ended no one in the province dared speak a word against him. People no longer ventured out of their houses at night and there was not a single bandit left to set the dogs in the fields to barking. The few offenders who had managed to escape arrest and had fled to

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, pp.3169-72.

neighbouring provinces and states found themselves pursued even there. When the beginning of spring came Wang stamped his foot and sighed, "Ah! If only I could make the winter last one more month I could finish my work to satisfaction!" Such was his fondness for slaughter and demonstrations of power and his lack of love for others. When the emperor heard of this he concluded that Wang was a man of ability and transferred him to the post of *zhongwei* (中尉), the military commander of the capital.^{58RR}

Wang's biography continues to tell us that during his tenure he took in many equally ruthless officials as his aides in suppressing the local *haoqiang*. They put many *haoqiang* and their families into prison. Most of them ended up either being executed or dying in prison, with few leaving the prison alive. Under the personal encouragement of Emperor Wu, those leading regional officials who were desirous of impressing the emperor with their harshness all followed Wang's policy of "ruling with terror" (以惡為治). It is said that when Sima Qian concluded the *Biographies of Stern Officials* in the later years of the emperor's reign, there were around seventy thousand people detained by the central law enforcement ministry alone and over one hundred thousand by its subordinate departments.⁹⁵⁵ Among them were many from throughout the country believed to be *haoqiang*. Although the forces of the local *haoqiang* were heavily hit by the repression, many managed to survive and eventually regained their lost ground.

Emperor Wu took a further measure to control the local *haoqiang* forces. The emperor was under the strong influence of necromancers and alchemists. One year after he ascended the throne, he began to construct his mausoleum in Maoling, to the northwest of the capital. He encouraged people to migrate to the place by awarding them money and free land. Ten years later, his newly appointed policy advisor Zhufu Yan (主父偃 ?-127 B.C.) submitted a memorial to the throne suggesting:

Now that Your Majesty's mausoleum has been established at Maoling in the suburbs, it would be advisable to gather together the wealthy and powerful families and the troublemakers among the people from all over the empire and resettle them at Maoling. In this way you will increase the population of the capital area and at the same time prevent

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, pp.3178-9. See also *Han Dynasty II*, p.295-6.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, 3181-2. See also *Han Dynasty II*, pp.398-9.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p.3186 and p.3190.

the spread of evil and vicious ways in the provinces. This is called preventing danger without resorting to punishments.^{60TT}

The emperor adopted this proposal and issued an edict ordering *haoqiang* and other influential families whose property value exceeded three million *jin* to move to Maoling under the direct surveillance of the central government.⁶¹ The significance of this measure was more political than economic. Many *haoqiang* families were pulled out of their power bases and most of them became less influential, or even lost all influence in their new place of abode. Large-scale forced migration of powerful families was frequently implemented, and the biographic annals of Emperor Wu contain a specific account of one such in his later years.⁶² *Haoqiang* families were not only forced to move to within arm's reach of the emperor; some were also moved to the northwest frontier. In the fifth year of Yuanshou (元狩 118 B.C.), the emperor ordered that "the treacherous be moved from across the country to the borders in company with officials and commoners."⁶³ Many *youxia* were believed among them. Li Ling (李陵) once reported to the emperor that "those I command at the border were all brave warriors, excellent soldiers and swordsmen from Jingchu (荆楚). They are able to catch tigers and hit any target."⁶⁴

As the result of Emperor Wu's various measures of suppression, the regional influence of the *xia* and *haoqiang* was reduced in the later years of his reign. However, it was still far from being eliminated. Sima Qian made the point clearly that after the execution of Guo Xie *xia* were still numerous across the land.⁶⁵ Under the reign of Emperor Xuan (漢宣帝 r. 74-49), the grandson of Emperor Wu, the influence of *haoqiang* once again began to pose a threat to the local government in many areas. The *Han Shu* has the following account:

In Zhuo Prefecture (涿郡 in Hebei), there were two big families, the Western Gao (西高氏) and Eastern Gao (東高氏). All officials from the prefecture level avoided them out of fear, never daring to offend them. Those officials would say: "We would rather disappoint the governor than the great *haoqiang* families." The retainers of the two Gao families

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, <平津侯主父列傳>, p.2976. See also *Han Dynasty II*, p.204.

⁶¹ *Qian Han shu* (前漢書), v.6, <武帝紀>: "徙郡國豪杰及嘗三百萬以上於茂陵." p.19.

⁶² *ibid.*, "太始元年, ... 徙郡國吏民豪杰于茂陵雲陵." p.22.

⁶³ *ibid.*, "徙天下奸猾吏民於邊." p.20.

⁶⁴ *Qian Han shu* (前漢書), <李廣蘇建傳>, "臣所將屯邊者, 皆荆楚勇士奇材劍客也, 力扼虎, 射命中." p.230.

⁶⁵ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.6, <游侠列傳>, "自是之後, 為俠者極眾, 敢而無足數者." p.3231.

unscrupulously committed robberies and thievery and would flee to the Gao fortresses whenever discovered. No official dared to chase them. It had been the situation for quite a long time. Nobody dared walk on the street without carrying weapons at the ready.^{66U}

This situation further worsened under the reign of Emperor Cheng (漢成帝 r. 33-7 B.C.). The influence of *haoxia* and *haoqiang* even infiltrated into the capital Chang'an, under the very eyes of the central government, as related in the *Han Shu*:

Between Yongshi (永始 16-13 B.C.) and Yuanyan (元延 12-9 B.C.), Emperor Cheng was weary of holding court. The influence of imperial relatives prevailed. The Hongyang (紅陽) and Changzhong (長仲) brothers made friends with frivolous *xia* and sheltered desperadoes. In Beidi (北地) a *haoqiang* named Hao Shang (浩商) and his followers killed the chief of Yiqu (義渠) with his wife and children, six people in all, out of revenge. Yet, Hao could still come and go in Chang'an. The office of deputy prime minister sent its officials to chase the culprits. An imperial order was also issued to arrest Hao. It took a long time to bring him to justice. The number of villains was gradually growing in Chang'an. The youths from the alleys ganged up in groups to kill officials. They were hired to take revenge. They cast pellets [to decide what to do]. The red pellet went to cut down a military officer, the black one to cut down a civic official, and the white one to arrange the funeral of a fellow gangster. As dusk came to the city, they turned out in a cloud of dust to rob people. The dead and injured were left lying on the street. Alarms were sounded all the time.^{67V}

Faced with this rampant development of *haoxia* influence and activity, the government of Emperor Cheng seemed unable to do more than appoint strong officials. However, the government was now much weaker and had little confidence of crushing the *haoxia* and *haoqiang* forces. It was capable now of securing order only in the capital and the neighboring areas. When Wang Zun (王尊) was appointed mayor of the capital city (京兆尹), he immediately arrested and executed a group of *haoxia* in the city: Yu Zhang (禹章), Zhang Hui (張回), Zhao Jundu (趙君都) and Jia Ziguang (賈子光), who "as famous *haoxia* in Chang'an were all engaged in taking revenge and retaining

⁶⁶ *Qian Han shu* (前漢書), v.90, <酷吏傳>, p.340.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, pp.340-1.

assassins.⁶⁸ Years later, an even harsher official Yin Shang (尹賞) was appointed to the post. The difficult situation he confronted is described in the continuation of the above account in the *Han Shu*:

Yin Shang was selected to be the mayor of Chang'an (京兆尹) from the top of the recommendation list and allowed to do whatever he would see fit. Upon arriving at his office, he built up prisons, which were several-*zhang*-deep pits surrounded by a wall with a huge stone covering on top. He named them *huxue* (虎穴), or the tiger's den. Then he instructed his aides and various levels of officials to list all those frivolous youths and evil juveniles, unregistered merchants, and those wearing bright suits of armor and carrying weapons. Several hundred were listed. Yin Shang assembled all officials in Chang'an one morning with hundreds of carriages, sending them to take all the people on the list into custody. He accused them all of collaborating with the rebels. He read the list and released one from every group of ten. The remaining people were put into the *huxue*, one hundred for each. All the *huxue* were covered by huge stones. When the stones were removed days later, all of them were found dead with their bodies lying on top of each other. The bodies were all buried near a monastery at Hengdong (恒東). The names of the dead were left at their burying place. A hundred days later, the families of the dead were allowed to take back the bodies. They were wailing while the passers-by all lamented. A ballad spread in the city of Chang'an: "Where to find the place where they have died? It will be in the grounds for the youth of Hengdong. If you behave yourself recklessly when you are alive, where else will your body be found when you are dead?"⁶⁹

Yin's suppression was so cruel that the event became an often-used allusion in later youthful *xia* literature. Those released by Yin were either the leading *haoxia*, or the children of former officials or rich families. They escaped punishment. The pardoned *haoxia* leaders were later recruited to pursue and capture their fellow *haoxia*, rebels and other outlaws.⁷⁰ During the later years of the Western Han, the common strategy adopted by the regime in suppressing *haoxia* and *haoqiang* was to split the local *haoqiang* forces and to use one group to combat another. In Ban Gu's

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p.343.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p.341.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p.341.

Biographies of the Youxia, the three most famous *haoxia* of the time, Lou Hu (樓護), Chen Zun (陳遵) and Yuan She (原涉) were all appointed to local offices.

From Emperor Jing to the usurper Wang Mang (王莽 r. 5-23), suppression of local *xia* forces was the consistent policy of the Han regime. Along with the *xia*, *haoxia* and *haoqiang*, numerous innocent people died at the hands of stern and repressive officials. Bao Xuan (鮑宣), an official in the court of Emperor Ai (漢哀帝 r. 6-1 B.C.), once pointed out in a memorial to the throne that there were “seven major causes of death” (七死): first was death caused by torture by the stern officials, second was death caused by excessive punishments, and third was death caused by the framing of innocent people.⁷¹ The first three causes were all related to the suppression policy of the government. Atrocities committed by the government were the main cause of unnatural death at the time, according to Bao. However, the sustained nature of this suppression also shows that the local *haoxia* forces stubbornly resisted over the long term any attempt by the government to strip them of their economic and political interests. Both Sima Qian and Ban Gu noticed that even under such harsh measures, as one group of *xia* fell, others rose, as if they were unconquerable. The Western Han was the one time in history in which local *xia* forces constituted a real threat to the regime, which is why they drew such extraordinary attention from the authorities as well as the official historians.

After the Western Han, while the *xia* continued to exist, especially in the lower social levels, no further biographies of *xia* were written by the official historians. Many reasons explain this silence. Among them three stand out. One was the suppressive government policy towards the *xia* and other non-governmental forces in the succeeding Eastern Han. The second was the increasing dominance of Confucianism in the ideological system, which stifled political dissent among the literati. The third was that the *xia* themselves underwent great changes during the period and they became far removed from their classical model in the pre-Qin eras. The *xia* were gradually disappearing from the mainstream political scene in real world, but meanwhile the idealization and mythologization of the *xia* began.

⁷¹ *ibid.*, v. 72, <鮑宣傳>: “又有七死: 酷吏毆殺一死也, 治獄深刻二死也, 冤陷亡辜三死也。” p.286.

第四章所引原文

^A 項籍者，下相人也，字羽。...其季父項梁，梁父即楚將項燕，為秦將王翦所戮者也。...項籍少時，學書不成，去學劍，又不成。...項梁殺人，與籍避仇吳中。吳中賢士大夫皆出項梁下。每吳中有大徭役及喪，項梁常為主辦，陰以兵法部勒賓客及子弟，以是知其能。（史記·項羽本紀）

^B 楚左尹項伯者，項羽季父也，素善留侯張良。張良是時從沛公，項伯乃夜馳之沛公軍，私見張良，具告以事，欲呼張良與俱去。曰：“毋從俱死也。”張良曰：“臣為韓王送沛公，沛公今事有急，亡去不義，不可不語。”...項莊拔劍起舞，項伯亦拔劍起舞，常以身翼蔽沛公，莊不得擊。...項王怒，欲殺之（劉邦父）。項伯曰：“...殺之無益，祇益禍耳。”項王從之。（史記·項羽本紀）

^C 秦始皇帝游會稽，度浙江，梁與籍俱觀。籍曰：“彼可取而代也。”梁掩其口，曰：“毋妄言，族矣！”梁以此壯籍。籍長八尺餘，力能扛鼎，才氣過人，雖吳中子弟皆已憚籍矣。（史記·項羽本紀）

^D 其以新造烏合之軍，抗積威之秦，以救瀕亡之趙，可不謂義俠耶？不忍於人民之苦戰，而欲與漢王決斗，可不謂仁勇耶？垓下末路，不肯度江，而雲無面目見父老，此乃真武士之面目也！（中國之武士道）

^E 張耳者，大梁人也。其少時，及魏公子毋忌為客。張耳嘗亡命，游外黃。...張耳此時脫身游，人家厚奉給張耳，張耳以故致千里客。...陳餘者，亦大梁人也。...餘年少，父事張耳，兩人相與為刎頸交。秦之滅大梁也，張耳家外黃。高祖為布衣時，常數從張耳游，客數月。秦滅魏數歲，已聞此兩人魏之名士也，購求有得張耳千金，陳餘五百金。張耳陳餘乃變名姓，俱之陳，為里監門以自食。（史記·張耳陳餘列傳）

^F 季布者，楚人也。為氣任俠，有名於楚。項籍使將兵，數窘漢王。及項羽滅，高祖購求布千金，敢有舍匿，罪及三族。...楚人諺曰：“得黃金百斤，不如得季布一諾”。（史記·季布列傳）

^G 後歲餘，漢滅項籍，漢王立為皇帝，以彭越為梁王。田橫懼誅，而與其徒屬五百餘人入海，居島中。高帝聞之，以為田橫兄弟本定齊，齊人賢者多附焉，今在海中不收，後恐為亂，乃使使赦田橫罪而召之。...田橫乃與其客二人承傳詣洛陽。未至三十里，至尸鄉廐置，橫謝使者曰：“人臣見天子當洗沐。”止留，謂其客曰：“橫始與漢王俱南面稱孤，今漢王為天子，而橫乃為亡虜而北面事之，其耻固已甚矣。...且陛下所以欲見我者，不過欲一見吾面貌耳。今陛下在洛陽，今斬吾頭，馳三十里間，形容尚未能敗，猶可觀也。”遂自剄，令客奉其頭，從使者馳奏之高帝。高帝曰：“嗟乎，有以也夫！起自布衣，兄弟三人更王，豈不賢乎哉！”為之流涕，而拜其二客為都尉，發卒二千人，以王者禮葬田橫。既葬，二客穿其冢旁孔，皆自剄，下從之。高帝聞之，乃大驚，以田橫之客皆賢。吾聞其餘尚五百人在海中，使使召之。至則聞田橫死，亦皆自殺。於是乃知田橫兄弟能得士也。（史記·田儋列傳）

^H 高祖為人，...仁而愛人，喜施，意豁如也。常有大度，不事家人生產作業。及壯，試為吏，為泗水亭長，廷中吏無所不狎侮。好酒及色，常從王媪、武負貰酒，醉卧，...此兩家常折券棄責。...高祖為亭長，素易諸吏，乃給為謁曰：“賀錢萬”，實不持一錢。...高祖以亭長為縣送徒驪山，徒多道亡。自度比至皆亡之，到豐西澤中，止飲，夜乃解縱所送徒。曰：“公等皆去，吾亦從此逝矣！”徒中壯士願從者十餘人。...乃令樊噲召劉季，劉季之眾已數十百人矣。...乃立季為沛公。（史記·高祖本紀）

^I 〔韓〕信惟餓隸，〔英〕布實黥徒，〔彭〕越亦狗盜，〔吳〕芮尹江湖。雲起龍襄，化爲侯王。（前漢書·叙傳）

^J 張良者，其先韓人也。... 秦滅韓，良年少，未宦事韓。韓破，良家童三百人，弟死不葬，悉以家財求客刺秦王，爲韓報仇，以大父、父五世相韓故。... 得力士，爲鐵椎重百二十斤。秦皇帝東游，良與客狙擊秦皇帝博浪沙中，誤中副車。秦皇帝大怒，大索天下，求賊甚急，爲張良故也。良乃更名姓，亡匿下邳。... 居下邳，爲任俠。項伯常殺人，從良匿。後十年，陳涉等起兵，良亦聚少年百餘人。（史記·留侯世家）

^K 陳丞相平者，陽武戶牖鄉人也。少時家貧，好讀書。... 伯常耕田，縱平使游學。... 家乃負郭窮巷，以敝席爲門，然門外多有長者車轍。（史記·陳丞相世家）

^L 王陵者，故沛俄，始爲縣豪，高祖微時，兄事陵。陵少文，任氣，好直言。... 陵卒從漢王定天下。以善雍齒，雍齒，高帝之仇，而陵本無意從高帝，以故晚封。（史記·陳丞相世家）

^M 樂布者，梁人也。始梁王彭越爲家人時，嘗與布游。窮困，賃傭於齊，爲酒人保。數歲，彭越去之巨野中爲盜，而布爲人所略賣，爲奴於燕。爲其家主報仇，燕將臧荼舉以爲都尉。臧荼後爲燕王，以布爲將。及臧荼反，漢擊燕，虜布。梁王彭越聞之，乃言上，請贖布以爲大夫。使於齊未還，漢召彭越，責以謀反，夷三族。已而梟彭越頭於洛陽下，詔曰：“有敢收視者，輒捕之。”布從齊還，奏事彭越頭下，祠而哭之。吏捕布以聞。上召布，罵曰：“若與彭越反邪？吾禁人勿收，若獨祠而哭之，與越反明矣。趣烹之！”方提趣湯，布顧曰：“願一言而死。”... 於是上乃釋布罪，拜爲都尉。（史記·季布樂布列傳）

^N 〔劉邦〕乃封稀爲列侯，以趙相國將監趙、代邊兵，邊兵皆屬焉。稀常告歸過趙，趙相周昌見稀賓客隨之者千餘乘，邯鄲官舍皆滿。稀所以待賓客布衣交，皆出客下。... 陳稀，梁人，其少時數稱慕魏公子。及將軍守邊，招致賓客而下士，名聲過實。（史記·韓信盧綰列傳）

^O 樊噲者，沛人也。以屠狗爲事，與高祖俱隱。... 樊噲在營外，聞事急，乃持鐵盾入到營。... 是日微樊噲奔入營譙讓項羽，沛公事幾殆。（史記·樊鄴滕灌列傳）

^P 太史公曰：以項羽之氣，而季布以勇顯於楚，身履軍搢旗者數矣，可謂壯士。然至被刑戮爲人奴而不死，何其下也！彼必自負其材，故受辱而不羞，欲有所用其未足也，故終爲漢名將。賢者誠重其死，夫婢妾賤人感慨而自殺者，非能勇也，其計畫無復之耳。（史記·季布樂布列傳）

^Q 〔漢初〕尚有干戈，平定四海，亦未暇違庠序之事也。孝惠呂后時，公卿皆武力有功之臣。（史記·儒林列傳）

^R 初，沛公引兵過陳留，酈生踵軍門上謁，... 使者入通，沛公方洗，問使者曰：“何如人也？”使者對曰：“狀貌類大儒，衣儒衣，冠側注。”沛公曰：“爲我謝之，言我方以天下爲事，未暇儒人也。”... 酈生噴目案劍叱使者曰：“走，復人言沛公，吾高陽酒徒也，非儒人也。”使者懼而失謁，跪拾謁，還走，復人報曰：“客，天下壯士也！...” 沛公遽雪足杖矛曰：“延客人！”（史記·酈生陸賈列傳）

^S 叔孫通儒服，漢王憎之，乃變其服。服短衣，楚制，漢王喜。叔孫通之降漢，從儒生弟子百餘人，然通無所言進，專言諸故群盜壯士進之。（史記·劉敬叔孫通列傳）

^T 高祖還歸，過沛，留。... 酒酣，高祖擊築，自爲歌詩曰：“大風起兮雲飛揚，威加海內兮歸故鄉，安得猛士守四方！”（史記·高祖本紀）

^U 漢祖仗劍，武夫勃興。憲令寬除，文禮簡闊。緒餘四豪之烈，人懷陵上之心。輕死重氣，怨惠必讎。令行私庭，權伊匹庶，任俠之方成其俗矣。（後漢書·黨錮列傳）

^V 漢立張耳爲趙王。漢五年，張耳薨，謚爲景王，子敖嗣立爲趙王。高祖長女魯元公主爲趙王敖后。漢七年，高祖從平城過趙，趙王朝夕袒韞蔽，自上食，禮甚卑，有子婿禮。高祖箕踞詈，甚慢易之。趙相貫高、趙午等年六十餘，故張耳客也，生平爲氣，乃怒曰：“吾王孱王也！”說王“夫天下豪杰并起，能者先立。今王事高祖甚恭，而高祖無禮，請爲王殺之！”張敖矚其指出血曰：“君何言之誤！且先人亡國，賴高祖得復國，德流子孫，秋毫皆高祖之力也。願君無復出口。”貫高趙午等十餘人皆相謂曰：“乃吾等非也。吾王長者，不倍德。且吾等義不辱，今怨高祖辱我王，故欲殺之，何乃淤王爲乎？令事成歸王，事敗獨身坐耳。”...漢九年，貫高怨家知其謀，乃上變告之。於是上皆并逮捕趙王貫高等，十餘人皆爭自剄，貫高獨怒罵曰：“誰令公爲之？今王實無謀，而并捕王，公等皆死，誰白王不反者？”乃檻車膠致，與王詣長安。治張敖之罪，上乃詔趙群臣賓客有敢從王者皆族。貫高與客孟舒等十餘人，皆自髡鉗，爲王家奴，從來。貫高至，對獄曰：“獨吾屬爲之，王實不知。”吏治榜笞數千，刺刺，身無可擊者，終不復言。...廷尉以貫高事辭聞，上曰：“壯士！誰知者，以私問之。”中大夫泄公曰：“臣之邑子，素知之。此固趙國立名義不侵爲然諾者也。”上使泄公持節問之運輿前。...《貫高》具道本指所以爲者王不知狀。於是泄公入，具以報，上乃赦趙王。上賢貫高爲人能立然諾，使泄公具高之，曰：“張王已出。”因赦貫高。貫高喜曰：“吾王審出乎？”泄公曰然。泄公曰：“上多足下，故赦足下。”貫高曰：“所以不死一身無餘者，白張王不反也。今王已出，吾責已塞，死不恨矣。且人臣有篡殺之名，何面目復事上哉！縱上不殺我，我不愧於心乎？”乃仰絕頰，遂死。當此之時，名聞天下。（史記·張耳陳餘列傳）

^W 季布弟季心，氣蓋關中，遇人恭謹，爲任俠，方數千里，士皆爭爲之死。嘗殺人，亡之吳，從袁絲匿。長事袁絲，弟畜灌夫籍福之屬。...當是時，季心以勇，布以諾，著聞關中。（史記·季布樂布列傳）

^X 洛陽劇孟嘗過袁盎，盎善待之。安陵富人有謂盎曰：“吾聞劇孟博徒，將軍何自通之？”盎曰：“劇孟雖博徒，然母死，客送葬車千餘乘，此亦有過人者。且緩急人所有，夫一旦有急扣門，不以親爲解，不以存亡爲辭，天下所望者，獨季心、劇孟耳。”（史記·袁盎晁錯列傳）

^Y 袁盎者，楚人也，字絲。父故爲群盜，徙處安陵。高后時，盎嘗爲呂祿舍人。及孝文帝即位，盎兄噲任盎爲中郎。...袁盎常引大體，慷慨。...病免居家，與閭里浮沉，相隨行，斗鷄走狗。...袁盎雖居家，景帝時時使人問籌策。梁王欲求爲嗣，袁盎進說，其後語塞。梁王以此怨盎，曾使人刺盎，刺者至關中，問袁盎，諸君警之皆不容口。乃見袁盎曰：“臣受梁王金來刺君，君長者，不忍刺君。然後刺者十餘曹，備之！”...梁刺客後曹果遮刺殺盎安陵郭門外。（史記·袁盎晁錯列傳）

^Z 及至漢興，禁網疏闊，未之匡改也。是故代相陳郟，從車千乘；而吳濞淮南，皆招賓客以千數。外戚大臣魏其武安之屬，競逐於京師；布衣游俠劇孟郭解之徒，馳驚於閭閻，權行州域，力折公侯。衆庶榮其名迹，覲而慕之。（漢書·游俠傳）

^{AA} 吳王濞者，高帝兄劉仲之子也。...吳有豫章郡銅山，濞則招致天下亡命者，益鑄錢，煮海水爲鹽，以故無賦，國用富饒。...其國以銅鹽故，百姓無賦。卒踐更，輒與平賈。歲時存問茂材，賞賜閭里。佗郡國吏欲來捕亡人者，訟共禁弗予。如此者四十餘年，以故能使其衆。（史記·吳王濞列傳）

^{BB} 梁孝王武者，孝文皇帝子也，而與孝景帝同母。...上未置太子也，上與梁王燕飲，嘗從容言曰：“千秋萬歲後傳於王。”王辭謝，雖知非至言，然心內喜。...招延四方豪杰，自山以東游說之士，莫不畢至。...梁多作兵器弩弓矛數十萬，而府庫金錢且百巨萬，珠玉寶器多于京師。（史記·梁孝王世家）

^{CC} 魏其侯寶嬰者，孝文后從兄子也。父世觀津人，喜賓客。...七國兵已盡破，封嬰爲魏其侯。諸游士賓客爭歸魏其侯。...武安侯田汾者，孝景后同母弟也。...孝景崩，即日立太子，稱制，所鎮撫多有田汾賓客計策。...武安侯新欲用事爲相，卑下賓客，進名士家居者貴之，欲以傾魏其諸將相。...天下吏士趨勢利者，皆去魏其歸武安，武安日益橫。...以武安侯汾爲丞相。...天下士郡諸侯愈益附武安。（史記·魏其武安侯列傳）

^{DD} 及徙豪富茂陵也，〔郭〕解家貧，不中嘗，吏恐，不敢不徙。衛將軍爲言：“郭解家貧不中徙。”上曰：“布衣權至使將軍言，此其家不貧。”

^{EE} 虞氏者，梁之富人也。家充殷盛，錢帛無量，財貨無訾。登高樓，臨大路，設樂陳酒，博擊樓上。俠客相隨而行。樓上博者，射明瓊張中，反兩翕魚而笑。飛鷹適墜其腐鼠而中之。俠客相與言曰：“虞氏富樂之日久矣，而常有輕易人之志。吾不侵犯之，而乃辱我以腐鼠，此而不報，無以立勇于天下。請與若等戮力一志，率徒屬，必滅其家爲等倫。”皆許諾。至期日之夜，聚衆積兵，以攻虞氏，大滅其家。（列子·說符）

^{FF} 孝文時，吳太子入見，得侍皇太子飲博。吳太子師傅皆楚人，輕悍，又素驕，博，爭道，不恭，皇太子引博局提吳太子，殺之。…吳王由此稍失藩臣之禮，稱病不朝。（史記·吳王濞列傳）

^{GG} 太子學用劍，自以爲人莫及，聞郎中雷北巧，乃召與戲。被一再辭讓，誤中太子。太子怒，被恐。此時有欲從軍者輒詣京師，被即願擊匈奴。太子遷數惡被於王，王使郎中令斥免，欲以禁後。（史記·淮南衡山郎中）

^{HH} 濟東王彭離者，梁孝王子。…彭離驕悍，無人君禮。昏暮私與其奴亡命少年數十人行剽殺人，取財物以爲好。所殺發覺者百餘人，國皆知之，莫敢夜行。（史記·梁孝王世家）

^I 灌將軍夫者，潁陰人也。…獨二人及從奴十數騎馳入吳軍，至吳將麾下，所殺傷數十人，不得前，復馳還，走入漢壁，皆亡其奴，獨與一騎歸。夫身中大創十餘，適有萬金良藥，故得無死。…吳已破，灌夫以此名聞天下。潁陰侯言之上，上以夫爲中郎將。…灌夫爲人剛直使酒，不好面諛。貴戚諸有勢在己之右，不欲加禮，必陵之；諸士在己之左，愈貧賤，尤益敬，與均。憫人廣衆，薦寵下輩，士亦以此多之。夫不喜文學，好任俠，已然諾。諸所與交通，無非豪桀大猾。家累數千萬，食客日數十百人，陂池田園，宗族賓客爲權利，橫于潁川。潁川兒乃歌之曰：“潁水清，灌氏寧；潁水濁，灌氏族。”（史記·魏其武安侯列傳）

^J 其在閭巷少年，攻剽椎埋，劫人作奸，掘冢鑄幣，任俠并兼，借交報仇，篡逐幽隱，不避法禁，走死地如鶩者，其實皆爲財用耳。（史記·貨殖列傳）

^{KK} 義縱者，河東人也。爲少年時，嘗與張次公俱攻剽，爲群盜。…王溫舒者，陽陵人也。少時椎埋爲奸。（史記·酷吏列傳）

^{LL} 郭解，軹人也，字翁伯，善相人者許負外孫也。解父以任俠，孝文時誅死。解爲人短小精悍，不飲酒。少時陰賊，感慨不快意，身所殺甚衆。以軀借交報仇，藏命，作奸剽攻不休，乃鑄錢掘冢，固不可勝數。適有天幸，窘急常得脫，若遇赦。及解年長，更折節爲儉，以德報怨，厚施而薄望，然其自喜爲俠益甚。既已振人之命，不矜其功，其陰賊著於心，卒發於睚眦如故雲。而少年慕其行，亦輒爲報仇，不使知也。解姐子負解之勢，與人飲，使之爵，非其任，強必灌之。人怒，拔刀刺殺解姐子，亡去。解姐怒曰：“以翁伯之義，人殺吾子，賊不得。”弃其尸於道，弗葬，欲以辱解。解使人謂知賊處，賊窘自歸，具以實告解。解曰：“公殺之固當，吾兒不直。”遂去其賊，罪其姐子，乃收而葬之。諸公聞之，皆多解之義，益附焉。

解出入，人皆避之。有一人獨箕踞視之。解遣人問其名姓。客欲殺之。解曰：“居邑屋至不見敬，是吾德不修也，彼何罪？”乃陰屬尉史曰：“是人，吾所急也，至踐更時脫之。”每至踐更，數過，吏弗求，怪之，問其故，乃解使脫之。箕踞者乃肉袒謝罪。少年聞之，愈益慕解之行。

洛陽人有相仇者，邑中賢豪居間者以十數，終不聽。客乃見郭解。解夜見仇家，仇家曲聽解。解乃謂仇家曰：“吾聞洛陽諸公在此間，多不聽者。今子幸而聽解，解奈何乃從他縣奪人邑中賢大夫權乎！”乃夜去，不使人知，曰：“且無用，待我去，令洛陽豪居其間，乃聽之。”

解執恭敬，不敢乘車入其縣廷。之旁郡國，為人請求事，事可出，出之；不可者，各厭其意。然後乃敢嘗酒食。諸公以故嚴重之，爭爲用。邑中少年及旁近縣豪，夜半過門常十餘車，請得解客舍養之。

及徙豪富茂陵也，解家貧，不中嘗，吏恐，不敢不徙。衛將軍爲言：“郭解家貧不中徙。”上曰：“布衣權至使將軍爲言，此其家不貧。”解家遂徙。諸公送者出千餘萬。軹人楊季主子爲縣椽，舉徙解。解兄子斷楊椽頭。由此楊氏與郭氏爲仇。

解入關，關中賢豪知與不知，聞其聲，爭交歡解。...已而又殺楊季主。楊季主家上書，人又殺之關下。上聞，乃下吏捕解。解亡，置其母家室夏陽，身至臨晉。臨晉籍少公素不知解，皆冒，因求出關。籍少公已出解，解轉入太原，所過輒告主人家。吏逐之，迹至籍少公。少公自殺，口絕。久之，乃得解。窮治所犯，爲解所殺，皆在赦前。軹有儒生侍使者坐，客譽郭解，生曰：“郭解專以奸犯公法，何謂賢！”解客聞，殺此生，斷其舌。吏以此責解，解實不知殺者。殺者亦竟絕，莫知爲誰。吏奏解無罪。御史大夫公孫弘議曰：“解布衣爲任俠行權，以睚眦殺人，解雖弗知，此罪甚於解殺之。當大逆無道。”遂族郭解翁伯。（史記·游俠列傳）

^{MM} 濟南閔氏，宗人三百餘家，豪猾，二千石不能制。於是景帝乃拜都爲濟南太守。至則族滅閔氏首惡，餘皆股栗。（史記·酷吏列傳）

^{NN} 是時濟南閔氏、陳周庸，亦以豪聞。景帝聞之，使使盡誅此屬。其後代諸白、梁韓無辟、陽翟薛兄、陝韓儒紛紛復出焉。（史記·游俠列傳）

^{OO} 武帝即位，吏治尚循謹甚，然由居二千石中，最爲暴酷驕恣。所愛者，撓法活之，所憎者，曲法誅滅之。所居郡，必夷其豪。（史記·酷吏列傳）

^{PP} 治淮南、衡山、江都反獄，皆窮根本。...於是湯益尊任，遷爲御史大夫。...出告緡令，鋤豪強并兼之家，舞文巧詆以輔法。（史記·酷吏列傳）

^{QQ} 上以爲能，遷爲河內都尉，至則族滅其豪穰氏之屬。...定襄吏民亂敗，於是徙縱爲定襄太守。縱至，掩定襄獄中重罪輕系二百餘人，及賓客昆弟私人相視亦二百餘人。縱一鞠捕，曰：“爲死罪解脫。”是日皆報殺四百餘人。其後郡中不寒而栗，猾民佐吏爲治。（史記·酷吏列傳）

^{RR} 上聞，遷爲河南太守。素居廣平時，皆知河內豪奸之家，及往，九月而至。令郡具私馬五十四匹，爲驛自河內至長安，布吏如居廣平時方略，捕郡中豪猾，郡中豪猾相連坐千餘家。上書請，大者至族，小者乃死，家盡没人償贖。奏行不過二三日，得可事。論報，至流血十餘里。河內皆怪其奏，以爲神色。盡十二月，郡中毋聲，毋敢夜行，野無犬吠之盜。其頗不得，失之旁郡國黎來，會春，溫舒頓足嘆曰：“嗟乎，令冬月益展一月，足吾事矣！”其好殺伐行威不愛人如此。天子聞之，以爲能，遷爲中尉。（史記·酷吏列傳）

^{SS} 自溫舒等以惡爲治，而郡守、都尉、諸侯二千石欲爲治者，其治大抵盡放溫舒。...廷尉及中都官詔獄逮至六七萬人，吏所增加十萬餘人。（史記·酷吏列傳）

^{TT} 《主父偃》說上曰：茂陵初立，天下豪杰并兼之家，亂衆之民，皆可徙茂陵。內實京師，外銷奸猾，此所謂不誅而害除。（史記·平津侯主父列傳）

^{UU} 大姓西高氏東高氏，自郡吏以下皆畏避之，莫敢與牾，咸曰：“寧負二千石，無負豪大家。”賓客放爲盜賊，發輒入高氏，吏不敢追，浸淫日多。道路張弓拔刃，然後敢行。（漢書·酷吏傳）

^{VV} 永始元延間，上怠於政，貴戚驕恣。紅陽長仲兄弟，交通輕俠，藏匿亡命。而北地大豪浩商等，殺義渠長妻子六人，往來長安中。丞相御史遺椽求逐黨與，詔書召捕，久之乃得。長安中奸猾浸多。閭里少年，群輩殺吏，受賕報仇。相與探丸爲彈，得赤者斫武吏，得黑者斫文吏，白者治喪。城中薄暮塵起，剽劫行者，死傷橫道，桴鼓不絕。（漢書·酷吏傳）

^{ww} 河平中，王尊爲京兆尹，捕擊豪俠，殺〔禹〕章及箭張回，酒市趙君都賈子光，皆長安名豪，報仇怨養刺客者也。（漢書·游俠傳）

^{xx} 賞以三輔高第選守長安令，得一切便宜從事。賞至，修治長安獄，穿地方深各數丈，致令辟爲郭，以大石覆其口，名曰虎穴。乃部戶曹掾史與鄉吏亭長里正伍人，雜舉長安中輕薄少年惡子，作務而鮮衣凶服被鎧杆持刀兵者，悉籍記之，得數百人。賞一朝會長安吏，車數百兩，分行收捕，皆劾以爲通行飲食群盜。賞親閱，見十置一，其餘盡以次內虎穴中，百人爲輩，覆以大石。數日一發視，皆相枕藉死，便輿出瘞寺門恒東，著其姓名。百日後乃令死者家各自發取其尸，親屬號哭，道路皆噓唏。長安中歌之曰：“安所求子死？恒東少年場。生時諒不謹，枯骨後何瘞？”（漢書·酷吏傳）

^{yy} 賞所置皆其魁宿，或故吏善家子失計隨輕黠願自改者，財數十百人，皆贖其罪，詭令立功以自贖。盡力有效者因親用之爲爪牙，追捕甚精，甘耆奸惡，甚於凡吏。（漢書·酷吏傳）

Chapter 5: On the Border of History and Literature

In this chapter, I propose to discuss the most important figure in preserving and reconstructing the early *xia* tradition. Sima Qian's image of the *xia* as conveyed in his grand history, the *Shi Ji*, has greatly influenced later *xia* literature and thus shaped our modern understanding of the *xia* heritage.

Sima Qian and his composition of the *Shi Ji*

Pre-Qin and Han Chinese philosophy of history is reflected in two pivotal works, Confucius' *Chun Qiu* and Sima Qian's *Shi Ji*. History was conceived as recording the utterances and deeds of prominent figures in government and the major events of cities and states. From its emergence, Chinese historiography was under the strong influence of moralism. Many early official scribes and historians believed that history had a general scheme and moral purpose, and that it was full of important lessons for mankind, especially those who were the rulers. They believed that the unfolding of history revealed the will of Heaven in regard to human matters. Therefore truthful recording, or *shilu* (實錄), of events and utterances was essential to reveal Heaven's message. However, truthful recording meant more than merely superficially accurate description. A scribe or a historian had to look beyond the surface of an event to search for its concealed meaning. Deduction and imagination based on observation and reason thus had to be employed when a link between events was missing or where evidence was obscure or absent. A good historian was not simply a faithful recorder. He was also an interpreter and analyst with penetrating insight. In this respect, he searched out and transmitted moral lessons contained in historical events.

Confucius, credited as the founder of Chinese historiography for allegedly editing the annals of the state of Lu (魯), or the *Chun Qiu*, once declared: "People in the later ages will know me through the *Chun Qiu*, and also blame me for the *Chun Qiu*."¹ Mencius pointed out Confucius' motive for writing history in this way: "The world was declining and the Way was waning. Wicked thoughts and evil deeds occurred. There were ministers who killed their lords and sons who killed their fathers. Confucius was frightened and therefore composed his *Chun Qiu*. Writing the *Chun Qiu* was for the sake of the Son of Heaven." Out of his preoccupation with political and moral issues, Confucius made his history a platform to judge between right and wrong and delivered his

¹ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v. 4, <孔子世家>: "后世知丘者以春秋, 而罪丘者亦以春秋。" p.1995.

didacticism. His work was claimed thus to make “treacherous ministers and wicked sons take fright.”^{2A}

Through editorial arrangement of the original materials and careful examination of the texts, Confucius explored the concealed meaning of recorded historical events. He never intended to conceal the strong moral purpose of his work. In this respect, Confucius’ attitude towards the recording and composition of history reflected the concern of historians of his time. Confucius regarded his compilation of *Chun Qiu*, which originated in the historical archives of the state of Lu, as creating a canon both for his own time and for posterity.

Even before Confucius, the official scribes, in general, were conscious of their mission in searching for the truth, and they regarded the truthful recording of what happened as the starting point of their search. To a responsible scribe, the principle of truthful recording would not be compromised even if his life was in danger.

When the powerful Qi *dafu* Cui Zhu (崔杼) killed his lord, Duke Zhuang of Qi (齊莊公), in 548 B.C., the Grand Scribe of Qi (齊大史) wrote down on his tablet the following words: “Cui Zhu killed his lord.” Cui put him to death right away. Two of his younger brothers attempted to finish recording the incident and were killed in succession. Another younger brother came forth defiantly, intending to continue his brothers’ work. A scribe living in the south of the state set off with his tablets for the capital to defend the principle of his profession. When he heard the record had finally been completed, he returned home.^{3B} In this incident the scribes showed their uncompromising attitude towards their duty. This attitude appears to have been widely accepted in the circles of both court scribes and historians.

² *Mengzi zhengyi* (孟子正義), v. 6, <滕文公章句下>, pp.266-7, p.271. The most eminent Han Confucian scholar, Dong Zhongshu (董仲舒), also followed Mencius’ line to speculate on Confucius’ motivation in compiling the *Chun Qiu*: “When the Zhou regime was waning, Confucius became the *sikou* (司寇), or justice minister, of Lu. The lords worked against him, while the ministers presented him with obstacles. Confucius realized that his words would not be accepted and his ideal would not be attained. He thus wrote a critical account of the events of 242 years of history in order to set a moral criterion for the world. He reprimanded kings, denigrated lords and condemned ministers to promote his Kingly Way [in that history].” (See *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v. 6, <太史公自序>, p.3355)

³ *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu* (春秋左傳注), <襄公二十五年> (548 B.C.), p.1099.

The *Zuo Zhuan*, the source of this incident, provides another similar account. In the fall of 607 B.C., Duke Ling of Jin (晉靈公) tried to kill his chief minister Zhao Dun (趙盾), who on numerous occasions had admonished the duke for not behaving properly. Zhao narrowly escaped death, and was in flight to a neighboring state when his brother Zhao Chuan (趙穿) attacked the duke and killed him. Zhao Dun came back to find the Grand Scribe Dong Hu's (董狐) account: "Zhao Dun killed his lord." He argued about the account with Dong Hu. But the scribe said: "As a chief minister, you ran away without crossing the borders, and returned without denouncing the rebel. If you are not responsible, who is responsible?" Zhao Dun could not but accept the account. Confucius later commented on the event by saying: "Dong Hu was an upstanding scribe of ancient times because he did not conceal the fact, while Zhao Dun was a virtuous minister because he accepted the blame for the sake of principle."⁴

Confucius' remark is significant in its proclamation of the spirit of truthful recording, or *shufa* (書法), the principle of recording. The core of this principle for him is the moral courage to tell the truth. He regarded this principle as the essential criterion by which to judge a good historian. Confucius elaborated upon this notion. For him it meant not only accurately recording the event, but delving into the event for its inner truth. In the case of Zhao Dun, his brother killed Duke Ling. It was likely that Zhao Dun was not personally involved in the killing, but, if one views the event in the light of Jin politics and Zhao Dun's position as head of a family with great influence among both the Jin aristocracy and the populace, it might be possible to agree with the scribe who insisted that Zhao Dun bore responsibility for the killing. The tradition of *shufa* was enriched by Confucius, who, as a non-official historian, rewrote the *Chun Qiu*. His way of writing history became known as the *Chun Qiu bifa* (春秋筆法), or rhetoric of *Chun Qiu*, by which the message of the event became evident through careful organization and wording of the narrative. *Chun Qiu* became a model for later historical writing and its influence on the *Shi Ji* was evident.

Sima Qian began his career as a historian under the legacy of Confucian historiography. He was born to an official historian's family in 145 (or 135) B.C., the 5th year of Zhongyuan (中元) in Emperor Jing's reign. He was five years old when Emperor Wu came to the throne. Sima Qian's father, Sima Tan (司馬談 ?-110 B.C.), became the Grand Historian in Emperor Wu's court. In accordance with the ideological pluralism in the early Han period, Sima Tan took an open-minded

⁴ *ibid.*, 晉靈公二年, pp.658-63.

stance towards different schools of thought. His *Lun Liujia Yaozhi* (論六家要旨), or *On the Essentials of the Six Schools*, is an important Han document, whose purpose was to impartially evaluate the six major schools of thought of the time. It was partially because of his father's influence that Sima Qian later kept an open mind and a sympathetic attitude towards people and events that would be ignored by the orthodox Confucians of his time.

When Sima Qian was about twenty, he spent some time traveling across the country, visiting numerous historical sites. After that he started his career as a junior official in the court. During the first decade of his career, he followed the emperor in his entourage and served as an envoy on several occasions. In 110 B.C., his father asked Sima Qian, just before his death, to carry on the writing of a history he had just begun. The next year Sima Qian was appointed to the office his father had left. He began to examine what his father had written, and to collect additional historical materials, in order to write the *Shi Ji*.

In 99 B.C., the second year of Tianhan (天漢), Emperor Wu sent thirty thousand mounted troops, led by his trusted general, Li Guangli (李廣利), to attack the Hun army in the Qilian Mountain (祁連山) area. General Li Ling (李陵), grandson of the well-known Han general Li Guang (李廣), led a troop of five thousand foot soldiers to follow the main force. Li Guangli directed Li Ling's troops away from the main force as a tactical maneuver to divert the main Hun force. Li Ling soon found his five thousand foot soldiers surrounded by an army of eighty thousand mounted Hun troops. After an eight-day battle, half of his men were killed and most of those surviving were wounded. They had also run out of weapons and food supplies. Li Ling surrendered to the Hun army. Upon receiving the news, many courtiers blamed the military defeat on Li Ling. When asked by the emperor how he viewed the incident, Sima Qian alone defended the general, his long time court colleague and friend. He asserted that since the general had not been killed he would serve his country again should there be a chance. The emperor regarded this comment as an affront to Li Guangli and the emperor himself. He had Sima Qian arrested. In the course of defending his friend, a traitor to most people in the court, Sima Qian fell from grace and lost his status. When he was in prison awaiting the verdict, he received no help from any of his friends. He was sentenced to death, a sentence which was later changed to castration. This bitter experience clouded the rest of his life. After his release from prison two years later, he was reappointed to the Office of the Secretariat. According to his best known letter, *Bao Ren An Shu* (報任安書), eight years after the

tragedy, he had withdrawn from society for the duration of his life. The sole reason for bearing his humiliation, rather than committing suicide, was to finish writing the *Shi Ji*, which, he believed, would be his compensation for his sufferings.⁵

No doubt Sima Qian was channeling his life and passion into his history. He did not detach himself from what he wrote, with the result that a reader can easily feel his presence and his passion throughout the work. In searching for Sima Qian's motive and impetus in writing the *Shi Ji*, his father's words on his deathbed, recorded by Sima Qian in the following passage, are illuminating:

The Duke of Zhou (周公) has been praised in the world. It is because he was able to sing the merits of King Wen and King Wu, proclaim the practices of Zhou (周) and Shao (邵), comprehend the thoughts of Taiwang (太王), Wangji (王季), and Gongliu (公劉), in order to honor Houji (后稷). From the time of Kings You (幽) and Li (厲), the Kingly Way ceased to prevail and the Rites and Music (禮樂) were in decline. Confucius rebuilt the old and retrived the discarded. He commented on the *Poetry and Documents* (詩書), and compiled the *Chun Qiu*. Scholars have followed in his steps to this day. Since Confucius finished his work of history, over four hundred years have passed. [During this period], the vassal lords annexed one another, and historical records were neglected. With the rise of the Han, the whole country has been united. But the deeds of wise rulers, worthy lords, loyal ministers and those who died for righteous causes have not yet been discussed and recorded by me as the Grand Historian. I very much fear that our history will be lost. You would best give thought to this!⁶

The late Grand Historian saw himself following the Duke of Zhou and Confucius in preserving the achievements and contributions of great men. His early death forced him to leave his great ambition to be fulfilled by his son. Sima Qian echoed his father's words in his preface (自序) to the *Shi Ji*: "I used to hold the office [of Grand Historian]. If I neglect the virtues of sovereigns and record nothing of them, and if I allow the achievements of the meritorious ministers, outstanding families and virtuous officials to be obliterated and narrate nothing of them, I would betray my

⁵ *Qian-Han shu* (前漢書) (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1986), v.62, 司馬遷傳, p.253-6.

⁶ *Shiji jinzhū* (史記今注), v. 6, 太史公自序, p.3353.

father's behest. There is no more serious guilt than that."⁷⁶ Both the father and the son saw the hero as central to history. Sima Qian further indicated that history was created by those "who were distinguished in supporting righteousness, and who missed no opportunity in achieving success and fame in the world."⁷⁸ In his view, the role played by heroes changed the direction of history and determined the fate of mankind.

Sima Qian became one of the first historians to see that the old chronicle framework would no longer serve well. Since the time of Confucius, the nature and volume of the historical materials had greatly changed. A new narrative form was needed to encompass a wider array and greater quantity of historical materials. Sima Qian developed the annal-biography (紀傳體) model as this new form. This led to a major change in the writing of history. The emphasis on events in pre-Qin historiography, represented by the *Chun Qiu* and its derivative the *Zuo Zhuan*, was shifted to an emphasis on historical personages.

The creation of the annal-biography narrative form is extremely significant to the history of the *xia* and *youxia*. Without this new form, the commoner *xia* (布衣之俠) of the Warring States and early Han, and perhaps the *xia* or *youxia* as a whole, would not have had their history recorded, as they would have been omitted from the traditional chronicles which paid scant attention to the lower orders of society. For this reason, Sima Qian was the most important single historian to mold our vision of the early *xia* tradition.

Sima Qian was perhaps fascinated with *xia* behavior and the figure of the *xia* because he himself possessed a chivalric temperament. This temperament was partly responsible for his fateful involvement in the Li Ling Incident. In his letter to Ren An (任安) he explained why he defended the disgraced general before the emperor:

Li Ling and I served in the court together. I regarded him as a distinguished man. He was filial towards his parents, serious about his words to his fellow officers, disinterested in wealth, fair in giving and taking, courteous and self-effacing, modest and willing to make friends inferior to his position. He was always thoughtful in his devotion to his country regardless of his own safety. These traits were consistently displayed in his

⁷⁶ *ibid.*, p.3359.

character. I regarded him as a *guoshi* (國士), a prominent man of the country. I believe that since Li Ling was able to share everything with his soldiers, they were entirely devoted to him. Even the famous generals of the past could not surpass him [in this respect]. Although he fell into disrepute, I thought he was looking for a chance to atone for his defeat. No matter what had happened to him, his achievements on the battlefield alone should be enough to show the world.^{9f}

Li Ling possessed what Sima Qian regarded as integral to the *xia* character: he was true to his word, contemptuous of wealth, and able to keep friends who would die for him. In Li Ling, Sima Qian found an ideal *xia* personality.

Sima Qian tried to live up to his ideal and thus paid a high price. He came to his friend's defense. Unfortunately this almost cost him his life. He remained bitter that no friend came to plead with the emperor on his behalf.¹⁰ However, his sense of the heroic was not dashed. By recounting heroic deeds in his biographies, he recalled the spirit of departed heroes and castigated his society for its lack of heroic qualities.

Biographies of the *youxia*

The *Youxia Liezhuan* (游俠列傳), or *Biographies of the Youxia*, is a unique chapter in the *Shi Ji*, both for its biographical subjects and its superb composition.¹¹ First, its biographical subjects are all commoners, in sharp contrast to most of the other biographies in the *Shi Ji*, which were primarily of the lives of lords, princes, outstanding civil and military officials and other prominent public figures. Second, the *Biographies of the Youxia* is a well knit chapter, consisting of eloquent

⁹ *ibid.*, “扶義調儒，不令已失時，立功名於天下。” p.3364.

^{9f} *Qian-Han shu* (前漢書), v.62, <司馬遷傳>, p.254.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, “交游莫救，左右親近不為一言。” p.254.

¹¹ The *Shi Ji* has 12 annals (本紀) for kings, 10 charts (表) as chronicles, 8 treatises (書) on special topics, 30 biographies for hereditary families (世家) and 70 other biographies (列傳), covering a three thousand year history from the legendary Yellow Emperor to the time of the historian. The subjects of the official histories traditionally had been aristocrats and other members of the elite. Sima Qian was one of the official historians who included commoners in his history. Although he put the biographies of commoners, such as *youxia*, vaudevillians, diviners and money-makers, at the end of his annal-biography framework, possibly under the pressure of conventional norm of history writing of the day, their existence alone is a demonstration of his open-mindedness.

argument, lively description and impassioned comment on the *youxia* and their conduct. Not a few scholars regarded it as one of the best chapters to show the craft of the historian.

Many scholars and *Shi Ji* commentators have speculated on Sima Qian's motivation for including the *youxia* in his work. More than a few attributed it to his suffering in the Li Ling Incident. A Ming scholar named Chen Renzi (陈仁子 1454-1514) made the following comment on the chapter:

The name of the *youxia* probably arose to describe men of more recent ages who were lacking in morality. *You* (游) means roaming and *xia* (俠) means coercing (要挟). They valued brotherhood more than their own lives, and were bold to solve difficulties and settle disputes. Compared with the morality of the ancients, who could solve catastrophes while remaining calm, the *youxia* definitely lagged behind them a huge distance. However, a worthy man would not be overcritical of them. He would say that [their behavior] was shaped by their experiences. What they did may not have completely conformed with righteousness, but if there had been no *youxia* at the time, there would have been misery everywhere, as people were content to stand by with folded arms. Why should I despise them? They were really what Confucius said "dying for a just cause". Sima Qian's composition of the biographies may have been driven by his misfortune of imprisonment.^{12G}

Chen's "ancients" are the pre-Qin sages who conformed to the Confucian ideal. But such men could not exist in later society. Therefore the *youxia*, who regarded "solving difficulties and settling disputes" as their reason for existence, were indispensable. Another Ming scholar, Dong Fen (董份 1510-1595), also connected Sima Qian's treatment of the *youxia* to his experience of the Li Ling Incident. Dong said: "When Sima Qian was in distress because of the Li Ling Incident, none of his friends came to his rescue. He was left alone to fight with the harsh law. That is why he was so touched by the heroism of the *youxia*."¹³ Many other Ming scholars held the same opinion. They indicated or implied that Sima Qian's biographical intent was to express his scorn for the lack of *youxia* heroism in his time.

¹² Han, Zhaoqi (韓兆琦), *Shiji xuanzhu jishuo* (史記選注集說) (Nanchang: Jiangxi renmin chubanshe, 1982), <游俠列傳>, p.428.

¹³ *ibid.*, "史遭遭李陵之難，交游莫救，身坐法困，故感游俠之義。" p.428.

Connecting the writing of the *Biographies of the Youxia* to Sima Qian's suffering in the Li Ling Incident is no doubt an effort to reach into the psychological depths of the author's motivation. But suggesting it as the sole reason for including the *youxia* in his work is too one-sided. A more important reason is his fascination with the unusual. The great Eastern Han scholar Yang Xiong (揚雄 53 B.C.-18) was the first *Shi Ji* commentator to comment on the author's fondness for recording unusual people and things. Yang said, "Sima Qian was too indiscriminating and could not bear to prune his writing. This was also true of Confucius, but Confucius was fond of righteousness, while Sima Qian was merely zealous for *qi* (奇), novelty or unusual things."¹⁴ In Yang's expression "ai qi" (愛奇), *qi* stands as the antonym of *zheng* (正) and *yi* (義), orthodoxy and righteousness. Yang was mocking Sima Qian's acquisition of unorthodox and unconventional anecdotes for his history. As an orthodox Confucian scholar, Yang disliked Sima Qian's penchant for recording unusual and fantastic words and deeds. Decades later, Ban Biao (班彪 3-54) and his son Ban Gu (班固 32-92), the authors of the *Han Shu*, also commented on Sima Qian's tendency to include "whatever came to hand" in his history.¹⁵

Sima Qian was often fascinated with the unusual. For example, money-makers were regarded as socially low in Han society, but Sima Qian included them in the biographies of his history. His reason is simply that they made themselves "outstandingly wealthy" by employing "unusual schemes and methods" in their business, since "none of them enjoyed any titles or fiefs, or salaries from the government, nor did they play tricks with the law or commit any crimes to acquire their fortunes." All these people had a very humble start but achieved much by the end.¹⁶

Throughout the *Shi Ji*, Sima Qian often expresses his respect and admiration for people who showed devotion to various kinds of spiritual values and moral pursuits. Contempt for wealth is actually one of the principal virtues for him. The apparent reason for his praising money-makers is the unusualness of their efforts to achieve success. For the same reason, he glorifies the *xia* and

¹⁴ Yang, Xiong (揚雄), *Fa Yan* (法言), <君子篇>: "多愛不忍, 于長也。仲尼多愛, 愛義也。于長多愛, 愛奇也。" Quoted in Yang Yanqi (楊燕起) at al. ed. *Lidai mingjia ping Shiji* (歷代名家評史記) (Taipei: Boyan chuban youxian gongsi, 1990), p.1.

¹⁵ Fan, Ye (范曄), *Hou Han shu* (後漢書), <班彪列傳>: "務欲以多聞廣載為功。" Quoted in *Lidai mingjia ping Shiji* (歷代名家評史記), p.2.

¹⁶ See the *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v. 6, <貨殖列傳>, pp.3340-1. See translation from Watson's *Han Dynasty II*, pp.453-4.

youxia, many of whom were gamblers, vagabonds and even former bandits, because they could attain positions of great influence and carve out their place in history against all odds.

Although Sima Qian was basically a Confucian, his judgments were often far from being orthodox in many respects. This is evident in the moral framework in which he places the *youxia*. In the opening paragraph of the *Biographies of the Youxia*, Sima Qian states:

Han Fei has remarked: "The Confucians with their learning pervert the laws; the *xia* with their contentiousness violate the prohibitions." Thus he condemns both groups. Yet the Confucian scholars have often been praised by the world. Some of them, by their knowledge of statesmanship, succeeded in becoming prime ministers and high officials and acted as aides to the rulers of the time. Their achievements are fully recorded in history books, and there is therefore no reason to discuss them here. Others, however, such as Confucius' disciples Ji Ci (季次) and Yuan Xian (原宪), were simple commoners living in the village lanes. They studied books and cherished independence of action and the virtues of the superior man; in their righteousness they refused to compromise with their age, and their age in turn merely laughed at them. Therefore they lived all their lives in barren hovels with vine-woven doors, wearing rough clothes, eating coarse food and scarcely enough of that. Yet, though it is over 400 years since they died, their disciples have never tired of writing about them. As for the *youxia*, though their actions may not conform to perfect righteousness, yet they are always true to their word. What they undertake they invariably fulfill; what they have promised they invariably carry out. Without thinking of themselves they hasten to the side of those who are in trouble, whether it means survival or destruction, life or death. Yet they never boast of their accomplishments but rather consider it a disgrace to brag of what they have done for others. So there is much about them which is worthy of admiration, particularly when trouble is something that comes to almost everyone some time.¹⁷

Sima Qian put the *youxia* on a par with the Confucians at the outset by quoting Han Fei's denunciation of them. In Sima Qian's view, Confucians could be sorted into two groups: the pragmatic Confucians who carved their names in history and needed no further promotion from

¹⁷ *ibid.*, 游俠列傳, pp.3219-20. See also Watson's *Han Dynasty II*, pp.409-10.

historians, and the ivory-towered Confucians who were continually praised by their followers and needed no extra word from historians either. His sympathy went fully to the *youxia*, who, unlike the Confucians, had left little in history and were largely misunderstood or ignored. As Sima Qian went on to say in his opening statement: "It is no longer possible to discover anything about the commoner *xia* of ancient times.....The Confucians and Mohists have brushed them all aside and have failed to make any mention of them in their writings. As a result, the names of the commoner *xia* who lived before the Qin have vanished like smoke and can no longer be known. I find this very regrettable indeed!"¹⁸¹ He thus tried to redress the situation. A very special perspective which Sima Qian brought to his treatment of the *xia* was that the *youxia*, or the commoner *xia*, were indispensable to society for their help to those in trouble. He said:

Men who stick fast to their doctrines and observe every minute principle of duty, though it means spending all their lives alone in the world, can hardly be discussed in the same breath with those who lower the tone of their discourse to suit the vulgar, bob along with the current of the times, and thereby acquire a glorious name. Yet among the commoner *xia* there are men who are fair in their dealings and true to their promises, who will risk death for others without a thought to their own safety, and who are praised for their righteousness a thousand miles around. So they have their good points, too; they do not simply strive to get ahead at any price. Therefore when people find themselves in trouble they turn to these men for help and entrust their lives to them. Is it not just this sort of men that people mean when they talk about the "worthy" and the "eminent"? As a matter of fact, if I speak in terms of actual authority and power and the effect which their actions had upon their own times, the *xia* of the hamlets and villages so far surpass men like Ji Ci and Yuan Xian that there is hardly any basis for comparison. If I am talking about immediate effectiveness and the keeping of promises (功見言信), how can we say that the righteousness of these *xia* is dispensable?¹⁹¹

Sima Qian's antagonism in the above statement was not towards Confucians in general, but only towards those who were either anachronistic or opportunistic. The anachronistic Confucians were ineffective, while the opportunistic Confucians, whom he disliked most, lacked integrity. In contrast, the commoner *xia* impressed him deeply. He repeatedly referred in the above statement to

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p.3223. See also *Han Dynasty* II, pp.411-2.

their faithfulness to their promises and their willingness to die for friends and righteousness. He was also impressed by their characteristic modesty and indifference towards amassing wealth (廉潔退讓).

In essence, Sima Qian identified the following four virtues as characteristic of the *youxia*: 1) faithfulness in their word, 2) readiness to risk death for others, 3) indifference to wealth, and 4) modesty and humbleness. The stress he put upon these four virtues was intended to distinguish the *youxia* from the *haoqiang* and any others who called themselves *xia* without possessing such virtues. He argued that the commoner *xia* were even more deserving of esteem, because of their humble station. Twice in the *Biographies of the Youxia*, he made a spirited defense of the *youxia* against the common view that indiscriminately placed them with either *haoqiang* or bandits. Sima Qian made this argument:

In more recent ages there were men like Yan Ling and the princes of Mengchang, Chunshen, Pingyuan, and Xinling. All of these men, because they were related to the ruling families of the time and could rely upon their wealth as landowners and high officials, were able to summon worthy men from all over the empire to be their retainers and thus achieve fame among the feudal lords. This is not to say that they themselves were not worthy men. But it is more like the case of a man who shouts downwind. The sound of his voice is not necessarily increased in strength; it is the force of the wind that bears it along. Yet there were others, *xia* of the lanes and byways, who, though they had no such advantages, were so upright in conduct and careful of their honor that their reputation was known all over the empire and there was no one who did not praise them as worthy men. This is not quite so easy to do.....After the founding of the Han there were men like Zhu Jia, Tian Zhong, Wang Gong, Ju Meng, and Guo Xie who, although they often ran afoul of the law in their day, were in their personal relations scrupulously honest and humble. Such qualities are surely worthy of praise. Their reputations were not founded on air and it was not without reason that men gathered about them. On the other hand, when it comes to those who band together in cliques and powerful family groups, pooling their wealth and making the poor serve them, arrogantly and cruelly oppressing the weak and helpless, giving free rein to their own desires and treating people any way they please - such men the *youxia* despise even as others do. I am grieved that so many people of my day consider Zhu Jia, Guo Xie,

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p.3222. See also *Han Dynasty* II, p.411. Last sentence altered.

and the others to be in the same group of those bullies and *haoqiang*, and so ridicule both groups.^{20K}

At the end of his biography of Guo Xie, Sima Qian again remarked that the *youxia* were different from the “bullies and *haoqiang*” (暴豪之徒). He portrayed the *youxia* as men who “possess the manners of gentlemen and act scrupulously and modestly.” In contrast, the bullies and *haoqiang* were merely “bandits and robbers from lower society”, whose company would be awkward and shameful for a real *youxia* like Zhu Jia.^{21L}

At the end of the biographies, Sima Qian equated the *youxia* with the *junzi* (君子), the ideal Confucian gentleman. His intention is clear. As a writer who had a keen sensitivity for unusual traits, he admired the *youxia* for their extraordinary vigor and capability. But the *youxia* were treated by society as if they were a disreputable social element, especially during the time of Emperors Jing and Wu, when the suppression of the *youxia* was in the ascendant. In order to legitimize the inclusion of the *youxia* in his history, which he was writing in his capacity of official historian, he first had to distinguish the *youxia* from the prevailing image of the *xia*, and secondly had to place the deeds of *youxia* within the framework of Confucian behavior. This meant inevitably the idealization of the *youxia*.

Sima Qian played a central role in remolding popular notions of the *xia*. However, it was not until long after his time that these became widespread. When copies of the *Shi Ji* were first circulated half a century after his death, the *youxia* section was still an object of denunciation, although the work as a whole was admired. I have already quoted Yang Xiong’s blunt criticism. Ban Biao and Ban Gu both denounced in unequivocal terms his praise of the *youxia* as “belittling those of integrity while valuing trivial achievements”²², and “rejecting recluses of high virtue while promoting villains.”²³ Their accusations gave rise to a heated discussion of the topic, which was argued among the *Shi Ji* scholars and commentators up to pre-modern times. This chapter,

²⁰ *ibid.*, pp.3223-4. See also *Han Dynasty II*, pp.411-2.

²¹ *ibid.*, p.3231.

²² *Hou Hanshu* (後漢書), v.40, “道游俠則賤守節而貴俗功。” p.478.

²³ *Han Shu* (漢書), v.63, “序游俠則退處士而進奸雄。” p.255.

Biographies of the Youxia. was to remain one of the most controversial parts of Sima Qian's work.²⁴

Images of *xia* in the biographies of *youxia* and assassins

The two chapters, the *Biographies of the Youxia* and the *Biographies of Assassins* (刺客列傳), contain most of the references to the commoner *xia*. The other *xia* or *xia*-spirited figures are scattered among other chapters of the *Shi Ji*. The *Biographies of the Youxia* are confined to the Han dynasty and thus include people and events close to the historian's time, while the *Biographies of Assassins* treat pre-Han figures. In essence, both these chapters deal with people who came out of obscurity and were drawn into important events in history. The protagonists from both sets of biographies acted similarly in regard to friendship, faith and honor.

It is clear, first of all, that Sima Qian had in mind a specific type of *xia*, much different from the type defined by Han Fei and later accepted by the majority of scholars and historians. Han Fei called the *xia* "private swords" or "people who carry the sword" to characterize their resort to violence instead of the law. In Sima Qian's *Biographies of the Youxia*, only Tian Zhong (田仲) is depicted as "loving the sword" (喜劍). Zhu Jia, Ju Meng and Guo Xie seem to have had no passion for swords or martial arts. They did not carry a sword, in all probability because they were forbidden to by Han law. Whatever the case, display or use of the sword was no longer important for a *youxia*. Sima Qian pointedly told his readers that the *youxia* were the commoner *xia* who gave protection to comrades in trouble and used their influence to gather followers. Sima Qian called these followers "ke" (客), "menke" (門客). Someone sent to assassinate another person for a cause was called a "cike". He thus divided the *xia* into the two major groups of *youxia* and *cike*. The reason he did not include any *youxia* from before the Han dynasty in the *Biographies of the Youxia* is probably because he could not find any authentic historical accounts of them. As for the lack of *cike* from the Han dynasty in his *Biographies of Assassins*, the reason for this might be 1) Sima Qian failed to find anyone in his own time who assassinated somebody for a grand cause; 2) it was politically dangerous to praise an assassin in his time. It seems that the assassins of his time

²⁴ See comments on the biographies in *Lidai mingjia ping Shi Ji* (歷代名家評史記) (Taipei: Boyan chuban youxian gongsi, 1990), pp.835-45.

were no more than faceless and nameless men who in most cases acted as the lackeys of disreputable schemers.

A comparative reading of these two sets of biographies shows some interesting similarities and differences between them. According to the *Biographies of the Youxia*, the three subjects of these biographies were charismatic and popular on all levels of society. Zhu Jia was so admired by the people who lived east of the Pass (關東) that “everyone there was longing to become his friend.”²⁵ He was also a close friend of the Marquis Ruying, Xiahou Ying (夏侯嬰). For Ju Meng, one thousand carriages came from many places to attend his mother’s funeral. The Marquis Tiao, Zhou Yafu (周亞夫), then army commander-in-chief, received him as a guest of honor. As for Guo Xie, numerous youths in his neighborhood voluntarily devoted themselves to him. In many cases he did not know who had rendered him what service. The Grand General Wei Qing (衛青) was also his friend.

In contrast, the five subjects of the *Biographies of Assassins* were more reclusive. They had few friends and preferred to stay in the shadows. When they had to take action to fulfill their secret missions, they ended by sacrificing their own lives. Cao Mo was an exception merely by luck.²⁶

None of the men in the *Biographies of the Youxia* came from a warrior background. Nor could they earn fame from their swordsmanship. The disappearance of the sword as a symbol of the *xia* was a striking difference between the pre-Qin and Han eras. However, the *cike* described in the *Biographies of the Assassins* were warriors or former warriors who were versed in swordsmanship and certainly hired on that basis. Cao Mo was retained by Duke Zhuang of Lu (魯莊公) because he was “brave and vigorous” (勇力). Zhuan Zhu (專諸) was recommended to Prince Guang of Wu by Wu Zixu (伍子胥) for his “ability”, obviously his military skills. Yu Rang called himself “*shi*”, and was proud of being treated as a “state *shi*” (國士) by his lord. Nie Zheng (聶政) was a “brave warrior” (勇敢士). The fact that he could assassinate the heavily guarded prime minister of Han (韓), Xia Lei (俠累), shows that he was a highly skilled swordsman. Jing Ke’s (荊軻) fascination with swordsmanship led him to seek out master swordsmen across the country to discuss the art of swordsmanship.

²⁵ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.6, <游俠列傳>, “自關以東, 莫不延頸願交焉.” p.3225.

²⁶ *ibid.*, v.5, <刺客列傳>, p.2532.

Sima Qian used the term for the term *youxia*, “wandering knights”, for the commoner *xia* in the Han, but in fact, except when in flight from government forces, the power base and influence of the *youxia* remained mainly in the region where they lived. Zhu Jia was based to the east of the Pass (關東), while Ju Meng was based in Luoyang and Guo Xie in Zhi. The assassins, however, travelled far afield. Most of the assassins in the biographies left their home either to escape prosecution or to work for an ambitious nobleman. Zhuan Zhu left Tangyi (堂邑) for the capital of Wu to become a retainer of Prince Guang. Nie Zheng left his home state and went to Qi to flee from his enemies. After Jing Ke left his native Wei (衛), he moved about various places until he became a retainer of Prince Dan of Yan.

Differences between the two groups were largely a product of different times. It was hardly possible for an assassin like those in the *Biographies of the Assassins* to meet with success in a unified and centralized society like the Han. It was also not likely that in a land dominated by numerous contentious feudal lords, as in the pre-Qin period, humble commoners could exert significant influence on events by themselves.

With regard to family background, character, temperament, behavior and ideals, the two groups have much more in common in the *Shi Ji*. Although Sima Qian did not explicitly make this point, it strongly appears that he had a complete image of the *xia* in his mind when he described the *youxia* and assassins.

The first similarity to be noted is in background. The two groups came from families of no great influence or from very humble beginnings and yet they did extraordinary deeds. The *youxia* provide the following examples. Zhu Jia was an ordinary landowner, but his efforts in rescuing Ji Bu finally made Emperor Gaozu think differently of the fleeing general. Zhou Yafu, the commander-in-chief of the imperial army, with responsibility for putting down the revolt of the southeast feudal lords, was so pleased to have Ju Meng, a gambler, at his side that he behaved as if he had already eliminated the rebels. Guo Xie was originally a young outlaw. He twice drew Emperor Wu's personal attention and his fate was decided by a ruling from the emperor himself.

As for the assassins, the former bodyguard Cao Mo forced Duke Huan of Qi, the most powerful lord of the time, to return the land his army had seized from Lu. Zhuan Zhu ushered in a great age for the state of Wu by assassinating its lord to allow the enthronement of Prince Guang. Nie Zheng worked as a butcher to support his mother and sister. His assassination of the Han prime minister shocked the whole region of Jin, Chu, Qi, Wei and Han. Jing Ke, a wandering knight, was hired by Prince Dan to carry out the assassination of the King of Qin, who later unified the country as the First Emperor of Qin. Although the mission was unsuccessful, it became one of the most famous events in Chinese history.

The second similarity between the two groups is the centrality of altruism, heroism, individuality, warmth and affection, and contempt for wealth in their system of values.

1) Altruism. Altruism is no doubt the most important characteristic of the *youxia*. "To shelter the runaway and to rescue people from the brink of death" (存亡死生) are the goals of Sima Qian's *youxia*. Zhu Jia "sheltered and concealed hundreds of *haoshi* (豪士), or eminent men, and other ordinary people, whose number was too large to count."²⁷ Ji Bu was the most prominent political fugitive he sheltered and rescued. Zhu "often hastened to the side of others who were in trouble, giving less importance to his own well being than theirs."²⁸ Apart from this, "in helping people who were in need, he considered first those who were poor and humble."²⁹ Sima Qian did not specify Ju Meng's altruistic deed, but said it was "much like that of Zhu Jia."³⁰ Guo Xie was also very active in sheltering fugitives, giving generously and rescuing people in danger. Sima Qian said that Guo "took more and more delight in daring and chivalrous actions."³¹

Their altruism is reminiscent of the deeds of the noble-*xia* represented by the "Four Princes" in the Warring States, such as the Prince of Mengchang who single-handedly sheltered thousands of refugees, fugitives and criminals from the other states. However, there is an essential difference between the noble-*xia* and *youxia*. Sima Qian in the *Biography of Prince Chunshen* made it clear that the altruism displayed by these noble-*xia* was often motivated by their desire to gain political

²⁷ *Shiji jinzhū* (史記今注), v.6. 游俠列傳>: "所蔽活豪士以百數, 其餘庸人不可勝言。" p.3224. See also Watson's translation in *Han Dynasty II*, p.412.

²⁸ *ibid.*, "專趨人之急, 甚己之私。" p.3225.

²⁹ *ibid.*, "振人不矜, 先從貧賤始。" p.3224.

³⁰ *ibid.*, "行大類朱家。" p.3225.

³¹ *ibid.*, "自喜為俠益甚。" p.3226.

influence and to wield power.³² In regard to the altruism of the *youxia*, Sima Qian repeatedly described its non-utilitarian nature. In his opening statement, he praised the *youxia* for never “boasting of their accomplishments but rather considering it a disgrace to brag of what they have done for others.”³³ In their biographies, he twice reminded his readers of this defining characteristic of the *youxia*. He devoted half of Zhu Jia’s biography to describing how Zhu “never boasted of his abilities nor bragged of the favors he had done for others.” Zhu was described as a benefactor whose “only concern was not to make himself known to the people he once helped.” After he successfully helped General Ji Bu out of his predicament, he never made any further attempt to see Ji, who later became a personage in the court.³⁴ In Guo Xie’s biography, Sima Qian described Guo as “giving generously and expecting little in return” and “never boasting of his achievement whenever he had saved someone’s life.”³⁵

2) Heroism. Sima Qian on many occasions in the *Shi Ji* suggested that heroism was one of most admirable of human virtues. He believed it to be seriously lacking under the tyranny of Emperor Wu's regime.

Heroism was the main reason for Sima Qian to include such controversial historical figures as the assassins in his history. He used every occasion to stress the heroism demonstrated by his subjects. Cao Mo confronted death calmly and forced Duke Huan of Qi to promise the return of invaded lands. Sima Qian described how he “threw his short sword away and descended from the altar to go back to his seat, keeping perfectly calm and talking as usual.”^{36M} Yu Rang’s revenge upon Zhao Xiangzi was described in lengthy detail in order to heighten the heroic element. In Nie Zheng’s biography, Sima Qian described how his hero came alone to kill the Han prime minister and then committed suicide while disfiguring himself in order to protect his sister. Sima Qian concluded Nie’s biography by adding how his sister came forward, risking her own life, to identify her dead brother. Her purpose was to glorify his heroism. Jing Ke’s friend Tian Guang (田光), who recommended Jing to Prince Dan, regarded himself as *jiexia* (節俠), or *xia* of integrity. He cut his own throat to impel Jing forward to carry out an arduous mission. Fan Yuqi (樊於期), a former Qin

³² *Shiji jinzhū* (史記今注), v.5, ~春申君列傳>: “方爭下土, 招致賓客, 以相傾奪, 輔國持權.” p.2416.

³³ *Shiji jinzhū* (史記今注), v.6, ~游俠列傳>: “既已存亡死生矣, 而不矜其能, 羞伐其德.” p.3219.

³⁴ *ibid.*, “終不伐其能, 歆其德, 諸所嘗施, 唯恐見之, ……既陰脫季布將軍之厄, 及布尊貴, 終身不見也.” p.3224-5.

³⁵ *ibid.*, “厚施而薄望, ……既已振人之命, 不矜其功.” p.3226. See also Watson’s translation in *Han Dynasty II*, p.414 with my amendment.

³⁶ *ibid.*, v.5, ~刺客列傳>, p.2535.

general who was wanted by the King of Qin, also cut his own throat so that Jing could carry his head to the king, and thus gain entry for his assassination attempt. When Jing failed to assassinate the king, he faced his death heroically. Sima Qian's conclusion to the *Biographies of Assassins* reads:

Of these five men, from Cao Mo to Jing Ke, some succeeded in carrying out their mission and some failed. But it is perfectly clear that they were determined upon their mission. They were not false to their faith. How could it be wrong to hand down their names to later ages?³⁷

As for the *Biographies of the Youxia*, heroism is not the main theme, but Sima Qian made it very clear in his opening statement that risking one's life to go to the aid of friends and others in distress was one of the *youxia* characteristics and that this was heroic and praiseworthy.

3) Individuality. Although all of Sima Qian's heroes in the two biographies originated from the lower levels of society, and most remained commoners all their life, they were uncommon in certain ways, especially in their rebellious attitudes towards the law and their rejection of the official perception of conventional morality. In his opening statement in the *Biographies of the Youxia*, Sima Qian laid the groundwork for his vision of the *youxia*. He admitted that the behavior of the *youxia* did "not conform to *zhengyi* (正義)." ³⁸ Many commentators and scholars interpret *zhengyi* as "justice" or "perfect righteousness". I believe Sima Qian was referring to official law and social convention. If this is correct, the lack of respect on the part of the *youxia*, as well as the assassins, for law and convention was an indicator of their individualism. Jing Ke became close friends with many men of prominence in his wanderings through the feudal states. He was regarded by his friends as a man of depth and learning. But he also made friends with people from the bottom levels of society.

In the course of his travels Jing Ke reached the state of Yan (燕), where he became close friends with a dog butcher and a man named Gao Jianli who was good at playing the lute. Jing Ke was fond of wine, and every day he would join the dog butcher and Gao Jianli to drink in the market place of the Yan capital. After the wine had begun to take effect, Gao

³⁷ *ibid.*, p.2557. See also Burton Watson's translation in *Qin Dynasty* with my amendment p.178.

Jianli would strike up the lute and Jing Ke would join in with a song. In the middle of the crowded market place they would happily amuse themselves, or if their mood changed they would break into tears, exactly as though there were no one else about.³⁹⁰

Their disrespectful attitudes towards the social proprieties of the day demonstrated their marked individuality. Jing's temperament was displayed in an outburst directed at his master, Prince Dan of Yan, when the latter attempted to hasten him off on the mission from which he was not to return. Zhu Jia won fame as a *xia* while most of his fellows in Lu remained firm adherents of Confucianism. Ju Meng became prominent as a *xia* from a place where most people were engaged in trade. He was fond of gambling and involved himself in many unruly youthful pursuits.^{40P}

4) Warmth and affection. Since Han Fei's time, the *xia*, *youxia* and especially the assassins were portrayed as single-minded and cold-blooded men. While emphasizing their aspects such as heroism and altruism, Sima Qian never avoided opportunities to demonstrate the gentle, sometimes even tender, side of his heroes.

One example was Nie Zheng. Nie was an affectionate man. Although he was a poor dog butcher, he declined a large gift of money from Yan Zhongzi for his possible service, stating that: "I dare not dedicate myself to anyone while my mother is still alive." Later, his mother died and after he buried her he said to himself:

Alas! I am merely a man of the marketplace who wields a knife to butcher. However, Yan Zhongzi, as a minister of the feudal lord, paid me a visit from a far distant place and made friends with me. My reception of him was extremely inadequate and I never did anything worth mentioning for him, but he presented a hundred catties of gold as a birthday gift for my mother. Although I did not accept it, I quite understood that it demonstrated his deep appreciation of me. This worthy man is driven by his passion for revenge and trusts me, a man of the remote countryside. How can I remain indifferent? He once invited me and I turned it down only because my old mother was still alive. Since she has passed away now, I will work for the person who appreciates me."

³⁸ *ibid.*, "今游侠, 其行雖不軌於正義," p.3219.

³⁹ *Shiji jinzhū* (史記今注), v.5, <刺客列傳>, p.2546. See also Watson's translation in *Qin Dynasty*, p.168.

⁴⁰ *Shiji jinzhū* (史記今注), v.6, <游侠列傳>, p.3224-5.

After Nie conducted the assassination, he deformed and killed himself in order to remove a possible lead to Yan or his sister. However, his sister came to identify him in order to exhibit her brother's heroism, although in doing so she risked her own life. Sima Qian concluded Nie's biography with the following quotation:

The people in Jin, Chu, Qi and Wei heard of the incident and they all said: "Not only was Nie Zheng a brave man, his sister is also a brave woman." If, in the first place, Nie Zheng had been aware that his sister would under no circumstances accept an injustice and was not afraid of dying far from home, and that she would come from a thousand *li* afar to make his name and die with him, he might not have dared devote himself to Yan Zhongzi.⁴¹

Sima Qian emphasized the gentle and sentimental side of his hero. In the story the cruelty and fierceness usually associated with an assassin are invisible and the whole story is imbued with Nie's affection for his beloved mother and sister and his gratitude to the person who appreciated his worth.

5) Contempt for wealth. Throughout the two sets of biographies, one can see that Sima Qian was consciously making efforts to distinguish his *xia* from the manipulative local bullies or money-driven assassins. Sima Qian drew a clear dividing line between their respective attitudes and approaches to wealth. His heroes bore a simple and unique quality: contempt for wealth. Yan Zhongzi (嚴仲子) gave a hundred catties of gold to hire Nie Zheng for the purpose of revenge. Nie was impressed by Yan's sincerity and generosity but returned the money, because he could not promise Yan that the mission was possible while his mother was still alive. After the death of his mother, he carried out the assassination without thinking of the reward. None of the assassinations or attempted assassinations was motivated by money. In his *Biographies of the Youxia*, Sima Qian claimed that *lianjie* (廉潔), or indifference to wealth, was one of the praiseworthy virtues of the *youxia*, who regarded it shameful to use one's fortune to enslave the poor.⁴² Zhu Jia spent all his wealth in altruistic activities so that "he owned little money and could only wear coarse clothes

⁴¹ *ibid.*, p.2541-4.

⁴² *ibid.*, "私義廉潔退讓, 有足稱者。……設財役貧, 游俠亦且之。" p.3223.

and eat simple food and drive an oxcart.”⁴³ Sima Qian observed at the end of Ju Meng’s biography that Ju left his family “a legacy of less than 10 pieces of gold.” (hardly a wealth in his time)⁴⁴ In Guo Xie’s biography, Sima Qian also indicated that despite the fact that Guo exercised great influence in his neighborhood his family had risen very little in its financial position. When he was forced to move his whole family to Maoling in the suburb of the capital, he had to rely on his friends to raise funds for the move. He never drank wine and even had no personal carriage.⁴⁵ Through these illustrations, Sima Qian made it clear that the least important motive of his heroes was profit.

Sima Qian’s *xia* heroes in his biographies are quite different from the *xia* images in the *Zuo Zhuan* and other pre-Qin works. His devotion to the *xia* was to produce a heated discussion in his readership but it drew a cold response from the official historians of later ages. He had few imitators and followers in this regard among later historians. But his vision of the *xia* had great effect on the romanticization of *xia* heroes in later literary portrayals.

Other *xia*-spirited figures in the *Shi Ji*

In other chapters in the *Shi Ji*, Sima Qian describes the *xia*, and especially the *xia* spirit and *xia* heroism. *Xia* in its classic form had disappeared with the replacement by the Han of the pre-Qin order, but the *xia* spirit, including both the *xia* temperament and *xia* ideal, was far from extinct in society. Sima Qian’s vision of the *xia* spirit was to influence the people of later ages. In this section, two chapters of the *Shi Ji*, the *Biography of Wu Zixu* (伍子胥列傳) and the *Biographies of Ji An and Zheng Dangshi* (汲鄭列傳), will be examined in order to explore further Sima Qian’s conception of the *xia* spirit in its broader sense.

The Biography of Wu Zixu contains four stories of revenge. First is Wu’s own revenge on King Ping of Chu (楚平王), the murderer of his father and brother. This biography is interwoven with three other tales of vengeance: namely those of Fu Cha (夫差) and Baigong Sheng (白公勝) for their

⁴³ *ibid.*, “家無餘財, 衣不完采, 食不重味, 乘不過駒牛.” p.3224-5.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, “及劇孟死, 家無餘十金之財.” p.3225. “10 pieces of gold” at that time was a conventional expression for a trifling amount of wealth.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, “解家貧, ……諸公送者出千餘萬, ……不飲酒, 出未嘗有騎.” p.3229-30.

respective fathers. and that of Goujian (勾踐) for his own humiliation. As rendered by William Nienhauser, the main story unfolds as follows:

Wu Zixu was a native of Chu. He was also named Yuan (員). His father was Wu She (伍奢) and his elder brother was Wu Shang (伍尚). One of his ancestors was named Wu Ju (伍舉). Ju gained prominence by serving King Zhuang of Chu (楚莊王 r. 613-591 B.C.) with straightforward admonition. His descendants have since been renowned in Chu.

King Ping of Chu (楚平王 r. 528-516 B.C.) had an heir named Jian (建) and he made Wu She the Grand Mentor to the heir, with Fei Wuji (費無忌) the Lesser Mentor. Wuji was disloyal to the Heir Jian. King Ping sent Wuji to bring back a bride from Qin for the Heir. The bride was very pretty. Wuji sped back and reported to King Ping: "The Qin bride is very pretty, you should take her yourself and get another one for the Heir." King Ping therefore took the Qin bride himself and favored her above all others. The Qin bride gave birth to a son named Zhen (軫). [The king] found another woman for the heir.

Having ingratiated himself with King Ping through the Qin woman, Wuji left the Heir to serve King Ping. He feared that once King Ping had died and the Heir was enthroned, [the Heir] would kill him. He therefore took every occasion to slander the Heir Jian. Jian's mother was from Cai (蔡) and she was not favored by King Ping. King Ping became gradually estranged from Jian and sent him to guard Chengfu (城父) and maintain the border troops.

Soon thereafter, Wuji recommenced his constant criticism of the heir. King Ping then summoned the heir's Grand Mentor Wu She and interrogated him. Wu She knew that Wuji had been slandering the heir to King Ping and said: "Why have you allowed yourself to become estranged from your own flesh and blood by a slanderous, malicious, menial slave?" Wuji said to the king: "If you do not now restrain him, his scheme will succeed, and you will soon be taken." Enraged, King Ping imprisoned Wu She and sent the commander of Chengfu, Fenyang (奮揚) to go kill the Heir. Before he reached [Chengfu], Fenyang sent a man to tell the Heir: "Fly quickly, or you will be executed!" Heir Jian fled to Song (宋).

Wuji said to King Ping, "Wu She has two sons, both of them worthy. If they are not executed, they will be Chu's sorrow. You can summon them by using their father as a hostage. Otherwise they will be Chu's trouble." The king sent a messenger to tell Wu She, "If you can bring your sons here, you live. If not, you die." Wu She replied, "Shang is by nature humane. If called, he is sure to come. Yuan is by nature indomitable and defiant, able to bear opprobrium, capable of accomplishing great things. If he sees that on coming they will both be taken, he is sure not to come." The king would not listen. He sent a man to summon the two sons.

As the father expected, Wu Shang went to die with his father, while Wu Zixu fled Chu to start his long journey of revenge. The biography describes how Wu Zixu took flight with Baigong Sheng (白公勝), the son of the Heir Jian:

Wu Zixu and Sheng fled together with only the clothes on their backs. They were almost captured. With his pursuers behind him, Wu Zixu reached Jiang River. On the bank of the river was an old fisherman in a boat. He realized Wu Zixu's plight, and took him across the river. After Wu Zixu had crossed, he took off his sword and said, "This sword is worth a hundred catties of gold. I give it to you." The fisherman replied, "It is the law of Chu that whoever captures Wu Zixu will be granted fifty thousand *tan* of grains and a noble title. Not just a sword worth a hundred catties of gold." He refused to accept it. Before Wu Zixu reached Wu, he fell ill. He stopped on the way and begged for food.

Years later, Wu Zixu became the confidant of Helu (闔廬), King of Wu, and persuaded him to launch attacks on Chu even after the death of King Ping, who was the target of Wu's revenge. The following is how Wu conducted his revenge:

When the troops of Wu entered [Chu's capital] Ying (郢), Wu Zixu sought [King Ping's son] King Zhao (昭王). Not finding him, he dug up King Ping's tumulus, removed his corpse, and whipped it three hundred times before he stopped.^{46R}

⁴⁶ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.4, <伍子胥列傳>, pp.2213-8. Translation is from William Nienhauser Jr. ed. *The Grand Scribe's Records* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), xvii: *The Memoirs of Pre-Han China*, with my amendment. p.49-54.

The Qing *Shi Ji* scholar Liang Yusheng (梁玉繩 1744-1819) in his *Shiji Zhiyi* (史記志疑) points out that neither the *Zuo Zhuan* nor the *Gongyang Zhuan*, the two main sources of this biography, mentions the excavation of King Ping's grave, and Liang suspects that Sima Qian errs in describing Wu Zixu's whipping the king's corpse.⁴⁷ Other scholars insist that Sima Qian had sources to support his description of excavating the king's grave. I think that Sima Qian probably utilized folk-tales as his sources. Sima Qian did not specifically question Wu's revenge. Instead, in order to legitimize Wu Zixu's unusual act, he included Wu's response to his friend Shen Baoxu (申包胥), who accused him of acting excessively in excavating the grave and whipping the corpse. Sima Qian's final words in the biography further praise Wu as a hero:

The Grand Historian remarks: How terrible is hatred and resentment in a man! If a king cannot give cause for it among his vassals and subordinates, how much more is this so for men of the same rank! If Wu Zixu had accompanied Wu She in death, how would he differ from an ant or mole-cricket? Casting aside a lesser duty, he wiped clean a great disgrace, and his name has endured through later generations. It was so solemn and moving when he was trapped on the bank of the Jiang, begging for food by the roadside, and never for a single moment forgetting [his mission of revenge on] Ying. Except a man of extremely heroic character, who could endure [so many kinds of suffering] to attain merit and fame?⁴⁸

Sima Qian regards endurance as one of the highest qualities of heroes. Most of his *xia* heroes display an extraordinary capacity to endure hardship in order to carry out their mission. Yu Rang and Jing Ke stand as examples. Many scholars notice that Sima Qian himself was inspired by the same spirit in enduring his own humiliation to fulfill his mission.

Wu Zixu was described by his father as "indomitable and defiant" (剛戾) in nature. In defiance of all custom, he excavated King Ping's grave and whipped his corpse to vent his hatred. Before his

⁴⁷ *The Memoirs of Pre-Han China. Wu Tzu Hsu, Memoir 6, Note 45, p.54.*

⁴⁸ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.4, <伍子胥列傳>, pp.2223-4. See also translation in *The Memoirs of Pre-Han China*, with my amendment, p.60. See also English references in David Johnson, "Epic and history in early China: the matter of Wu Tzu-hsu" in *Journal of Asian Studies*, v.40 (1982), pp.255-71, and Richard Rudolph, *Wu Tzu-hsu.: His Life and Posthumous Cult: A Critical Study of Shih Chi 66* (Ph. D. thesis, University of California, 1942), which contains a translation and an analysis of the text.

death by order of Fu Cha, the King of Wu, he asked his attendants: "Be sure to plant a catalpa tree at my grave so that there will be materials for making a coffin; and pluck out my eyes and hang them above the east gate of Wu so that I can watch the Yue invaders enter to destroy Wu."⁴⁹ His defiant words were an omen of the defeat that the state of Wu suffered two years later.

Wu Zixu was also described as a person who had the courage to remonstrate with his lord about a wrong decision. He thought that the major threat to the safety of the state of Wu was from Yue in the south. After Wu won the war against Yue, the succeeding king of Wu, Fu Cha, accepted the surrender of the King of Yue and let him go. The king of Wu then focused his foreign policy on northward expansion. Wu Zixu steadfastly opposed this change of direction and regarded it as disastrous. His numerous remonstrations with the king made him less and less favored at court, and finally cost him his life.

Ji An (汲黯) was a colleague of Sima Qian at court. In his biography he was portrayed as an outspoken and heroic man who had the courage to criticize the emperor and other influential ministers to their faces. Under the reign of Emperor Wu, all officialdom was subject to the tyranny of the emperor. Ji An was one of the few who dared challenge the emperor through his blunt remonstrations and sharp criticism:

Ji An was by nature very haughty and not punctilious. He could not tolerate the faults of others and would denounce people to their faces. He was friendly with those whose temperament was similar to his, and could not even bear to see those whose temperament was different. For this reason he had few friends among his colleagues. On the other hand, he was fond of learning, acted chivalrously and valued moral courage (好學游俠任氣節). His conduct was honest and upright. He was also fond of outspoken criticism and his words often enraged the emperor. Because of his outspoken criticism, he could not stay in one position for long.

The emperor at the time was busy summoning scholars and Confucians to court and telling them, "I want to such-and-such." Commenting on this, Ji An said to the emperor, "On the surface you are practicing benevolence and righteousness, but in your heart you have too

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p.2221. See also translation in *Wu Tzu Hsu, Memoir 6*, p.58.

many desires. Why should you ever expect to imitate the rule of the sage kings Yao and Shun?" The emperor sat in silence, his face flushed with anger, and then dismissed the court. The other high officials were all terrified of what would happen to Ji An. When the emperor left the room, he turned to his attendants and said, "Ji is too blunt and tactless!" When some of the officials reproached Ji An for this, Ji replied, "Is it the purpose of the Son of the Heaven in appointing us to be his officials to lead him towards unrighteous deeds through flattering and agreeing with whatever he says and does? Now that I occupy these posts, no matter how much I may value our own safety, I cannot allow the court to suffer disgrace, can I?"

"What sort of man is Ji An?" the emperor asked, to which Zhuang Zhu (莊助) replied, "As long as he is employed in some ordinary post as an official, he will do no better than the average person. But if he were called upon to assist a young ruler or to guard a city against attack, then no temptation could sway him from his duty, no amount of entreaty could make him abandon his post. Even the bravest men of antiquity, Meng Ben and Xia Yu, could not shake his determination!"⁵⁰

Sima Qian seems to identify what he sees broadly as moral courage with the *xia* spirit. His goal is to exalt his version of the *xia* character. In the *Biographies of the Youxia*, Sima Qian struggled hard to distinguish his vision of the *xia* from the commonly prevailing view. In the above description of Ji An's character, Sima Qian directly linked the *xia* part of Ji's character to his moral courage. In the biography of Yuan Ang, a prominent official at the courts of Emperor Wen and Emperor Jing, Sima Qian also specifically lauded his *xia* character and activity. He was exploring the positive and moral side of the *xia* character and *xia* spirit, and, more significantly, its healthy influence on officialdom.

Zheng Dangshi (鄭當時) was the other subject of the *Biographies of Ji and Zheng*. Like Ji An, he was also a high-ranking official with *xia* character, but he was motivated by a different side of the *xia* spirit. Zheng was closer to the older model of the *xia* in the way he helped people in distress, and in his ability to make friends all over the country. It is very interesting that in this biography Sima Qian devoted most of the content to Zheng's *xia* character and *xia* activities. Sima Qian did

not mention any of Zheng's political activities and career achievements. Since they served at the same court, Sima Qian should have been very familiar with Zheng's official life. A possible explanation would be that Zheng's *xia* character and *xia* activities were more colorful and impressive for the historian.

It is my view, therefore, that the *Biographies of Ji and Zheng* may be read as Sima Qian's elegy on the disappearance in his time of the classical *xia* and the *xia* spirit. His sorrow is reflected in his concluding remarks to the biographies:

The Grand Historian remarks: As long as Ji An and Zheng Dangshi wielded power, they had friends by the score, but when their power vanished, their friends vanished with it. If even worthy men such as they suffered this fate, how must it be with ordinary people! Master Zhai (翟公) of Xiagui (下圭) said that he had so many guests that they completely filled his gate when he was commandant of justice. Later, however, when he lost his position, he might have spread a sparrow net in front of his gate without fear of anyone stumbling into it. Sometime afterwards, he was once appointed as commandant of justice and all his old visitors wanted to come to see him again, but he wrote in large letters over the top of his gate the following inscription: "When one is at the juncture of life and death, one may know who are friends; when one becomes poor, one may know the quality of friendship; and after one lost his power, one may know the true color of friendship." Alas! Ji and Zheng might well have said the same thing!^{51V}

It seems that for both Emperor Wu's court and society at large, it was a time that lacked *xia* heroism and altruism. Sima Qian's disappointment over the nature of his time prompted him to include these many heroes in his work.

Literary approaches to the *xia* in the *Shi Ji*

Awareness of the division between history and literature occurred late in China. The process by which this division occurred is complex and it appears to have come about on line different to those

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, v.6. <汲鄭列傳>, pp.3129-30. See also translation in Watson's *Han II*, pp.308-9, with amendments of mine.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, 3140. See translation in *Han II*, pp.317-8, with amendments of mine.

in the West. A leading hypothesis is that in the latter Han dynasty Chinese literature began to gain independence from its historiographic and philosophical parentage. A conscious division between literature and other major forms of narrative began to take shape.⁵²

This is not to suggest that writers in earlier times lacked a literary sense. On the contrary, literary consciousness was present at the same time that Chinese writers developed a historical consciousness. That being said, the Chinese literati as a whole, especially in the pre-Qin period, were remarkably didactic and morally focused. Therefore, the literary sense was restrained and literature became a subordinate tool to both history and philosophy. But under the guise of either history or philosophy, Chinese literature grew in its own way. Sima Qian lived in a transitional time to the conscious division between history and literature. Therefore, it is no wonder that his monumental historical work *Shi Ji* contains both historiographical and literary characteristics. The *Shi Ji* in fact is the last official history whose literary virtues as equal to its historical virtues.

The annal-biography style, the narrative form in which Sima Qian wrapped history, is itself a combination of history and literature. Both the annals and biographies contain historical personages. The annals are devoted mainly to sovereigns. Since the annals are more chronological, they thus set the time frame for the whole work. But it is not only the chronological structure that makes the annals more historical than the biographies. In the annals, Sima Qian was usually less critical about non-historical narratives, such as the birth legends of sovereigns. In the biographies, Sima Qian was also admirably time conscious. He specified when a person lived and an event happened, whenever such information was available. Since the core of the biography style of history is person rather than the event, it was inevitable that the historian would depict personality and, if he thought it was necessary, explore the inner world of his subjects. That is where Sima Qian was more inclined to take the literary approach.⁵³

Sima Qian was not always motivated by an appetite for the peculiarities of the world, even though on occasion he included in his annals and biographies myth, legend and hearsay. This was done

⁵² See, for example, Lu Xun (鲁迅) *Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilue* (中國小說史略) (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1973), chapters on the Wei-Jin.

⁵³ When the conscious division between history and literature was finally drawn by Song historians such as Sima Guang (司馬光 1019-1086) the writing of official history became more rigid and literary approaches were consciously avoided. See W. Beasley and E. Pulleyblank, eds., *Historians of China and Japan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964).

when authentic historical documentation was lacking. In these instances, he relied heavily on the literary approach, characterized by using imagination.

His *xia* heroes in the *Shi Ji* on the whole were based on authentic historical documents and his own researches. He bestowed upon them his own passions. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Sima Qian became emotionally involved in the fate of his heroes, especially those who suffered and failed in their efforts to fulfill their aspirations. His own bitter suffering in the Li Ling incident, in which he found himself almost deserted in a helpless situation, no doubt intensified his longing for altruism and heroism. He found these traits in *xia* heroes, especially the commoner *youxia* and assassins.

However, when he started to call back the spirit of his dead heroes, Sima Qian was faced with three great obstacles, namely the lack of detailed documentary sources, the official suppression and public criticism of the *xia* and their activities, and the change in nature of the *xia* in the Han era. The literary approach was adopted in overcoming these obstacles. First, in the *Biographies of the Youxia*, Sima Qian devoted almost half the content to his own comments. Such a lengthy commentary in one chapter is unusual in the *Shi Ji*, though Sima Qian was very much present in his work, always ready to reveal his personal feelings and never attempting to conceal his value judgments. His narrative is stylistically and emotionally eloquent rather than ethically and politically correct for his time. It is also poetical in that it makes much use of antithesis and exclamatory sentences. His profuse and eloquent remarks in the biographies not only made up for the deficiency of source material, but also set the tone for the later description of his *xia* heroes.

Sima Qian was aware that the predominant impression left by the Han *xia* on society was of manipulateness and lawlessness. He certainly could not identify the *xia* heroes in his mind with such people. Rather, he turned to the *youxia* as an exemplary *xia* model. In the opening statement of the biographies, he introduced Zhu Jia, Tian Zhong, Wang Gong, Ju Meng and Guo Xie, five men who lived in the Early Han. Of these, the accounts of Tian Zhong and Wang Gong are very sketchy, with only two sentences for Tian and one sentence for Wang. There is almost no direct description of Ju Meng's character and deeds, but rather an oblique narration of his chivalric deeds: for example, the reader is told of the Grand General's surprise to have Ju Meng at his side and of the numerous attendants at his mother's funeral. The biography of Zhu Jia is very similar to

Ju Meng's in length. Both are brief. However, the scarcity of documentary sources seems to pose no limit to the historian's literary ability to portray his ideal *xia* model. In fact, the scarcity of the documentary sources left room for his literary approach.

Sima Qian applied story-telling techniques to his historical narrative to enhance its theatrical effect. The *Zhanguo Ce* (戰國策), or *Intrigues of the Warring States*, and the *Zuo Zhuan* are the main source of his stories in the *Biographies of Assassins*. Sima Qian showed his literary ingenuity in reorganizing the scattered source materials. His heroes form an integrated and chronological representation of this most notable ancient *xia* group. He described the courage of Cao Mo, the bravery of Zhuan Zhu, the indomitability of Yu Rang, the unselfishness of Nie Zheng, and the motivation and heroism of Jing Ke. He linked these heroes of different times together, and he modified the original stories or added to them new anecdotes, whose sources remain unknown.

The *Biography of Nie Zheng* is an example. The *Zhanguo Ce* presents two conflicting versions of Nie's assassination of the chief minister of the state of Han (韓): One is that he did it alone; the other he did it with an assistant called Yang Jian (陽堅). According to the same source, the assassination took place during an official ceremony, called the *Tongmeng zhi hui* (東孟之會), and Lord Ai of Han (韓哀侯 r. 376-371) was also killed with his chief minister.³⁴ Sima Qian adopted the version that Nie Zheng carried out the assassination single-handedly. He wanted to paint Nie as a lone hero who knew from the beginning that he would not come back alive and whose main concern was to protect his sister and Yan Zhongzi, whom he was to avenge. In the same biography Sima Qian also changed the location of the assassination to the chief minister's heavily guarded residence and thus excluded Lord Ai of Han as a victim. In so doing, Sima Qian was able to highlight Nie's courage and swordsmanship, and also to dispel the impression of excess on Nie's part. The biggest change he made to the story is the conclusion, which the *Zhanguo Ce* presents as follows:

Han displayed Nie Zheng's corpse in the market and posted notice of a reward of a thousand in gold for its identity. But even after a long time had passed, no one knew who he was. Zheng's elder sister, Rong, heard what was happening and said: "my brother was a man of great honor. I cannot be so chary of my own person that I allow my brother's name to remain obscure, for this is not what he would have wished." She went to Han and looked

³⁴ *Zhanguo ce jianzhu* (戰國策箋注) (Tianjin: Nankai daxue chubanshe, 1993), No.390, <東孟之會>: "東孟之會, 孟政、陽堅則相兼君。" p.734.

at his corpse. "What courage!" she said. "How great was his spirit and its resolve. In that he surpassed Ben (贛) and Yu (育) and was greater than Cheng Jing (成荆). Today he lies dead and unnamed. His parents are in their graves and he has no brothers. If he remains un-named it will be because of me. But I cannot bear to deny him fame out of concern for myself." She embraced the body and wept, saying aloud, "This is my brother, Nie Zheng from the Shenjing Lane (深井里) in Zhi", and killed herself on his corpse. The countries of Jin, Chu, Qi and Wei heard this and said, "Not only was Nie Zheng capable, but his sister also could die in the cause of honor. The reason later ages will know Nie Zheng's name is because his sister willingly faced being chopped into small pieces to insure her brother's fame."⁵⁵

Sima Qian usually devoted a section at the end of a chapter to revealing a theme, conveying a message or passing judgment. He rewrote the story at the end of Nie's biography:

Han took his corpse and exposed it in the marketplace. They asked who he was and offered a reward, but no one knew. Han then hung up notices offering a reward: "A thousand catties of gold to the one who can name the killer of Chief Minister Xia Lei." After some time, Han had still not learned who he was.

Nie Zheng's older sister, Rong, heard that a man had stabbed and killed Han's Chief Minister. The assailant had not been captured alive and no one in the state knew his name: his corpse had been exposed in the market place, and notices offering a thousand catties of gold had been posted. She was stricken with anguish: "Is this my young brother? Alas, Yan Zhongzi understood him well!"

She set out at once for Han. When she went to the marketplace, she found that the dead man was indeed Nie Zheng. She bent over his corpse and wailed with the utmost grief, then said: "This is Nie Zheng of Shenjing Lane in Zhi!" The crowds passing by in the marketplace all said: "This man brutally murdered our state's Chief Minister and the king has hung up notices offering a thousand catties of gold for identifying the assassin. Haven't you heard of this? How can you risk identifying him?"

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, No.384, 《韓魏相魏》, p.723-4. See translation in J. I. Crump, *Chan-kuo Tse* (Chinese Materials Center, Inc., 1979), p.458.

Rong replied: "I have heard. But the reason why Zheng suffered shame and humiliation, casting himself among the peddlers of the marketplace, was that our mother was happily still alive and well, and I had not yet married. When our mother departed the world after her full measure of years and I made a home with my husband, Yan Zhongzi discovered my brother and raised him out of his humiliation and straitened circumstances, making him his friend. His magnanimity was lavish indeed. What could I do to [to stop him]? A man will definitely die for the person who values him! And now, because I am still alive, he has savagely mutilated himself in order to brush over his tracks. How could I let my worthy brother's name be buried forever just because I feared the penalty of death?"

Having dumbfounded the people in Han's marketplace, she gave a great shout of "Heaven!" three times and finally died beside Zheng, stricken with anguish and grief. When people in Jin, Chu, Qi and Wei heard this, they all said, "Not only was Zheng a capable man, his sister was also a valorous woman!"

If Zheng had earlier known that his sister had no intention of enduring in silence, thought nothing of having her bones lie unburied, was sure to cross thousands of miles of mountains in order to lay out his fame [before the world], and that sister and brother would both lie exposed in the marketplace of Han, he might not have dared to promise himself to Yan Zhongzi. Yan Zhongzi could be regarded as being able to value and gain a worthy man. 60X

Compared to its source in the *Zhanguo Ce*, Sima Qian used literary invention to create a more theatrical ending to the story. At the beginning, Nie Rong heard that someone assassinated the Han prime minister. While the *Zhanguo Ce* simply says she already knew that it was done by her brother, Sima Qian added a psychological dimension in her suspicion of what she had heard. This led her to go the Han market to see whether the body was really her brother's. After she claimed the dead man as her brother, the *Zhanguo Ce* describes how she praised her brother's courage and then killed herself. Sima Qian in his version of the story added a conversation between her and the spectators in the market. Through this narrative, Sima Qian explained why Nie Zheng came to assassinate the chief minister and deform himself. He specifically used the words, "a man would

definitely die for the person who values him”, to highlight the theme of Nie’s biography, and that of the whole of the *Biographies of Assassins* as well. As if this were not enough, Sima Qian added his own remarks at the end to stress the theme once more. Sima Qian’s adaptation of the story added new detail and enhanced its literary flavor.

In the *Biography of Jing Ke*, Sima Qian also inserted some new twists to make the image of his hero, who was best known for his failed assassination attempt on the First Emperor of Qin, more colorful and well rounded. The biography in appearance is a copy of the story in the *Zhanguo Ce*. Sima Qian carefully rewrote its beginning and ending. He also added the following two anecdotes to the biography:

Jing Ke once visited the area of Yuci (榆次), where he engaged Gai Nie (蓋聶) in a discussion on swordsmanship. In the course of the talk, Gai Nie got angry and glared fiercely at Jing Ke, who immediately withdrew. Someone asked Gai Nie if he did not intend to summon Jing Ke back again. “When I was discussing swordsmanship with him a little while ago,” said Gai Nie. “I had a difference of opinion and I glared at him. Go and look for him if you like, but I’m quite certain he has gone. He wouldn’t dare stay around!” Gai Nie sent a messenger to the house where Jing Ke had been staying, but Jing Ke had already mounted his carriage and left Yuci. When the messenger returned with this report, Gai Nie said, “I knew he would go. I glared at him and frightened him away.” Again, when Jing Ke was visiting the city of Handan (邯鄲), he and a man named Lu Goujian (魯勾踐) got into a quarrel over a chess game. Lu Goujian grew angry and began to shout, whereupon Jing Ke fled without a word and never came to see Lu Goujian again.⁵⁷

Sima Qian’s motive in including these anecdotes is not hard to detect. In the *Biography of Jing Ke*, these anecdotes also function as a *fubi* (伏筆), or foreshadowing, of the later development of the story. On the surface, it seems that he was describing Jing’s cowardice. However, in the context of the biography as a whole, the reader is persuaded that Jing’s backing away from the two incidents is an indication of his tremendous courage. He shows remarkable forbearance because he has a larger mission to fulfill. At the beginning of his biography, Jing Ke is described as a young man

⁵⁶ *Shiji jinzhū* (史記今注), v.5, 〈刺客列傳〉, p. 2543-4. See translation in the *Grand Scribe’s Records*, v. 7, *The Memoirs of Pre-Han China*, pp.324-5.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p.2545. See also Watson’s translation in *Qin Dynasty*, p.167.

with an extraordinarily strong sense of mission and, according to Sima Qian's interpretation, his whole existence is to anticipate its final summons. For that mission, any setback or sacrifice would be endurable.

Following the climax of the story, Sima Qian let Lu Goujian return at the end of the biography again to reminisce upon the earlier incident. This brings the story to its completion:

When Lu Goujian heard of Jing Ke's attempt to assassinate the king of Qin, he sighed to himself and said, "What a pity that he never properly mastered the art of swordsmanship! And as for me - how blind I was to his real worth! That time when I shouted at him in anger, he must have thought I was hardly a worthy man!"⁵⁸²

This foreshadowing became a fundamental literary technique in later Chinese literature, especially narrative literature. Apart from the effect created by the general structure of the work, Sima Qian's literary approach is also to be seen in his portrayal of the historical characteristics and psychology of historical personages, and, most of all, in his reconstruction of their detailed conversation. All of these are exemplified in the *Biography of Guo Xie*. Here Sima Qian gave a minute description of Guo's outward appearance, inward psychological moments and his highly personalized conversations with other people.

But Sima Qian's consciousness of historical method was never diminished by his application of the literary approach. In selecting and assessing source materials, Sima Qian was first and foremost a critical historian. His realism usually enabled him to distinguish historical fact from mere fantasy. His final comment in the *Biography of Jing Ke* is indicative of his critical spirit:

The Grand Historian remarks: When people these days tell the story of Jing Ke, they assert that at the command of Prince Dan Heaven rained grain and horses grew horns. This is of course a gross error. They likewise say that Jing Ke actually wounded the king of Qin, which is equally untrue. At one time Gongsun Jigong and Master Dong were friends of the

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p.2557. See also *Qin Dynasty*, p. 177.

physician Xia Wuju and they learned from him exactly what happened. I have therefore reported everything just as they told it to me.^{59AA}

We can see that Sima Qian followed consciously the rules of evidence and credibility, and he also carefully weighed the facts, trying to draw a line, at least theoretically, between anecdote and folk tale. He criticized the fictionalization of historical events in the latter. This is where the *Shi Ji* is basically history and not literature. However, Sima Qian's narrative of the story is under constant tension, with his extensive use of the literary approach to build a narrative frame for his story, and to deliver its political and moral message, which always pushes outward against the restraint of historical plausibility of the story. His success lies at using the literary approach to enliven and energize historical events and personage, which first appeared dull and lifeless in the archives.

Sima Qian's reconstruction of *xia* imagery was no doubt completed within the confines of history. However, according to my analysis, it fell within a border area not far from the territory of literature. Sima Qian's literary successors in the Eastern Han and Wei-Jin rebuilt and further developed the imagery of the *xia*. Their efforts began to move the *xia* into the territory of literature. The *xia* recorded and described by Sima Qian as a significant social group had by then long since disappeared. However, due to Sima Qian's creative work, the *xia* became one of the major themes in Chinese literature thereafter.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 2557. See also *Qin Dynasty*, p. 177-8.

第五章所引原文

- ^A 世衰道微，邪說暴行有作，弑其君者有之，子弑其父者有之，孔子懼，作春秋。春秋，天子之事也。... 孔子成春秋而亂臣賊子懼。（孟子）
- ^B 大史書曰：“崔杼弑其君。”崔子殺之，其弟嗣書而死者二人，其弟又書，乃舍之。南史氏聞大史盡死，執簡以往，聞既書矣，乃還。（左傳·襄公二十五年）
- ^C 宣子驟諫，〔靈〕公患之。... 秋九月，晉侯飲趙盾酒，伏甲，將攻之。... 趙穿殺靈公於陶圃，宣子未出山而復。大史書曰：“趙盾弑其君。”以示於朝。宣子曰：“不然。”對曰：“子為正卿，亡不越竟，反不討賊，非子而誰？”... 孔子曰：“董狐，古之良史也，書法不隱。趙宣子，古之良大夫也，為法受惡。”（左傳·宣公二年）
- ^D 夫天下稱誦周公，言其能論歌文武之德，宣周邵之風，達太王王季之思慮，爰及公劉，以尊后稷也。幽厲之後，王道缺，禮樂衰，孔子修舊起廢，論詩書，作春秋，則學者至今則之。自獲麟以來，四百有餘歲，而諸侯相兼，史記放絕，今漢興，海內一統，明主賢君忠臣死義之士，余為太史而弗論載，廢天下之史文，余甚懼焉，汝其念哉！（史記·太史公自序）
- ^E 且余嘗掌其官，廢明聖德不載，滅功臣世家賢大夫之業不述，墮先人所言，罪莫大焉。（史記·太史公自序）
- ^F 夫僕與李陵，俱居門下。... 僕觀其為人自奇士，事親孝，與士信，臨財廉，取予義，分別有讓，恭儉下人，常思奮不顧身以徇國家之急，其素所蓄積也，僕以為有國士之風。... 愚以為李陵素與士大夫絕甘分少，能得人之死力，雖古名將不過也。身雖陷敗，彼觀其意，且欲得其當而報漢，事已無可奈何，其所摧敗，功亦足以暴於天下。（漢書·司馬遷傳）
- ^G 游俠之名，蓋起於后世無道德之士耳。夫游者行也，俠者持也，輕生高氣，排難解紛，較諸古者道德之士，不動聲色消天下之大變者，相去固萬萬，而君子諒之，亦曰其所遭者然耳。律其所為，雖未必盡合於義，然使當時而無斯人，則袖手於焚溺之冲滔滔皆是，亦何薄哉？斯固亦孔子所謂殺身成仁者也。遷之傳此，其亦惑於蠶室之禍乎？（史記選注集說引）
- ^H 韓子曰：“儒以文亂法，而俠以武犯禁。”二者皆譏，而學士多稱於世雲。至如以術取宰相卿大夫，輔翼其世主，功名俱著於春秋，固無可言者。及若季次、原憲，閭巷人也，讀書懷獨行君子之德，義不苟合當世，當世亦笑之。故季次、原憲終身空室蓬戶，褐衣蔬食不厭。死而已四百餘年，而弟子志之不倦。今游俠，其行雖不軌於正義，然其言必信，其行必果，已諾必誠，不愛其軀，赴士之厄困，既已存亡死生矣，而不矜其能，羞伐其德，蓋亦有足多者焉。且緩急，人之所時有也。（史記·游俠列傳）
- ^I 古布衣之俠，靡得有聞。..... 儒墨皆排擯不載，自秦以前，匹夫之俠，湮滅不見，余甚恨之。（史記·游俠列傳）
- ^J 今拘學或抱咫尺之義，久孤於世，豈若卑論儕俗，與世浮沉而取榮名哉！而布衣之徒，設取于然諾，千里誦義，為死不顧世，此亦有所長，非苟而已也。故士窮窘而得委命，此豈非人之所謂豪賢者邪？誠使鄉曲之俠，予季次、原憲比權量力，效功當世，不同日而論矣。要以功見言信，俠客之義又何可少哉！（史記·游俠列傳）
- ^K 近世延陵、孟嘗、春申、平原、信陵之徒，皆因王者親屬，藉以有土卿相之富厚，招天下賢者，顯名諸侯，不可謂不賢者矣。比如順風而呼，聲非加疾，其執激也。至如閭巷之俠，修行砥名，聲施於天下，莫不稱賢，是為難耳。... 漢興有朱家、田仲、王公、劇孟、郭解之徒，雖時干當世之文網，然其私義廉潔退讓，有足稱者，名不虛立，士不虛附。至如朋黨宗強比周，社財役

貧，豪暴侵凌孤弱，恣欲自快，游俠亦丑之。余悲世俗不察其意，而猥以朱家、郭解等令與暴豪之徒同類而共笑之也。（史記·游俠列傳）

^L 然關中長安樊仲子，... 雖為俠而遠裙有退讓君子之風。至若北道姚氏，西道諸杜，... 此盜跖之居民間者耳，曷足道哉！此乃鄉者朱家之羞也。（史記·游俠列傳）

^M 曹沫投其匕首，下壇，北面就群臣之位，顏色不變，辭令如故。（史記·刺客列傳）

^N 自曹沫至荆軻五人，此其義或成或不成，然其立意較然，不欺其志，名垂后世，豈妄也哉！（史記·刺客列傳）

^O 荆軻既至燕，愛燕之狗屠及善擊築者高漸離。荆軻嗜酒，日與狗屠及高漸離飲於燕市，酒酣以往，高漸離擊築，荆軻和而歌於市中，相樂也，已而相泣，旁若無人者。（史記·刺客列傳）

^P 魯人皆以儒教，而朱家用俠聞。..... 周人以商賈為資，而劇孟以任俠顯諸侯。..... 劇孟行大類朱家，而好博，多少年之戲。（史記·游俠列傳）

^Q 久之，聶政母死，既已葬，除服，聶政曰：“嗟乎！政乃市井之人，鼓刀以屠，而嚴仲子乃諸侯之卿相也，不遠千里，枉車騎而交臣。臣之所以待之，至淺顯矣，未有大功可以稱者，而嚴仲子奉百金為親壽，我雖不受，然是者徒深知政也。夫賢者感忿睚眦之意而親信窮僻之人，而政獨安得嘿然而已乎！且前日要政，政徒以老母。老母今以天年終，政將為知己者用。”..... 聶政直入，上階刺殺俠累。..... 因自面皮決眼，自屠出腸，遂以死。..... 政姐榮聞人有刺殺韓相者，賊不得，國不知其姓名，暴其尸而縣之千金，乃於邑曰：“其是吾弟與？”..... 立起如韓之市，而死者果政也，伏尸哭極哀，曰：“是軹深井里所謂聶政者也。”... 卒於邑悲哀而死政之旁。晉楚齊衛聞之，皆曰：“非獨政能也，乃其姐亦烈女也。鄉使政誠知其姐無濡忍之志，不重暴政之難，必絕千里以列其名，姐弟俱戮於韓市者，亦未必敢以身許嚴仲子也。”（史記·刺客列傳）

^R 伍子胥者，楚人也，名員。員父曰伍奢，員兄曰伍尚。員先曰伍舉，以直諫事楚莊王，有顯，故其後世有名於楚。楚平王有太子曰建，使伍奢為太傅，費無忌為少傅。無忌不忠于太子建。平王使無忌為太子取婦於秦，秦女好，無忌馳歸報平王曰：“秦女絕美，王可自取，而更為太子取婦。”平王遂自取秦女而絕愛幸之，生子軫，更為太子取婦。

無忌既以秦女自媚於平王，因去太子而事平王。恐一旦平王卒而太子立，殺己，乃因讒太子建。建母，蔡女也，無寵於平王。平王稍益疏建，使建守城父，備邊兵。頃之，無忌又日夜言太子短於王。..... 平王乃召其太傅伍奢考問之。伍奢知無忌讒太子於平王，因曰：“王獨奈何以讒賊小臣疏骨肉之親乎？”無忌曰：“王今不制，其事成矣，王且見擒。”於是平王怒，囚伍奢，而使城父司馬奮揚往殺太子。行未至，奮揚使人先告太子：“太子急去，不然將誅。”太子建亡奔宋。

無忌言於平王曰：“伍奢有二子，皆賢，不誅且為楚憂，可以其父質而召之，不然且為楚患。”王使使謂伍奢曰：“能致二子則生，不能則死。”伍奢曰：“尚為人仁，呼必來，員為人剛戾忍詬，能成大事，彼見來之并擒，其勢必不來。”王不聽，使人召二子曰：“來，吾生汝父；不來，今殺奢也。”.....

伍胥遂與勝獨身步走，幾不得脫。追者在後。至江，江上有一漁父乘船，知伍胥之急，乃渡伍胥。伍胥既渡，解其劍曰：“此劍直百金，以與父。”父曰：“楚國之法，得伍胥者賜粟五萬石，爵執圭，豈徒百金劍邪？”不受。伍胥未至吳而疾，止中途，乞食。.....

及吳兵入郢，伍子胥求昭王，既不得，乃掘平王墓，出其尸，鞭之三百，然後已。（史記·伍子胥列傳）

^S 太史公曰：怨毒之於人甚矣哉！王者尚不能行之於臣下，況同列乎？向令伍子胥從伍奢俱死，何異螻蟻？弃小義，雪大耻，名垂於後世，悲乎！方子胥窘於江上，道乞食，志豈嘗須臾忘郢邪？故隱忍就功名，非烈丈夫孰能致此哉？（史記·伍子胥列傳）

^T 乃告其舍人曰：“必樹吾墓上以梓，令可以為器；而抉吾眼縣吳東門之上，以觀越寇之人滅吳也。（史記·伍子胥列傳）

^U 黯為人性倨，少禮，面折，不能容人之過。合己者善待之，不合己者不能忍見，士亦以此不附焉。然好學，游俠，任氣節，內行修潔，好直諫，數犯主之顏色。……以數直諫，不得久居位。……天子方招文學儒者，上曰吾欲雲雲，黯對曰：“陛下內多欲而外施仁義，奈何欲效唐虞之治乎！”上默然，怒，變色而罷朝，公卿皆為黯懼。上退，謂左右曰：“甚矣，汲黯之戇也！”群臣或數黯，黯曰：“天子置公卿輔弼之臣，寧令從諛承意，陷主於不義乎？且已在其位，縱愛身，奈辱朝廷何！”……上曰：“汲黯何如人哉？”助曰：“使黯任職居官，無以逾人。然至其輔少主，守城深堅，招之不來，麾之不去，雖自謂賁育之勇不能奪之矣。”（史記·汲黯列傳）

^V 太史公曰：夫以汲黯之賢，有勢則賓客十倍，無勢則否，況眾人乎！下圭翟公有言，始翟公為廷尉，賓客闐門，及廢，門外可設雀羅。翟公復為廷尉，賓客欲往，翟公乃大署其門曰：“一死一生，乃知交情。一貧一富，乃知交態。一貴一賤，交情乃見。”汲黯亦雲，悲乎！（史記·汲黯列傳）

^W 韓取聶政尸於市，懸購之千金，久之莫之誰子。政姐聞之曰：“弟至賢，不可愛妾之軀，滅吾弟之名，非弟意也。”乃之韓，視之曰：“勇哉！氣矜之隆，是其軼賁育而高成荆矣。今死而無名，父母既歿矣，兄弟無有，此為我故也。夫愛身不揚弟之名，吾不忍也。”乃抱尸而哭之曰：“此吾弟軼深井里聶政也。”亦自殺於尸下。晉楚齊衛聞之曰：“非獨政之能，乃其姐者亦烈女也。”聶政之所以名施於后世者，其姐不避菹醢之誅，以揚其名也。

^X 韓取聶政尸暴於市，購問莫知誰子。於是韓懸之，有能言殺相俠累者予千金，久之莫知也。政姐榮聞有刺殺韓相者，賊不得，國不知其名姓，暴其尸而懸之千金，乃於邑曰：“其是吾弟與？嗟乎，嚴仲子知吾弟！”立起，如韓，之市，而死者果政也，伏尸哭極哀，曰：“是軼深井里所謂聶政也。”市行者諸人皆曰：“此人暴虐吾相國，王懸購其名姓千金，夫人不聞與？何敢來識之也？”榮應之曰：“聞之。然政所以蒙污辱自弃於市販之間者，為老母幸無恙，妾未嫁也。親既以天年下世，妾已嫁夫，嚴仲子乃察舉吾弟困污之中而交之，澤厚矣，可奈何！士固為知己者死，今乃以妾尚在之故，重自刑以絕從，妾其奈何畏歿身之誅，終滅賢弟之名！”大驚韓市人，乃大呼天者三，卒於邑悲哀而死政之旁。晉楚齊衛聞之，皆曰：“非獨政能也，乃其姐亦烈女也。”鄉使政誠知其姐無濡忍之志，不重暴骸之難，必絕千里以列其名，姐弟俱戮於韓市者，亦未必敢以身許嚴仲子也。嚴仲子亦可謂知人能得士矣！（史記·刺客列傳）

^Y 荆卿嘗游過榆次，與蓋聶論劍，蓋聶怒而目之。荆軻出，人或言復召荆卿，蓋聶曰：“曩者吾與論劍有不稱者，吾目之；試往，是宜去，不敢留。”使使往之主人，荆卿則已駕去榆次矣。使者還報，蓋聶曰：“固去也，吾曩者目攝之！”荆軻游於邯鄲，魯勾踐與荆軻博，爭道，魯勾踐怒而叱之，荆軻嘿而逃去，遂不復會。（史記·刺客列傳）

^Z 魯勾踐已聞荆軻之刺秦王，私曰：“嗟乎，惜哉其不講於刺劍之術也！甚矣吾不知人也！曩者吾叱之，彼乃以我為非人也！”（史記·刺客列傳）

^{AA} 太史公月：世言荆軻，其稱太子丹之命，“天雨粟，馬生角”也，太過。又言荆軻傷秦王，皆非也。始公孫季功、董生與夏無且游，且知其事，為余道之如是。（史記·刺客列傳）

Chapter 6: Romanticization of the *xia*

Sima Qian's idealized *xia* image in the *Shi Ji* was the last conscious effort an official historian made to preserve and present the *xia* as a historical entity, but he also paved the way to turn the *xia* tradition into a literary convention. The romanticization of the *xia* tradition in the non-official historical works such the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and *Yue Jue Shu* was the further development in this direction to literature. The transformation of the tradition was completed by the Wei-Jin when *xia* novellas like the *Yan Dan Zi* and the *yuefu xia* ballads became the main carrier of the *xia* tradition.

The way to literature: the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and *Yue Jue Shu*

As the *xia* were largely products of a chaotic and disintegrating era, they were doomed to lose their influence and independent role in the centralized state which came into being in the Western and Eastern Han dynasties. The *xia* underwent great changes, and gradually integrated themselves into the lower levels of society. Sima Qian was the lone official historian who included many *xia* figures and *xia*-like personages with admiration in his history. Although Ban Gu (班固 32-92), the second great Han historian, retained and enlarged upon Sima Qian's *Biographies of the Youxia* in his dynastic history, the *Han Shu* (漢書), he approached his task from an entirely different narrative perspective.

Ban Gu replaced Sima Qian's opening statement with one of his own, which was diametrically opposed to Sima Qian's position. Ban Gu was obviously attempting to reveal what he thought the true historical image of the *xia* in the Han dynasty to be by adding to the biographies other *xia* characters: Yu Zhang (禹章), Lou Hu (樓護), Chen Zun (陳遵) and Yuan She (原涉), all of whom were typically Han *haoqiang*. Ban Gu in fact reiterated Han Fei's criticism of the lawlessness of *xia* activities, though there is a difference of degree between the two positions. While Han Fei advocated wiping out the *xia* like vermin, Ban Gu still admitted and even praised some moral virtues on the part of the *xia*. But on the whole, Sima Qian's efforts to construct an idealized image of the *xia* suffered a significant setback.

However, Sima Qian's idealization of the *xia* was sympathetically echoed by a few later historians and scholars. In the opening to the *Biographies of the Youxia*, Sima Qian struck a resonating chord with his readership:

Trouble is something that comes to almost everyone some time. The Grand Historian remarks: In ancient times Emperor Shun (虞舜) was caught in a burning granary and trapped in a well; Yi Yin (伊尹) was obliged to carry tripods and sacrificial stands; Fu Yue (傅說) served as a convict laborer among the cliffs of Fu; Lu Shang (呂尚) was reduced to selling food at the Ji Ford; Guan Zhong (管仲) was bound with fetters and handcuffs; Baili Xi (百里奚) tended cattle; Confucius was threatened at Kuang, and between Chen and Cai he grew pale from hunger. All of these are what scholars call men of benevolence and followers of the Way. If even they encountered such misfortunes, how much more so must men of only ordinary character who are trying to make their way in a discordant and degenerate age? Surely the troubles they meet with will be too numerous to recount!^{1A}

When even the sages and the worthiest men were sometimes in their lives subject to suffer from misfortune and could not save themselves, Sima Qian suspected that an average man could save himself in their situations. Since this average man could not attain his own salvation, Sima Qian indicated that the salvation could come from heroes such as the *youxia*, for they "would hasten to the side of those in trouble without thinking of themselves."² However, in the real world, this would not happen on most occasions, because, as Sima Qian himself was aware, this kind of *xia* heroes were only few in number and, furthermore, as he witnessed, the authorities of the Han empire would not tolerate anyone from the multitude to take law to his own hands. This caused a predicament for the historian. There were ordinary men and other less powerful people like the historian himself, who longed for salvation when in trouble, or when the justice system failed them; but there was little chance in real life that heroes would be able to rush to their rescue. Sima Qian's idealization of *youxia* may be viewed in part as his way of reducing his own anxiety, caused by the deficiency of heroism in his time. Because of his training as a historian, Sima Qian could only go as far as evidence allowed. Although he idealized his model to a certain extent, Sima Qian tried to

¹ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.6, <游俠列傳>, p.3220-1. The English translation is from Burton Watson's *Records of the Grand Historian: Han Dynasty II* (Revised Edition), p. 410.

² *ibid.*, "不受其軀, 赴士之厄困." p.3219.

build his model of heroism in a real historical land, not in a literary utopia, as was to be the case with later *xia* literature.

With Sima Qian's presentation of his idealized *xia* archetype, the transformation of the *xia* from a historical entity to a literary creation began. This was in the later part of the Eastern Han period. I call this development the romanticization of the *xia*.

When Emperor Guangwu (光武帝 r. 25-57) subjugated all rival warlords and founded the Eastern Han dynasty, he began to adopt a policy of promoting civil personnel in order to contain the military establishment. In his own words, he committed himself to "remove meritorious generals and replace them with civil officials, and to lay up weapons and send away battle steeds."³ As a result, the officialdom of the early Eastern Han was quickly civilianized. Military heroism, which was such a prominent theme during Emperor Gaozu's reign in the early Western Han, went into eclipse under the reign of the founder of the Eastern Han. Indicative of this difference is the self-restraint practiced by the meritorious generals of the Eastern Han. Ma Yuan (馬援 14 B.C.-49), one of the most prominent warriors of the time, was a *xia*-spirited figure all his life. When he found that his nephews were following a *xia*-like lifestyle, he earnestly exhorted them against it:

Long Bogao (龍伯高) is a reliable and prudent person, who talks kindly of others. He is also modest, frugal and honest. People respect him. I like him and regard him highly. I would like to see that you follow his example. Du Jiliang (杜季良) is a chivalric and altruistic person, who is concerned with joys and sorrows of others, no matter who they are. At his father's funeral, people came from all over the country. I like him and regard him highly, but do not want you to follow his example.⁴

It was not only the *xia* as described by Sima Qian in his *Biographies of the Youxia* who were losing ground, the *haoqiang*, the main variant of the *xia* in the Western Han period, were forced to exert their influence by a more roundabout route under the changed political and social environment. On many occasions, as the *Han Shu* shows, they cooperated with the authorities in order to escape direct suppression from the Han authorities and keep their influence over regional

³ *Hou-Hanshu jijie* (後漢書集解) (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1973), v.1, <光武帝紀>: "退功臣而進文吏, 戰弓矢而散馬牛." p.62.

⁴ *ibid.*, v.24, <馬援列傳>, p.315.

matters. From the founding of the Eastern Han, the *haoqiang* as a whole gradually became a part of the Han administration at the local levels in maintaining order and security. The world for the real *xia*, those who continued to live up to the *xia* ideal, became further diminished. The heroism of the *xia* now became a memory that inspired the imagination of both the intellectuals and the common people. This was reflected in the romanticization of the *xia* image which began at this time.

With the founding of the Eastern Han, Confucianism had been quickly restored to be the official ideology. Confucian rationalism was forcefully advocated by the imperial dynasty and its staunch Confucian followers. This “state” Confucianism, which exalted order, hierarchy and filial piety, was different from the early Confucianism which influenced *xia* values. The Confucian scholars in the Eastern Han became more obsessed with textual problems of the canons. While Confucianism remained as the guiding ideology in intellectual life throughout almost the whole Eastern Han, its ideological preeminence was subject to challenge. Taoist mysticism grew in stature among a literati fascinated with the mystical and weird. Excessive imagination was given visible space in serious writings like history and philosophy.⁵ Writers of the time, inspired by Sima Qian’s archetypal portrayal of the *youxia* and the widespread folk tales of *xia* heroism, often broke through the confines of history by indulging their imagination in historical writing. Two representative works in this regard are the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* (吳越春秋) and *Yue Jue Shu* (越絕書).

Zhao Ye (趙曄 fl. late 1st century), the author of the *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, lived in the late Eastern Han. According to his biography in the *Hou Han Shu* (後漢書), or the *History of the Eastern Han*, he worked as a junior county assistant for a short time and then spent over two decades studying the Han version of the *Shi Jing*, or *Han Shi* (韓詩). His *Shi Xi* (詩細), or the *Subtlety of Poetry*, was regarded as one of the best works on the study of the *Shi Jing*. He was thus included in the *Biographies of Confucian Scholars* in the *Hou Han Shu*.

According to his preface, Zhao Ye wrote the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* in order to glorify the ancient history of Wu and Yue, in whose tradition he was born and raised, and revive the heroism that was prevalent in that ancient time. The editors of *Siku Zongmu Tiyao* (四庫總目提要), or the *Precis of*

⁵ See Wang Chong (王充 27-97?) *Lun Heng* (論衡) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959). Wang specifically targeted “fantasy-making” (虛妄), which he condemned as an unhealthy intellectual trend of the time. See his chapters <感虛>, <龐虛>, <奇怪>, <指瑞>, <宣漢>, <儒增>, <藝增> and <自紀>.

the *General Catalogue of the Complete Work of the Four Treasuries*, catalogued Zhao's work under "Regional History" (史部·載記) for its overall historical style, but they also called it an approximation to fiction.⁶

As for the *Yue Jue Shu*, many of the book's commentators believed that it was composed by Yuan Kang (袁康 fl. late 1st century), a native of Kuaiji (會稽), the ancient Yue capital. Yuan was probably a contemporary of Zhao Ye. The work was regarded by the editors of the *Siku Zongmu Tiyao* as an authentic Han writing based on its content and style. It was also catalogued under "Regional History".

The stories in the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and *Yue Jue Shu* basically originated from the *Shi Ji*, but they were rearranged from the scattered chapters of the latter into one narrative framework. When we compare the *xia* stories in the *Shi Ji* with the original source materials, we find how Sima Qian structured his plots and portrayed his figures. Comparison between the *xia* stories in the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and *Yue Jue Shu* and their sources in the *Shi Ji* shows how the archetypal stories were then embellished and romanticized.

I consider the central theme of these two works to be the concept of "bao" (報), which was not previously emphasized in the *xia* tradition. The concept of bao, or retribution, is a very important notion in Chinese society in general, and among the lower levels of society in particular. It occurs in the *xia* stories in the *Shi Ji*, but became the main theme running through both the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and *Yue Jue Shu*.⁷

Bao as part of the code of human behavior is a very old concept. *Baochou* (報仇), or revenge, and *bao'en* (報恩), or requital of favors, are the two sides of the notion. *Bao* only became an important ethic in the Chunqiu period especially for warriors. The *xia*, as the spiritual inheritors of these warriors, carried forward this notion in their behavior code. Cao Mo, Zhuan Zhu, Yu Rang, Nie Zheng and Jing Ke, the *xia* in the *Biographies of Assassins*, were all impelled to risk their lives

⁶ *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* (四庫全書總目提要) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), v.66, <史部·載記類·吳越春秋>: "近小說家言, 然自是漢晉間稗官 雜記之體." p.583. See the English reference in John Lagerwey *The Annals of Wu and Yueh, Part I* (Ph. D. thesis, Harvard University), which includes a complete study of the relationship of the work to its sources and a fully annotated translation from v. 1 to v.5.

through adherence to *bao*, either to avenge the wrong suffered by their lords or to requite their debts of gratitude owed to their lords. The concept was later ethicized in the Han by Confucian scholars to become an obligation everyone should fulfill. For instance, Dong Zhongshu (董仲舒 179-104 B.C.) claimed that a son would not be regarded as a son if he failed to avenge his father's death.⁸ Another prominent Han scholar, Liu Xiang (劉向 79-8 B.C.) further claimed that failing to return favors was often the cause of disaster.⁹ The Han historian Xun Yue (荀悅) simply said that revenge was a righteous action.¹⁰ The notion of *bao* was not only advocated by these prominent Han intellectuals, it was also widely accepted by the common people as a way of upholding justice. This notion became the most prominent subject of folkloric literature of the time.

Retribution is also one of the major themes of Chinese mythology. As shown in Chapter One, the mythical stories of Gongong (共工) and Xingtian (刑天) became the archetypes of revenge stories in later ages. The common theme of both *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and *Yue Jue Shu* is revenge. The main thread of the two narratives consists of three stories of revenge: Wu Zixu (伍子胥 d. 485 B.C.) who sought revenge for his father and brother, Fu Cha (夫差 r. 495-477 B.C.) who sought revenge for his father, and Goujian (勾踐 r. 497-465 B.C.) who sought revenge for himself and his state. In comparison to their main sources in the *Shi Ji*, these two works have the following noticeable new features:

- 1.) Structurally, the three stories of revenge in the *Shi Ji* are to be found in several different biographies, without a main story line to connect them. These stories in the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and *Yue Jue Shu* are linked by a linear story line, which displays the correlation and coherence of the events of vengeance.
- 2.) In the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and *Yue Jue Shu*, folkloric story-telling technique was consciously employed to provide the structural framework. For instance, in the third chapter of *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, Prince Guang (公子光) sent a physiognomist disguised as a market official to seek worthy

⁷ For the notion of *bao*, see English reference in Yang Lien-sheng, "The Concept of Pao as a Basic for Social Relations in China", in *Chinese Thought and Institutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957).

⁸ *Chunqiu fanlu jinzhuzhu jinyi* (春秋繁露今注今譯) (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1984), v.4, <王道>: "子不復仇非子也。" p.99.

⁹ *Shuo yuan jiaozheng* (說苑校證) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), <復恩>: "夫禍亂之源, 皆由不報恩生矣。" p.117.

¹⁰ *Shen jian* (申鑒) (Taipei: Zhongguo zixue mingzhu bianyinhui, 1977), <時事>: "復仇者義也。" p.10.

men who dwelt among the common people. The physiognomist found Wu Zixu, who had fled to Wu for asylum, and reported to the prince about him. The story of Wu Zixu's revenge on the King of Chu was introduced at this point. Through Wu Zixu, Prince Guang recruited Zhuan Zhu to assassinate King Liao of Wu (吳王僚 r. 526-515 B.C.). Wu Zixu was almost present in every chapter, even the one after his death. In the last chapter, Wu's ghost took away the body of Dafu Zhong (大夫種 d. 465 B.C.), who was forced to commit suicide after the King of Yue completed his conquest of the state of Wu. The two loyal subjects began their posthumous life as gods of the tide.¹¹

3.) The theme of *bao* was enhanced and romanticized in the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and *Yue Jue Shu*. When Wu Zixu and his brother Wu Shang (伍尚) were summoned by King Ping of Chu (楚平王), in the *Yue Jue Shu* Wu Zixu said to Shang, who was determined to die with his imprisoned father: "Please do not go. I heard that will be your end if you go. If we do not go, we have a chance for revenge. It is not wise to go and die all together. And it is cowardly to die without avenging the wrong done to our father." Wu Shang went, however, and met his death along with his father.¹² When Wu Zixu finally led the Wu army to capture the city of Ying (郢), the capital of Chu, his revenge was described in the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* in this way:

Being unable to apprehend King Zhao of Chu (楚昭王), Wu Zixu dug up King Ping's tumulus, removed his corpse, and whipped it three hundred times. Pacing his left foot on the belly of the corpse and picking out the eyes of the corpse with his right hand, he then denounced [the dead King Ping]: "Why should you believe a slanderous person and kill my father and brother? Was that not an injustice?" He then asked Helu (闔閭) to take King Zhao's wife as his booty, while he himself, Sun Wu (孫武) and Bai Xi (白喜) respectively took the wives of Zichang (子常) and Sima Cheng (司馬成) as their booties, to insult the king of Chu and his subjects.¹³

In the previous chapter when I discussed the same event in the *Biography of Wu Zixu* in the *Shi Ji*, I mentioned some of the *Shi Ji* scholars' skepticism of grave robbery and corpse whipping. Here

¹¹ *Wuyue chunqiu yizhu* (吳越春秋譯注) (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1992), p.30, pp.37-38, p.400.

¹² *Yue jue shu* (越絕書) (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1962), "子必毋入。胥闔之：入者窮，出者報仇。入者皆死，是不智也；死而不報父之仇，是不勇也。" p.3.

¹³ *Wuyue chunqiu yizhu* (吳越春秋譯注), p.89.

the author of *Wu Yue Chunqiu* went further in order to impress his readers with Wu Zixu's obsession with revenge. King Ping died before Helu became King of Wu in 514 B.C. and it was in the ninth year of Helu's reign (505 B.C.) that the army of Wu led by Wu Zixu entered the Chu capital. It is hard to imagine whipping and picking out the eyes of a corpse buried ten years before. In light of the unusually strong advocacy of justified revenge in the Eastern Han, the overstated description may serve to meet the author's sense of justice.¹⁴ For a readership that was also emotionally involved in justified revenge, the author's intent met with their aspirations. That was why folklore became readily included in history. The authors of both the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and *Yue Jue Shu* were more ready than writers prior to their time to romanticize, or even fictionalize, history.

A famous anecdote recounted in the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* illustrates very well how the source in the *Shi Ji* was subsequently romanticized. This concerns the arrival of Wu Zixu at the Yangtze River in the course of his flight to Wu. In the *Biography of Wu Zixu* in the *Shi Ji*, it is described how an old fisherman saved him by boating him across the river. In the *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, this episode is developed into a full-sized story of its own as follows:

[Wu Zixu fled] to the river, when he saw an old fisherman sailing a boat against the current. Zixu called out to him, "Please give me a ride!" He called several times. The fisherman intended to give him a ride, when he found someone peeking nearby. The fisherman thus began to sing: "The shining sun is gradually moving forward, and I will meet you beside the reed marshes." Zixu immediately walked to the reed marshes. The fisherman sang again: "The sun is bending in the west, my heart is full of sorrow. The moon is rising, why not come to my boat? The situation is critical, what should I do?" Zixu went aboard his boat. The fisherman knew what was in Zixu's mind and conveyed him through the rapids. When Zixu was about to depart, he untied his precious sword and gave it to the fisherman. "This is my father's sword. There are seven diamond stars decorated in it and it is worth a hundred catties of gold. I give it to you to express my gratitude." The fisherman said, "I heard that it is the law of Chu that whoever captures

¹⁴ See Wen Chongyi (文崇一) *Baoen yu fuchou: jiaohuan xingwei de fenxi* (報恩與復仇: 交換行爲的分析) in *Shehui ji xingwei kexue yanjiu de Zhongguo hua* (社會與行爲科學研究的中國化) (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan minzuxue yanjiusuo, 1982). Wen suggested the existence of a strong practice of revenge in the

Wu Zixu will be granted fifty thousand *shi* of grain and a noble title. How could I pursue a sword worth a hundred catties of gold?" He declined to accept the sword and told Zixu, "Leave quickly and do not linger, otherwise you will be caught by Chu." Zixu asked, "What is your name?" The fisherman replied, "At this perilous moment, two runaway persons have met each other. I mean that I am the person who took you, runaway of Chu, across the river. Since we understand each other through something beyond words, does my name really matter? You are the person in the reed marshes, and I am the old fisherman. Please do not forget me when you become honored." Zixu said, "I will not."

Many years later, after Wu Zixu took his revenge on the King of Chu, he led the army of Wu to attack Zheng, where he met his savior, the old fisherman:

Duke Ding of Zheng (鄭定公 r. 529-514 B.C.) was frightened. He announced to his state, "Anyone who is able to make the Wu army withdraw can share half the state with me." The son of the fisherman responded to the call, "I can do it with neither a weapon nor a *dou* of grain. I only need an oar and then will sing on my way. I will return soon." The duke gave an oar to the son of the fisherman. Facing the marching army led by Zixu, [the son] beat at his oar as he sang repeatedly the song "The person in the reed marshes". Upon hearing the song, Zixu was surprised, and he asked, "Who are you?" He was answered, "I am the son of the fisherman. Out of fear my lord announced that whoever makes the army of Wu withdraw can share power with him. I am thinking of my father's meeting with you and beg you here to leave Zheng alone." Zixu sighed, "How sad it is! I live today only because of your father's kindness. Heaven knows that I would not forget!" He therefore withdrew the troops and led them back to Chu.¹⁵⁰

The brief story line in the *Shi Ji* was significantly elaborated into a story of *bao*. From a historical point of view, the story is full of holes. First, its lack of authenticity is obvious. Duke Ding of Zheng died in 514 B.C., the year Wu Zixu's patron Prince Guang became King Helu of Wu. According to both *Zuo Zhuan* and *Shi Ji*, it was in the 9th year of King Helu that the Wu army invaded into the Chu capital. The author of *Wu Yue Chunqiu* put the attack on Zheng by Wu

Eastern Han dynasty by listing seven well-documented cases of revenge from the *Hou Han Shu* (後漢書) alone, which outnumbered all the other previous sources. See p.339.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, pp.35-6, p.90.

thereafter, when Duke Ding of Zheng had already died for ten years.¹⁶ Second, its lack of historical consistency and plausibility is also evident. The old fisherman was described in the above story as scuttling his boat and drowning himself in the middle of the river in order to stop any of Wu Zixu's pursuers from catching him. By what means would his son know of the meeting between Wu Zixu and his father? And of Wu's promise? The narrative pattern of the folk tale is observable in the story. Obviously the author was more concerned about the effect of the story than he was with consideration of the story's credibility. The audience of a folk tale would be more than willing to ignore an inconsistency or even a contradiction in the story as long as the story produced a good artistic effect. Where Sima Qian was prudent and critical, the authors of *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and *Yue Jue Shu* were much less hesitant.

The romanticization of history in the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and *Yue Jue Shu* is displayed in several other ways. These are: 1) Enhanced detail. Zhuan Zhu, a famous *xia* figure in the *Shi Ji*, was portrayed in the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* as a man of peerless prowess. His heroic death, after agreed on the rightness of assassinating King Liao of Wu, was recorded more detail than it had been in the *Shi Ji*.¹⁷ 2) Character elevation. Sima Qian was always conscious of his responsibility as a historian to draw balanced and unbiased portraits of historical figures. Wu Zixu, Ji An and Zheng Dangshi belong to the list of his most favored heroes. In their biographies, Sima Qian revealed Ji's parochialism, Zheng's obsequiousness before the emperor, and Wu Zixu's mistaken entrustment of his son to a powerful Qi minister at the time Qi was regarded as a hostile state by Wu, which led to Wu Zixu's death.¹⁸ In both the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and *Yue Jue Shu* the last event was deliberately ignored and Wu Zixu's relentless remonstrance with the King of Wu was suggested as the cause of his death. He was reconstructed in the form of the Confucian ideal personality of a loyal minister with the *xia* spirit. 3) Appearance of versification. The editors of *Siku Quanshu* perceived "forcefulness and lavishness" (縱橫曼衍) as the literary style common to the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and *Yue Jue Shu*.¹⁹ In the *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, the conversation between Wu Zixu and fisherman is composed of tetrasyllabic verse. Lyric poetry is used repeatedly through its chapters. The whole work is imbued with a rich poetic flavor.

¹⁶ *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu* (春秋左傳注), <定公五年>, p.1553, and *Shiji huizhu kaozheng* (史記會注考證), v.42, <鄭世家>, p.682, and v.66, <伍子胥列傳>, pp.872-3.

¹⁷ *Wuyue chunqiu yizhu* (吳越春秋譯注), pp.38-42.

¹⁸ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.4, <伍子胥列傳>, "乃屬其子於齊鮑牧." p.2221.

Also interwoven in the main stories of the two works are many other anecdotes, which either display *xia* heroism or portray images of *xia* or *xia*-spirited figures. These include the washerwoman who committed suicide after feeding Wu Zixu (Chapter Three), Jiao Qiuyi (椒丘沂) who fought with a monster (Chapter Four), Yue Nu (越女) and Yuan Gong (袁公) who had superb swordsmanship, and Yao Li (婁離) who let the King of Wu burn his wife and son as a trick to win the confidence of the king's enemy Qing Ji (慶忌) so that he might approach and kill him. Some of these images became literary archetypes in later *xia* literature. The *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and *Yue Jue Shu* are regarded as the most important works in the transition from history to historical romance.

Complete transformation from history to literature: the *Yan Dan Zi*

Although history was greatly romanticized in both the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and *Yue Jue Shu*, the two authors believed, and also wanted their readers to believe, that they were writing history instead of fiction. Firstly, in the *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, a rigorous time frame is provided throughout the whole work, reminding its reader of the historicity of the stories. The only exceptions are Chapter One and Chapter Five, where the legendary origins of Wu and Yue are introduced, as many previous historians had done when dealing with the origin of a ruling family or the birth of a ruler. If we examine the romanticization of history in the two works from a different perspective, we find myths and folk tales historicized, an approach Chinese historians commonly used, though with restraint and prudence, when historical evidence was lacking. Secondly, both works are complete history. The *Wu Yue Chunqiu* is the history of the rise and fall of two neighboring states, while the *Yue Jue Shu* is a regional history centering on Yue's re-establishment. Thirdly, the authors of the two works were highly concerned about the cause and effect in the flow of historical events, so that lessons of history might be made manifest. That is why ever since the Tang Dynasty the two works have been classified as history. However, the two works also provided a successful model demonstrating that history could be romanticized to educate and entertain its readers. In this regard, the first Chinese *xia* novella, the *Yan Dan Zi* (燕丹子), may be cited.

¹⁹ *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* (四庫全書總目提要), v.66, <史部·載記類·越絕書>: “其文縱橫曼衍, 與吳越春秋相類.” p.583. The editors' remark does not appear particularly condemnatory even though they suggested that a lavish narrative was not suited to historical writing.

The concept of fiction, or *xiaoshuo* (小說) in Chinese, is first exhibited in its primitive form in Zhuangzi's (莊子 fl. 4th century B.C.) work. Zhuangzi wrote in his *Wai Wu* (外物), "Using *xiaoshuo* to seek official preferment from a county governor is far from discussing the great matters of state."²⁰ *Xiaoshuo* means "petty thoughts" in this context. In the early Eastern Han dynasty, *xiaoshuo* came to be seen as a narrative type. Ban Gu described this in the *Han Shu* as follows:

The school of *xiaoshuo* was probably created by those junior officials whose office duty was to collect town gossip and street talk.²¹

Many scholars believe that "town gossip and street talk" referred to folklore of the time. Although the concept of *xiaoshuo* in the passage is still not exactly what we call fiction in the later ages, the close relation of *xiaoshuo* with folklore is no doubt the most characteristic feature of the earliest Chinese fictional writing. We can observe this in the *Yan Dan Zi*.

Opinion has been widely divided upon the time of composition of *Yan Dan Zi*. There are three major positions. The Ming scholar Hu Yinglin (胡應麟 1551-1602) wrote in his *Shaoshi Shanfang Bicong* (少室山房筆叢):

From my reading of the book. I have found that its colorful writing is impressive, and its style is similar to that of the Eastern Han. It might be written by a certain writer in the later Han, who based the story upon Sima Qian's *Biography of Jing Ke* and added to it a few fantasies.^{22E}

The Qing scholar Sun Xingyan (孫星衍 1753-1818) wrote a preface to his edition of the work, claiming that it was "an ancient work of pre-Qin time". He came to his conclusion on the basis of the similarities between the *Yan Dan Zi* and other pre-Qin works like the *Zuo Zhuan* and *Zhanguo Ce*. He found the writing style of these works identical in regard to "skillful narration and well-versed language".^{23F} The editors of *Siku Quanshu* based their conclusion as to the possible time of composition on textual evidence. The *Yan Dan Zi* was never mentioned in later Eastern Han works

²⁰ *Zhuangzi yigu* (莊子譯註) (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1991), <外物>: "飾小說以干縣令，其于大遠亦遠矣。" p.559.

²¹ *Qian Han shu* (前漢書), v.30, <藝文志>: "小說家者流，蓋出於稗官街談巷議道聽途說者之所造也。" p.167.

²² *Shaoshi shanfang bicong* (少室山房筆叢) (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1963), v.32, <四部正偽>, p.415.

²³ *Yan Dan Zi* (燕丹子) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), <孫星衍序>, p.5.

such as the *Lun Heng* (論衡) and *Fengsu Tong* (風俗通), both of which quoted heavily from earlier writers and even mentioned anecdotes appearing in the *Yan Dan Zi* but without alluding to the work. Thus the composition of the *Yan Dan Zi* could not predate the later Eastern Han period. And since the *Yan Dan Zi* was first quoted by an early Tang literary commentator, it had to have been composed before the Tang dynasty.²⁴

My own investigation finds that in fact the first passage of *Yan Dan Zi* was quoted in Zhang Hua's (張華 232-300) *Bowu Zhi* (博物志).²⁵ It is therefore likely that the work was composed sometime between the late Eastern Han and early Western Jin (西晉 265-316), in other words between about 150 A.D. and 3rd century. The more significant and important thing is that the *Yan Dan Zi* is the first complete work in which historical events were successfully fictionalized to form a full novella. The appearance of *Yan Dan Zi* started a stream of works of historical fiction. In them, the historicity of story was of lesser importance than literary imagination. Since the Tang dynasty the *Yan Dan Zi* has been catalogued under the category of fiction. Hu Yinglin credited it as "the originator of fiction and fictional biography in history." (古今小說雜傳之祖)²⁶

The *Yan Dan Zi* differs from the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and *Yue Jue Shu* in the following two ways: 1) the *Yan Dan Zi* shows no interest in conveying any historical lesson. It is a story of a noble *xia* and a *xia* assassin, and that of their revenge and heroism. The author (or authors) was entirely occupied by the protagonists' determination to extract revenge and their courage of defying their monstrous enemy. 2) the *Yan Dan Zi* breaks through the framework of historical biography by focusing upon the main plot and omitting the dull parts of the original story, such as the background and the subsequent history of the protagonists, which both the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and *Yue Jue Shu* routinely introduce whenever a new character is brought into the story. While the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and *Yue Jue Shu* ushered in a long series of works in the historical romance genre, the *lishi yanyi* (歷史演義), which usually preserved many of the original historical events, the *Yan Dan Zi* started a new literary genre of historical fiction, or the *lishi chuanqi* (歷史傳奇), whose fictional component far outweighed its historical content.

²⁴ *Siku quanshu zongmu* (四庫全書總目), v.2, <小說家類存目·燕丹子>, p.1215.

²⁵ *Bowu zhi* (博物志) (Taipei: Xucsheng shuju, 1980), v.8, <史補>, p.81.

²⁶ *Shaoshi shanfang bicong* (少室山房筆叢), v.32, <四部正偽>, p.415.

The *Yan Dan Zi* adopts a linear progression through three major episodes. The first episode: humiliation and plans of revenge. The Crown Prince Dan of Yan was made a hostage in Qin and was humiliated by the King of Qin. He managed to flee to his home state and immediately started planning his revenge. He sought help from his mentor Ju Wu (鞠武), who disagreed with the prince's revenge plan and introduced a former *xia* named Tian Guang (田光) to the prince to formulate an alternative. After a careful three-month inspection, Tian found that none of the warriors retained by the prince could execute the plan. He then recommended his friend Jing Ke to the prince, claiming Jing as the only person who was capable of the task. The second episode: the relationship between the prince and Jing. The crown prince tried every possible means to win over Jing Ke, who finally promised to take revenge on the King of Qin. The last episode: the revenge plan in action. Jing Ke went to Qin as an envoy pretending to pay tribute on land. When he was received by the king, Jing Ke pulled out a hidden sword and seized hold of the king. He reprimanded the king for his cruelty towards the world and threatened to kill him if he failed to follow what was commanded. The King of Qin, however, managed to get himself free and then attacked Jing Ke and killed him.

As Hu Yinglin indicated, the story of *Yan Dan Zi* came basically from the biography of Jing Ke in the *Biographies of Assassins*. But the author of *Yan Dan Zi* adjusted the original story to present it tragically, in a unified plot. He trimmed some anecdotes in the biography from the original story. For example, he omitted Jing Ke's encounters in his travel around the states. He also omitted the Qin army's military pressure on the Yan borders.

The author also rearranged the story and added to it a number of folk tales to enhance the fantastic effect of the story. Jing Ke, in the original story in the *Shi Ji*, had already been in Yan for a while when the crown prince returned home. In the *Yan Dan Zi*, Tian Guang made a specific trip to Wei (衛) to invite Jing Ke. This change highlights the fame Jing enjoyed. The Crown Prince is described in the *Shi Ji* as having urged Jing Ke to embark upon the mission of assassination. But in the *Yan Dan Zi*, it is Jing Ke who initially asked to carry out the plan. This change may have been intended to prevent a reader of the *Shi Ji* from thinking that the prince was a self-seeking person whose only impulse was to kill his personal enemy. Certainly it also serves to show that Jing Ke was a man of purpose and determination. Jing Ke's failure in assassinating the King of Qin was suggested in his biography in the *Shi Ji* as the result of his less-than-perfect swordsmanship. In the *Yan Dan Zi* his

failure was attributed to his credulousness, which allowed him to be fooled by the captured king. These twists were all aimed at highlighting Jing's noble *xia* character and his heroism. Therefore, they were adopted largely for rhetorical and aesthetic reasons. The nameless author obviously had no intention of merely repeating the historical event. He wanted to provide a group of images to appeal to a broad readership.

The *Yan Dan Zi* can be thus viewed as a bold and successful example of the rise of folkloric literature from the territory of historiography. The creation of *Yan Dan Zi*, folklore in the garb of history, was a mixture of aristocratic history and grassroots literature. There was at least one social reason for the combination. The invention of paper and the development of writing tools in the Eastern Han may possibly have made education and book-based knowledge reach society to a wider range than in previous ages. Although the literacy rates of the time are unknown, many biographies in the official history of the Eastern Han show that more and more people from lower social levels were entering the formerly aristocratic world of intellectuals. They brought into this world the beliefs and value systems of the lower levels of society. Literary exaggeration and free-wheeling imagination were two characteristics of folkloric thinking of the time. In the *Yan Dan Zi* the folkloric and literary components are both evident. The most important of the folkloric components are as follows.

First is the belief that a good person would enjoy the blessings of heaven. The *Yan Dan Zi* begins its story this way:

When the Crown Prince Dan of Yan was a hostage in Qin, the King of Qin treated him without courtesy. The Prince was not happy about this and wanted to return home. But the King of Qin did not take any notice of him and said mockingly, "If you can bring it to pass that the raven's head becomes white and the horse grows horns, then I will permit it!" At that Dan looked up to Heaven and sighed, and at once the raven's head became white, and the horse grew horns, so that the King, much against his will, had to set him free. However, he had a bridge built which could be treacherously opened, intending Dan to fall through it. But when Dan crossed it, it did not open, and so he arrived at night at the frontier barrier, but the customs gate was not yet open. So Dan imitated the crowing of a

cock and at once all the cocks started to crow. The gate was opened, and he could escape and return home.^{27H}

Sima Qian, as a critical historian, was strong enough to resist the temptation of including these details in his biographies. In describing Prince Dan's escape from Qin in the *Shi Ji*, Sima Qian swept over this in merely one short sentence as "fleeing back home with resentment" (怨而亡歸). In concluding this biography, Sima Qian stated that he had not included certain stories because they strained his credibility - stories that were later to be incorporated into the *Yan Dan Zi*. Sima Qian was always skeptical of the widely accepted notion that Heaven blessed good men, as he so incisively expressed in the *Biography of Boyi* (伯夷列傳). This notion, however, was firmly believed among creators of folklore, as well as their audience. The author of *Yan Dan Zi* put all the folkloric anecdotes together to demonstrate that the prince was protected and helped by Heaven.

The use of artistic exaggeration to portray prominent personalities is another important characteristic of folklore. For instance, the author of *Yan Dan Zi* offers the following anecdotes concerning the workings of *zhiyu* (知遇), or understanding and appreciation, between a lord and his subject, in order to bring out the exaggerated characters of the Crown Prince and Jing Ke.

Some days later the Crown Prince went with Ke into the Eastern Palace, where they enjoyed the view from the banks of a pond. Ke lifted up a tile and hurled it at the frogs. At once the Crown Prince ordered someone to pass him a platter of gold pieces, so that Ke could take them to throw with. When he had thrown them all, he was offered new ones, until he stopped and said, "It is not that I want to be stingy with the gold pieces for the Crown Prince's sake, it is just my arm is hurting." On another occasion they drove out together with a thousand-mile horse. Ke said, "I have heard that the liver of a thousand-mile horse tastes delicious!" At that the Crown Prince had the horse slaughtered and the

²⁷ *Yan Dan zi* (燕丹子), p.1. Translation is from *The Golden Casket: Chinese Novellas of two Millennia* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964), with my emendations. Sima Qian made use of similar folkloric anecdotes as those in the above passage obviously with caution. Not long after Jing Ke, Prince Dan and others were killed for their involvement in assassination attempts on the King of Qin, the Qin armies completed their ruthless wars of unification. The whole country was under the tyrannical rule of the Qin regime. Jing and the prince were regarded among the people of the conquered states as martyred heroes. A cult honoring them developed during the Qin dynasty especially in the lower levels of society, where plots of toppling the regime did not cease. The stories of Jing and Prince Dan legends like this one

liver served to Ke. When General Fan offended King of Qin, who pressed hard for his arrest, he fled and sought asylum with the Crown Prince, who had a banquet prepared for him on the terrace of Huayang (華陽臺). During the carousal the Crown Prince called forward a beautiful woman who knew how to play the zither. Ke said, "I like the zither player." The Crown Prince wanted to make a present of woman to him but Ke said, "It is only her hands that I love." At once the Crown Prince had her hands chopped off and served to him in a jade dish. The Crown Prince used to eat with Ke at the same table and to sleep on the same couch.²⁸¹

First, in Jing's biography in the *Shi Ji*, Sima Qian described the relation between Jing and the Crown Prince in a following brief account: "Jing Ke was given a senior ministerial post and lodged in an upper lodge. The Crown Prince appeared daily at his house, supplying him with the best food and often other rare objects, and presenting him carriages, horses and beautiful women to his every wish, all in order to satisfy his expectations."²⁹¹ This account was refurbished with many folkloric anecdotes in the *Yan Dan Zi* and presented in an inflated language distinct from that used in historical works.

Second, to chop off the zither-player's hands may be upsetting to modern eyes, but it was accepted by both authors and readers in ancient times, when women were regarded as merely men's property, equal to carriages and horses. Even Sima Qian accepted a possibly fictional account, in which the chivalrous Prince Pingyuan chopped off the head of his favorite concubine just because she could not help laughing at seeing a crippled man limping along.³⁰ Sima Qian probably viewed it as a noteworthy anecdote to show the *xia* character of the prince. There were few serious complaints critical comments made on this kind of conduct by Chinese scholars in history. Even as late as the Tang dynasty, the prominent philosopher and writer Han Yu (韓愈 768-824) still praised Zhang Xun (張巡), a loyal county governor who organized an effective resistance against the forces of the rebellious general An Lushan (安祿山 ?-757), for killing his concubine to feed his soldiers in

were widespread, and still circulating at the time when Sima Qian started collecting source materials for his history.

²⁸ *ibid.*, p.4. Translation from the *Golden Casket* with my emendations.

²⁹ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.5, <刺客列傳>, p.2550. Translation from *The Grand Scribe's Records*, xvii, *The Memoirs of Pre-Han China*, p.329.

³⁰ *ibid.*, <平原君列傳>, p.2387.

the besieged city Suiyang (睢陽).³¹ To kill one's beloved (殺所愛) and its variant form, to kill one's own or a friend's enemy (借交報仇), for a cause, later became a pair of motifs indispensable to *xia* literature.

The author of *Yan Dan Zi* also used simile and contrast to create the colorful images of the novella. For instance, the Crown Prince was described as saying, "A man is ashamed of continuing to live in this world after suffering humiliation, just like a virtuous woman who is ashamed of suffering violence and having her chastity outraged."³² The simile suggests the prince's burning desire for vengeance, which drove him to take immediate action. When his mentor Ju Wu proposed a long-term plan against Qin, the prince rejected it by saying, "This will drag along the road interminably, but my heart cannot wait any longer."³³ It is reminiscent of Wu Zixu's metaphoric answer to a former friend. "My time is late and my road is a distant one, that is why I have to take shortcuts and move against the current."³⁴ Contrast of images is another artistic means often used throughout the *Yan Dan Zi*. For instance, the impetuosity of the Crown Prince's young heart is in sharp contrast to the maturity and cool-headedness of Ju Wu. Jing Ke, before appearing in the story, is described as having "courage in spirit" (神勇) and this stood in contrast to Xia Fu (夏扶), "whose courage runs in blood" (血勇), Song Yi (宋意), "whose courage is in his veins" (脈勇) and Wuyang (武陽), "whose courage is in his bones." (骨勇) During the later development of the story, Wu Yang became a foil to Jing Ke's heroic character:

While the two traveled to Yangdi (陽翟), Jing Ke bought some meat from a butcher and had a dispute with him over a discrepancy in weight. The butcher insulted Jing Ke. Wuyang was about to attack the butcher but he was stopped by Jing Ke. They continued their journey westward until they entered Qin and reached Xianyang (咸陽). Through the Counselor of the Palace, Meng (蒙), Jing Ke delivered the message: "The Crown Prince of Yan stands in awe of the great King's majesty, he therefore sends you the head of General Fan and the map of Dukang (督亢). He desires to become your vassal on the northern border." The King of Qin was very pleased at this. All the assembled courtiers surrounded

³¹ *Han Changli ji* (韓昌黎集) (Taipei: Xin wenfeng chubanshe, 1977), v.2, <張中丞傳後序>, p.86.

³² *Yan Dan zi* (燕丹子), "丈夫所耻, 耻受辱以生於世也; 貞女所羞, 羞見劫以虧其節也。" p.1. Translation from *The Golden Casket*, p.31.

³³ *ibid.*, "此引日緩緩, 心不能須也。" p.2.

³⁴ *Shiji jinZhu* (史記今注), v.4, <伍子胥列傳>: "吾日暮途遠, 吾故倒行而逆施之。" p.2218. Translation from the *Memoirs of Pre-Han China*, p.54.

his seat; in front of the dais halberds were arrayed in their hundreds. In this way he received the envoys from Yan. Jing Ke carried the General's head, while Wuyang was carrying the map. Bells and drums sounded together; the whole assembly of courtiers cried out, "Long live the King!" Wuyang was so frightened that he could scarcely put one foot in front of the other and his face became deathly pale. The King of Qin was surprised, but Jing Ke looked around at Wuyang and stepped forward to apologize for him, "He is only a simple man from the barbarians on the northern frontier. He has never before seen a Son of Heaven. Pray allow him a little time so that I can bring my mission to you to an end!"³⁵

In this passage the author inserted a few details that were not in the original story in the *Shi Ji*. The descriptions of Wuyang's boorishness and cowardice further serve to portray Jing Ke as a man of wisdom and "courage in spirit".

I regard the composition of *Yan Dan Zi* as the first known example of the departure of *xia* literature from historiography. It was the first successful union of elite history and folkloric literature. In both *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and *Yue Jue Shu*, the movement of history was developed in a frame of cause and effect. Events were central. In the *Yan Dan Zi*, the emphasis was given to the characterization of its two heroes. The *Yan Dan Zi* opened up new territory for Chinese literature in general and *xia* literature in particular. The images of Crown Prince Dan and Jing Ke created in the *Yan Dan Zi* were regarded as the most important contributions of ancient *xia* literature. Liu Xianxin (劉咸昕 1896-1932), a modern literary scholar, put it this way:

The practice of the *youxia* started by the Mohists and became widespread in the later Zhou, Qin and Han. It has its own works to convey its ideas. The *Yan Dan Zi* and *Shui Hu* (水滸) are such works. The names of Jing Ke, Nie Zheng, Chao Gai (晁蓋) and Song Jiang (宋江) are so popular among the people. Is that not the contribution of the stories? Prince Dan of Yan for the *xia* was just like Chaofu (巢父) and Xuyou (許由) for Taoists.³⁶

One might wonder whether it is fair to compare the *Yan Dan Zi* with the *Shui Hu*, the masterpiece of *xia* literature, in terms of artistic and aesthetic quality. No doubt the *Yan Dan Zi* provided later *xia* literature as a whole with a narrative model and images of *xia* heroes. Its themes of revolt and

³⁵ *Yan Dan zi* (燕丹子), p.5. Translation is from *The Golden Casket*.

revenge against oppression and injustice were well preserved in later *xia* literature and folkloric literature. Meanwhile, the work incurred the displeasure of rulers. For instance, Emperor Qianlong (乾隆 r. 1735-1796) of the Qing ordered it to be removed from the *Siku Quanshu* for its rebelliousness.³⁷ However, *xia* literature, starting from the *Yan Dan Zi*, survived the indifference and hostility of the orthodox literati to grow steadily and even outlive nearly all other genres of literature.

The *xia* in Wei-Jin literary anecdotes and novella

It is widely believed that *xia* literature, which was started with the *Yan Dan Zi*, reached maturity in the Tang dynasty. The period of almost five centuries in which it grew is called the Wei-Jin and Northern-Southern Dynasties (魏晉南北朝), or simply Wei-Jin. The time was similar to the Chunqiu and Warring States in terms of short-lived regimes, social instability and insecurity of life. However, these were both periods of philosophical and literary dynamism.

The Eastern Han dynasty was toppled by peasant uprisings and then torn by civil wars and invasions of the northwestern non-Chinese military regimes. The old social structure was broken with an unprecedented mass migration of population from north to south. Politically, it was a time ridden by schemes, conspiracies, usurpation, revolts and massacres. Ideological Confucianism was challenged and discredited by all kinds of philosophical and religious thought, among them Buddhism, Taoist mysticism, skepticism and hedonism. Documentary evidence suggests a resurgence of *xia* activity in society. The classical *xia* spirit, such as *xia* altruism and chivalry, could still be seen in the upper and lower levels of society. However, the trend of *xia* activity seemed to be following the Han model. The *xia* rites and codes were utilized by the powerful local families to expand their influence. The *shaoyou* (少俠), or youthful *xia*, became a prominent urban lifestyle of the young. All these elements were reflected in *xia* literature of the time.

The spread of Buddhism and Taoism doubtlessly opened up very different worlds in the intellectual life of the Eastern Han, and further stimulated the imagination of literary writers. Although the

³⁶ *ibid.*, quoted in <楊家駱序>, p.3. Chaofu and Xuyou are considered the ancient Taoist sages.

³⁷ *ibid.*, p.2. Also see *Siku zongmu tiyao* (四庫總目提要), v. 143, <小說家類存目·燕丹子>: “多鄙誕不可信, 殊無足采, 仰承聖訓, 附存其目。” p. 1215.

historical way of thinking remained active among writers in general, historicity of a story was no longer the first concern of writers and their readers. While historical elements in literature declined, novelty ascended. Writers of the time seem to become more aware of the difference between a historical narrative and a literary narrative.

The story of Ganjiang (干將) and Moxie (莫邪) may serve as an example in this regard. Ganjiang and Moxie are the names of two famous swords in the works of Zhuangzi, Xunzi and other pre-Qin writers. In the work alleged to the Han scholar Liu Xiang (劉向), *Lieshi Zhuan* (列士傳), or *Biographies of Great People*, Ganjiang (sometimes known as Ganjiang Moxie) became the name of a swordsmith, who made these two swords and later was killed. His son sought revenge for his death. There were other versions of the story, in which Ganjiang and Moxie became the names of a swordsmith and his wife.³⁸ In the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and *Yue Jue Shu*, the story was elegantly romanticized. The *Wu Yue Chunqiu* mentioned that the couple made a pair of swords, the *yang* (陽) sword named after Ganjiang and *yin* (陰) sword after Mo Xie. For an untold reason, Ganjiang hid the *yang* sword and only presented the *yin* sword to the King of Wu.³⁹ The Jin writer Zhang Hua (張華) in his *Lieyi Zhuan* (列異傳), or *Fantastic Stories*, rewrote the story and made it more novelistic. The story was so popular among writers that decades later it was rewritten again by Gan Bao (干寶 fl. 317-322) in his work *Soushen Ji* (搜神記), or *Stories of Seeking Mysteries*. Gan Bao was a renown historian and writer in the Jin. He reorganized the plot and elaborated on it with conversation detail. The literary merit of the story was further augmented.

Ganjiang Moxie of Chu was ordered to make swords for the King of Chu. Since he spent three years to complete the work, the king was angry and intended to kill him. Two swords were made, one male and the other female. Ganjiang's wife was about to give birth to their child, when the husband told his wife, "My work was to make swords for the king, and I spent three years to complete it. The king is angry and he will surely kill me when I go to meet him. If you happen to give birth of a son, tell him when he grows up, 'Watch the Southern Mount at our door: a pine tree will be found on a stone, where a sword can also be found.'" He then took the female sword to meet the King of Chu. The king was greatly displeased and he sent someone to interrogate Ganjiang. It was found that two swords, one

³⁸ *Tangqian zhiguai xiaoshuo jishi* (唐前志怪小說輯釋) (Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1987), <魏晉編>, pp. 141-3.

³⁹ *Wu Yue chunqiu yizhu* (吳越春秋譯注), <閩閩內傳>: "干將匿其陽, 出其陰而獻之。" p. 74.

male and one female, had been made, and only the female one was presented. The angry king killed Ganjiang immediately.

Moxie's son was named Chibi (赤比). When he grew up, he asked his mother, "Where is my father?" His mother answered, "Your father made swords for the King of Chu. Because he spent three years to complete the work, the angry king killed him. When he left, he told me, 'Tell your son to watch the Southern Mount at the door. A pine tree will be found on a stone, where a sword can also be found.'" The son therefore watched southward at the door. He could not see any mountain, but a pine pillar standing on a stone base. He hacked the pillar apart with an ax and found the sword. He was obsessed with the desire to take revenge on the King of Chu.

The king had a dream in which he saw a child whose eyebrows were one foot apart and who wanted to take vengeance. The king immediately offered one thousand catties of gold for the capture of the child. Moxie's son heard this and fled. He sang a sad song on his flight to a mountain, where he met a traveler. The traveler asked, "You are so young, why are you crying so sadly?" He answered, "I am the son of Ganjiang Moxie. The King of Chu killed my father and I want to take revenge." The traveler said, "I heard that the king offered a thousand catties of gold for your head. Give me your head and sword, and I will avenge you!" The child said, "Good!" He cut off his own head right away and presented it with his sword to the traveler. His body stood there. The traveler promised, "I would not disappoint you." The body then fell to the ground.

The traveler took his head to meet the King of Chu. The king was greatly pleased. The traveler said, "This is a brave man's head, you should boil it in a big pot." The king followed his words. The head was still not dissolved after being boiled for three days and nights. Instead, it leaped from the boiling water with an angry stare. The traveler said to the king, "The head of the son has not dissolved. I wish you can come to look at it. It will be surely dissolved then." The king went to the pot. The traveler chopped off the king's head, which fell into the boiling water. The traveler then cut off his own head, which also

fell into the boiling water. The three heads were all boiled beyond recognition. They were buried in three separate tombs under the one name "the three tombs of the king".^{10M}

As a story of revenge, it is not much different in structure from that of Wu Zixu's in the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and Prince Dan's in the *Yan Dan Zi*. However, in imagery it is quite different from the latter two, which were more or less written the influence of historical factuality. Although literary imagination was brought into play in the *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, and especially in the *Yan Dan Zi*, the authors of the two works were conscious of the norms of historical realism and validity. The fact that Gan Bao named his work *Stories of Seeking Mysteries* shows clearly his purpose. In the above story, Gan Bao resorted to the mythological and folkloric approaches to vitalize his heroes. When Chibi cut off his own head and presented it to the *youxia* and when his body fell to the ground only after revenge on his behalf was promised shows the zeal with which the boy wanted revenge. This theme was reinforced by the detail of the boy's head resisting dissolution in the boiler for three days and even jumping out of the boiler to stare at his enemy, the King of Chu. These descriptions of fantastic detail heightened the aesthetic and theatrical effect of the story.

The traveler is another successful literary portrait by the author. The traveler is a combination of *youxia* and assassin. Sima Qian's *xia* acted mostly out of gratitude or comradeship. They were less concerned about whether justice would be done. To carry out justice for its own sake (主持正義), or on Heaven's behalf (替天行道), is an idea which appears to be first emerging in *xia* literature of the Wei-Jin era. The traveler encountered Chibi in a mountain. He offered justice in the form of vengeance against the killer of the boy's father and even pledged his own life. He was driven entirely by his sense of justice. Neither gratitude nor brotherhood was involved.

In Dai Zuo's (戴祚) *Zhenyi Ji* (甄異記), or *Stories of Wonders*, a *xia* monk behaved similarly in rescuing Xie Yun (謝允), who was unjustly imprisoned by a negligent county governor. Xie was kidnapped and sold to be a slave in a rebel-controlled area when he was fifteen:

When the rebellion was put down, Xie Yun went to the county authority requesting a restoration of his former status. The governor of Wushang (烏傷) not only refused to hear his case, but also imprisoned and tortured him. Xie Yun was told in a dream, "You would

¹⁰ *Quanben soushen ji pingyi* (全本搜神記評譯) (Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 1994), v. 11, p.206.

not easily get out of prison. Since you are kindhearted in nature, I will rescue you.” When he awoke he saw a young man wearing a yellow robe outside the bars of his jail. The young man often entered the jail to talk to Xie Yun. The warders knew he was not an ordinary man and thus dared not frame a case against Xie. After he was released, Xie went to the Mount Wudang [to thank his rescuer].⁴¹

Like the traveler in the previous story, the yellow-robed young man was a *xia* hero in that he would “draw his sword at the sight of injustice” (路見不平，拔刀相助). The story obviously inspired the author of the Tang story *Chezhong Nuzi* (車中女子), or *Girl in a Carriage*. It was not by coincidence that the *xia* who brought Li Yi (李益) to his abandoned lover in another Tang story *Huo Xiaoyu* (霍小玉) also wore a yellow robe. The modern writer Zheng Zhengyin (鄭證因 1900-1960) named his famous *xia* novel *Huangshan Ke* (黃衫客), or *Yellow-robed Xia*. The yellow robe almost became a synonym of *xia* in literature.

With the gradual decline of historical content came the emergence of more contemporary themes in Wei-Jin *xia* literature. Many anecdotes were aimed at illustrating the concept of *bao*: both as taking revenge and returning a favor. Buddhism and Taoism also added new features to the old tradition of ensuring personal justice, which lay at the core of the *xia* tradition.⁴² Most of these anecdotes were set in the contemporary world of the authors. Popular stories of this sort were collected in works such as the *Soushen Ji*, *Soushen Houji* (搜神後記), *Yiyuan* (異苑), *Shuyi Ji* (述異記) and *Youming Lu* (幽明錄).

Another indication of the fading interest in historical subject matter was demonstrated by the penchant for creating images of female *xia* heroes. Since the emergence of *xia* in the Chunqiu period, both the real and the imaginative world of *xia* had been a world of men. Sima Qian did describe the bravery of Nie Rong, sister of Nie Zheng, in his *Biographies of Assassins*, but the description was intended to enhance the heroism of her brother. At best, women were merely a decoration in the world of men. More often, a woman was blamed as the cause of a man's failure.

⁴¹ *Lieyi zhuan deng wuzhong* (列異傳等五種) (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 1988), p.85.

⁴² *Bao*, or retribution, has been a basic notion in Chinese moral philosophy. Before Buddhism and Taoism injected their influence into its content, *bao* had been more temporal. Its basis was retributive justice. Under the influence of Buddhism, the notion of *bao* began to carry religious flavor, for instance, it became a notion of predestination. The new component enhanced the imperative nature of retribution. See Dun

disaster and ruin. The breakdown of Confucianism and especially the strong concern for seeking novelty and oddity changed the way of seeing the world on the part of writers of the Wei-Jin age.⁴³ A great number of women emerged as protagonists in Wei-Jin novellas and anecdotes. Female images were also created in the Wei-Jin *xia* literature and became a constant inspiration to the writers of *chuanqi* (傳奇) novellas in the Tang dynasty. *Biqiu Ni* (比丘尼), or *Nun*, in the *Soushen Houji* is an example. The ambitious Jin general, Huan Wen (桓溫), received a nun as his honored guest. The nun drew the attention of the general for the unusually long time she was spending bathing. When he ventured a look to see what had happened, he was frightened to find the nude nun wielding a sword and cutting her own belly, limbs and head. When she came out of the bath as if nothing had happened, she told the general, "If someone dares to usurp the power of his lord, his body will be treated that way." Because of this warning, the general never attempted to replace his lord even though he had the ability to do so.⁴⁴ We can readily find the shadow of the nun in the images of female *xia* of the Tang dynasty, such as Nie Yinniang (聶隱娘), who was especially noted for her swordsmanship and who transformed herself into a demon to defeat the assassin sent by a rebelling warlord, and Hongxian (紅綫), who, in order to stop an imminent war, walked at lightning speed into a warlord's camp and stole a jewel case from his bedroom as a warning that the warlord's life was at her mercy.

The most impressive heroine created by the Wei-Jin writers is Li Ji (李寄). This is also a product of Gan Bao's *Soushen Ji*. The story took place in Yongling (庸嶺). A huge snake killed many people and caused a general panic across the area. Cattle and sheep could not satisfy the beast, which appeared in a shaman's dream and requested young girls. Nine girls were sacrificed until the local authority could not provide any more in the tenth year. Then Li Ji, the youngest daughter of the Li Dan (李誕) family, came forward and asked her parents to let her go as the tenth girl:

Ji sneaked away from home so nobody could stop her. She requested a good sword and a snake-biting dog. On an August morning, she went to the temple and waited there with her sword and dog. She first mixed several *shi* of glutinous rice with sweet wheat and put it in front of the snake cave. The snake began to emerge, with its head as big as a grain bin and

Weng (遁翁) *Yinguo de dinglu* (因果的定律) in *Fojiao genben wenti yanjiu* (佛教根本問題 研究) (Taipei: Dasheng wenhua chubanshe, 1978), p.201.

⁴³ In this regard, the *zhiguai* (志怪) was not merely a literary genre actively flourishing in the Wei-Jin era; it was also to some extent a way of thinking among intellectuals of the time.

its eyes like two-feet high mirrors. It smelled the scent of the rice and ate it first. Then Ji let go her dog to bite the snake. From behind she hacked several wounds on the snake. Burning with pain, the snake emerged fully from the cave and died. Ji entered to look at the cave. The skeletons of the nine girls were found. She took them all out and spoke loudly to them, "You were coward and weak, and thus eaten by the snake. How sad it was!" She then slowly walked home.^{45P}

The girls in the village were thus saved by Li Ji from the yearly rite of feeding the evil beast. The author bestowed upon the young girl what was identified as the most distinguished *xia* character: to remove the evil and to save the weak. When the men had all resigned themselves to misfortune, it is more than heroic that a young girl had the will and wit to stop the evil.

In their fictionalization of the *xia*, the writers of Wei-Jin brought another conceptual innovation to the literature, *Wu* (武), or martialness. The martial side of *xia* was magnified. Because of their origins in the Chunqiu warrior class, military nature was born into the *xia* character. However the military side of the *xia* had become diminished as *xia* became more and more a temperament, behavior pattern and lifestyle. Liu An (刘安 179-122 B.C.) in the early Han even declared that "a warlike person is not a *xia*." (喜武非侠)⁴⁶ Sima Qian simply ignored the martial side of his *youxia* and showed no interest in whether they possessed swordsmanship or not. He placed virtues like altruism and personal loyalty far ahead of swordsmanship even for his assassin *xia*, for whom *wu*, or martial ability, was crucial. This mood was maintained through both the Western and Eastern Han. In the *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, the *wu* side of *xia* was re-explored. With its descriptions of the martial skills of Zhuan Zhu, Jiao Qiuyi, Qingji, Yuenu, Yuangong and Chen Yin (陳音), *wu* and *xia* were given a balanced image. During the Wei-Jin period, admiration of novelty and fantasy drove many writers to stress the martial side of *xia*, as they found that *wu* opened a fascinating realm in *xia* literature, where they could let their imaginations run free to create magnificent scenes and images.

The rise of a new martial tradition in *xia* literature also had its social foundation. The Wei-Jin was a time of chronic war. Most of the literati were drawn into wars and other lesser conflicts in their

⁴⁴ *Soushen houji* (搜神後記) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988), v.2, p.11.

⁴⁵ *Quanben soushen ji pingyi* (全本搜神記評譯), v.19, p.366.

⁴⁶ *Huainan zi* (淮南子), <說山>, p.277.

lifetime. Many even had military experience. Cao Pi (曹丕 187-226) in his *Zi Xu* (自叙), or *Autobiography*, recorded his early experience of learning archery and horsemanship from his father and swordsmanship from a master. The following episode shows how well trained he was:

I heard that [General] Deng Zhan (鄧展) was very vigorous and adept in using all kinds of weapons. He claimed to be able to use his bare hands to fight people with swords. I once took time to discuss swordsmanship with him and I told him, "Your way is not correct. I had learned swordsmanship and have acquired a good technique." He requested a match between us. That time we were eating sugar cane after a heavy drink. We used the cane to fight in the front square of the palace. In several rounds I hit his arm three times. The spectators around burst with laughter. Zhan felt embarrassed and requested to do it over again. I said to myself, "I know he will try to launch a quick attack to my chest." I pretended to step forward into him. Zhan approached me head-on as I expected. But I made a sudden turn and hit him on his face. Everybody was stunned. I went back to my seat and said with a smile, "In the past, Yang Qing (陽慶) asked Chunyu Yi (淳于意) to change his old ways and taught him a secret technique. Now I would like to ask General Deng to give up his old ways and to learn the essentials of swordsmanship." Everybody present was amused.⁴⁷

The experience of Cao Pi, a prince (later a monarch) and also an important writer of the time, shows that the martial tradition, which was suppressed through the whole Eastern Han dynasty, was revitalized among the nobility, as well as in society as a whole.

This renewed martial tradition was reflected in descriptions of swords and swordsmanship. As discussed in Chapter Two, the sword was a favorite weapon of *xia* heroes. It was the subject of poetry and was worshipped in pre-Qin times. Descriptions of mythical swords and tales of sword culture re-emerged in the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and *Yue Jue Shu*. During the Wei-Jin period, swords appeared in each literary genre with an unprecedented frequency.

It should be noted that this was more than the restoration of a broken tradition. First, the writers of Wei-Jin were not as a whole interested in using the sword as an image to convey a philosophical or

⁴⁷ *Dianlun* (典论), <自叙>, p.3.

political message, as Zhuangzi had done in his treatise, *Shuo Jian*. In the Wei-Jin, the sword was personified and human intelligence was bestowed upon it. It upheld justice in its own way. Second, the sword and sword culture were greatly mysticized and mythologized in the hands of Wei-Jin writers. Mainstream Confucian thought had always been realistic and rational, and it took a strong stance against mythology and irrationalism. It was inclined to rationalize any fictional elements it encountered. The spread of Taoism, and especially Buddhism provided writers of the Wei-Jin with an entirely different way of thinking. The influence of these religions upon the mysticization of swords can be easily found. The later Qing scholar Shen Zengzhi (沈曾植 1851-1922) in his *Hairilou Zhacong* (海日樓札叢) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962) described the Buddhist swordsmanship of the Wei-Jin and Tang in terms such as *chengjiu jianfa* (成就劍法) and *chengjian chengjiufa* (聖劍成就法). Through mastering either of the above, a swordsman would gain supernatural power from his sword, which would enable him, for example, to illuminate the darkness, kill a monster or break through an enemy battle formation.⁴⁸

The tale of swordsmith Ganjiang Moxie was rewritten again and again by Wei-Jin writers. They created a new image of the sword in these stories. The Jin writer Xiao Guangji (蕭廣濟) in his *Xiaozi Zhuan* (孝子傳), or *Biographies of Filial Sons*, was the author of one of these:

The wife of the King of Chu once embraced an iron pillar to cool herself off in summer. She felt inspired and thus became pregnant. She later gave birth to a piece of iron. The King of Chu ordered Moxie to make it into two swords. It took Moxie three years to complete the work. One female and one male sword were finally produced. Moxie kept the male for himself and presented the female to the King of Chu. The female sword often mournfully lamented its fate in the scabbard. The king asked his subjects the reason and was told, "There were originally two swords, female and male. The female sword laments, because it is missing the male sword." The king was furious. He had Moxie arrested and killed immediately.^{49R}

The story of male and female swords was twisted and developed further in the *Shiyi Ji* (拾遺記). The work was allegedly written by Wang Jia (王嘉 fl. 4th century), a Taoist monk in the late Jin

⁴⁸ *Hairilou zhacong* (海日樓札叢) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), pp. 219-20.

⁴⁹ *Tangqian zhiguai xiaoshuo jishi* (唐前志怪小說輯釋), <魏晉編>, p. 142.

period. The sword and sword culture were Wang's favorite themes. He claimed that Emperor Zhuanxu (帝顓頊) of high antiquity had a sword called *yeying* (曳影), which would fly to a place and put down an armed rebellion whenever one occurred. In time of peace, "A roar of a dragon or a tiger was often heard from the scabbard."⁵⁰ As a Taoist monk, Wang himself might have been engaged in alchemical practices such as smelting metals or making pills of immortality, because he was said to possess the detailed knowledge of the subject. In Wang's stories, some very memorable scenes of sword making are to be found. The most fantastic story is his *Kunwu Shan* (昆吾山), where he eloquently described the Taoist sacred mountain and the swords it produced:

Under the Kunwu Mountain there was plenty of flame-red gold. In ancient times, the Yellow Emperor once deployed his troops there against the forces of Chiyou (蚩尤). People used to dig a hundred *zhang* (丈) deep into the ground but could not reach its source. They only saw sparks flying off like stars. The earth contained cinnabar, which could be smelted to sharp green bronze. The color of the mountain spring was red. The grass and plants on the mountain were all vigorous and even the earth was solid and compact. At the time of King Goujian of Yue, workers were sent to offer a sacrifice of a white horse and white cow to the god of the Mountain Kunwu. They excavated the metals and cast them into eight swords. In the mountain lived a kind of animal as big as a hare. [The male ones] were golden-colored. They ate minerals and lived in a deep cave. They also ate copper and iron and thus had iron-like internal organs. The female ones were silver-colored. On one occasion the weapons in an armory of the state of Wu all disappeared, even though the doors of the armory remained locked. The king ordered his officials to investigate the holes in the armory. A pair of hares, one white and one yellow, were captured and killed. When their chests were cut open, they were found to have iron organs. The hares had eaten the weapons. The king called in his swordsmiths and ordered them to cast the organs into swords. Two swords were made, the male one was named "*ganjiang*" (干將) and the female "*moye*" (鑊鄒). They could be used to cut jade and horn. The king treasured them very much. Because of these swords, he became an overlord over the other states. The swords were later kept in a stone casket and buried. At the time of Jin's resurgence, a violet ray rose up to the sky from their buried place. Zhang Hua (張華) appointed Lei Huan (雷煥) the governor of Fengcheng County (豐城縣), where Lei found the two swords. Zhang

⁵⁰ *Shiyi ji* (拾遺記) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), v.1, p.16.

and Lei each took one of them. After being cleaned by the clay of Huayin (華陰), the swords became dazzlingly brilliant. Zhang was later killed and nobody knew the whereabouts of his sword. One day the son of Lei carried his father's sword and walked over the Yanping Ford (延平津), when his sword roared and flew into the river. The son jumped into the water to search for it, but only found two dragons coiled together under the pool staring at him. He dared not continue the search.⁵¹

The story possessed such a strong charm, especially the part where the swords were found and then lost forever, that later *xia* novellas, novels and poetry repeatedly alluded to it. From the middle of the Eastern Han, the sword was no longer a combat weapon in military service. It had been replaced by other more practical weapons like the *dadao* (大刀), or broadsword, a kind of chopper with only one edge, commonly used to cut down enemies in battle. However, the sword as a cultural symbol of the martial tradition has never met with any serious challenge. This legacy was greatly enriched in the Wei-Jin literature. The aesthetic value of the sword, as well as the mysterious culture around it, directly inspired the creation of *jianxia* (劍俠), or the swordsman *xia*, in the Tang *xia* novellas.

For Sima Qian, one could be a *xia* with or, more often, without a sword. The Wei-Jin writers turned a new page, where the *xia* were always accompanied by their swords in upholding social justice. The new *xia* existed mostly in literature. They were called *wuxia* (武俠), or the martial *xia*, and their commitment to social justice, a centerpiece of the literature, was called *yiwu xingxia* (以武行俠), or the use of force in the practice of *xia*.

The *xia* in Wei-Jin *Yuefu* ballads

Sima Qian's idealization of the *xia* was carried on in *xia* literature. In the real world, the *xia* continued to follow its Han *haoxia* model, with new variations in the turbulent Wei-Jin era. The Wei-Jin *xia* developed basically in two directions: those of the commoner *xia* and the noble *xia*. The commoner *xia*, including the lower-society *xia* and other non-noble *haoxia*, formed their own groups, well-organized or otherwise, across the north and south to defend themselves or to dominate their neighborhoods. Like Lu Su (魯肅 172-217) of Wu (三國·吳) and Zu Di (祖逖 266-

⁵¹ *ibid.*, v. 10, pp. 232-4.

321) of Jin (晉), they organized “*qingxia shaonian*” (輕俠少年), or youthful *xia*, and “*baojie yongshi*” (暴杰勇士), or “formidable and valiant men”, into quasi-troops to protect their clans or local communities as they migrated from their war-ridden native places in the north to the relatively peaceful south.⁵² Many *haoxia* organized similar groups and communities, which were called “*buqu*” (部曲) or “*wubao*” (塢堡), primarily based on ties of clanship. Quite a few of them used these kinds of organized forces to control their neighborhoods, like Zheng Bao (鄭寶) and Zhang Duo (張多) in the south and the Gao brothers in the north.⁵³

As for the noble *xia*, many young members of aristocratic families were themselves engaged in *xia* activities, often for comradeship and pleasure-seeking. When Cao Cao (曹操 155-220) was young, he “behaved recklessly like a *xia*, not attending his proper duties.”⁵⁴ He and his friend Yuan Shao (袁紹 ?-202), another young noble, were both “fond of being *youxia*” (好為游俠). They were described as sneaking into a wedding house and kidnapping the bride.⁵⁵ During the Wei-Jin period, behaving like a *xia* seems to become the life style of young men from noble families and other upper-class families. It became almost a conventional pattern that a man lived a reckless and restless *xia* life when young and then became a prominent official or general or social celebrity in middle age. Xu Shu (徐庶 fl. 2nd century) was “fond of the ways of the *xia* and the sword as a young man”.⁵⁶ Xue Xiuyi (薛修義 fl. 6th century) was “an evil *xia* when he was young.” (少而奸俠)⁵⁷ Dai Yuan (戴淵 fl. 3rd century) was born to a family that produced officials for generations, but he wanted to live a different life:

When Dai Yuan was young, he behaved like a *youxia* and never cared about the norms of conduct. He often robbed merchants and travelers between the Jiang and Huai rivers. Once Lu Ji (陸機 261-303) returned to Luoyang for his vacation with considerable baggage. Dai

⁵² *Wu shu* in *Sanguo zhi* (三國志·吳書) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1971), v.54, <魯肅傳>, p.1267 and *Jin shu* (晉書) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), v.62, <祖逖傳>, pp.1693-5.

⁵³ *Wei shu* in *Sanguo zhi* (三國志·魏書) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1971), v.14, <劉曄傳>, p.443 and *Bei Qi shu* (北齊書) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1972), v.20 <高乾列傳>, pp.289-90.

⁵⁴ *Wei shu* in *Sanguo zhi* (三國志·魏書), v.1, <武帝紀>: “任俠放蕩, 不治行業。” p.2.

⁵⁵ *Shishuo xinyu* (世說新語) (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1965), <假譎>: “嘗與袁紹好為游俠, 觀人新婚, 因潛入主人園中, …… 抽刀劫新婦。” p.224. The authenticity of the story is dubious, because in the social milieu of the day the kidnapping of a bride would break the taboos of male and female conduct and make the girl unmarriageable again. But it is believable that Cao Cao, like many other descendents of nobility of the time, went through a youthful *xia* style, characterized by its turbulent nature.

⁵⁶ *Shu shu* in *Sanguo zhi* (三國志·蜀書) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1971), v.35, <諸葛亮傳>注: “少好任俠擊劍。” p.914.

⁵⁷ *Bei Qi shu* (北齊書), v.20, <薛修義傳>, p.275.

sent his young followers to plunder Lu's boat. Dai sat himself in a big chair on the bank, directing the operation methodically. Dai had a graceful carriage. Even when he was committing a crime like this, he was still different from other robbers.^{58U}

Like all the above mentioned people, Dai later changed his life and became an army general. This sort of account is seen in many historical biographies of the time. Historians, however, were in general still following the stance taken by Ban Gu and Xun Yu in criticizing *xia* for their evil nature. Nevertheless, they were also influenced by Sima Qian's promotion of his version of *youxia*. That is why they paid so much attention to the people who had a *xia* past and later became prominent in the public arena. This might also be viewed as an unconscious effort by historians and scholars to remold the *xia* into something more socially acceptable.

The *xia yuefu* (樂府) ballads of Wei-Jin are the full embodiment of this trend. Compared to their sister genre of the novella, which is more concerned with the heroism and altruism of the *xia*, the ballads cover a broader range *xia* life, especially that of the youthful *xia*. There is another obvious difference between the two genres. While the *xia* novellas are filled with the supernatural so popular at the time, the ballads are full of youthful vivacity and rely more upon realistic events.

The Wei-Jin novella and Wei-Jin ballad had different traditions. The Wei-Jin novella largely grew out of the influence of pre-Han mythology, such as the *Shan Hai Jing* (山海經), and the Han miscellaneous histories (雜史), those listed under Ban Gu's *xiaoshuo* category. Fascination with the supernatural and extraordinary phenomena is its unmistakable imprint. The genre-conscious Wei-Jin writers, many of whom were also historians, such as Guo Pu (郭璞 276-324) and Gan Bao (干寶 fl. 317-322), often drew on source materials unfit for inclusion in the more serious and critical histories, but which still useful as a supplement to those histories in their novellas, where they could give play to their imagination with less restraint.

In contrast to the novella, the *Yuefu* had a more official lineage. *Yuefu*, literally the Music Bureau, originally was a governmental institute created in the early Han with two main functions. One was to collect folklore from across the country and eulogistic verse written by men of letters. These works were then set to music to play in court presumably as a means of making the feelings of

⁵⁸ *Shishuo xinyu* (世說新語), v.5, <自新>, p.164.

common people known to the higher authorities. The other function of the institute was to provide imperial religious ceremonies with verse and music. The Music Bureau's function of collecting folklore was exaggerated and idealized by Confucian scholars as a means by which the monarch observed the people's sentiments and the conditions across the land. However, the collections made by the Bureau helped bridge the gap between the folk song and the poetry of the literati, providing a source of inspiration for men of letters for centuries after, and both the folk song and its imitations were termed *yuefu*. The strong expression of aspirations, high principles and heroic vision is to be found in Han narrative verse, and it is this mood that imitators of later times found attractive and put to such good use in their own literary efforts.

The political and social function of the Han *yuefu* made the editors and writers of the genre take more realistic and reflective approaches toward their subject. This is the main reason Han *yuefu* as a whole were created with a strong realistic bent. This spirit was inherited in the Wei-Jin *yuefu* ballads.

Yuefu ballads flourished during Wei-Jin times. Among the *yuefu* ballads, the *youxia yuefu* is one of its most creative and lively parts. The idealization of *xia* started by Sima Qian was finally completed in the *youxia yuefu*. Sima Qian praised some virtues of the *youxia*, but he also recognized the lawlessness of *youxia* conduct. Because of this, the *youxia* had always drawn sharp criticism from orthodox historians. The *youxia yuefu* portrayed the *youxia* as a force to help maintain imperial law and order. In other words, the *youxia* were remolded in the *youxia yuefu* from the outlaw of tradition to the crusader for law. The *Youxia*, as a subject of admiration and the embodiment of justice and righteousness, began in the literature of the Wei-Jin period, specifically with the *youxia yuefu*.

Zheng Qiao (鄭樵 1104-1162), an authoritative Song scholar and cataloguer, in the *Yuelue* (樂略), or *Treatise on Music*, of his *Tong Zhi* (通志), or *General History*, listed twenty-one *yuefu* titles under the subject *Youxia*. Those initially created in the Wei-Jin represent almost half of them. They are the following: *Youxia Pian* (游俠篇), *Xiake Pian* (俠客篇), *Boling Wanggong Xiaqu* (博陵王宮俠曲), *Linjiang Wang Jieshi Ge* (臨江王節士歌), *Shaonian Zi* (少年子), *Chang'an Shaonian Xing* (長安少年行), *Qingbo Pian* (輕薄篇), *Jieke Shaonianchang Xing* (結客少年場行) and *Zhuangshi Pian* (壯士篇). Later other scholars added *Baima Pian* (白馬篇) and *Liu Sheng* (劉生) to the list. Today

there are eleven titles and thirty ballads extant. This may not be impressive in terms of quantity, because the other *yuefu* subjects, such as love songs, are much greater in number. But the *youxia* ballads are valuable in conveying a complete image of the Wei-Jin *xia*, especially the youthful *xia*, from which the image of the *xia* dominant today, the *yixia* (義俠 righteous *xia*), was derived. Furthermore, the Wei-Jin *youxia yuefu* is the most important contributor to the formation and efflorescence of the *biansai* (邊塞), or frontier poetry in the Tang dynasty.

The general theme of the Wei-Jin *youxia yuefu* is the glorious life of youthful *xia* turned war heroes. This theme is developed in a three-fold progression, from youthful *xia* through service on the frontiers, to return home as a recognized hero:

The Wei-Jin historians were generally unsympathetic towards the *xia* past of a person, no matter how prominent he became in later life. But the Wei-Jin *youxia yuefu* poets usually dwelt upon the early life of the *shaoxia*, with admiration. Unlike the writers of Han *yuefu* ballads, most of whom were either anonymous or little known, most of the Wei-Jin *youxia yuefu* writers came from noble families. They had either lived such a *shaoxia* life themselves or else were familiar with it. This provided the basis of their creative portrayal of the *xia* model. In the *youxia yuefu* ballads, the possessions of the *shaoxia*, such as his horse and weapon, are depicted in detail. This is shown explicitly in *Jieke Shaonianchang Xing* (結客少年場行), or *Making Friends Among the Young Bloods*, written by Bao Zhao's (鮑照 414-466) and Liu Xiaowei's (劉孝威 496-549):

A fine piebald horse with a golden halter,	驄馬金絡頭
A curved knife worn on a brocade belt. ⁵⁹	錦帶佩吳鉤

and

Coming from the Liujun area,	少年本六郡
The young man wandered through the big cities.	遨遊遍五都
A bronze short sword at his waist,	腰插銅匕首
A silk umbrella over his head to shut out sunlight.	障日錦塗蘇
His silver arrows all were hawk-feathered,	鷲羽裝銀鏑

⁵⁹ *Gafu shishu no kenkyu* (樂府詩集の研究) (Tokyo: Kyuko shoin, 1970), v.66, p.402. See translation of the poem in James Liu's *The Chinese Knight-errant*, p.59.

And his ivory bow was decorated with rhinoceros skin.⁶⁰

犀膠飾象弧

The proud *shaoxia* even had his jade bridle installed by the Lord of Chen (陳王) and his golden whip made by the Empress of Jin (晉后)⁶¹ The artistic exaggeration of detail serves well to portray the image of a bold and uninhibited *shaoxia*. It was widely adopted by Tang poets to express the high *xia* spirit.

Besides their appearance, the *shaoxia*'s joyful and pleasure-seeking life style is another subject often described in *youxia yuefu* like *Shaonian Zi* (少年子), *Qingbo Pian* (輕薄篇), *Chang'an Shaonian Xing* (長安少年行) and *Youxia Pian* (游俠篇). The last poem written by Wang Bao (王褒 ?-572 or 577) is representative:

Famous songs come from the two capitals,	京洛出名謳
Powerful <i>xia</i> compete in making friends.	豪俠競交游
They visit the four princes south of the River,	河南期四姓
And call on the five marquises west of the Gate.	關西謁五侯
They watch cockfighting by the highway,	斗鷄橫大道
Or ride on the road lined with tall catalpa trees.	走馬出長楸
As the mulberry-trees' shadows shift at sunset,	桑陰徒將夕
They linger about under the locust-trees. ⁶²	槐路轉淹留

Their high life would never be curbed by the sunset. "Locust-trees" is a veiled allusion to a brothel or a recreational place, where many *shaoxia* consumed their remaining energy. Emperor Yuan of Liang (梁元帝 508-555) describes this aspect of the *shaoxia* life in his poem about Liu Sheng (劉生):

Young Liu indulged in <i>xia</i> activities,	任俠有劉生
His words are valued in both capitals.	然諾重兩京
People in Fufeng would feel honored when he visits,	扶風好驚座
And in Chang'an his name is often counted upon.	長安恒借名
During the night he drinks pomegranate wine,	榴花聊夜飲

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p.402.

⁶¹ *ibid.*, v.66, <長安少年行>, "陳王裝馬勒, 晉后鑄金鞭." p.405.

⁶² *ibid.*, v.67, <游俠篇>, p.408. See translation in *The Chinese Knight-errant*, pp.60-1.

Next morning he needs bamboo tea to sober himself up.	竹葉解朝醒
He makes friends with people like Commander Li,	結交李都尉
Roaming around the city of beauties. ⁶³	遨遊佳麗城

Cock-fighting, horse-racing, wine and women constituted the life of these *shaoxia*. But if their lives consisted solely of these activities, they would not be much different from the other profligates from hereditary noble families. After acknowledging their taste for the extravagant life style, the *youxia yuefu* writers would then display the show of their heroic side of the *shaoxia*, as in Zhang Hua's *Boling Wanggong Xiaqu* (博陵王宮俠曲):

The brave lads indulge in heady chivalry,	雄兒任氣俠
Their fame overwhelms unruly youths.	聲蓋少年場
They wreak vengeance on behalf of friends,	借交行報怨
And kill people by the market place	殺人都市旁
Curved knives clang in their hands,	吳刀鳴手中
Or swords with edges sharp as autumn frost.	利劍嚴秋霜
From their waists jut white halberds,	腰間叉素戟
In their hands, white-headed spears.	手持白頭鑊
These they wield as fast as lightning flashes,	騰超如激電
Or whirl around as fleeting beams of light.	回旋如流光
A hand-to-hand fight decides the issue,	奮擊當手決
One across another, corpses lie.	交尸自縱橫
Living beyond the dominion of law,	身在法令外
With nothing to restrict his free will. ⁶⁴	縱逸常不禁

These *shaoxia* are very short-tempered, with just a “displeasure incurred over a cup of wine”, leading to “a feud fought with glittering blades.”⁶⁵ In outward appearance, this poeticized scene almost matches that in Sima Qian's *Biography of Guo Xie* when Guo's young bandit life is introduced. However, the point of view of the Wei-Jin *yuefu* poets is a different one, as they treated lawless behavior as an integral part of a hero's growth.

⁶³ *ibid.*, v.24, <劉生>, p.199.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, v.67, <博陵王宮俠曲>, p.409. See translation in *The Chinese Knight-errant*, p.59.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, v.66, <結客少年場行>, “失意杯酒間。白刃起相仇。” p.402.

While Sima Qian strove to reveal the moral side of the lawlessness of his *youxia* and assassins, the Wei-Jin *yuefu* poets felt no need to justify a hero's reckless youth. The basic difference is that Sima Qian was writing of historical personages in accordance with the norms of contemporary history writing. Even though he admired some of the less moral characteristics of his heroes, as a historian he had to indicate the lawless side of their conduct. The Wei-Jin *yuefu* writers, in contrast, used literature to create an image of society, by which they intended to show that the youthful *xia* life was not blameful but a necessary part their heroes' expenses. Besides this, another important difference is that Sima Qian's *youxia* mostly came from the lower levels of society, which gave him reason to offer them sympathy. The Wei-Jin *yuefu* writers, however, reflected in their ballads the lives of young scions of the great houses, who later became social heroes.

The *yuefu* poets were highly conscious of transforming their *shaoxia* from men of "personal prowess" (私勇) to men of "public heroism" (公勇). This is the second of the three stages. Cao Zhi's (曹植 192-232) *Baima Pian* (白馬篇) is a representative *yuefu* in this regard. Cao actually started the tradition:

A white steed decked with a golden bridle,	白馬飾今羈
Galloped past towards the north-west	聯翩西北馳
"May I inquire who the rider is?"	借問誰家子
"A <i>youxia</i> from You (幽) and Bin (邠) in the north."	幽燕游俠兒
He left his native district in his youth,	小小去鄉邑
And spread his fame across the distant desert.	揚聲沙漠陲
He always carries a fine sturdy bow,	宿昔乘良弓
With jagged arrows made of bramble wood.	楛矢何參差
Pulling the string, he hits the target on the left;	控弦破左的
Shooting from the right, he hits another target "yuezhi".	右發摧月支
Looking up, he shoots a leaping ape:	仰手接飛猱
Bending down, he hits the target "mati" once more.	俯身散馬蹄
He is more agile than a monkey,	狡捷過猿猴
And as fierce as a leopard or dragon.	勇剽若豹螭
When alarms came from the frontier,	邊城多緊急

That barbarian troops had made repeated raids,	胡虜數遷移
And when a call to arms came from the north,	羽檄從北來
He mounted his steed and reached the frontier fort.	厲馬登高堤
He rode on right into the land of the Huns,	右驅蹈匈奴
Holding the Tartar tribes in high disdain.	左顧凌鮮卑
He threw himself before the pointed swords,	寄身鋒刃端
Without giving a thought to his own life.	性命安可懷
He did not even worry about his parents,	父母且不顧
Let alone his children and his wife.	何言子與妻
His name entered the register of heroes,	名編壯士籍
His heart had no room for personal feelings.	不得中顧私
He risked his life at a time of national disaster,	捐軀赴國難
And regarded death merely as returning home. ⁹⁰	視死忽如歸

This is the first instance of the *xia*-turned-hero image created in the Wei-Jin *yuefu* ballads. While the hero's *youxia* past is touched on very briefly, the focus of the poem is upon his martial skills and patriotic passion. But his *youxia* past is essential to the poem. The poet obviously intended to tell his reader that the *youxia* past was accountable for the martial skill and heroism of the protagonist. This poem by Cao Zhi is the first indication since Sima Qian's time of the *youxia* being a force for good. It does more in this regard than all Sima Qian's justifications for "offending against the law" and effectively challenges the accusations of Han Fei that all *xia* were outlaws. In the above poem, the vigor and bravery of the *shaoxia* were set in the noble enterprise of frontier warfare.

Cao Zhi, a prince himself, led a mischievous and reckless young life. As he grew older, he dreamed of realizing his military and political aspirations. In his well-known *Zishi Biao* (自試表), or *Memorial to the Throne on Self-examination*, he described himself as being also talented militarily. In this regard, it is fair to say that Cao Zhi is not really talking about *youxia* as such but is using a highly selective image of the *xia* to reflect his own ambitions. He created an image for himself, but in so doing he thus created a new image of the *youxia*. This new image of a *youxia* who risked his life rushing to the frontier in time of "national crisis" (國難) inspired many other

writers and poets to explore the theme. Yuan Shu (袁淑), a Song (南朝宋 420-479) poet, in his *Baima Pian*, a poem modeled after Cao's original work, developed a more sophisticated *youxia* character. The traveling *youxia* made many noble friends in the capital because he was a man of integrity and credibility. Once he gave his word, he would never betray it. Finally he went to the north-west border to defend his country, because "his mind is always occupied by the concern of the country."⁶⁷ He was thus praised by the poet as a "heroic *xia*" (俠烈).

The third and final stage of this process is the realization by the *xia* of the rewards due to him for his heroism. There are two descriptive models to be found of heroes returning after they won honor on the frontiers. The first is of the contemplative maturity acquired by the hero after enduring his baptism of border warfare. Bao Zhao's *Jieke Shaonianchang Xing* is representative of this model:

Having left his home for thirty years,	去鄉三十載
He now once more returns to the old hills.	復得還舊丘
He ascends a peak overlooking the fortresses,	升高臨四關
And gazes at the imperial city, in and out.	表里望皇州
The nine roads lie as smooth as water,	九衢平若水
The double palace gates rise like clouds.	雙闕似雲浮
The palace is full of generals and ministers,	扶宮羅將相
Lining the road stand princes and lords.	夾道列王侯
At noon the market-place is crowded and busy,	日中市朝滿
Carriages and horses pass like a running stream.	車馬若川流
As bells strike, men dine from rows of vessels,	擊鐘陳鼎食
Driving out, they seek the company of friends.	方駕自相求
"What is this that I alone am doing,	今我獨何爲
Frustrated and beset with a hundred cares!" ⁶⁸	感稟懷百憂

The hero had returned from the frontier, where he initially went to avoid arrest as a result of a blood-feud killing. But the former *shaoxia* could not find mental peace again when facing a

⁶⁶ *Kafu shishu no kenkyu* (樂府詩集の研究), v.63, p.390. See translation of the poem in James Liu's *The Chinese Knight-errant*, pp.57-8.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, v.63, <白馬篇>"心爲四海懸" p.391.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, v.66, <結客少年場行>, p.402.

tranquil scene, or even by seeking pleasure in the capital as he first appeared to be doing in the poem. The poet's desire was to have his hero become more contemplative and reflective as he aged. This was an obvious effort to tame and rationalize the unruly *shaoxia*. This model has a variant: a returning war veteran devotes more to public interest than to his personal reward, as shown in Kong Zhigui's (孔稚圭 447-501) *Baima Pian*:

After I engraved my name on the stone to the Yanran Mount,	勒石燕然道
I returned in triumph to the pavilion in Chang'an.	凱歸長安亭
My bravery is known to the authorities,	縣官知我健
And no one in the country is not overwhelmed with admiration.	四海誰不傾
Only when the powerful Hun is destroyed,	但使強胡滅
Will I need a mansion built for me. ⁶⁹	何須甲第成

The last couplet is a reminiscence of the words of Huo Qubing (霍去病), one of the greatest generals of the Han dynasty: "Since the Hun has not yet perished, I will not need a home."⁷⁰ The *shaoxia* is thus elevated to the status of the national hero.

The second model is that of the glory and grandeur of triumph. This model seems to be more common in the *youxia yuefu*. The hero's suffering in service on the borders was greatly honored and rewarded, as shown in Kong Zhigui's *Baima Pian*:

He was always resolved to dedicate himself to his country,	本持身許國
And he came into prominence with his military accomplishment.	况復武功彰
Even after a thousand years,	會令千載後
His name would be still in the book of honor. ⁷¹	流譽滿旌常

In Liu Xiaowei's *Jieke Shaonianchang Xing*, the accomplished *shaoxia* could still keep his old life style and enjoy the favor he received:

He kicked a ball after showing bravery in the battlefield,	勇餘聊蹙鞠
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⁶⁹ *ibid.*, v.63, <白馬篇>, p.391.

⁷⁰ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.6, <驃騎列傳>, "天子爲治第, 令驃騎視之, 對曰: '匈奴未滅, 無以家爲也。'" p.2953.

⁷¹ *Kafu shishu no kenkyu* (樂府詩集の研究), v.63, <白馬篇>, p.391.

And he played pitch and toss when the war was over.	戰罷戲投壺
He was formerly a general in the north,	昔為北方將
Now he becomes a lord in the south.	今為南面孤
The head of state carried his bow,	邦君行負弩
And the county governor cleared the way for him. ⁷²	縣令且前驅

This sort of artistic exaggeration is often used in Chinese folklore. The *youxia yuefu* poets in general were motivated to create an atmosphere where the *youxia* spirit was promoted. As we know, most of the *youxia yuefu* poets lived under the southern dynasties. These dynasties held only the southern half of Chinese territory and were always under direct military threat from the non-Chinese occupiers of the north. The *shaoxia* heroes could by no means in the *yuefu* ballads run wild around Luoyang and Chang'an, because these two areas had been wholly occupied by the northwestern conquerors since the collapse of the Western Jin. The flourishing border and *youxia* themes in the Wei-Jin *yuefu*, which were full of the scenes of glorious military success and optimistic heroism, may well have functioned for the writers as channels to dissolve the reality of their frustrations and defeatism. Thus the gay life of the *shaoxia* and their military adventures were fully exploited and described in the *youxia yuefu*. These literary fantasies brought about an essential change in the conception of the *xia* as a whole. In the hands of the above *yuefu* poets and other Wei-Jin poets, the *youxia* were finally transformed from antisocial deviants into guards of public security, from outlaws to social heroes. However, the transformed *youxia* were usually not reduced to being a mere appendage of the authorities. The Wei-Jin *yuefu* writers could admirably keep a well-balanced tension in the character of their *youxia* heroes, with the youthful vitality pushing outward against the attainment of mental maturity. This may be one of the main reasons why images of the *youxia* have been so well received by Chinese readers in general, and young readers in particular, on the course of Chinese history.

The final transformation of the early *xia* tradition was basically completed in the Wei-Jin *youxia yuefu*. In other words, the imagery of the *xia* in the Wei-Jin *yuefu* became prototypical for later Chinese *xia* literature. This imagery has been enriched and diversified ever since.

⁷² *ibid.*, v.66, <結客少年場行>, p.402.

第六章所引原文

^A 且緩急，人之所時有也。太史公曰：昔者虞舜窘於井廩，伊尹負於鼎俎，傅說匿於傅岩，呂尚困於棘津，夷吾桎梏，百里飯牛，仲尼畏匡，菜色陳蔡。此皆學士所謂有道仁人也，猶然遭此災，況以中材而涉亂世之末流乎？其遇害何可勝道哉！（史記·游俠列傳）

^B 龍伯高敦厚周慎，口無擇言，謙約節儉，廉公有威。吾愛之重之，願汝曹效之。杜季良豪俠好義，憂人之憂，樂人之樂，清濁無所失。父喪致客，數郡畢至。吾愛之重之，不願汝曹效也。（後漢書·馬援列傳）

^C 伍胥以不得昭王，乃掘平王之墓，出其尸，鞭之三百，左足踐腹，右手抉其目，誚之曰：“誰使汝用讒諛之口，殺我父兄，豈不冤哉？”即令闔閭妻昭王夫人，伍胥、孫武、白喜妻子常、司馬成之妻，以辱楚之君臣也。（吳越春秋）

^D 至江，江中有漁父乘船從下方溯水而上。子胥呼之，謂曰：“漁父渡我！”如是者再。漁父欲渡之，適會旁有人窺之，因而歌曰：“日月昭昭乎侵已馳，與子期乎蘆之漪。”子胥即止蘆之漪。漁父又歌曰：“日之夕矣，予心憂悲；月已馳矣，何不渡為？事浸急兮，當奈何？”子胥入船。漁父知其意也，乃渡之千澗之津。……欲去，胥乃解百金之劍與漁者：“此吾前君之劍，中有七星，價值百金，以此相答。”漁父曰：“吾聞楚之法令，得伍胥者，賜粟五萬石，爵執圭，豈圖取百金之劍乎？”遂辭不受。謂子胥曰：“子急去勿留，且為楚所得。”子胥曰：“請丈人姓字。”漁父曰：“今日凶凶，兩賊相逢，吾所謂渡楚賊也。兩賊相得，得形於默，何用姓字為？子為蘆中人，吾為漁丈人，富貴莫相忘也。”子胥曰：“喏。”……遂引軍擊鄭，鄭定公前殺太子建而困迫子胥。自此，鄭定公大懼，乃令國中曰：“有能還吳軍者，吾與分國而治。”漁者之子應募曰：“臣能還之。不用尺兵斗糧，得一橈而行歌道中，即還矣。”公乃與漁者之子橈。子胥軍將至，當道扣橈而歌曰：“蘆中人！”如是再。子胥聞之，愕然大驚曰：“何等謂與語？公為何誰矣？”曰：“漁父者子。吾國君懼怖，令於國：有能還吳軍者，與之分國而治。臣念前人與君相逢於途，今從君乞鄭之國。”子胥嘆曰：“悲哉！吾蒙子前人之恩，自致於此。上天蒼蒼，豈敢忘也？”於是乃釋政國，還軍守澗。（吳越春秋）

^E 余讀之，其文采誠有足觀，而辭氣頗與東京類，蓋漢末文士因太史《慶卿傳》增益怪誕為此書。（少室山房筆叢）

^F 其書長於敘事，嫻於辭令，審是先秦古書，亦略與《左氏》、《國策》相似，學在縱橫，小說兩家之間。（燕丹子·孫星衍序）

^G 唐李善注《文選》，始援引其文，是其書在唐以前。……《風俗通》及《論衡》皆有此說，仍云廐門木鳥生肉足也，亦不引此書。注家引書，以在前者為據，知此書在應劭、王充後矣。（四庫全書總目·小說類存目·燕丹子）

^H 燕太子丹質於秦，秦王遇之無禮，不得意，欲求歸。秦王不聽，謬言，令烏白頭，馬生角，乃可許耳。丹仰天嘆，烏即白頭，馬生角。秦王不得已而遣之，為機發之橋，欲陷丹。丹過之，橋為不發。夜到關，關門未開。丹為鷄鳴，眾鷄皆鳴，遂得逃歸。（燕丹子）

^I 後日與軻之東宮臨池而觀，軻拾瓦投龜，太子令人奉盤金，軻用抵，抵盡復進。軻曰：“非為太子愛金也，但臂痛耳。”後復共乘千里馬，軻曰：“聞千里馬肝美，太子即殺馬進肝。暨樊將軍得罪於秦，秦求之急，乃來歸太子。太子為置酒華陽之臺。酒中太子出美人能琴者。軻曰：“好手秦者。”太子即進之。軻曰：“但愛其手耳。”太子即斷其手，盛以玉盤奉之。太子常與軻同案而食，同床而寢。（燕丹子）

¹ 於是尊荆卿為上卿，舍上舍，太子日造門下，供太牢具，異物間進，車騎美女恣荆軻所欲，以順適其意。（史記·刺客列傳）

^k 行過陽翟，軻買肉爭輕重，屠者辱之，武陽欲擊，軻止之。西入秦，至咸陽，因中庶子蒙白曰：“燕太子丹畏大王之威，今奉樊於期首與督亢地圖，願為北番臣妾。”秦王喜，百官陪位，陛戟數百，見燕使者，軻奉於期首，武陽奉地圖，鐘鼓并發，群臣皆呼萬歲。武陽大恐，兩足不能相過，面如死灰色。秦王怪之，軻顧武陽前謝曰：“北番蠻夷之鄙人，未見天子，願陛下稍假借之，使得畢事於前。”（燕丹子）

^l 咸昕又謂：游俠之風，開於墨翟，盛於周京、秦漢。蓋亦有書，以傳其說，則是書與水滸是也。荆卿、聶政、晁蓋、宋江之名，洋洋於人耳，非小說之效歟？俠者之稱燕丹，亦猶道家之稱巢許也。（燕丹子·楊家駱序）

^m 楚干將莫邪為楚王作劍，三年乃成。王怒，欲殺之。劍有雄雌。其妻重身當產，夫與妻曰：“吾為王鑄劍，三年乃成，王怒，往必殺我。汝若生子是男，大，告之曰：‘出戶望南山，松生石上，劍在其背。’”於是即將雌劍，往見楚王。王大怒，使相之。劍有二，一雄一雌，雌來雄不來。王怒，即殺之。

莫邪子名赤比，後壯，乃問其母曰：“吾父所在？”母曰：“汝父為楚王作劍，三年乃成，王怒，殺之。去時囑我：‘語汝子，出戶望南山，松生石上，劍在其背。’”於是子出戶南望，不見有山，擔階堂前松柱下石砥之上，即以斧破其背，得劍，日夜思欲報楚王。

王夢見一兒，眉間廣尺，言欲報仇。王即購之千金。兒聞之，亡去。入山行歌，客有逢者，謂：“子年少，何哭之甚悲耶？”曰：“吾干將莫邪子也。楚王殺吾父，吾欲報之！”客曰：“聞王購子頭千金，將子頭與劍來，為子報之。”兒曰：“幸甚！”即自刎，兩手捧首及劍奉之，立僵。客曰：“不負子也。”於是尸乃僕。

客持頭往見楚王，王大喜。客曰：“此乃勇士頭也，當於湯鑊煮之。”王如其言，煮頭三日三夕不爛。頭踣出湯中，睜目大怒。客曰：“此兒頭不爛，願王自往臨視之，是必爛也。”王即臨之。客以劍擬之，王頭隨墜湯中。客亦自擬己頭，頭復墜湯中。三首俱爛，不可識別。乃分其湯肉葬之，故通名“三王墓”。（搜神記）

ⁿ 歷陽謝允，字道通，年十五，為蘇峻賊軍王免所掠賣，為奴於東陽蔣鳳家。……賊平之後，允詣縣別良善。烏傷令張球不為申理，恠拷拷楚。允夢見人云：“此中易入難出。汝有慈心，當相拯救。”覺，見一少年，通身黃衣，遙在柵外，時進獄中與允言語。獄吏知是異人，由此不敢枉允，既蒙理還，乃西上武當山。（甄異記）

^o 晉大司馬桓溫，字元子，末年，忽有一比丘尼，失其名，來自遠方，投溫為檀越。……尼每浴，必至移時。溫疑而窺之。見尼裸身揮刀，破腹出臟，斷截身首，支分鬻切。溫怪駭而還。及至尼出浴室，身形如常。溫以實問，尼答曰：“若逐凌君上，行當如之。”時溫方謀問鼎，聞之悵然。故以戒懼，終守臣節。（搜神後記）

^p 東越閩中有庸嶺，高數十里。其西北隰中有大蛇，長七八丈，大十餘圍，土俗常懼。東冶都尉及屬城長吏多有死者，祭以牛羊，故不得禍。或與人夢，或下諭巫祝，欲得啖童女十二三者。都尉令長，并共患之。然氣厲不息，共請求人家生婢子，兼有罪家女養之。至八月朝祭，送蛇穴口，蛇出吞噉之。累年如此，已用九女。爾時預復募索，未得其女。將樂縣李誕家有六女無男，其小女名寄，應募欲行，父母不聽。……寄自潛行，不可禁止。寄乃告請好劍及咋蛇犬。至八月朝，便詣廟中坐，懷劍將犬。先將數石米糲用蜜麩灌之，以置穴口。蛇便出，頭大如圍，目如二尺鏡，聞糲香氣，先啖食之。寄便放犬，犬就噉咋，寄從後斫得數創。瘡痛急，蛇因踴出，至庭而死。寄人視穴，得其九女骷髏，悉舉出，咤言曰：“汝曹怯弱，為蛇所食，甚可哀愍。”於是寄緩步而歸。（搜神記）

Q 關展善有手臂，驍五兵，又稱其能空手入白刃。余與論劍良久，謂言：“將軍法非也。余願常好之，又得善術。”因求與余對。時酒酣耳熱，方食竿蔗，便以爲杖。下殿數交，三中其臂。左右大笑。展意不平，求更爲之。余言：“吾知其欲突以取交中也。”因僞深進，展果尋前，余卻腳巢，正截其額。坐中驚視，余還坐笑曰：“昔陽慶使淳于意去其故方，更授以秘術，今余亦願將軍捐弃故技，更受要道也。”一坐盡歡。（典論·自叙）

R 楚王夫人嘗於夏取涼而抱鐵柱，心有所感，遂懷孕，後產一鐵。楚王命莫邪鑄此爲雙劍，三年乃成。劍一雌一雄，莫邪留其雄，而以雌進楚王。劍在闈中常有悲鳴。王問群臣，對曰：“劍有雌雄，鳴者雌，憶其雄也。”王大怒，即收莫邪殺之。（孝子傳）

S 有曳影之劍，騰空而舒，若四方有兵，此劍則飛起指其方，則克伐；未用之時，常於闈里，如龍虎之吟。（拾遺記）

T 昆吾山，其下多赤金，色如火。昔黃帝伐蚩尤，陳兵於此地。掘深百丈，猶未及泉，唯見火光如星。地中多丹，煉石爲銅，銅色青而利。泉色赤，山草木皆勁利，土亦剛而精。至越王勾踐，使工人以白馬白牛祠昆吾之神，采金鑄之，以成八劍之精。……其山有獸，大如兔，毛色如金，食土下之丹石，深穴地以爲窟；亦食銅鐵，膽腎皆如鐵。其雌者色白如銀。昔吳國武庫之中，兵刃鐵器，俱爲食盡，而封署依然。王令檢其庫穴，獵得二兔，一白一黃，殺之，開其腹，而有鐵膽腎，方知兵刃之鐵爲兔所食。王乃召其劍工，令鑄其膽腎以爲劍，一雌一雄，號“干將”者雄，號“莫邪”者雌。其劍可以切玉斷犀。王深寶之，遂霸其國。後以石闈埋藏。及晉之中興，夜有紫氣冲斗牛。張華使雷煥爲豐城縣令，掘而得之。華與煥各寶其一。拭以華銀之土，光耀射人。後華遇害，失劍所在。煥子佩其一劍，過延平津，劍鳴飛入水。及入水尋之，但見雙龍纏屈於潭下，目光如電，遂不敢前取矣。（拾遺記）

U 戴淵少時，游俠不治行檢。嘗在江淮之間，攻掠商旅。陸機赴假還洛，輜重甚豐。淵使少年掠劫。淵在岸上，據胡床，指麾左右，皆得其宜。淵既神姿峰穎，雖處鄙事，神氣猶異。（世說新語）

Conclusion: The Early *Xia* tradition

The early *xia* tradition exhibited a virtually complete transformation in the course of the millennium from its birth in the Chunqiu era to its completion in the Wei-Jin era (ca. 8th century B.C. - ca. 6th century A.D.).

The pre-Qin *xia* emerged from a well-documented Neolithic and Bronze Age martial tradition. In their early history they were carriers of certain moral values and chivalric ethics of the pre-Qin *shi* (士), or warrior, class. This martial tradition, also preserved in myth and legend, was passed down through the tribal warrior, the farmer-soldier *guoren* (國人), and the military *shi* to the more complex Chunqiu warrior. In other words, though the tradition of the *xia* is far more ancient, the origins of the *xia* themselves lie in the *guoren*, *shi* and Chunqiu warriors.

It was the Chunqiu warrior which thus became the prototype of *xia*, and the later *xia* adopted a large part of the ethical and behavioral code of this warrior class. Bravery, altruism, faithfulness and comradeship were common traits of both groups, but the *xia* differed from the Chunqiu warrior in two principal respects: 1) the *xia* were essentially displaced warriors in a very different society, and 2) the *xia* hired out their military services primarily to private interests (私家) instead of serving more legitimate sources of authority (公室).

The tendency of the *xia* to defy authority and act in ever more personal capacities first became evident during the period of the Warring States, but their altruistic and self-sacrificing spirit made them different from the bandits and other types of outlaw with whom they coexisted. The *xia* became an active force in the political arena, often acting as mercenaries but sometimes taking independent action. They soon became the subject of extensive attention, and usually drew severe criticism from scholars and social thinkers, especially from those who advocated the authority of law and ruler, like the practitioners of the Legalist School. Han Fei thus became the earliest pre-Qin scholar to describe the character and behavior of the *xia*. From his Legalist viewpoint, Han Fei christened the *xia* "private swords" (私劍), and denounced their violation of the laws and their affronts to public order. His criticism of the lawlessness of *xia* behavior remained almost unchanged as an "official" attitude over the succeeding dynastic period of more than two millennia.

Conclusion: The Early *Xia* tradition

As a social group, the *xia* came to share some common ground with other social groups. Names such as “*ruxia*” (儒俠), “*moxia*” (墨俠) and “*daoxia*” (盜俠) show the close relationship between the *xia* and such groups, and because of their association with groups more easy to define, a more syncretic, more hazily defined type of *xia* made its appearance. While martial activity was still its defining characteristic, and the *shi* its main inspiration, the *xia* as a group began to resist the softening of their identity and although they often insisted on their own distinctive temperament and behavior, they found it impossible to escape some influence, at least, from other dominant contemporary ideologies. Confucian “benevolence” (仁) and Mohist “universal love” (兼愛) therefore both left their mark on the more simplistic altruism of the original *xia*. In particular, the Mohist readiness to help the weak and their willingness to sacrifice themselves to fulfill a mission or an obligation were contributions to the better side of the *xia* personality.

At the same time, *xia* behavior was more often forced by the exigencies of the times to degenerate into lawlessness in the form of banditry or ruthless self-interest. Even at their best, the *xia* often found themselves acting opportunistically, selling themselves for example to satisfy the ambitions of wayward lords. It was because of this lawless side of *xia* behavior that Han Fei criticized them so severely.

The Warring States period, with its lack of any recognized central authority over the Chinese culture area, is the only time in history where the individual *xia* could move to center stage and shine as major players. The turbulent state of society, a noble class eager to use *xia* talents, and an ever growing urbanization were mainly responsible for the stage of development the *xia* reached at this time.

With the end of the Warring States and emergence of the centralized Han empire, which was intolerant of challenges from non-governmental forces, the *xia* lost their position which had for so long kept them on the fringes of upper echelons of society. They were now relegated to the lower rungs of the social ladder. Only in the early years of the Han, when many of the principal contributors to the dynastic founding were either former *xia* or *xia*-spirited junior Qin officials, did they cling to their earlier role. However, from the accession of Emperor Jing in 157 B.C., campaign after campaign was mounted by the throne to expunge the *xia* from the land.

Under these circumstances, the early *xia* tradition entered a third stage of development. The essential factor in this change was the large number of commoners who flowed into the ranks of the *xia*. Most of them were illiterate or barely educated, possessing only military skills. They could never conform to the definition of the true *xia*. Unlike their pre-Qin predecessors who often acted on an individual basis, the Han *xia* were usually organized by familial or local interests. They attached themselves to influential local families and landlords to form powerful regional blocs to oppose the central authority and to impose their influence on local affairs. While there were commoner *xia* in the Han dynasty who lived up to older ideals of protecting their comrades and helping people in distress, there were others, especially the so-called *haoqiang* (豪強 also known as *haoxia* 豪俠), who developed fully the potential for evil in the *xia* character by collaborating with corrupt government officials to exploit more helpless people. The Han *haoqiang* survived imperial attempts at suppression by shifting their allegiance to the government, but at the first sign of weakness in the central government, they rapidly reasserted their power on the local scene.

Sima Qian, who observed these developments from his court vantage-point in the years between 108 B.C. and his death twenty years later, tried to recreate the *xia* model based on its classical ideal. He lived in a time when the “Age of Heroes”, the time of the epic figures of the Warring States and the founding fathers of the Han dynasty, was still fresh in memory. In his view, the tyranny of Emperor Wu trampled this heroism under foot. Sima Qian, in fact, is said to have inherited his “hero-worship” from his father and he never shrank from eulogizing heroes and heroism in the *Shi Ji* (史記). This almost cost him his life when, out of what he saw as his own heroic motives, he involved himself in the “Li Ling Incident” (李陵事件 99 B.C.), and his punishment had among its consequences his idealization of the *xia* spirit, and his inclusion of the *xia* in his history, in the company of more conventionally worthy subjects of praise. Sima Qian was the first historian who attempted to distinguish the true *xia* and their code of conduct from the Han *haoqiang* and their unedifying practices. Perhaps unconsciously, perhaps intentionally, he glorified the *xia* and came dangerously close to turning history into myth. Although his reconstruction and portrayal of the *xia* image was basically historical, his approach displayed a literary license that set the direction for later writers to embellish the *xia* image and to create a new literary convention for the *xia* tradition.

By the end of the Western Han dynasty, the *xia* had ceased to exist as a significant political force. Official historians no longer found it necessary to pay attention to the *xia* and their activities. From the Eastern Han dynasty (東漢 25-220), there were no further biographies of *xia* in the official histories. The prestige of the *Shi Ji*, however, continued to grow, and with it, fascination on the part of non-official historians and writers with the exploits of the *xia*. Thus was built the mythic and literary world of the *xia* long after they had virtually lost their grounding in the real historical world.

The writers of the Wei-Jin and Six Dynasties (魏晉六朝 220 - 589) contributed most to transforming the early tradition to a new ethos and cosmos of the *xia*. First, they brought the *xia* theme fully out of the confines of history and made it a subject of the literary imagination. Second, their literature brought the *xia* movement back into the mainstream consciousness of society and legitimized its ethos as a positive force in fighting domestic enemies and foreign invaders. They thus completed the construction of a literary world of the *xia* initiated by Sima Qian, and prepared the ground for the efflorescence of *xia* literature in the Tang dynasty (唐朝 618-907).

From the formation and transformation of the early *xia* tradition, we can glimpse some of the interplay between history and literature. While the distinction between history and literature was made very early in China, as for example in the separation between the *Shang Shu* (尚書) and *Shi Jing* (詩經), it was not a clear distinction, and often there was a very fine line in content as well as in approach. History was always the dominant domain, and almost all early works extant today interpreted literary materials historically and are inclined to historicize them. Even though no one today would mistake the *Shi Jing* for history, it was regarded as “historical” and its hermeneutics were approached as historical and philosophical until the 20th century. However, since elegance and liveliness of expression were considered essential to “good” historical works like the *Zuo Zhuan* and the *Shi Ji*, both works are considered by modern scholars to be as much literary as historical masterpieces. The early *xia* tradition from the time of the *Shi Ji* has been preserved and interpreted as a mixture of history and literature.

The development was diachronic from history to literature. The early *xia* emerged as a social entity, but after attracting widespread attention and becoming a prominent social entity in the Warring States era, the *xia* became a subject of imagination and fictionization. When the *xia* as a

class disappeared from history in the Han dynasty, the tradition began to be idealized and mythologized, largely I believe, because the image of the *xia* appealed to the psychological need for salvation and justice on the part of the less successful intellectuals and unprivileged masses in China's second period of disunion. The historical was transformed into the literary, and slowly became a source of fascination to a widening readership. Few Chinese historians prior to the twentieth century would think that this was ahistorical or distorting, rather most would have regarded it as a necessary approach to help highlight the message hidden in a dry historical fact and thus reveal the essential historical truth.

The interplay between history and literature helped develop the early tradition into a mythical realm that removed the historical specifics of the early *xia*. What emerged was something called the “*xia* spirit”. It was never the preserve of a single social stratum. Instead, it came to be identified in different social strata and gradually came to be defined as a frame of mind and mode of behavior. Especially after its embodiment by Sima Qian and its further poeticization by the Wei-Jin writers in their novellas and ballads, the new *xia* image became a typological pattern for later literature. The pattern possessed its own internal impetus to further literary development of the *xia* image and never relied solely upon the inspiration of the historical *xia* and their activities. This is another factor responsible for a flourishing of *xia* literature in the Tang and Song periods in spite of the much reduced presence of *xia* in reality.

Another interflow we notice from the evolution of the early *xia* tradition is that between elite and popular culture. The *xia* initially came from the line of *guoren* and *shi*, which functioned as an intermediate layer in the sharply stratified Zhou society, and were thus influenced both by aristocratic and plebeian culture. While altruism and bravery in the early *xia* tradition were inherited from the noble warrior, the sense of equity and brotherhood came more from the general populace. The *xia* were divided into two distinct groups in the Warring States period: the noble *xia* and the *ke* (客), or retainers who attached themselves to the nobles. The syncretism then became more pronounced. In this regard, Feng Xuan (馮援) was a perfect example. A man of military ability, he was virtually penniless when he went to Prince Mengchang for shelter. Once he became a retainer of the prince, he came to realize that his skills entitled him to better treatment. He later proved himself to be the most capable of *xia* retainers by helping his master to establish himself as a political force in a competitive environment. In Feng's character, the generosity and

insightfulness of the noble *xia* and the plebeian sympathy and shrewdness formed an integrated whole. During the Han dynasty the evil side of the noble *xia* was fully revealed by the *haoqiang* who typically colluded with corrupt elements in local government to oppress the peasantry, while many commoner *xia* degenerated into outlaws who involved themselves in banditry, tomb-robbery, counterfeiting, and other illegal acts. When Sima Qian began to create the image of *youxia* in his history, he used his own elite perspective to portray even his commoner heroes. He used Confucian ethical values such as honesty and modesty (廉潔退讓) to remold the *xia* image. He endowed certain *xia* characters, like Zhu Jia and Guo Xie, with noble qualities but also attempted to preserve their plebeian spontaneity. His initiative in portraying the *xia* as a combination of both elite and popular characteristics was later fully developed into a defining technique in *xia* literature.

Another interesting feature is the role of folklore in formation and, especially transformation, of the early *xia* tradition. The folkloric influence was one of the important external elements that facilitated the transformation of the early *xia* tradition. I believe that when Sima Qian portrayed his *xia* image in biographies of the *youxia* and *cike*, he consciously resisted the temptation to rely on folklore. This does not mean that he ignored the existence of folklore sources, and there is evidence that he did adopt certain elements. But he did it judiciously and with an acknowledged rationality. Over time, folklore elements intruded more and more into scholarly writing and the trend became so strong that two centuries after Sima Qian's death, the famed "rationalist" Wang Chong (王充 27-97) made it a central target of criticism in his *Lun Heng* (論衡).¹ Even Sima Qian was not immune from later attacks on the same grounds. The folkloric influence is readily evident in the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and *Yue Jue Shu*, two of the best-known regional histories produced by Wang's contemporaries. While earlier historians, such as Zuoqiu Ming (左丘明) and Sima Qian had, I believe, simply tried to historicize folklore sources, the authors of the above two latter works adopted anecdotes from these sources often in their original fantastic forms, such as the story of the swordswoman Yuenu (越女), the story of the transformation of Yuan Gong (袁公) into an ape, and the strange legend of swordsmith Ganjiang (干將) and his swords. The folkloric influence in fact became dominant in the *Yan Dan Zi* and eventually turned the work into pure literary invention,

¹ See chapters of <語增>, <感虛>, <書虛>, <是噫> and other in the *Lun Heng* (論衡).

with only a thin historical veneer.² The dominance of folkloric influence marked the completion of the transformation of the early *xia* tradition.

As I have suggested, the post-Han period became increasingly “aristocratic” and the transformation of the tradition to pure literature reflected the new ethos. For instance, the main theme of revenge or vendetta in the *Yan Dan Zi* was aristocratic, and the protagonist, Jing Ke, in the novella was stripped of his “commoner” *xia* characteristics. Instead, he pursued a Confucian ideal - the Kingly Way (王化).³

This admixture of aristocratic literature and folklore is even more evident in another genre: the Wei-Jin *yuefu xia* ballad. The *yuefu* ballad first appeared in the lower strata of Han society, and its authors are mostly unknown. By the Wei-Jin not only are the authors of most ballads known, but many of them are also well known. The *yuefu* ballad became one of the most beloved genres of the nobility as well as the literati. Among the authors of *yuefu xia* ballads were emperors (Emperor Yuan of Liang 梁元帝), princes (Lord Chensi 陳思王曹植), chief ministers (Zhang Hua 張華) and prominent officials (Kong Zhigui 孔稚圭). For many of the noble authors, especially those from the southern dynasties, the vigorous form of the *yuefu* ballad and the uninhibited theme of the *youxia* combined to become an ideal outlet for their frustration with a situation in which they held sovereignty only over a part of China and in which they had to live in a state of constant political trepidation.

A final point worthy of reflection is the fact that several commentators have seen the *xia* tradition not only as a literary convention but also as a spiritual mode. More particularly, many modern Chinese writers have seen the *xia* tradition as an essential component of the Chinese ethos or “national character”. Zhuang You (壯游) observed in the early years of this century that “the soul of the *youxia*” (游俠魂) was basic to “the soul of the Chinese people”.⁴ Another writer of the period, Tang Zengbi (湯增璧), called it “the martial virtue of the common people” (匹夫之武德).⁵ To Shen

² Ying Shao (應邵 fl. 189-194) in his *Fengsu tongyi jiaoshi* (風俗通義校釋) (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1980) discussed the folklore influence over the formation of Prince Dan and Jing Ke story. He termed the folklore as “petty narrative from alleys” (閭閻小論), a synonym of *xiaoshuo* (小說). See v.2, p.69.

³ See *Yan Dan Zi* (燕丹子), “繼召公之迹，追甘棠之化，高欲令四三王，下欲令六五霸。” p.25.

⁴ Zhang Dan ed., *Xinhai Geming qian shinián jian shilun xuanji* (辛亥革命前十年間時論選集) (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1960-1977), v.1, <國民新靈魂>, pp.572-4.

⁵ *ibid.*, v.3, <秦俠篇>, p.82. See also Footnote 12 of the Introduction.

Congwen (沈從文 1902-1988) “the spirit of *youxia*” (游俠者精神) was absolutely integral to the country folk in his stories. Shen analyzed it further into “romantic passion” (浪漫情緒) and “religious passion” (宗教情緒), a combination of elite and popular cultures. He was impressed by its “creation of the past” (產生過去) and prophesied its “shaping of the future” (形成未來).⁶ Wen Yiduo (聞一多 1899-1946), writing from an unsympathetic perspective, indicated that Confucianism, Taoism, and the Mohist-transformed *xia* were the symptomatic components of Chinese society.⁷ A recent researcher, Zhang Weimin (張未民), has claimed that the Mohist-*xia* tradition should be seen as a fundamental value system of the lower orders of society standing in opposition to the Confucianism of higher society. He argues that the opposition between these two basic positions originated in the antagonism between two archetypes: the heroic Great Yu tradition and the rational Zhou Rites tradition. What is common to these approaches, and to the argument advanced in this thesis, is the presence of the *xia* tradition as an essential part of the psyche and the cultural experience of the Chinese people.

⁶ Shen Congwen, *Shen Congwen wenji* (沈從文文集) (Guangzhou: Huacheng chubanshe, 1984), v.9, <湘西·鳳凰>, pp.409-12.

⁷ Wen Yiduo, *Wen Yiduo quanji* (聞一多全集) (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1982), v.3, <關於儒·道·土匪>, pp.469-70. Wen viewed the *xia* as “degenerate Mohists” who was opposed to the old social order and engaged in destroying it, but was unable to construct a new one to replace it. Whether the *xia* was a symptom is still open to discussion, but Wen’s placing the *xia* alongside Confucianism and Taoism to form the basis of Chinese culture was perceptive.

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INDEX OF NAMES

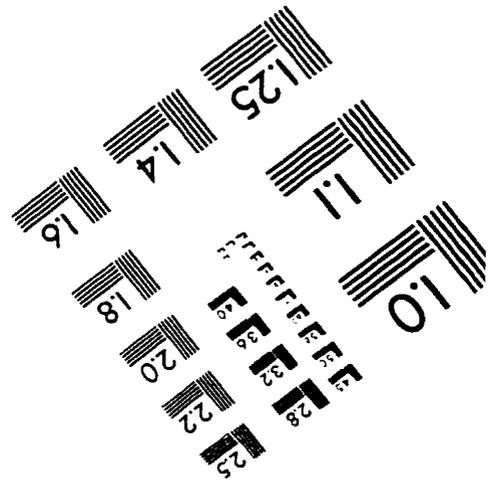
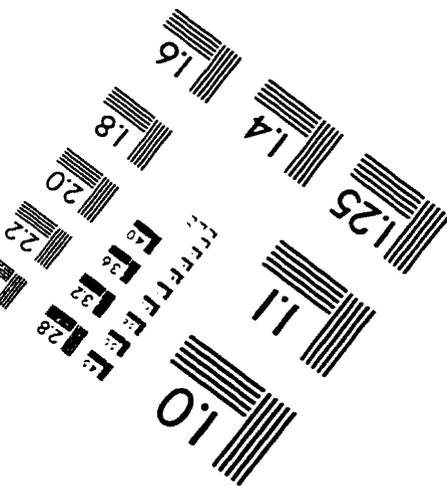
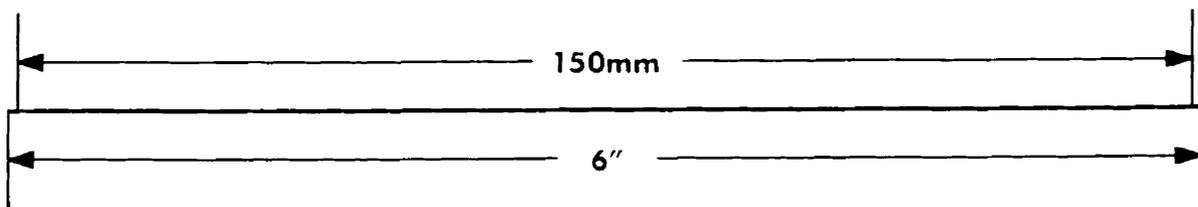
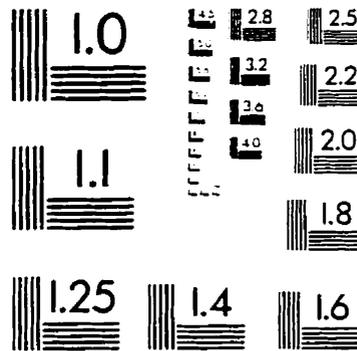
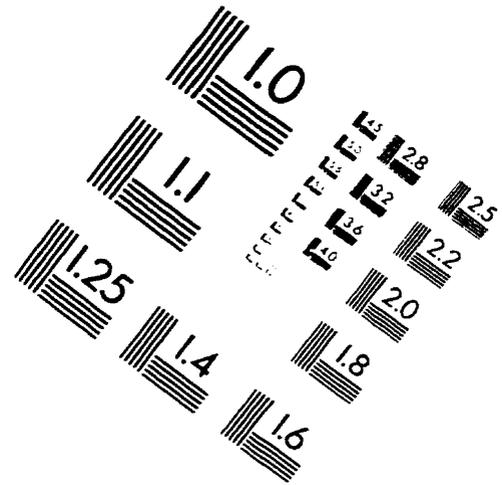
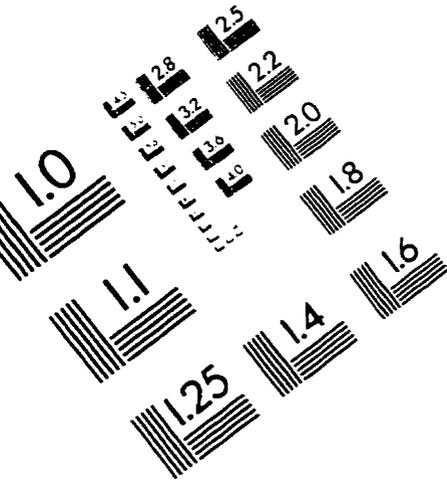
- Baigong (白公): 57, 182, 184.
 Ban Biao (班彪 3-54): 169.
 Ban Gu (班固 32-92): 3, 132, 154, 169, 200, 210, 230.
 Bao Xuan (鮑宣): 154.
 Bao Zhao (鮑照 414-466): 233, 237.
 Beigong You (北宮黝): 89.
 Beiguo Zi (北郭子): 7.
 Bian Zhuangzi (卞莊子): 87.
 Boqin (伯禽): 33.
 Cao Cao (曹操 155-220): 229.
 Cao Mo (曹沫): 15, 63, 64, 114, 175, 176, 178, 190.
 Cao Pi (曹丕 187-226): 225.
 Cao Zhenwen (曹正文 1950-): 22.
 Cao Zhi (曹植 192-232): 235, 237, 250.
 Chen Pingyuan (陳平原 1954 -): 19, 20.
 Chen Renzi (陳仁子 1454-1514): 168.
 Chen Shan (陳山 1945-): 19, 20.
 Chen Sheng (陳勝 d. 209 B.C.): 119.
 Chen Xi (陳稀): 124, 133.
 Chen Yu (陳餘): 121.
 Chen Zun (陳遵): 156, 200.
 Chi You (蚩尤): 27, 28.
 Chibi (赤比): 220.
 Chu Mei (鋤麋): 61.
 Confucius: 43, 86, 161, 162, 163, 169.
 Creel, Herrlee: 53, 54.
 Cui Fengyuan (崔奉源): 14.
 Cui Zhu (崔杼): 63, 67, 162.
 Dai Yuan (戴淵 fl. 3rd century): 230.
 Dai Zuo (戴祚): 222.
 Dantai Mieming (澹臺滅明) (b. 512 B.C.): 89.
 Daozhi (盜跖): 100, 101.
 Dong Fen (董份 1510-1595): 168.
 Dong Hu (董狐): 163.
 Dou Yin (竇嬰): 133, 135.
 Duan Yucai (段玉裁 1735-1815): 73.
 Duke Ai of Lu (魯哀公) (r. 494-468 B.C.): 89.
 Duke Chu of Jin (晉出公 r. 474-458 B.C.): 67.
 Duke Ding of Lu (魯定公 r. 509-495 B.C.): 33.
 Duke Ding of Zheng (鄭定公 r. 529-514 B.C.): 208.
 Duke Huan of Qi (齊桓公 r. 685-643 B.C.): 46, 56, 62, 178.
 Duke Ling of Jin (晉靈公 r. 620-607 B.C.): 61, 163.
 Duke Ling of Qi (齊靈公): 59.
 Duke Mu of Qin (秦穆公 r. 659-621 B.C.): 99.
 Duke of Zhou (周公 virtually reigned 1042-1036 B.C.): 31, 52, 169.
 Duke Ping of Jin (晉平公 r. 557-532 B.C.): 104.
 Duke Qing of Qi (齊頃公): 59.
 Duke Xian of Jin (晉獻公 r. 676-651 B.C.): 60.
 Duke Xiang of Lu (魯襄公 r. 572-542 B.C.): 97.
 Duke Xiang of Song (宋襄公): 55.
 Duke Zhuang of Lu (魯莊公 r. 693-662 B.C.): 63, 175.
 Duke Zhuang of Qi (齊莊公 r. 553-548 B.C.): 63, 64, 67, 68, 162.
 Duke Zhuang of Zheng (鄭莊公 r. 743-701 B.C.): 109.
 Emperor Ai (漢哀帝 r. 6-1 B.C.): 154.
 Emperor Cheng (漢成帝 r. 33-7 B.C.): 152.
 Emperor Guangwu (光武帝 r. 25-57): 202.
 Emperor Hui (惠帝 r. 195-187 B.C.): 128.
 Emperor Jing (漢景帝 r. 157-141 B.C.): 132, 137, 146, 245.
 Emperor Qianlong (乾隆 r. 1735-1796): 218.
 Emperor Wen (漢文帝 r. 179-157 B.C.): 132, 143.
 Emperor Wu (漢武帝 r. 140-87 B.C.): 2, 128, 148, 151, 187, 188.
 Emperor Xuan (漢宣帝 r. 74-49): 151.
 Emperor Yuan of Liang (梁元帝 508-555): 234, 250.
 Empress Lu (呂后 r. 188-179 B.C.): 130.
 Fairbank, John King: 25.
 Fan Kuai (樊噲): 124.
 Fan Sui (范雎): 111.
 Fan Yang (範鞅): 63.
 Fan Ye (范曄 398-445): 132.
 Fan Yuqi (樊於期): 178.
 Fanchi (樊遲 b. 505 B.C.): 89.
 Fenghu Zi (風胡子): 78.
 Feng Xuan (馮諼): 77, 105, 248.
 Feng Youlan (馮友蘭 1895-1990): 10, 40, 91, 101.
 Fenyang (奮揚): 61, 183.
 First Emperor of Qin (秦始皇 259-210 B.C.): 8, 119, 199.

- "Four Princes" (四公子): 104, 107, 110, 172, 177.
 Fu Cha (夫差): 182, 190, 205.
 Gan Bao (干寶 d. 317-322): 220, 231.
 Gan Jiang (干將): 77, 78, 219, 220, 249.
 Geng Yu (庚庚): 76.
 Geng Zhuzi (耕柱子): 94.
 Gong Gong (共工): 28.
 Gong Liu (公劉): 36, 165.
 Gong Pengcheng (龔鵬程 1956-): 15.
 Gongshu Duan (共叔段): 106.
 Gongsun Hong (公孫弘 200-121 B.C.): 145.
 Grand Scribe of Qi (齊大史): 162.
 Great Yu (大禹): 25, 26, 251.
 Gu Jiegang (顧頡剛 1893-1980): 10, 39.
 Gu Long (古龍 1936-1983): 14.
 Gu Yanwu (顧炎武 1613-1682): 42.
 Guan Fu (灌夫): 137, 138.
 Guan Gao (貫高): 130, 131.
 Guan Zhong (管仲 d. 645 B.C.): 45, 62, 201.
 Gun (鎡): 28.
 Guo Moruo (郭沫若 1892-1978): 10, 90.
 Guo Pu (郭璞 276-324): 231.
 Guo Xie (郭解): 8, 133, 135, 139, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 172, 174, 175, 176, 177, 180, 181, 190, 194.
 Guo Zui (郭最): 63.
 Han Fei (韓非 280-233 B.C.): 3, 69, 70, 71, 87, 89, 102, 170, 244.
 Han Xin (韓信): 122, 123, 126.
 Han Yu (韓愈 768-824): 216.
 He Lu (闕閭 r. 514-496 B.C.): 77, 206.
 Hongxian (紅綫): 224.
 Hou Jian (侯健 1926-): 14.
 Hou Ying (侯嬴): 7, 110, 117, 118.
 Hu Yinglin (胡應麟 1551-1602): 211, 212, 213.
 Hua Bao (華豹): 55.
 Huo Qubing (霍去病): 238.
 Ji An (汲黯): 185, 186, 209.
 Ji Bu (季布): 121, 126, 180.
 Ji Ci (季次): 174, 170, 171.
 Ji Shaogong (籍少公): 144.
 Ji Xin (季心): 132.
 Jiang Zhiyou (蔣智由 1866-1929): 8.
 Jin Bi (晉鄙): 113.
 Jin Yong (金庸 1925-): 14.
 Jing Ke (荊軻): 175, 176, 179, 193, 194, 213, 215, 216.
 Jing Wei (精衛): 29.
 Jisun (季孫): 103.
 Ju Meng (劇孟): 12, 132, 133, 135, 172, 174, 175, 176, 179, 190.
 Kang Youwei (康有為 1858-1927): 93, 96.
 King Anxi of Wei (魏安厘王) (r. 276-243 B.C.): 113.
 King Cheng of Zhou (周成王 r. 1042-1006 B.C.): 31, 52.
 King Li of Zhou (周厲王 r. 878-842 B.C.): 37.
 King Liao of Wu (吳王僚 r. 526-515 B.C.): 76, 206.
 King of Yue (越王勾踐 r. 497-465): 46, 182, 205.
 King Ping of Chu (楚平王 r. 528-516 B.C.): 61, 182, 184, 206.
 King Wu of Zhou (周武王 r. 1049-1043 B.C.): 30, 74.
 King Zhao of Chu (楚昭王 r. 515-489 B.C.): 78, 184, 206.
 King Zhao of Qin (秦昭王 r. 306-251 B.C.): 104, 108, 109.
 Kong Kui (孔悝): 58.
 Kong Zhigui (孔稚圭 447-501): 238, 250.
 Kua Fu (夸父): 28, 29.
 Lanzi (蘭子): 78.
 Lang Shen (狼曠): 58.
 Li Deyu (李德裕 787-849): 5.
 Li Guangli (李廣利): 164.
 Li Ling (李陵): 151, 164, 171, 246.
 Li Ji (李奇): 224.
 Li Yiji (酈食其): 131.
 Liang Hong (梁弘): 58.
 Liang Qichao (梁啟超 1873-1929): 8, 10, 56, 57, 120, 121.
 Liang Yusheng (梁玉繩 1744-1819): 184.
 Liang Yusheng (梁羽生 1922-): 14.
 Lie Zi (列子): 78.
 Liu An (劉安 179-122 B.C.): 225.
 Liu Bang (劉邦 r. 202-195 B.C.): 120, 123, 126, 129, 131, 132, 176.
 Liu Xiang (劉向 79-8 B.C.): 205, 219.
 Liu Xianxin (劉咸忻 1896-1932): 218.
 Liu Xiaowei (劉孝威 496-549): 233, 239.
 Liu Yinbo (劉蔭柏 1941-): 19.
 Lord Ai of Han (韓哀侯 r. 376-371): 190.
 Lord of Wu (吳王): 135, 139, 140.
 Lord of Xu (徐君): 76.
 Lord Xiangcheng of Chu (楚襄成君): 76.
 Lord Xiao of Liang (梁孝王): 132, 134.
 Lord Yangcheng of Chu (楚陽城君): 95, 96.
 Lord Yuan of Song (宋元君): 78.
 Lou Hu (樓護): 156, 200.

- Lu Ji (陸機 261-303): 230.
 Lu Shang (呂尚): 30, 201.
 Lu Simian (呂思勉 1884-1957): 39.
 Lu Su (魯肅 172-217): 229.
 Lu Zhonglian (魯仲連 c. 305-245 B.C.): 113, 114.
 Luo Liqun (羅立群 1957-): 18.
 Ma Yuan (馬援 14 B.C.-49): 202.
 Mao Sui (毛遂): 114, 118.
 Masubuchi Tatsuo (增淵龍夫 1916-): 11, 12, 15.
 Mencius: 42, 67, 89, 161.
 Meng Sheng (孟勝): 95, 96.
 Miyazaki Ichisada (宮崎市定 1901-): 11, 73.
 Mo Xie (莫邪): 77, 219, 220, 227, 228.
 Mo Di (墨翟) (c. 480-c 390 B.C.): 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96.
 Mo Zi (墨子): 44, 47.
 Nie Rong (聶榮): 191, 192, 198.
 Nie Yinniang (聶隱娘): 224.
 Nie Zheng (聶政): 175, 176, 180, 186, 191, 198.
 Nuwa (女媧): 26.
 Prince Chunshen (春申君): 107, 108, 111, 172.
 Prince Dan of Yan (太子丹): 176, 185, 213, 218.
 Prince Guang of Wu (公子光): 76, 176, 205.
 Prince Jizha of Wu (季札): 60, 61, 76, 172.
 Prince Mengchang (孟嘗君): 77, 104, 105, 107, 114, 136, 172, 177.
 Prince Pingyuan (平原君): 105, 107, 108, 109, 113, 114, 172, 216.
 Prince Shangren (公子商人): 63.
 Prince Xinling (信陵君): 107, 110, 114, 118, 124.
 Qidiao (漆雕): 89, 90.
 Qian Mu (錢穆 1895-1994): 10, 15, 90.
 Qiu Jin (秋瑾 1877-1907): 7.
 Qu Qiubai (瞿秋白 1899-1935): 13.
 Qu Yuan (屈原 339?-278? B.C.): 76.
 Ranqiu (冉求 b. 522 B.C.): 89.
 Ren An (任安): 166.
 Ren Jiyu (任繼愈 1916-): 90.
 Ru Chun (如淳): 73, 95.
 Ruan Ying (樂盈): 63, 64.
 Sa Mengwu (薩孟武 1898-1984): 123.
 Shen Congwen (沈從文 1902-1988): 250.
 Shen Ming (申鳴 fl. late 6th century B.C.): 57.
 Shen Nong (神農): 27.
 Shen Yanbing (沈雁冰 1896-1986): 13.
 Shen Zengzhi (沈曾植 1851-1922): 226.
 Shuliang He (叔梁紇): 43.
 Shusun Tong (叔孫通): 131.
 Sima Qian (司馬遷 145?-87? B.C.): 1, 2, 3, 5, 15, 61, 108, 111, 115, 124, 132, 135, 138, 139, 146, 150, 151, 154, 163, 164, 165, 166, 171, 172, 176, 178, 177, 180, 187, 188, 194, 195, 200, 230, 234, 246, 249.
 Sima Tan (司馬談 ?-110 B.C.): 163, 164.
 Su Qin (蘇秦 ?-317 B.C.): 106.
 Sun Bozong (孫伯宗 fl. 586-576 B.C.): 47.
 Sun Tiegang (孫鐵剛 1943-): 14.
 Sun Xingyan (孫星衍 1753-1818): 211.
 Sun Yirang (孫詒讓 1848-1908): 103.
 Tang Zengbi (湯增璧): 250.
 Tao Xisheng (陶希聖 1893-1988): 9.
 Tian Fen (田汾): 133, 135.
 Tian Guang (田光): 178, 212.
 Tian Heng (田橫): 122, 123, 127.
 Tian Xiangzi (田襄子): 96.
 Tian Yuying (田毓英): 14.
 Tian Zhong (田仲): 172, 174, 190.
 Wang Bao (王褒 ?-572 or 577): 233.
 Wang Chong (王充 27-97): 249.
 Wang Hailin (王海林 1942-): 18.
 Wang Jia (王嘉 fl. 4th century): 227.
 Wang Ling (王陵): 128.
 Wang Mang (王莽 r. 5-23): 154.
 Wang Wenshu (王溫舒): 139, 148, 149.
 Wang Zun (王尊): 154.
 Weifu (微虎): 89.
 Weizhi (尉止): 97, 98.
 Wei Qi (魏齊): 108, 109.
 Wei Qing (衛青): 135, 146, 175.
 Wen Yiduo (聞一多 1899-1946): 251.
 Wu Geng (武庚): 31.
 Wu Qi (吳起 440-381 B.C.): 95.
 Wu Yue (吳越 1878-1905): 7.
 Wu Zixu (伍子胥): 175, 182, 183, 184, 205, 206, 207, 208.
 Wuyang (武陽): 217.
 Xi Ke (郟克): 59.
 Xi Yong (郟雍): 104.
 Xia Lei (俠累): 175.
 Xiahou Ying (夏侯嬰): 122, 174.
 Xian clan (閑氏): 149, 150.
 Xian Zhen (先軫): 58.
 Xiang Bo (項伯 d. 192 B.C.): 120.
 Xiang Liang (項梁 d. 208 B.C.): 119, 120.
 Xiang Yan (項燕 d. 224 B.C.): 119.
 Xiang Yu (項羽 232-202 B.C.): 120, 122, 126.
 Xiao Guangji (蕭廣濟): 227.

- Xing Kuaigui (邢蒯賁): 68.
 Xing Tian (刑天): 29.
 Xinyuan Yan (辛垣衍): 113, 116.
 Xu Fuguan (徐復觀 1903-1982): 38, 41.
 Xu Ruo (徐弱): 95.
 Xu Shen (許慎) (30-124): 71, 72,
 (徐庶 fl. 2nd century): 230.
 Xun Xi (荀息): 60.
 Xun Yue (荀悅 148-209): 4, 73, 101, 102, 230.
 Xun Zi (荀子): 45, 75.
 Yan Di (炎帝): 27.
 Yan Huiju (顏喙聚): 101.
 Yan Shigu (顏師古 581-645): 72.
 Yan Ying (晏嬰 589-500 B.C.): 7, 68.
 Yan Zhongzi (嚴仲子): 180, 181, 190, 192.
 Yang Du (楊度 1874-1932): 8.
 Yang Kuan (楊寬 1914-): 40.
 Yang Shuda (楊樹達 1885-1956): 40.
 Yang Xiong (揚雄 53 B.C.-18): 169.
 Yanghu (陽虎): 33.
 Yellow Emperor (黃帝): 8, 27.
 Yi Zong (義縱): 139, 148.
 Yin Shang (尹賞): 154, 156.
 Youruo (有若 508-457 B.C.): 89.
 Yu Huan (魚豢 fl. 3rd century): 5.
 Yu Rang (豫讓): 21, 64, 65, 67, 68, 127, 178, 190.
 Yu Zhang (禹章): 154, 200.
 Yuan Ang (袁盎): 131, 132, 187.
 Yuan Gong (袁公): 79, 210, 249.
 Yuan Kang (袁康 fl. late 1st century): 204.
 Yuan She (原涉): 156, 200.
 Yuan Xian (原憲): 174, 170, 171.
 Yuenu (越女): 78, 79, 210, 249.
 Yunchang (允常): 76.
 Zang Jian (臧堅): 59.
 Zhang Ao (張敖): 129, 130.
 Zhang Binglin (章炳麟 1869-1936): 7.
 Zhang Er (張耳): 121.
 Zhang Hua (張華 232-300): 212, 220, 228, 234,
 250.
 Zhang Liang (張良 d. 189 B.C.): 120, 124.
 Zhang Tang (張湯): 151.
 Zhang Weimin (張未民): 251.
 Zhang Xun (張巡): 216.
 Zhao Dun (趙盾): 61, 163.
 Zhao Xiangzi (趙襄子): 65, 178.
 Zhao Ye (趙擘 fl. late 1st century): 203.
 Zheng Dangshi (鄭當時): 187, 193, 209.
 Zheng Qiao (鄭樵 1104-1162): 232.
 Zheng Zhenduo (鄭振鐸 1898-1958): 13.
 Zheng Zhengyin (鄭證因 1900-1960): 223.
 Zhibo (智伯 d. 455 B.C.): 65, 67, 127.
 Zhi Chao (殖綽): 63.
 Zhi Du (郅都): 146.
 Zhou Yafu (周亞夫): 135, 175, 176.
 Zhu Hai (朱亥): 109.
 Zhu Jia (朱家): 125, 172, 174, 176, 177, 181, 190.
 Zhuan Xu (顓頊): 28.
 Zhuan Zhu (專諸), 21, 175, 176, 190, 209.
 Zhuang Zi (莊子 fl. 4th century B.C.): 100, 210,
 226.
 Zhufu Yan (主父偃 ?-127 B.C.): 150.
 Zhou Chao (州綽): 64.
 Zhouyang You (周陽由): 147, 148.
 Zhuang You (壯游): 250.
 Zikong (子孔): 87, 98.
 Zilu (子路 542-480 B.C.): 58, 86, 88, 90.
 Zisi (子駟): 97, 98.
 Zu Di (祖逖 266-321): 229.
 Zuoqiu Ming (左丘明): 249.

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