

The Rise and Fall of the *xia* in the Western Han Dynasty

Jian Zhao

The *shi* (士) class was split into military and civilian camps in the early Chunqiu (春秋 770-476 B.C.). Society was then undergoing dramatic changes. The original highly hereditary system of public service (公室) was disintegrating. Many warriors 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* (俠), who provided services for their masters, such as fighting in battle or conducting an assassination. The *xia* warriors were extremely active through the whole period of the Warring States (戰國 475-221 B.C.), but under the brutal regime of Qin (秦 221-207 B.C.) they were forced underground and disappeared from the front stage of the political arena. The anti-Qin rebellion and founding of the Western Han (西漢 202 B.C.-8) revitalized the *xia* and also changed the nature of the classical *xia*. In this article, the development of the *xia* in the Western Han dynasty is extensively introduced and carefully analyzed, with a focus on the *xia*'s general position in society and its relationship with both the central and local authorities. The most famous Han *xia* figure, Guo Xie (郭解), is singled out for examination, as he will fully demonstrate the characteristics of the *xia* at the time.

The *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 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 (項) 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 (会稽 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.¹ 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 article.

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.² 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 (司馬遷) 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.³ 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 (梁啓超) in his *Zhongguo zhi Wushidao* (中国之武士道), or *The Chinese Way of the Warrior*, listed three of his encounters to show the development of his image as a heroic knight:

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!⁴

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 (魏) and one of the leaders of the anti-Qin uprising, was Prince Xinling's (信陵君) 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.⁵

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 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.⁶ 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. Tian was a strong opponent of the Liu forces. After Liu became emperor, Tian fled to an island in east with 500 or so of his followers, in fear of punishment. Worrying about their possible revolt later, the emperor sent an envoy to pardon Tian for his offenses and summon him to the capital.

Regarding acknowledging Liu as his ruler as an unbearable shame, Tian committed suicide on his way to the capital, and so did his 500 men⁷. Like Xiang Yu, Tian Heng was a classic noble warrior. He treated his people well and they were all willing to die for him. His heroic 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

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* (史記), 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) 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 (班固) 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 the tide of the time and became nobles."¹¹ 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.¹²

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.¹³ Wang Ling offended Liu Bang in defending his friend Yong Chi (雍齒). This almost cost him his noble title.¹⁴ Luan Bu's loyalty to his former lord Zang Tu (臧荼) almost cost him his own life.¹⁵ Chen Xi admired Prince Xinling and like him kept a huge number of retainers. He once passed by Handan (邯鄲) 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.¹⁶ 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.¹⁷ 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 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" (学書) 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 (試為吏), 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 be 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 not because they are brave; it is because they

know that their plans and hopes will never again have a chance of coming true!¹⁸

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 (豫讓), the famous Chunqiu *xia*, shifted his loyalty twice before he found a lord who appreciated his ability and recognized him as a *guoshi* (國士), 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 (智伯). 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 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 (吕后 r. 188-179 B.C.), nobles and ministers were all vigorous veterans with meritorious military service."¹⁹ 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 (汉武帝 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" (四公子) 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* (游侠) 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 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.²⁰ 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.²¹ 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* (筑), 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?"²² 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, 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, some of whom, such as Guan Gao (貫高), the premier of Zhao, and Zhao Wu (趙午), were infuriated. They went to the lord and told him that they would kill the emperor. Without their lord's support, Guan and Zhao later plotted to assassinate the emperor when he came through their state during his Dongyuan (東垣) inspection tour. The emperor avoided assassination only because he changed his tour schedule. The conspiracy was found and the lord was arrested. When a dozen of the

lord's ministers were hurrying to cut their own throats, Guan Gao decided to testify that the lord was innocent. When he 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 his bravery. He then 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 thus 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?"²⁵

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 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.²⁶ 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 as follows:

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.²⁷

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.²⁸

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 and influence. The practice of retaining *shi* also demonstrated their personal wealth and magnanimity. Ban Gu in his preface to *Biographies of Youxia* (游侠传) 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 (田璆) 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.²⁹

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.³⁰

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 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* (内史) 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.³² 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 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.³⁴

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.³⁵

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 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.

The *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* (列子) 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* group members. 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.³⁷ 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 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 court.³⁸

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.⁴⁰

However, a local *haoqiang* more often would conduct himself in 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. Guan Fu 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 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 so powerful that 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 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 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.⁴⁹

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 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 (鄧都) was the first such official entrusted by Emperor Jing. The *Biographies of Stern 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 local 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.⁵¹

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 (薛兪) of Yangdi (陽翟), Han Ru (韓孺) of Shan (陝) and various members of the Bai clan (諸白) of Dai (代), came to prominence.⁵²

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 (臨江王), 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* (宗室豪傑), who once suffered from his terror, resumed their old vices.⁵³ The emperor's campaign against the *haoqiang* relied chiefly upon a handful of stern and ruthless 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 "the 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.⁵⁴ 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."⁵⁵

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" (深竟党与) 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.⁵⁶

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 (河内) district as *duwei* (都尉: chief commander for local security and law enforcement) was to execute the whole 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.⁵⁷

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 terrible stories of his cold-bloodedness. He had many people arrested. Over 1,000 families were implicated. Most of them were executed during the first winter after he was appointed to his office. He was very disappointed when the winter was over:

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.⁵⁸

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).⁵⁹ 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. 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 the spread of evil and vicious ways in the provinces. This is called preventing danger without resorting to punishments.⁶⁰

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 the *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 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.⁶⁶

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 (絳陽) 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.⁶⁷

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 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 *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 by excessive punishments, and third 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 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.

Notes

¹ Ma Chiying (1987), 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.*, pp.264-5.

⁴ Liang, Qichao (1971), p.52.

⁵ Ma Chiying (1987), v.5, <張耳陳餘列傳>, pp.2593-4.

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

⁷ *ibid.*, <田儼列傳>, pp.2663-5. See also Watson's translation in *Han Dynasty I*, pp.201-2.

⁸ Liang, Qichao (1971), p.53. It was approximately eight hundred years from the founding of Qi in the early Zhou to the suicide of Tian Heng.

⁹ Ma Chiying (1987), v.1, <高祖本紀>, pp.298-305.

¹⁰ Sa, Mengwu. *Shuihu yu Zhongguo shehui* (水滸与中国社会) (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1987), p.3.

- ¹¹ *Qian Han shu* (前漢書), <叙伝下>, 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, <季布欒布列伝>, pp.2742-3. See also Watson's translation in *Han Dynasty I*, pp.251-2.
- ¹⁶ *ibid.*, <韓信盧縮列伝>, pp.2655-7.
- ¹⁷ *ibid.*, <樊鄴滕灌列伝>, pp.2666-9 and <季布欒布列伝>, p.2739.
- ¹⁸ *ibid.*, <季布欒布列伝>, p.2744. See also Watson's translation in *Han Dynasty I*, p.253.
- ¹⁹ *ibid.*, v.6, <儒林列伝>, p.3144.
- ²⁰ *ibid.*, v.5, <酈生陸列伝>, pp.2717-8.
- ²¹ *ibid.*, <劉敬叔孫通列伝>, p.2731.
- ²² *ibid.*, v.1, <高祖本紀>, p.343.
- ²³ *ibid.*, v.5, <劉敬叔孫通列伝>, p.2732.
- ²⁴ Wang, Xianqian. *Hou Han shu* (後漢書集解), v.67, <党錮列伝>, p.782.
- ²⁵ Ma Chiying (1987), v.5, <張耳陳餘列伝>, pp.2604-7. See also Watson's translation, *Han Dynasty I*, pp.142-4.
- ²⁶ *ibid.*, <季布欒布列伝>, pp.2741-2.
- ²⁷ *ibid.*, <袁盎晁錯列伝>, p.2753. See also Watson's translation, *Han Dynasty I*, p.461.
- ²⁸ Ma Chiying (1987), v.5, <袁盎晁錯列伝>, pp.2745-54.
- ²⁹ *Qian Han shu* (前漢書), p.343.
- ³⁰ Ma Chiying (1987), v.6, <吳王濞列伝>, pp.2838-40.
- ³¹ *ibid.*, v.4, <五宗世家>, p.2149.
- ³² *ibid.*, <梁孝王世家>, pp.2131-3.
- ³³ *ibid.*, v.6, <淮南衡山列伝>, p.3117.
- ³⁴ *ibid.*, <魏其武安侯列伝>, pp.2856-61.
- ³⁵ *ibid.*, <游侠列伝>, p.3229.
- ³⁶ *ibid.*, p.3225.
- ³⁷ *Lie zi zhu* (列子注), <說符>, 96-7.
- ³⁸ Ma Chiying (1987), v.6, <吳王濞列伝>, p.2839.
- ³⁹ *ibid.*, <淮南衡山列伝>, p.3106.
- ⁴⁰ *ibid.*, v.4, <梁孝王世家>, p.2138.
- ⁴¹ *ibid.*, v.6, <魏其武安列伝>, pp.2863-4.
- ⁴² *Qian Han shu* (前漢書), v.92, <游侠伝>, p.343.

- ⁴³ *ibid.*
- ⁴⁴ Ma Chiying (1987), v.6, <游侠列传>, p.3231.
- ⁴⁵ *ibid.*, <酷吏列传>, p.3162.
- ⁴⁶ *ibid.*, <游侠列传>, p.3223.
- ⁴⁷ *ibid.*, <货殖列传>, pp.3327-8. See also Watson's translation in *Han Dynasty II*, pp.446-7.
- ⁴⁸ *ibid.*, <酷吏列传>, p.3178 and pp.3183-6.
- ⁴⁹ *ibid.*, <游侠列传>, pp.3226-30. See also Watson's translation in *Han Dynasty II*, pp.413-7.
- ⁵⁰ *ibid.*, v.3, <平準書>, p.1449. See also Watson's translation in *Han Dynasty II*, p.63.
- ⁵¹ *ibid.*, v.6, <酷吏列传>, p.3162. See also *Han Dynasty II*, p.381.
- ⁵² *ibid.*, <游侠列传>, p.3226. See also *Han Dynasty II*, p.413.
- ⁵³ *ibid.*, v.6, <酷吏列传>, p.3163.
- ⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p.3164. See also *Han Dynasty II*, p.384.
- ⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p.3165. See also *Han Dynasty II*, p.384.
- ⁵⁶ *ibid.*, pp.3169-72.
- ⁵⁷ *ibid.*, pp.3178-9. See also *Han Dynasty II*, p.295-6.
- ⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p.3181-2. See also *Han Dynasty II*, pp.398-9.
- ⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p.3186 and p.3190.
- ⁶⁰ *ibid.*, <平津侯主父列传>, p.2976. See also *Han Dynasty II*, p.204.
- ⁶¹ *Qian Han shu* (前漢書), v.6, <武帝紀>, p.19.
- ⁶² *ibid.*, p.22.
- ⁶³ *ibid.*, p.20.
- ⁶⁴ *Qian Han shu* (前漢書), <李広蘇建传>, p.230.
- ⁶⁵ *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注), v.6, <游侠列传>, p.3231.
- ⁶⁶ *Qian Han shu* (前漢書), v.90, <酷吏传>, p.340.
- ⁶⁷ *ibid.*, pp.340-1.
- ⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p.343.
- ⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p.341.
- ⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p.341.
- ⁷¹ *ibid.*, v.72, <鮑宣传>, p.286.

References

- Ban, Gu (班固). *Han shu* (漢書). Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1986. (二十五史本卷一)
- Chu, T'ung-tsu. *Han Social Structure*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972.
- Dubs, Homer H. *The History of the Former Han Dynasty*, by Ban Gu. Baltimore: Waverly

- Press, 1955.
- Gao, You (高誘). *Huainanzi zhu* (淮南子注). Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1986.
(諸子集成本册十)
- Liang, Qichao (梁啓超). *Zhongguo Zhi Wushidao* (中国之武士道). Taipei: Taiwan zhonghua shuju, 1971.
- Loewe, Michael. *Crisis and Conflict in Han China*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1974.
- Ma, Chiying (馬持盈). *Shiji jinzhu* (史記今注). Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1987.
- Pirazzoli-r'Serstevens, Michele. *The Han Dynasty*. Translated by Janet Seligman. New York: Rizzoli, 1982.
- Takigawa, Kameraro (滝川亀太郎). *Shij buizhu kaozheng* (史記彙注考証). (第五版) Taipei: Hongshi chubanshe, 1977.
- Watson, Burton. trans. *Courtier and Commoner in Ancient China: Selections from the History of the Former Han*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1974.
- Xu, Fuguan (徐復觀). *Zhou Qin Han zhengzhi shehui jiegou zhi yanjiu* (周秦漢政治社会結構之研究). Hong Kong: Xinya yanjiusuo, 1972.
- Xun, Yue (荀悅). *Qian Han ji* (前漢紀). Guangzhou: Lingnan xuehaitang, 1876.