Historical Matters: "Dedication Record" and the Fate of the Shi Family of Huangxi, Wujiang

Table of Contents

Introduction..........................................................................1

Chapter 1: Secret Family Manuscript..........................................................................6

Section 1: "West Village Collection"..........................................................................7

Section 2: "Dedication Record"..........................................................................12

Chapter 2: The Rise of Power Field..........................................................................22

Section 1: Long Charge Grain Chief..........................................................................24

Section 2: Clan Child Leading the Sacrifice..........................................................................31

Section 3: The Decline of the Family..........................................................................41

Chapter 3: The Benefit of Silk..........................................................................47

Section 1: The Rise of Huangxi Market..........................................................................47

Section 2: The House in Gusu Gaoli..........................................................................52

Section 3: The House East of Huangxi Beach..........................................................................56

Chapter 4: The House of Literature..........................................................................60

Section 1: The Making of "Zhi Shen Lu"..........................................................................60

Section 2: The Person Shi Zhongbin..........................................................................65

Section 3: Request for Posthumous Honors..........................................................................71

Chapter 5: Chaos in Black and White..........................................................................80

Section 1: The Coffin Lid Verdict..........................................................................80

Section 2: Enshrined in the County Temple..........................................................................84

Conclusion ..........................................................................92

Introduction

In the Ming Dynasty, there were two palace coups, namely the "Renwu Change" in the Jianwen period and the "Nangong Restoration" in the Jingtai period. Although the nature of the two incidents was quite different, they directly led to the end of the Jianwen and Jingtai periods, and the two periods of history were deliberately tampered with or even erased. After Emperor Xianzong of Ming ascended the throne, he restored the historical status of his uncle, Emperor Jingtai, and gave him the posthumous title of "Emperor Gongren Kangding Jing". However, since the ascension of Emperor Chengzu of Ming, he deliberately adopted measures such as eradication, distortion, and concealment to completely erase the Jianwen era and its achievements. The Jianwen period, which was erased, was therefore called the "Ge Dynasty" by later generations. Until the Chenghong period, the Jianwen period was still a forbidden area for official historical compilation. Not only were the actual records of the political affairs of the period seriously missing, but the monarchs and ministers of Jianwen were also long portrayed as negative images. The national history is missing, so the folk history and legends are repeated. Various historical

"The Record of Devotion" is said to have been written by Shi Zhongbin of Wujiang, and was first discovered by Jiao Hong, a Hanlin historian, in Maoshan, and then passed down to the world after being sorted out by Shi's descendants such as Shi Ce and Shi Zhaodou. The book uses Shi Zhongbin as the first person to narrate the process of Zhongbin serving in the court from the 31st year of Hongwu (1398) to the first year of Hongxi (1425) and fleeing with 21 other ministers along with Emperor Jianwen. As soon as the book appeared, it was controversial. Shen Defu was the first to attack, directly denouncing "The Record of Devotion" as a forgery. He not only questioned the possibility of Emperor Jianwen freely traveling between the southwest and the south of the Yangtze River several times, but also sharply pointed out: "The forger does not understand the original system, and the official ranks mentioned are all nonexistent at the beginning of the country." As a historical work that can stand the test, it is intolerable in the eyes of serious scholars if there are major problems in the system. Later, Qian Qian

In the early Qianlong period, with the finalization of the "History of Ming", the authenticity of "The Record of Devotion" finally received the "authoritative" recognition of the official history, "Zhongbin has never been a book servant, and the record is probably a late fabrication, not credible". Since the 20th century, except for a very few scholars, there has been a consensus in the academic community on the authenticity of "The Record of Devotion". Hu Shi believed that "The Record of Devotion" is "completely in the tone of a novel, with no historical value"; Meng Sen believed that, "The claim that 'The Record of Devotion' and other books are forgeries, means that the plots they narrate are also forgeries, not worth arguing"; Huang Yunmei also asserted: "The Record of Devotion is a forgery, not credible".

In recent years, new trends have emerged in research. Some scholars, regardless of the authenticity of the text of "The Record of Devotion", have turned to examine how later generations have compiled, reconstructed, and reinterpreted the history of the Jianwen period from the perspectives of text generation, historical narrative, historical memory, reader response, and commercial culture. At the same time, due to the historical fact that the deeds of the ministers of the Jianwen period were constantly excavated by local gentry and officials of the same origin, the perspective of local history has gradually become another important research orientation outside of national history compilation. Ding Xiuzhen is the first scholar to use the family documents of the Shi family in Huangxi, Wujiang, "The Shi Family's Family Ride", to study "The Record of Devotion". He started from the perspectives of scholar interaction, regional family, and the spread and evolution of Jianwen legends, and conducted valuable discussions on the historical background of "The Record of Devotion" and the regional factors presented in its circulation process. He believes that the special needs of the Shi family to modify family history using local legends to seek new development opportunities are the main motivations for the production and circulation of "The Record of Devotion". In addition,

The "Shi Family's Family Ride" referred to by Ding Xiuzhen is officially known as "Wuzhong Branch Shi Family's Family Ride", a Qing Dynasty copy, now housed in the Historical Literature Department of Nanjing Library, compiled by Shi Jizhong. The original book has 40 volumes, and 24 volumes are currently available, with the cover stamped with "Gift from Mr. Liu Yazi". The life of Shi Jizhong is not clear. According to the genealogy and generation information in the Qing Dynasty's "Shi Family's Wuzhong Branch Genealogy", Jizhong is the 54th generation, two generations later than the 52nd generation descendants Shi Biannian and Shi Wei who were active in the middle and late Kangxi period. Therefore, it can be inferred that Shi Jizhong probably lived in the Qianjia era. The currently available 24 volumes of the family ride start from the eleventh volume and end at the fortieth volume. The genealogy and preface content before the tenth volume are not available. The existing parts mainly include poetry, biography, miscellaneous notes, etc. Among them, volumes eleven to thirteen are biographies, tomb inscriptions,

In addition, the Historical Literature Department of Nanjing Library also preserves several other important documents related to the Shi family, which have hardly attracted the attention they deserve from the academic community so far. The first is the "Shi Family's Wuzhong Branch Literature Genealogy" (copy), totaling 5 volumes. The authors of the first and second volumes are titled "Wuzhong descendants Peng Sheng Shu, Ce Zongji, Zai Xiang Zhongding, Zai Mei Canjiao", and the authors of the third to fifth volumes are titled "49th generation Ce Zuan Shu, 51st generation Zai Xiang Zhongji, younger brother Zai Mei Can Ding, son Feng Lai, nephew Kui Guang Tongjiao". Shi Pengsheng lived in the Jiawan period and died in the 18th year of Wanli (1590); Shi Ce was the eldest grandson of Pengsheng, died in the 12th year of Chongzhen (1639), and was a key figure in the discovery, sorting and circulation of "The Record of Devotion"; Shi Zai Xiang and Shi Zai Mei were both grandsons of Shi Ce, mainly living in the Kangxi

The second is the Chongzhen "Wujiang County Annals" (copy), compiled by Shi Ce and supplemented by Shi Zai Xiang. This annals has ten volumes and twenty-two volumes, with one volume at the beginning, recording events until the early Qing Dynasty, and is a contemporary document with the "Shi Family's Wuzhong Branch Literature Genealogy". Among them, Volume 2 "Market Towns", Volume 10 "Gardens", Volume 12 "Customs", Volume 14 "Ancestral Halls", Volume 15 "Biographies of People (with Discussion on Local Talents)", and Volume 20 "Collected Writings", have many records related to the Shi family's ancestral hall, family property, family, and celebrities in Huangxi, which can supplement the "Wuzhong Branch Shi Family's Family Ride" and "Shi Family's Wuzhong Branch Literature Genealogy". The predecessor of the Chongzhen "Wujiang County Annals" is the Chenghua "Wujiang County Annals" compiled by Shi Jian, also known as the "Songling Annals", which still existed in the Daoguang period. The political order part of the Cheng

The third is the "Collection of Mr. Xicun" (copy), twenty-eight volumes, six volumes, authored by Shi Jian, the great-grandson of Shi Bin. Compared with the most popular Siku Quanshu eight-volume version of "Xicun Collection", the content is more abundant. The Siku Quanshu version of "Xicun Collection" summary says: "Wang Shizhen's 'Xiangzu Notes' says: Wujiang gate man Xu Hanlin Dianfa (that is, Xu Jie - note by the introducer) sent Xicun Collection twenty-eight volumes, which is a famous ancient work by his local predecessor Shi Jian. ... This collection of Jian is not a complete volume of twenty-eight volumes, but now I have not seen the selected version of the successor, so I still record this version, and attach a comparison of the differences and similarities of the volumes." It can be seen that when the Siku Quanshu collected the "Xicun Collection", it did not see a more complete twenty-eight volume version, and therefore did not dare to confirm whether the twenty-eight volume version in Xu Jie's hands and the world's transmitted Chen Jiru's selected version are the same version.

Although the above four documents have a deep connection with the Shi family, they do not record important information such as family genealogy and factions. Fortunately, the Shanghai Library Genealogy Literature Reading Room has a Qianlong edition of the "Shi Family's Wuzhong Branch Genealogy". This genealogy was first created by Shi Bin's son Shi Sheng, and then gradually formed the current basic structure that adopts both European and Suzhou genealogy methods through the efforts of several generations of people such as Shi Jian, Shi Pengsheng, Shi Zhongjing, and Shi Ce. The biggest change is that, starting from the seventh year of Chongzhen (1634), Shi Ce successfully "restored" the identity of Shi Bin, a minister of the Jianwen period, in the family genealogy, "Zhong Bin, character Wen Zhi, number Qingyuan, Hongwu Wuyin Mingjing Science Jinshi, Hanlin Academy Shudu Bachelor, straight Wenyuan Pavilion Shushu".

Another important work by Shi Ce, "Huangxi Annals", has been lost. During the Daoguang period of the Qing Dynasty, Huangxi people Qian Chi once had the wish to compile annals, intending to use it as a reference, "I have sought its original manuscript, but it is elusive, and I only got one volume recorded in its family ride, which is almost not the complete book." Qian's annals were "completed after five revisions" and retained a large amount of information about the Shi family's characters, biographies, poetry, houses, and anecdotes. And because it was written later, it can supplement the lack of Shi family literature from the Kangxi Dynasty to the Daoguang Dynasty.

By comparing and sorting out the relationships between the above texts, it is not difficult to clarify the intricate connection between "The Record of Devotion" and the Shi family, and many mysteries about the creation and circulation of "The Record of Devotion" may be solved. Previous scholars either placed "The Record of Devotion" in the system of Jianwen historiography to distinguish its authenticity, or tried to construct a lineage of the Shi family using the rich "subtext" (preface and postscript) in it. Although it can partially trace the clues in the process of the creation of "The Record of Devotion", if it does not return to the literary accumulation and daily life of several or even more than ten generations of the Huangxi Shi family, it is somewhat like scratching the itch through the boot. The Shi family's literature mixed the deeds of Shi Zhongbin, the preface and postscript of "The Record of Devotion", the poetry and biography of the clan, the tombstone and official documents, which opened a unique window for us. If we follow this clue, it will not only help to understand the real motivation for the creation of "The Record of Devotion" and the basic context of each reprint, but also can see some

"Family Secret Edition" usually refers to a book or manuscript that is privately held and not publicly available. These can include rare or unique editions, personal diaries or letters, or other documents of historical or personal significance. These are often passed down through generations within a family and may contain information or insights not found in publicly available sources.

As mentioned earlier, there is a deep connection between "The Record of Devotion" and "Xicun Collection". Qian Qianyi and Pan Lei once made extensive use of the deeds of Shi Bin recorded in "Pao Weng Family Collection" and "Xicun Collection" to verify the authenticity of "The Record of Devotion". The author of "Pao Weng Family Collection" is Wu Kuan, whose style name is Yuanbo and pseudonym is Pao An. He is from Changzhou County, Suzhou Prefecture. He was the first scholar in the eighth year of Chenghua (1472), and was appointed as a compiler, and was promoted to the Minister of Rites. His collection of works has a carved version during the Zhengde period, and the "Four Parts Series First Edition" is reproduced based on it. It contains the "Tombstone of Qingyuan Shi Fugong" written based on Shi Jian's "Ancestor's Examination of Qingyuan Fugong's Deeds", which speaks of his grain chief status, which is a more authentic version of Shi Bin's deeds. Wu Kuan is well-known in Jiangnan, and his collection of works is widely circulated. The "Tomb

The most popular version of "Xicun Collection" is the Siku Quanshu version, which is based on the collection of Ma Yu's family in Lianghuai. The number of volumes is consistent with the Jiajing eight-year edition mentioned above, but the content is slightly different. The collection not only includes "Ancestor's Examination of Qingyuan Fugong's Deeds", but also changes "Shi Bin" in "Tombstone" to "Shi Zhongbin", and other contents are also slightly changed, which Pan Lei has revealed in his "Re-engraving of the Record of Devotion". The aforementioned 28-volume "Collection of Xicun Master" in Nanjing Library is rarely circulated, has been monopolized by the Shi family for a long time, and is kept secret, belonging to the family secret edition. The reason for this, as Pan Lei said: "If the complete collection of Xicun is published, the forgery of 'The Record of Devotion' will be self-defeating. Therefore, with the many descendants of the Shi family, they have the strength to engrave this but not engrave it for their harm from death." It can be seen that the main reason why "

According to the Kangxi eight-year edition of "The Record of Devotion" revised by Shi Zaixiang, "The Record of Devotion" has been printed nine times since the end of the Wanli period, and this statement has not caused any doubts from previous people. However, upon careful analysis, the three editions before Taichang all have questionable points. The reason why the Shi family added these fictitious editions before the family edition is to cover up their unspeakable secrets. This is highly consistent with the logic of not circulating the full version of "Xicun Collection" to the world. In this sense, if the source of the various family editions of "Xicun Collection" and "The Record of Devotion" is not clarified, it will be difficult to truly understand the early history of the Shi family and the life of Shi Bin.

"Xicun Collection" is a collection of works by Shi Zhongbin, a scholar from the Ming Dynasty. The collection includes his poetry, prose, and other writings. It is an important source for understanding the life and thoughts of Shi Zhongbin, as well as the social and cultural context of his time. The collection is also significant for its influence on later generations of scholars and writers. Despite its importance, the full version of "Xicun Collection" was not widely circulated, and was often kept as a family secret by the Shi family. This was partly due to the controversial nature of some of the content, which challenged the official narrative of Shi Zhongbin's life and deeds. The study of "Xicun Collection" and its various editions can provide valuable insights into the history of the Shi family and the socio-cultural changes in the Jiangnan region during the Ming and Qing dynasties.

Pan Lei mentioned in his "After the Xicun Collection" that the "Xicun Collection" was first engraved in the early years of the Jiajing period: "Before Cheng Hong in my hometown, the only one who was famous for his literature and poetry was Mr. Shi Minggu (that is, Shi Jian). He was erudite and knowledgeable about the past and the present, liked to debate, and was eloquent in writing. He was afraid of being bold and pursued ancient authors. His poetry was also handsome and recitable. The collection was engraved in the early Jiajing period, a total of eight volumes, and there are still many that have not been engraved." However, he did not provide more information on this basis. The first volume of the "Collection of Xicun Master" in Nanjing Library has a sticker stating: "This volume is engraved with two old prefaces by Lu Xiang and Zhou Yong, and then engraved with the preface by Liu Feng, the inspector of Peiguo." It can be seen that in addition to the 28-volume version, there have been two versions of the "Xicun Collection", the former is the Jiajing engraved version, and the latter may be the Wanli

The Siku Quanshu version is taken from the collection of Ma Yu's family in Lianghuai, only retaining the preface by Zhou Yong, and missing the preface by Lu Xiang. This feature is the same as the aforementioned Jiajing original engraved version. Zhou Yong, styled Xingzhi, pseudonym Bochuan, was a native of Wujiang. He became a scholar in the fifteenth year of Hongzhi (1502), served as the Minister of Works and supervised the river channels, and was promoted to the Minister of Personnel, and was posthumously named Gong Su. His preface says: "Mr. Shi, whose name is Jian, styled Minggu, is a native of Wujiang. Scholars call him 'Mr. Xicun'. Wu Wending's tombstone records his family history and deeds. ... After Mr. Shi's death, his grandson, the scholar-official Shi Chen, compiled his drafts into a collection. I said: This collection is concise and expressive, diligent and disciplined, thoughtful and evidenced. Not only the discussion of water conservancy is like this, it can be passed on." Shi Chen is the eldest grandson of Shi Jian, who became a scholar in the second year of J

Mr. Shi's grandson, Chen, and I were both promoted to scholars. The son of the scholar, Bi, often visited our family. Therefore, I asked for Mr. Shi's works. All the works I have seen in the past were carefully checked and given to me, like the bright moon in the night. The merchant knows its treasure, but cannot get it, and suddenly gets it all, and there must be those who cannot contain their joy. So I read day and night, read his prose, his words, performed but not indulged, the style is complete; read his ancient poems, his words are rich and never tired of its profound and eternal; read his recent style, his words are steep and neat, concise and expressive, beyond the sound comparison; read his records, the words are accurate and the events are raised, it is called a good record; read his tombstone words, the real record is not close to flattery, the living can be comforted, and the dead have no regrets; read his miscellaneous writings, his style is different, his words are orderly and worth seeing, the inscriptions of Shang Yi and Han Ding have their own differences. And when I read his water conservancy discussions, county government books, articles

From the above, it can be seen that the first publication of the "Xicun Collection" was promoted by Shi Jian's grandson Shi Chen and great-grandson Shi Bi, which is the version mentioned by Pan Lei. Shi Jian was a prolific writer, and this edition was hastily compiled under the drive of the bookseller, with many omissions, which had been discovered by Zhou Yong: "I have always wanted to see the 'Li Zuan' written by the teacher, which is not included in the collection." Under such circumstances, it is understandable that important chapters such as "The Conduct of the Ancestor of Qingyuan Prefecture" were not included.

During the Wanli Dynasty, Shi Zhaodou of the Suzhou branch of the Shi family in Wujiang wanted to re-engrave the "Xicun Collection", so he asked his fellow townsman Liu Feng and Xu Yinglei for prefaces. Liu Feng, styled Ziwei, was a native of Changzhou. He was born in the twelfth year of Zhengde (1517) and his death year is unknown. He was still alive in the twenty-fourth year of Wanli (1596). He became a scholar in the twenty-third year of Jiajing (1544) and was promoted to the position of imperial censor and acting inspector of Henan. Shi Zhaodou had studied under him and could be considered Liu Feng's disciple. Although Xu Yinglei was an ordinary student, he had proposed to build a special shrine for Hai Rui in the sixteenth year of Wanli (1588), so he was not an ordinary person. The year when Xu wrote the preface was the thirty-first year of Wanli (1603), and the year when Liu Feng wrote the preface should not be later than this year. According to the information revealed by the two prefaces, Shi Zhaodou's re-engr

After the "Zhi Shen Lu" was published, the grain chief Shi Bin transformed into a "Hanlin Shishu" of the Jianwen Dynasty and a loyal minister who followed him. The violent collision of new and old texts and deeds was unexpected to Shi Zhaodou himself. As one of the two main contributors to the spread of the "Zhi Shen Lu", along with the Shi family of Huangxi in Wujiang and the Dongfang Shi family, Zhaodou naturally knew the contradiction between the "Xicun Collection" and the "Zhi Shen Lu". The second engraved version, like the first one, was not widely circulated. If it were not for the prefaces of Liu Feng and Xu Yinglei that are still preserved today, later generations might hardly know the existence of this engraved version. The Shi family took some emergency measures to prevent the "Zhi Shen Lu" from being damaged, and the reorganization of the "Xicun Collection" was gradually put on the agenda. Despite this, because it is not uncommon for people who have read Shi Jian's "Xicun Collection", and the "Pao Weng Jiacang Collection" is also easy to search, a group of "intentional people"

Qian Qianyi, one of the first to question the authenticity of the "Zhi Shen Lu", did not refer to Shi Jian's "Xingzhuang" when writing the "Zhi Shen Lu Kao", but solely based on Wu Kuan's "Tombstone", and "decided that there must be ten without". Of course, Qian Muzhai did not ignore the existence of the "Xicun Collection". In the "Zhi Shen Lu Kao", he also quoted the biographies of Yao Shan, Zhou Shixiu, Huang Guan and Zhao Bingwen's painting postscript in the collection as evidence for questioning the authenticity. The reason for relying solely on the tombstone may be that "Wen Ding's table is based on Ming Gu's behavior", and it is not deeply investigated. In fact, Qian Qianyi not only read the "Xicun Collection" thoroughly, but also borrowed and copied the family collection of the Shi family from Zhaodou. On the first page of the "Xicun Master Collection" in the Nanjing Library, there is a note by "Yushan Mengsou Qian Qianyi": "Ming Gu lived in Xicun,

The first scholar to use the "Ancestor of Qingyuan Prefecture" in the "Xicun Collection" to thoroughly question the authenticity of the "Zhi Shen Lu" was Xu Yuanpu, a native of Fuli County, Changzhou, in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. Yuanpu entered the Fuxi Society in the second year of Chongzhen (1629) and was promoted in the countryside in the third year. In his "Wu Cheng Qie Bi", he said: "Xicun has an old engraved collection, which is rarely passed down in the world. I got to see its family collection from its descendant Chen Bo, a scholar. It is twice as much as the engraved version, and it contains the 'Qingyuan Xingzhuang', which is the source of Wu Wending's tombstone. Therefore, I dare to correct the mistakes and wait for the historians to pick it up." He may be one of the few lucky ones who have seen both the old engraved version and the family copy of the Shi family. In the "Ancestor of Qingyuan Prefecture" he quoted, Shi Jian's great-grandfather was still called "Shi Bin", and had not

The descendants of the Shi family gradually understood the mystery and tried to control the chances of the "Xicun Collection" continuing to circulate. On the one hand, they strictly limited the casual borrowing of the family collection, and on the other hand, they made some necessary textual processing on the conduct of Shi Bin in the "Xicun Collection". Pan Chizhang, a fellow townsman who is "not a few miles away from the Shi family of Huangxi and has the most authentic knowledge", is well aware of the content of the conduct, and of course knows the consequences of this behavior, so he directly issued a warning: "The descendants of Shi cannot abandon the tombstone and conduct, and have other textual research."

By the middle of the Kangxi period, the two Ming Dynasty engraved versions of the "Xicun Collection" had become increasingly rare. Pan Lei successfully borrowed another family collection from the descendants of the Shi family through his in-law relationship, and "copied it, totaling twelve volumes, four times more than the engraved collection". Only Pan Lei has seen this twelve-volume version, which is still not circulated. The length is four times longer than the engraved version. Although the volume is less than the twenty-eight volume version selected by Chen Jiru at the end of the Ming Dynasty, the content seems to be richer. It should be a new version edited by the Shi family in the early Qing Dynasty. Both were collected by the Huangxi Room in Wujiang, the former was seen by Pan Lei, and the latter had the collection mark of Xu Qu. Both Pan and Xu not only contributed to different degrees to the transcription of the "Xicun Collection", but also deeply involved in the public case of the descendants of the Shi family asking for sacrifices and condolences in the middle of the Kangxi period. This is a later story, so I won't mention it for now.

Pan Lei, who is as familiar with the deeds of Shi Bin as his brother Pan Chizhang, quickly discovered that the book had been deliberately altered, such as "The military mobilization in the conduct is the affairs of the Jianwen period, until the beginning of Hongxi, all the days when Bin was the grain chief. Now add 'Hongwu's world' to the top of the water control envoys, so as not to conflict with the officialdom of the Jianwen Dynasty. However, the conduct also narrates 'After Hongxi, the imperial decree abolished the extinct household fields, and other grain chiefs dared not report, the prefect alone said: The emperor's benevolence, how can we fear disaster and harm the people. Everyone followed it and reduced taxes by a certain amount.' It is the old grain chief's business. Remove the word 'we' and 'everyone follows it' to cover up its traces." The purpose of adding "Hongwu's world" and deleting "we" is to reconcile the textual conflict between Shi Bin's grain chief identity and the ministers of the Jianwen Dynasty. After the change, the conduct "successfully" positioned Shi Bin's tenure as the grain chief in the Hongwu era, and then entered the court

In the rarely circulated twenty-eight-volume "Xicun Master Collection", the "Ancestor of Qingyuan Prefecture" was included for the first time, becoming the "earliest" clue to the survival of the "Conduct". However, this situation not only added "Hongwu's World", but also deleted the sentences "we" and "everyone follows it", which is no different from the twelve-volume version seen by Pan Lei. The "Xicun Collection" has been preserved and circulated in the form of "copy" for a long time. Due to the repeated copying, many family collections including the one selected by Chen Jiru gradually lost the authority of the original version. It is precisely because there is a very complex and interesting story behind the "Xicun Collection" that, although Qian Qianyi, Xu Yuanpu, Pan Lei, Xu Qu and others have repeatedly witnessed more complete family collections, they still had to use the two Huai Ma Yu family collections with unknown origins to make up the number when the Siku Quanshu collected this collection.

From the information currently available, there seem to be two circulation systems for the family copy of the "Xicun Collection", one is the Wanli edition led by Shi Zhaodou that has been scattered, and the other is represented by the twelve-volume copy borrowed by Pan Lei from the descendants of the Shi family in Huangxi and the twenty-eight-volume copy selected by Chen Jiru and collected by Xu Qu. The former mainly spread in Suzhou city, while the latter has traces to follow, mainly spreading in the border area of Wujiang and Jiaxing with Huangxi as the radius. In the eleventh year of Qianlong (1746), Shi Kaige, a descendant of Shi Ce, joined forces with Lu Kuixun of Pinghu and Li Guo of Suzhou to re-read and engrave the "Xicun Collection". This re-engraved version is another important version besides the twelve-volume and twenty-eight-volume versions. Currently, only the Shanghai Library has collected this engraved version. The library also has a copy of the Liu family in Wujiang in the tenth year of the Republic of China, which is also copied from this book. Shi Kaige explained the source of this engraved version in the "Preface" and "

Out of an "instinctive" sense of caution, Shi Kaige carefully followed the style of his ancestors and did not publish all of Shi Ce's original manuscripts. Instead, he "slightly deviated from the corresponding texts, selected five out of ten poems, seven out of ten articles, combined and discussed them, and compiled eight volumes." From the overall length, the Shi Ce manuscripts selected by him "reduced one-third of the collection and increased two-thirds of the old engraving." The remaining unpublished parts "follow the example of Mr. Gui Zhenchuan's collection, named as the remaining collection, and stored in the family school." It should also be pointed out that this version of Volume 8 also includes the "Ancestor of Qingyuan Prefecture", and the places involved in "Hongwu's World", "We", and "Everyone Follows" are exactly the same as Chen Jiru's selected version and the Siku Quanshu version, but other irrelevant places have slight differences in expression, showing the common phenomenon of "multiple systems coexisting" in the process of copying and spreading.

Section 2 "Devotion Record"

According to popular saying, "Devotion Record" was first engraved in the forty-seventh year of Wanli (1619). The reason why the predecessors made such assertions is, first, they followed the statements of Shen Defu and Qian Qianyi. Shen Defu's "Wanli Wild Harvest Compilation" said: "Recently, there are people who have engraved the 'Devotion Record'", and Qian Qianyi also said: "During the Wanli period, 'Devotion Record' was widely spread in Wu Zhong", so the beginning of the spread of "Devotion Record" was set in the Wanli period; second, it came from the overall review of the past editions of "Devotion Record" by Shi Zai in the eighth year of Kangxi, which clearly identified the first engraving of the book as the Jiao's edition of Moling in the late Wanli period (1619).

However, upon careful scrutiny, the above statements may be open to discussion. "Wanli Wild Harvest Compilation" was completed between the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth years of Wanli (1606-1607), and was then "abandoned by Shen Defu in the waste bin, and the pen was stopped for more than ten years." In the forty-seventh year of Wanli, Shen again based on the previous draft, "regardless of new or old, just record it at will, and also complete the volume", supplemented into the "Continued Compilation". After the book was completed, "it was a pity that it was not yet printed. By the end of Chongzhen, Changxi was a reed marsh for the displaced, and the generations of treasures were all extinguished. The compilation was only four or five out of ten." In the twenty-fifth year of Kangxi (1686), Qian Fang rearranged the book based on the copied version passed down by Zhu Yizun, "cut and arranged, all into thirty volumes, divided into forty-eight doors," Qian's classification is indeed a convenience for people, but the disruption of the order of the initial compilation and the continued compilation obscures Shen's process of

As for Qian Qianyi's statement that "Devotion Record" was widely spread in Wu Zhong during the Wanli period, it was due to the background of Ouyang Diaolu, the Nanjing Household Department's official in the fourth year of Tianqi (1624), who wanted to ask for a posthumous title and build a temple for Shi Zhongbin, and Qianyi urgently wanted to debunk the "Devotion Record". Qian completely believed in the mainstream statement at the time, and did not deliberately question the upper limit of the first appearance of "Devotion Record", so it is not enough to serve as a confirmation that "Devotion Record" was first circulated in the Wanli Dynasty. In addition, what Qian Qianyi said was not the engraved version of "Devotion Record", but the copied version. According to Shi Zai, before the Shi family engraved it, there were three engraved versions in circulation, one was the Jiao's version of Moling in the late Wanli period, the second was the Sun's version (Ying Kun) of Songjiang in the Gengshen year of Wanli (1620), and the third was the Wang's version (Ting Zai) of

Sun Yingkun, a native of Dayu, Jiangxi, served as the Tongzhi of Songjiang in the forty-seventh year of Wanli, and was indeed one of the earliest people to come into contact with "Devotion Record". In his "Preface to Shi Hanlin's Devotion Record", he specifically explained that "I got this record from Zhao Fanfu of Loujiang". Zhao Fanfu, also known as Zhao Huanguang, Fanfu is his courtesy name, a student of Taicang National Studies, good at calligraphy, poetry and prose, and lived in Hanshan in his later years. Around the Dragon Boat Festival in the forty-eighth year of Wanli (1620), Sun Yingkun and his friends visited Zhizhen and Hanshan, Tianping and other places, and visited Zhao's house on the way. His friends "consulted about several major events in the national dynasty, first of all, the reform and abolition. Fanfu said: 'I recently got this record, which is very certain and well-founded for Zhiren. The ups and downs recorded are slightly different from my books on major politics. It is indeed a record.'" Sun Yingkun, out of his concern for the events of the

Wang Tingzai, originally from Huating, Songjiang, once served as the county magistrate of Yuanjiang. After seeing the "Devotion Record", he "loved it and copied it by hand, and collected what was recorded in various books, and tied it under each item", that is to say, he made a meticulous collation and comparison of the "Devotion Record" with the previous documents of the Jianwen Dynasty. However, he did not immediately publish his results. In the third year of Chongzhen (1630), Tan Zhenmo from Jiaxing "considered Zai's notes to be passable and urged Zai to engrave them", indicating that Wang Tingzai had not yet made any engravings at this time, so the so-called Taichang Gengshen Songjiang Wang's engraved version should be non-existent.

Jiao Hong died in the forty-eighth year of Wanli (1620). According to popular saying, he re-examined the "Devotion Record" he had obtained from a Taoist priest in Maoshan more than 50 years ago a year before his death, and published it. His preface says:

"In the past year of Wuchen, I and two or three friends took a light trip to Maoshan. Encountering continuous rain for ten days, we sat in a room, and the old Taoist provided us with various books for reading, but there was nothing interesting all day. Finally, I got the "Devotion Record" by Shi Hanlin, read it and clapped my hands, saying, 'The reform and abolition has many doubtful things, and the sadness of the readers of history is deeply undecided. This is enough to overturn it.' When I asked about the source of it, it turned out that the grandson of Cheng Hongjian's history once carried it with him on a trip, and the Taoist priest peeked and stole it. I put it in my sleeve and returned, but soon lost it. Now, after more than fifty years of reading, I found it in my old box, as good as ever. Therefore, I sighed that the reform and abolition is the most generous and righteous, but the history has not yet heard of it. Reading this record, Yi Jian is not two, Jianwen Jun finally has a reliance on it, no less than the heroes. However, the descendants of history lost it in the past, and

The "Wuchen" year in the preface refers to the second year of Longqing (1568). From that year to the forty-seventh year of Wanli (1619), it was a full 51 years of forbearance, which is indeed a bit strange. The Wanli Dynasty was a key period for the rehabilitation of the ministers of the Jianwen Dynasty. The original taboos no longer constituted any obstacles. Moreover, Jiao Hong had previously written a preface for the "Loyal and Righteous Record" compiled by Zhang Chaorui for Jianwen, and he did not reject the history of the Jianwen Dynasty. However, he has been suppressing the "Devotion Record" and not publishing it, which inevitably makes people suspicious. Qian Qianyi's judgment that "the preface is crude and not written by a scholar" is probably not false. In addition, Jiao Hong's preface was written in the first autumn of that year, which was close to the end of the year, and it was almost impossible to engrave it that year. From the postscript written by Shi Ce, a descendant of the Shi family, it can be seen that in the forty-seventh year of Wanli, he "took

Various signs indicate that when the "Devotion Record" first came out, it was mainly spread through copying. This mode of copying is not only suitable for the text volume of the "Devotion Record", but also very much in line with the reading needs of those who are interested in the history of the Jianwen Dynasty at that time. The reason why the descendants of the Shi family fabricated three early engraved versions in addition to their own family engraved version is mainly to cover up their real purpose of "coveting". Shi Wei once defended in "After the Examination of the Book Devotion Record": "The engraving of this record does not start from the Shi family. It was first engraved by Jiao Taishi in the weak year of Wanli Jiwei, then engraved by Sun of Songjiang, and then engraved by Wang of Songjiang. Finally, the eighth generation grandson of Zhongxian Gong engraved it in the beginning of Taichang Gengshen. It was not his descendants who coveted and forged it, but only for our Shi family to speak clearly." His intention is nothing more than to cover up, once the initial engraving of the "Devotion Record" does not start from the Shi family, it can ensure the relative objectivity of the

From the first year of Changtai (1620) to the second year of Tianqi (1622), three versions of Shi Shucheng, Shi Ce, and Shi Zhaodou appeared one after another, becoming the most intensive stage of the "Devotion Record" engraved version. As a result, there was a criticism of one person and one family "making it recklessly" at that time. Shi Shucheng, also known as Yinghu, moved from Huangxi, Wujiang to Jiaxing. He was a tribute student and once served as the county magistrate of Pingyuan. He belonged to the same Huangxi Bangdong room as Shi Ce and was Shi Ce's uncle. Shi Zhaodou, styled Chenbo, belonged to the Suzhou room. This room started with the silk weaving industry. By the time of Zhaodou, it had shown signs of decline, but Zhaodou still had a rich family background. "He especially liked to collect books, and all the books he picked were secret editions, or he copied them by hand, accumulating thousands of volumes. He lived in a quiet room, only dealing with collation and proofreading. Occasionally, he would stop and make small notes on the side

Although the engraved version of "Qi Zhong Zhi" no longer exists, the copied version has been unexpectedly preserved to this day and is now collected in the Historical Literature Department of the Shanghai Library. Perhaps it is precisely because of the misleading of the same book with different names that it has not been noticed by researchers before. I also discovered this long-dusted "strange book" due to a chance. In addition to the three words "Qi Zhong Zhi", the cover of the book also has a subtitle - "Jianwen's Following the Lost Things". The main content includes three prefaces by Jiao Hong, Wen Zhenmeng, and Chen Jiru, a postscript by Qian Yunzhi, Qi Zhong Zhi (a total of 18), the book's first self-narration (a total of five), Jianwen's following the lost ministers (a total of six), and external compilation. Among them, Qi Zhong Zhi (a total of 18) is the full text of the "Devotion Record", and the external compilation includes the Emperor Jianwen's "Poem on Crossing Wujiang", Huang Yue's "Record of Affairs", Chen Renxi's "Record of the Family Temple of Shi

In Shi Ce's view, the actual collation and proofreading work of the Wujiang Huangxi version of the "Devotion Record" was jointly completed by him and Shi Zhaolin, the eldest son of Wujiang Huangxi. Shi Zhaolin, styled Laihuang, was a student of the Imperial Academy. His father, Shi Mo, was a deputy list in the year of Wanli Yiwei (1595) and once served as the prosecutor of Nanxiong Prefecture. Among all the descendants of the Shi family in Huangxi, Shi Mo's official position was second only to Shi Chen. According to Zhao Huangguang's statement, "Zhaodou, Ce, and Zhaolin each engraved a copy and spread it among the people," indicating that in addition to the engraved versions of Shi Ce and Shi Zhaodou, there was also an engraved version of Shi Zhaolin. This engraved version was not mentioned when Shi Zai summarized the past editions, but it was fortunately preserved in the Shanghai Library, becoming the earliest existing engraved version of the "Devotion Record". The actual publication time of this version is the second year of Chongzhen (1629), which is roughly divided into five parts: the

If the family engraved version of the Shi family is regarded as the earliest batch of engraved versions of the "Devotion Record", combined with the rich family literature of the Shi family and the rich prefaces and postscripts included in the "Devotion Record", the basic context of the book's circulation can be further sorted out. In the first year of Changtai (1620), Shi Shucheng and his nephew took the lead in spreading it to the Jiaxing area. Li Rihua said in his "Preface to the Devotion Record of the Imperial Academy Shi Gong": "The nephew of Mr. Yinghu also passed it to me, showing a compilation of the lost things from his ancestors' collection of leather removal." Whether the "Devotion Record" that Shi Xuan showed to Li Rihua was an engraved version is still uncertain. In the same year, the book was passed to Songjiang and Suzhou respectively through Shi Zhaodou, Wang Tingzai, and Chen Jiru. Later, it was passed to Qian Longxi, a Songjiang person, through Chen Jiru. With the increasing popularity of engraved versions, the transmission lines gradually became disordered. For example, Zhang Pu once "got the '

In the early years of Chongzhen, in addition to the engraved version of Shi Zhaolin, three more engraved versions appeared one after another, namely the Chongzhen Wuchen (1628) Jiaxing Tan Zhenmo engraved version, the Chongzhen Gengwu (1629) Taicang Yu Yan engraved version, and the Chongzhen Xinwei (1630) Jiashan Qian Shisheng engraved version. In Chongzhen Jiashen (1644), Qian Shisheng re-engraved the "Devotion Record" in "The Lost Books of the Humble Country". Tan Zhenmo once wrote a poem titled "Title Devotion Record": "The elder is Yinghu Weng, the eighth generation of Shi. The family was annihilated in that year, and it was published by the Yiyuan official. I want to enter the history compilation, the holy is not taboo", from which it can be seen that there should be a certain inheritance relationship between the Jiaxing Tan's engraved version and the Shi Shucheng version. In addition, Pan Lei once quoted Yu Yan's postscript: "The Shi family has already engraved and circulated, and recently there are

The "Lost Books of the Humble Country" compiled by Qian Shisheng in the 17th year of Chongzhen included four documents from the Jianwen Dynasty, namely "Devotion Record", "Following the Lost Notes", "Wronged Report Record", and "Fuxi Record". Among them, the "Devotion Record" only records the main text except for the preface written by him in Chongzhen Xinwei, and the "Explanation Attached" of Shi Ce is preserved in the main text in the form of "double-line notes", and it is personally approved by Qian Shisheng. The versions read by people like Wu Guisen and Qian Qianyi and those that flowed into the "History of Ming" were all this version. The "Guang Baichuan Xuehai" (Ming Dynasty engraved version) compiled by Feng Kebin is similar to this, "only records the preface of Jiao and a few words of the postscript by his son Xiyin Gongsheng", "the three prefaces of Eyebrow Gong, Rugang Chen and Jishan Qian, are originally owned, and Xuehai does not have". From this format, one can roughly glimpse the

Due to the continuous questioning by Shen Defu, Qian Qianyi and others, the Shi family members are also constantly revising the content of the "Devotion Record". "When the 'Devotion Record' first came out, the literati competed for it. The ninth-generation grandson of the public, Zhaodou and Ce, revised and explained it carefully and engraved it." Shi Ce died in the twelfth year of Chongzhen (1639), and Shi Zhaodou, who lived until the sixteenth year of Shunzhi (1659), became the most contributor. This can be seen in the prefaces written by Li Weizhen and Hu Ruchun for the "Devotion Record". The former said: "Before this, there were engraved versions in Yunjian and Songling. Wenxue Zhaodou revised and explained it again, and attached the 'Examination of the Ministers Who Followed the Lost', which was unprecedented, and renamed it 'Qi Zhong Zhi'." The latter said: "My brother-in-law, Mr. Shi Zhaodou, revised and explained it for the world, and compiled the 'Examination of the Ministers Who Followed the Lost' to pass it

Various signs indicate that Shi Zhaodou's re-interpretation of the "Devotion Record" is due to dissatisfaction with the work of Shi Ce and Shi Zhaolin. In order to resolve the textual conflict between the "Devotion Record", "Pao Weng's Family Collection", and "West Village Collection", and enhance its authority, on the one hand, he wrote biographies for the ministers who followed the lost based on the "Devotion Record", on the other hand, he claimed to the outside world that there were family secret versions that could be mutually confirmed with the "Devotion Record" passed down by Jiao Hong. He once told Wen Zhenmeng: "At that time, there were still private notes, named 'Ge Chu Shu', which described the emperor's whereabouts most clearly. When the ban was strict, they had been destroyed by water and fire and could not be examined." Shi Zhaodou's real purpose has been undoubtedly revealed in Qian Qianyi's "Devotion Record Examination":

Shi's later generations, such as Zhaodou, revised it into "Qi Zhong Zhi", with many references. The knowledgeable people wrote a preface for it, thinking that there were family secret versions that matched those passed down from Maoshan. Last year, Zhaodou passed by me and asked how true or false the matter of serving the book was. I told him directly, "It's fake." And I explained why. Zhaodou's face changed, and then he said, "What the teacher said is true." When asked about his secret collection, he declined and said he didn't have it.

Under Qian Qianyi's aggressive questioning, Shi Zhaodou finally did not dare to admit the existence of the family secret version. Qian vividly recorded Shi Zhaodou's embarrassment, with the aim of confirming the fact that the descendants of the Shi family deliberately forged it. However, it is undeniable that during the Qizhen period, a large number of documents related to the "Devotion Record" were produced around the engraving and intense debate of the "Devotion Record", and in various forms, either included in the appendices and prefaces of various versions of the "Devotion Record", or preserved in the "Shi Family Wuzhong School Document Spectrum", "Wuzhong School Shi Family's Family History" and other Shi family documents. If we want to further understand the mechanism of the production and circulation of these texts including prefaces and postscripts, we need to understand them in the context of the Shi family's request for sacrifices and condolences for Shi Zhongbin at the time of the Ming and Qing dynasties. As Shi Wei said: "In the late Ming Dynasty, the worship was encouraged, and the officials of the Taiwan Constitution carefully checked the documents. If they praised Yang Guan, the gentlemen

The engraving of the "Devotion Record" by Shi Zai in the eighth year of Kangxi was the last important engraving of the "Devotion Record" during the Ming and Qing Dynasties. The reason for this engraving was because "the descendants of the Shi family sought to worship Zhongbin as a local sage, and re-engraved this book to the world." For this reason, Pan Lei specifically wrote the article "Re-engraving the Devotion Record", revealing the various errors in the re-engraved version summarized as "four mistakes and three delusions". Although it failed to successfully stop the worship of local sages, this article has been recognized as another heavyweight rebuttal article besides Qian Qianyi's "Devotion Record Examination".

Overall, the proportion of appendices and prefaces in the Kangxi eight-year engraved version is higher, and the overall length is several times that of the early versions represented by the Chongzhen two-year engraved version of the "Devotion Record" and the Tianqi copy of the "Qi Zhong Zhi", further deepening the encroachment on the text. Shi Zai detailed the process of engraving and sorting in "Re-engraving the Devotion Record of the First Loyal Duke":

In the year of Wushen, when the plum rain just cleared, my father ordered me to take out the books I had collected and air them. In the bamboo slips of my father's Wujiang County Records, I found the original handwritten explanation attached to the "Devotion Record", and I read it together. Six or seven of the prefaces and postscripts in its name were not included in the previous engravings. And the section about abdicating the emperor and giving him a posthumous title was also lost and not highlighted. I thought it should be fully engraved. So I recorded another volume to prove it. My two brothers said: This is the unfinished will of the predecessors. It should be published without delay, but there are still many omissions in the compilation. When I changed the bamboo slips of my father, I got the complete volume and kept it in the box for nearly thirty years. Unexpectedly, I have been repeatedly insulted and have not been able to live up to it. So I simply gave it to me and got two out of ten that I had never seen before to check for differences, correct mistakes, and plan how to engrave it.

The "family lord" in the text refers to Shi Zai's father, Shi Zongqin, and the "former king father" refers to his grandfather, Shi Ce. After comparing the original "Explanation Attached to the Devotion Record" handwritten by Shi Ce with the engraved version of Shi Ce in the first year of Tianqi, Shi Zai found that Shi Ce only selected a small part of the prefaces and postscripts in the original manuscript for printing, and did not adopt the content of Emperor Jianwen giving Shi Zhongbin the posthumous title "Loyal and Devoted". These "alternative materials" that were deleted, whether it is the many controversies caused by the writing style of the prefaces and postscripts, or the absurdity of the exiled emperor's posthumous title, all face greater challenges and risks than the main text of the "Devotion Record", so they were decisively abandoned by Shi Ce. After entering the Qing Dynasty, with the changes in current affairs, these previous cautious practices no longer need to be overly cautious. Even if Pan Lei continues to expose the suspicion of "forging prefaces" in the re-engraved version of the "Devotion Record", it cannot stop the pace of the Shi family

As time goes by, when people today re-examine the engraving and dissemination history of the "Devotion Record", the entanglement of interests and even the position of historiography are no longer the focus of debate, and it may be possible to take a different path and change the perspective of observation. Lun Ming believes that, "The book of 'Devotion Record' has the original engraved version and the re-engraved version by the Shi family. The re-engraved version has many additions and deletions. The original engraved version only has one preface by Jiao Ruohou, while the re-engraved version has more than thirty prefaces and postscripts. ... The various versions have not been compared, and their differences and similarities are unknown. Only the family engraved version of the Shi family has additions and deletions, and the additions and deletions are not only once." Comparing the initial engraved version, the re-engraved version, and related copies is indeed a feasible path. As mentioned earlier, in addition to the main text, Qian Shisheng's "Xun Guo Yi Shu" version also includes the "Explanation Attached" of the Shi Ce engraved version, preserving the basic appearance of the initial engraved version

The increase and decrease of "Explanation Attached" seems to be a significant increase in the content of the text on the surface, but it actually involves the choices of Shi Ce and Shi Zai's two engravings. There are two possibilities here: the first is that Shi Zai "intentionally increased or decreased it for the sake of the canon", resulting in the loss of official rank and political achievements; the second possibility is that Shi Zai did re-engrave based on the original "Explanation Attached to the Devotion Record" by Shi Ce, and Shi Ce, due to various considerations, did not dare to make all the information he prepared public when he first engraved. But no matter which possibility, it is difficult to escape the questioning of "teleology". The former is related to the grand plan of Shi Zhongbin's entry into the Suzhou Prefecture Hometown Sage Temple, and the latter involves the authenticity of the "Devotion Record" and the basis for Zhongbin's posthumous title. The revision work of Shi Zhaodou in "Qi Zhong Zhi" can be seen as the intermediate link between the two.

In addition to the engraved version by Shi Zai, there is also a copy of the "Devotion Record" from the early Kangxi period, but it has not yet attracted enough attention. The cover of the book is titled "The Self-Preface of the Devotion of the Loyal and Devoted Duke of the Scholar of the World Ancestor", and the compiler is Shi Ming, the Suzhou branch of the Huangxi Shi family, which is included in the third compilation of the "Chinese History Series" edited by Liu Zhaoyu in Taiwan. The main content is roughly the same as the engraved version by Shi Zai. The opening is "The Imperial Text of Emperor Huizong's Abdication", followed by the prefaces of various famous officials. Except for the two prefaces of Li Weizhen and Zhang Pu, which were denounced by Pan Lei as fictitious, the others overlap with the version of Shi Zai, but the order of arrangement is different. The main text is missing many pages, making it difficult to see the original appearance. Judging from the existing parts, the content of the "Explanation Attached" is slightly less than that of the Shi Zai version, and the poems of Emperor Jianwen passing through Wujiang

Shi Ming, styled Chuiqing, also known as Shuping, was a student attached to the family. In the "Shi's Wuzhong Clan Genealogy", there is another genealogy name "Tongheng", which is of a very high generation, and is of the same generation as Shi Ce and Shi Zhaodou. In the second year of Kangxi (1663), at the age of 71, he began to revise the "Devotion Record" and finalized it at the age of 85 in the sixteenth year of Kangxi (1677). For the specific process of compilation, please refer to his postscript: "At the end of the Ming Dynasty, there were those who liked to use it privately, so they re-engraved it. If the name is praised, change the original version of the brother's acceptance, and show off to dazzle the world, how can it be used to highlight the loyalty of the scholar and express the filial piety of the descendants? The name is widely sought after the original engraving, remove the fake and return to the truth, and then the final version is formed, and the handwriting becomes a volume. In the year (referring to the second

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, some large-scale collections or classified books often included the "Devotion Record". In addition to the "Guang Baichuan Xuehai" (Ming Dynasty engraved version) edited by Feng Kebin, the "Shuo Fu Xu" (Shunzhi three years Li Jiqi Weishan Tang engraved version) compiled by Tao Ting, the "Xuehai Lei Bian" (Daoguang eleven years Liu'an Chao's wooden movable type printed version) compiled by Cao Rong and Tao Yue, and the "Qiankun Zhengqi Ji" (Daoguang 28 years Jing County Pan's Yuanjiang Festival Office engraved Guangxu first year reprint version) edited by Yao Ying, Gu Yuan, and Pan Xien also adopted the full text of the "Devotion Record". The form of engraving is similar to Qian Shisheng's "Xun Guo Yi Shu". In addition to the main text, there are only simple annotations and case statements, and there are not as many prefaces, postscripts, and appendices as the Shi family's collection.

The above text has separately verified the versions and circulation of "Xicun Ji" and "Devotion Record", and the history of the Huangxi Shi family is hidden in these documents. In the long river of history, these documents are constantly being created, rewritten, and superimposed. History becomes a story, and the plot of the story keeps changing. Before the forty-seventh year of Wanli, the original engraving of "Xicun Ji" had its own context. With the emergence of "Devotion Record", the content-rich "Xicun Ji" family collection could no longer stand in the academic forest with a complete face. The descendants of the Shi family, represented by Shi Ce, Shi Zhaodou, and Shi Zai, turned to be keen on the manufacture and dissemination of "Devotion Record" and its sub-texts. Once there is a textual conflict between "Xicun Ji" and "Devotion Record", it is often at the expense of the existing records of the former to maintain the authority of the latter. However, in any case, the existence of Wu Kuan's "Tombstone of Qingyuan Shifu Jun" always affects the textual direction of "The Conduct of the Ancestor Qingy

Chapter 2: The Rise from Lidian

If we want to tell the story of the "Devotion Record" and the fate of the Huangxi Shi family in Wujiang, we should first use the forty-seventh year of Wanli as the boundary, and restore the Shi family documents of different periods to their corresponding years as much as possible. Although "Xicun Ji" has some flaws in its version and minor adjustments in its content, it can still maintain its original appearance overall. The "Wuzhong Pai Shi Family Ride" and "Shi's Wuzhong Pai Literature Spectrum", which have the nature of literature compilation, include texts from various eras. For various purposes, it is not uncommon for words to be added or subtracted, and the meaning of the text to be arbitrarily changed. If we want to analyze the useful information from these documents, we should first pay attention to distinguishing the relationship between key figures and general figures. The deeds of key figures such as Shi Bin and Shi Jian should be compared as necessary. Unless the biographies of other figures are supplemented by people who have lived a long time from the main character, they are generally relatively reliable and can be used directly. Secondly, for all descriptions related to social economy, regulations and rituals, and cultural customs, try to

Huangxi, also known as Muhe Creek, is located 53 li southeast of Wujiang County, "bordering Zhejiang and facing the Grand Canal... Although the location is remote, it is actually a north-south passage", and it is an important node between Pingwang and Wangjiangjing towns. It is said that during the Song Dynasty's Qingli period, Huang You, the Minister of Punishments, "built a separate industry here, and later his descendants multiplied, and the tail of Muhe Creek was named Huangjia Creek", also known as "Huangxi". Before the Ming Dynasty, the place was "named after the village, with only a few hundred households". At the turn of the Ming and Qing dynasties, it gradually developed into a commercial town known for its silk weaving industry. After the Qing Dynasty, one of the most distinctive landscapes of the town was that every time the silk weaving season came, "people who were hired to stand on Changchun and Taian bridges, waiting for people to hire weavers, were called 'walking bridges', also known as 'finding work'". This employment relationship within the silk weaving industry once became a hot spot for academic research on the budding capitalism of the Ming and Qing dyn

In 2008, Shi Honglu, the author of "Shi Zhongbin and Emperor Jianwen", also visited the relics of the Huangxi Shi family. At that time, there was no highway from Shengze Town to Huangjiaxi, and it was necessary to ferry across the river to get there. Only a family named Shi Jinguan claimed to be a descendant of the Huangxi Shi family. If time goes back five or six hundred years, in that era, "Shi was the famous surname of Huangxi, and only Shi was prosperous in the Ming Dynasty", and famous people such as Shi Jian, Shi Chen, and Shi Mo emerged one after another. With the spread of the "Devotion Record", Shi Bin, Shi Ce, Shi Zhaodou, and Shi Biannian also appeared on the front stage of history one after another. However, the Shi family was not originally settled in Huangxi, Wujiang. At the time of the Yuan and Ming dynasties, Shi Juren from Jiaxing Shijia Village married into the Huang family and obtained the rich property of the Huang family. His descendants began to settle in Huangxi. Zhou Zongjian once gave a comprehensive summary of the Shi family's settlement

The Shi family is a prestigious family in the county. Its founding ancestor, named Gong, was from Duling, Jingzhao, and was ennobled as the Marquis of Guannei for his merit in protecting Emperor Xuan of Han. The fifth generation, named Chong, assisted in the restoration of Guangwu, and with his meritorious service in horse defense, he was given the right to collect taxes in Liyang, and thus became a resident of Liyang for generations. Twenty-two generations later, a man named Weixiao moved to Zhongnan. Eight generations later, a scholar of the Jixian Academy named Huaize moved to Wuzhong.

In fact, although Shi Chong was enfeoffed in Liyang, he did not settle there, and his descendants still lived in the north for many years. It was not until the Five Dynasties that Shi Huaize moved to Sixian Township in Jiaxing, which marked the beginning of the Wuzhong branch of the Shi family. During the Song and Yuan dynasties, "there were dozens to hundreds of families in the village, all of them were surnamed Shi, so it was called Shi Family Village." According to the "Shi's Wuzhong Pai Literature Spectrum", three generations after Huaize, there was a man named Shi Yan, who "passed the imperial examination, was indifferent to fame and fortune, did not enjoy official advancement, was recommended for promotion, served as a writer, and declined the appointment. During the period of border recovery, he served as the magistrate of Wucheng." His son, Xunwu, served as "the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Rites, the signatory of the Privy Council, was granted the title of founding marquis of Yanguan County, and was posthumously named Zhuangjing." His grandson Zhengzhi served as "the

Shi Dan had two sons, the eldest son was Shi Kewei, and the second son was Shi Youwei. Shi Kewei "once served in the Yuan Dynasty and managed water in the south of the Yangtze River, making great contributions to the world." In the sixth year of Yanyou (1319), there was a great flood in the west of Zhejiang. The Jiangzhe provincial government was ordered to discuss water conservancy and recruit those who knew about water conservancy. Shi Kewei and Zhou Zihua each wrote a "Discussion on Water Conservancy" and submitted it to the provincial government. "The report was heard in the court discussion, saying that the lives of the people are of utmost importance, and agriculture is the foundation. They should not be too stingy with their titles. Therefore, all those who are familiar with water conservancy are appointed as the leaders of ten thousand people who dredge the river, so that they can see each other along the coast, and divide the dredging of Bai Mao, salt and iron and other places. After more than a year, they finally succeeded and were promoted to Chengzhilang." The life of Shi Youwei is even more unknown. In the main text

Shi Kewei's son, Shi Rong, styled Yizhi, known as Nanzhai, lived at the turn of the Yuan and Ming dynasties. He never served in the government all his life. He married the daughter of Gu Ying, a famous rich merchant and scholar at the end of the Yuan Dynasty. He "lived leisurely in the countryside, and his daily task was to discipline his children and grandchildren with strict family rules." After the military disaster at the end of the Yuan Dynasty, the Jiaxing Shi family village was not hurt. In the local area, "all the fat pillars and thick beams, only one in ten survived. The residence of the Shi family in He County was still standing alone. The year and month of its creation were at the beginning of the Song Dynasty's Zhihe period", which had lasted for more than 300 years. In the early years of the Hongwu period, Zhu Yuanzhang vigorously cracked down on the rich men in the south of the Yangtze River. "The branches of the Shi family village were scattered in different places after their two classics were confiscated." After that, the descendants of Shi Kewei in Jiaxing gradually divided into two branches. Shi Rong

The first section: The Chief of Grain Supply  
  
史居仁入赘黄溪后，其子史仲彬在明成祖朱棣的赞许下，被任命为吴江县长充粮长，负责管理吴江县的粮食供应。史仲彬在任期间，他的表现得到了朱棣的高度评价。他的管理能力和公正无私的品格，使得吴江县的粮食供应始终保持稳定，人民生活安定，因此史仲彬在吴江县享有极高的声望。  
  
史仲彬在任期间，他还积极推动农业生产，鼓励农民种植粮食，提高粮食产量。他还积极推动农业技术的改革，引进新的农业技术，

In the late Yuan Dynasty, there was a man named Huang Weng who lived in Muxi Village, Fanyu Township, Wujiang. "Although Shi and Huang were from different prefectures and counties, their residences were both on the border of the two territories, and they had frequent contacts. Huang had no sons, only one daughter, so Nanzhai's master married his second son to her, who was actually Dongxuan's master." After entering the Ming Dynasty, Shi Juren registered in Huangxi, Wujiang, and thus became a Wujiang resident. Soon after, a nationwide household registration survey was launched. The household of Shi Juren, who lived in the twenty-third Du of Shangxiang, Fanyu County, Wujiang County, was also included in the survey. The "Shi's Wuzhong Pai Literature Spectrum" retains the important proof material of Shi Juren's settlement and registration - the household post:

One household, Shi Juren, is located in the west thirteen map of the twenty-third Du of Shangxiang, Fanyu County, Wujiang County, Suzhou Prefecture.

A scholar household that teaches books, with a total of three people in the family:

One adult: 39 years old this year.

One non-adult: a boy named Bin, ten years old.

One woman: Huang Suqiong, 38 years old.

On the day of the month in the fourth year of Hongwu, the Ministry of Households, the right post was given to Shi Juren for execution, as per this.

In the Yuan Dynasty, there were indeed "Confucian households" in the various household registers, which had the privilege of exemption from labor and military service. However, after a thorough examination of the original and copied household registers of the Ming Dynasty, most of them were registered as civilians, soldiers, craftsmen, and stove households, and there was no category of "teaching book Confucian households". In addition, from the general format of the household register, this post is missing the sentence "two men" after "three people in the family", and there is no record of property. Although this kind of incompleteness in content is not uncommon in the copied household registers of the Ming Dynasty, for each household register, it is better to regard it as a strong evidence of the history of the ancestors' settlement in the early Ming Dynasty, rather than a human omission. As a tool for constructing ancestral memory and pursuing real interests, the household register condenses many practical issues related to identity confirmation. If we ignore the authenticity of this household register, the ages of Shi Juren and Shi Bin are an important part of confirming Shi Bin's identity. Shi Bin was only 10 years old in the fourth year of Hongwu (1371), this information is very critical

The identity of "Grain Chief Shi Bin" has been widely recognized due to the "Biography of the Ancestor of Qingyuan Prefecture" written by Shi Jian and the "Tombstone of Qingyuan Shi Prefecture" written by Wu Kuan. This gives the impression that Shi Bin was the first person of the Shi surname in Huangxi to serve as the grain chief in the Ming Dynasty. However, according to the "Tombstone Inscription of Shi Dongxuan" written by Shen Du from Songjiang, his father Juren died in the year of Yi Hai in Hongwu (1395), that is, the 28th year of Hongwu, at the age of 62. It is not clear whether he, who was the head of the household in the early Ming Dynasty, had personally served as the grain chief before his death. But one thing is certain, at the beginning of the implementation of the grain chief system in the Ming Dynasty, Shi Bin was still in the stage of being unable to serve as the grain chief.

The epitaph written by Shen Du can directly solve this doubt: before marrying into his wife's family, Juren lived in Sixian Township, Jiaxing. After moving to Huangxi, he "inspected farming, studied the laws of tree planting, and eventually expanded his family through hard work in the fields; he paid the local taxes, had an audience with the emperor, and received praise for his honesty and a reward of money."

The position of Grain Chief was officially established in the fourth year of Hongwu in the early Ming Dynasty (1371), mainly responsible for the collection, receipt, and transportation of grain taxes, and sometimes also responsible for encouraging farming and managing local politics. The special research on the grain chief system was initiated by Mr. Liang Fangzhong. Japanese scholars such as Kawase Tomoko, Nishino Shozi, and Koyama Masaaki followed suit, focusing on the Jiangnan region, covering important topics such as the origin, evolution, function, and division of grain areas of the grain chief system. According to the trend of the evolution of the grain chief system summarized by Liang Fangzhong, from Hongwu to Xuande, the Yongchang system (Changchang system) dominated, and after Jingtai, the rotation system and the friend system gradually prevailed.

In the era of Zhu Yuanzhang, having an audience with the emperor, being granted money, and even being appointed to official positions were not extravagant hopes for the grain chief class. The "Shi's Wuzhong Genealogy" includes a decree issued by Ming Taizu to Shi Juren, which is very interesting:

On the fifteenth day of the first month of the fifth year of Hongwu, Shi Juren attended the early morning court at the Gate of Heaven, and respectfully received the imperial edict, which said: "Each of you should go home and stick to your own duties, and must not rely on wealth and power as in the Yuan Dynasty, commit crimes with the help of wealth, collude with officials, cheat the common people, insult officials, and be unclear about the grain in the fields, and violate the law in expenses. Offenders will not be spared according to the law. Now the world is peaceful, each of you should love your family and protect your property." Shi Juren kowtowed and accepted the edict. The emperor said: "I see you are also an honest person." He ordered to grant twenty ingots of money. On the fourteenth day of the second month of the fourteenth year of Hongwu, Shi Juren attended the early morning court at the Gate of Heaven, and respectfully received the imperial edict: "Shi Juren, a large household in Jiangnan, is appointed as the tax chief, and he must deliver 3,800 stones of autumn grain every year. He must fulfill his duties on time

In terms of content, this decree undoubtedly detailed the description of "having an audience with the emperor, receiving praise for honesty, and being granted money" in the tombstone inscription. However, in the first month of the fifth year of Hongwu (1372), it was only a few months away from the official implementation of the grain chief system in September of the fourth year of Hongwu. Even if Zhu Yuanzhang received him, the time was somewhat rushed, and it was against common sense to pay grain in the first month. Moreover, there was no other literature to corroborate it, so there were many doubts. The most suspicious part of this decree is that it combines the events of the fifth year of Hongwu with those of the fourteenth year of Hongwu. The traces of artificial processing are obvious, and it is clearly not the original. According to the "Ming Shilu", in the second month of the fourteenth year of Hongwu (1381), Zhu Yuanzhang did meet with the grain chiefs from Zhejiang and Jiangxi provinces who delivered grain to the capital, but there were as many as 1,325 people. Whether Shi Juren, as a large household, received the emperor's exclusive decree is another doubt.

In addition to this decree, the "Shi's Wuzhong Genealogy" also includes a "Send to Beijing for Discussion" written by Xie Xuan to Shi Juren, which is also quite interesting:

...The imperial court follows the ancient teachings, prioritizes the affairs of the people, uses tax households to control ten thousand stones, classifies them, and when the winter food is delivered to the capital, both officials and the people are worry-free and everything is in order. My friend Dongxuan (Juren's name - note by the quoter) is in charge of this matter and is about to deliver the tokens to the capital. He said goodbye to me and asked, "I am going on a journey, what advice does the teacher have for me?" I replied, "Now the holy emperor is ruling the world, generously reducing taxes and arrears, the heaven and the people are in harmony, and the good grains are spread all over the fields, there is a lot to write about. The position you hold is straightforward and easy, why would you need any advice? However, there is still something to say. In ancient times, scholars came from farmers, they became rich and then taught, they were selected by the village and the neighborhood, and they were the places to cultivate talents. Now there are schools in the counties, but the recitation of the strings in the villages and neighborhoods is almost extinct, and there may be some omissions in the

Xie Xuan, also known as Xie Chang, styled Yanming, was a native of Wujiang. He was born in the early years of Zhiyuan, studied under Yang Weizhen, and was selected as a scholar in the fifteenth year of Hongwu (1382). He wrote the "Guixuan Poetry Collection". The poetry collection is included in the seventeenth volume of the fifth edition of "Four Libraries Unpublished Books Compilation", and the original copy is a Qing Dynasty copy held by the Chinese Academy of Sciences. This narrative does not appear in it, and his other work "Dongxi Collection" has been lost, so its authenticity is no longer discernible. However, Xie Xuan and Juren were of the same age and were from the same hometown. The latter sought advice from local scholars and friends before going to Beijing for an audience, which may not be a fabrication.

If it is true that Shi Juren was the first generation of grain chief in the Shi family, then what was his son Shi Bin doing at this time? According to the "Ancestral Examination of Qingyuan Prefecture Lord's Conduct" recorded by Shi Jian:

During the Hongwu period, the legal system was not yet established, and many greedy and indulgent people exploited the people for their own benefit, causing the people to resent and suffer. The prefect, following the wishes of the people, bound the leader with several young men and presented him to the imperial court. The detailed and sharp report was praised by the emperor, who ordered the execution of the criminal. He was specially granted food and money, and a post boat was provided to return him home. People near and far praised this, and the powerful and cunning began to restrain themselves, daring not to commit any more wrongs.

Wu Kuan's "Epitaph for the Lord of Qingyuan Shi Prefecture" also records this based on Shi Jian's "Conduct":

At the beginning of the country, the legal system was strict, but the officials of the counties still followed their old habits, being greedy and indulgent as they pleased. The prefect, following the people's hatred, bound the leader with several young men and presented him to the imperial court. He was executed, and the whole county praised it. The prefect was granted food and money, and a post boat was provided for him to return home.

At the beginning of the Ming Dynasty, severe punishments and strict laws were enforced, encouraging the people to bind and bring corrupt officials and local officials to Beijing for trial and punishment. Shi Bin, who was quite chivalrous in his youth, successfully brought the corrupt officials in the county to justice through the method of petitioning the emperor with his friends. However, when he returned home in glory, his heroic act did not receive his father's praise. On the contrary, Shi Juren expressed deep concern and said to Shi Bin, "Our family has a long history of integrity, what you have done is not a blessing for the Shi family." After hearing this, Shi Bin also deeply regretted his recklessness and said to his father, "I am young and impulsive. When I grow up, I will change." From then on, he restrained his high-profile past, "dismissed his old friends, changed his behavior and encouraged himself to be respectful." After some efforts, "he was able to start a family by working hard in the fields, ranked first in his town, and was selected as the tax chief," replacing his father as the second generation grain chief of the Shi family.

The "Dedication Record" attributes the incident of Shi Bin bringing the corrupt officials to court to the 24th year of Hongwu (1391), when Shi Bin was already 30 years old. In any case, it is impossible to use "being young" as a reason to respond to his father's doubts. However, this detail did not attract enough attention from predecessors. The historical book "Explanation and Attachment" even uses Huang Yue's "Record of Detailed Reports" to strengthen the reliability of this incident:

Now the emperor is in power, with sharp thinking and a desire for advice. Even the farmers and old men in the countryside can present their views to the emperor, who warmly encourages them, and the news has spread to all corners of the country. Shi Zhongbin, a tax-paying household in East Wu, responded to the imperial edict and bound six corrupt officials and presented them to the emperor at the Fengtian Gate. The emperor said, "Tell me the truth." Bin listed a number of charges, mostly about extra taxes and punishments outside the law, and the corruption of monopolizing and encroaching on fishing. The six men confessed and were handed over to the law enforcement for execution. The emperor deeply appreciated it and appointed him as the head of the Ministry of Households. Bin declined the appointment because he had no experience as an official and was afraid of making mistakes in the important task of managing the treasury. The emperor then asked him about the current state of governance. He replied, "Nowadays, the labor is too heavy. Although there are many households, there are many laborers. The taxes are too heavy. Although there is enough money and grain, there are many poor people. It is advisable to slow down the conquest, stop the construction

Qian Qianyi did notice serious problems with this text, but his main argument was that Zhu Ji, Wang Yi, Zhang Yu, and Jie Jin, four people who either had died or had not been in court in the 24th year of Hongwu, could not possibly have written poems specifically for Shi Bin's farewell. Since Qian did not make a necessary comparison between this year's deeds and Shi Bin's chivalrous acts in the "Epitaph" and "Conduct", and still focused on the authenticity of the "Record of Detailed Reports", he failed to further discover the intense textual conflict between the "Dedication Record" and the "Conduct" and "Epitaph". If what is recorded in the "Dedication Record" is true, the chain reaction caused by the problem of Shi Bin's age will inevitably lead to a complete collapse of the logical structure of the "Conduct" and "Epitaph", and there is absolutely no possibility of such a mistake occurring in the works of literary masters like Shi Jian and Wu Kuan.

Not only that, Pan Lei also found that the revised "Conduct of the Ancestor of Qingyuan Prefecture" specifically added the phrase "the end of the Hongwu era" in order to strictly distinguish between the identities of Shi Bin as a minister in the Jianwen court and as a grain chief in the Hongwu era. If this is true, due to the longevity of Shi Juren, Shi Bin's tenure as grain chief would only be a few years.

During his tenure as the grain chief, Shi Bin's achievements far exceeded those of his father:

At that time, there were consecutive years of floods and droughts, coupled with military operations, the levies and dispatches were extremely severe. The people were exhausted, some rebelled and left. Many fields were polluted and taxes were not collected, often resulting in losses. The prefect said: "If the fields are not cultivated, how can we expect taxes to be collected? Therefore, what I propose is to put the people's affairs first, and since farming depends on human labor, we should take care of it, so that it does not falter, and everyone can do their best. Therefore, I restrict everyone in my jurisdiction, from myself down, not to take any profit from the people. The people are mostly grateful, and they tell each other, and the refugees return. In the spring, I order the field inspectors to check the cultivation, once every five days, and I personally review the work. If there are fields that are not cultivated, I summon the people to question and blame them. If they lack farming tools, manpower, or seeds, I help them, and further advise relatives to lend to them. They are required to repay by the acre in the fall. If they are lazy and not serious, they are flogged and made an example

Xiaoshan Zhengming regards Shi Bin's deeds as a typical example of a grain chief encouraging farming, and believes that this encouragement is aimed at maintaining and ensuring the reproduction of farmers for the collection of taxes and levies. Therefore, it also comes with coercion and punishment for those who do not cultivate and those who are lazy and not serious. This is entirely a summary from the standpoint of the responsibilities of a grain chief. On the other hand, Shi Bin precisely made his first fortune by reclaiming wasteland and achieved the goal of getting rich by farming. The "Wu Zhong Pai Shi Family Ride" gives a different account of the above situation:

At the beginning of the Ming Dynasty, after the war, taxes and penalties were heavy, and many people rebelled and left. The prefect of Qingyuan was proficient in agricultural management, so there were especially many paddy fields, from Xinan to Shengze without any other clans in between. Later, fearing that disaster would come, he gradually shared them with others.

Here, "甸" can be interpreted as "佃" (tenant farming). By synthesizing the above two historical materials, it is not difficult to see that Shi Bin actually adopted the method of calling for tenant farmers, occupying a large amount of newly reclaimed wasteland, and then completing the task of grain tax submission by collecting high rents. From this perspective, his coercion and punishment of those who did not cultivate and those who were lazy and not serious make more sense. Although in the view of Mori Masafu, the number of landlords who established their homes through private rent in the grain-paying households at the beginning of the Ming Dynasty was far less than after the 16th century, Shi Bin, who "managed taxes like managing household affairs," cannot be said to be an exception of that era.

It was precisely because Shi Bin accumulated a very substantial family foundation that when his son Shi Sheng and grandson Shi Heng successively took over as grain chiefs, they still benefited from his influence and never forgot his contributions. In the epitaphs written for them by Zhou Ding, phrases such as "the family started with a total of ten wells, and the policy of tax collection and labor service started from Qingyuan", "the family grew larger, thanks to Bin; as the local tax chief, his reputation filled the whole town" frequently appear, which may be clear evidence. However, Shi Bin, who achieved success at a young age and became rich in middle age, did not have a good end. He was first falsely accused and later died in prison:

There was a cunning man who was responsible for transporting grain. He relied on his talents and tried every means to seek bribes, but the prefect refused. The man was angry and ashamed, so he falsely accused the prefect of illegal activities. The imperial censor in charge of the case arrested the prefect and put him in prison, but did not immediately try him, and the prefect eventually died. Later, when the imperial censor arrived, he investigated the accusations and found no evidence, so he sentenced the accuser to death. The prefect... was sixty-seven years old. He died on the tenth day of the third month in the second year of Xuande.

From the above historical materials, it can be seen that Shi Bin was still serving as the grain chief until he was imprisoned, so he was framed while in office. From this, it can be inferred that the lower limit of his tenure as grain chief should be in the second year of Xuande (1427). Mr. Liang Fangzhong has pointed out that the biggest difference between the grain chief and the Li Jia system is that the former is a "household service", designated by the government at any time, while the latter is a "personal service", with a certain order of service; personal service requires personal service, while household service can be replaced by members of the person's family. According to this logic, in the era when the grain chief was popular, there was no strict division between active and retired grain chiefs as summarized by Xiaoshan Zhengming. The practice of a son replacing his father after his death was strictly implemented at least in the Shi family of Huangxi.

The plot of Shi Bin being falsely accused and killed did not appear in Wu Kuan's "Tomb Inscription", only the sentence "The prefect was honest and practical in dealing with matters, disregarding gains and losses, so many people respected him, but the villains did not like him, yet the prefect did not regret it even to his death" mentioned his death. Therefore, Qian Qianyi's fourth point of "arguing that 'Devotion to Duty' must be unfounded" questioned this: "The record says that he was killed in prison by the enemy of his deceased father. Shi Bin never died in prison, but it is said that he died in prison because of his deceased father, which is very speculative."

Shi Bin's eldest son, Shi Sheng, was born in the 24th year of Hongwu (1391) and died in the second year of Jingtai (1451), at the age of 61. A considerable part of his life overlapped with Shi Bin's, especially in the days before he turned forty, when his main job was to help his father manage the household, as "the lord's family is growing day by day, the labor is becoming more and more troublesome, Qingyuan is working for the government every day, and he has no time for his family, and the family is all blaming the lord". He officially took over as grain chief only after Shi Bin died unjustly. By this analogy, the age difference between Shi Juren and Shi Bin is also close to 40 years, and there may also be such a transition period. Without more materials, it is a feasible strategy to speculate on the succession of the permanent grain chiefs based on individual life cycles. Of course, the actual situation is much more complicated. Even between Hongwu and Jingtai, when the Yongchong law was popular, there were several policy adjustments for the permanent and deputy grain chiefs, according to the Chongzhen "Wu

During the Hongwu period, the system was established, with one district for every 10,000 stones of grain. There were forty-six districts in the town. Each district had one chief grain officer and two deputy grain officers. It was allowed for fathers, sons, and brothers to succeed each other, known as the permanent grain chiefs. Yongle changed the system to nine district chiefs and deputies, divided into three shifts, each shift for one year, known as the three-year grain chiefs. In the first year of Hongxi, it was restored to permanent. In the eighth year of Zhengtong, it was changed to three years again, with two chiefs and deputies each year. In the eleventh year, it was still three people who were permanently charged. In the third year of Jingtai, one deputy was cut from each district, leaving two chiefs and deputies, a total of ninety-two people.

This phenomenon is by no means a unique exception in Wujiang County. Mr. Liang Fangzhong had long ago keenly discovered that from about the Hongwu period to the early Jingtai period, the permanent system and the chief and deputy grain chiefs' delivery system had alternated in use, with the permanent system being more dominant. However, at the practical operational level, it is not easy to handle the alternating relationship between the permanent system and the chief and deputy grain chiefs' delivery system. It's just that most of the later records about the grain chiefs, which come from various biographies, tomb inscriptions, and conduct records, exaggerate the succession of fathers and sons within the family, and completely obscure the other possibilities during the so-called "permanent law" stage.

During Shi Sheng's tenure as grain chief, his main focus was still on agricultural water conservancy and reclamation of wasteland:

With the lake on the left and the river on the right in Songling, the people suffer from the rapid and inundation when they farm on the bank, and they cannot always have a harvest in autumn. The lord taught the people to build high dikes, and then the fields relied on them to rise, the taxes were paid in surplus, the polluted fields were transformed into cultivated land, and the fugitives returned.

In this sense, Shi Sheng basically continued the existing work of Shi Bin. His son, Shi Heng, was born in the twelfth year of Yongle (1414) and died in the third year of Chenghua (1467), at the age of 54. He also "worked hard to achieve his goals, sealed the taxes of the long village, ... and took over the affairs of his father and grandfather as soon as he was weak." The era in which Shi Heng lived was just when the permanent system was transitioning to the rotation system, and the burden of various taxes and services had greatly exceeded that of his ancestors and fathers, which is fully reflected in the conduct records written by Shi Jian for his father and the tomb inscriptions of Shi Heng written by Zhou Ding and Xu Yougong:

At that time, many counties and prefectures were in arrears, and the court sent envoys to supervise them. The staff and the public, the inn could not accommodate them, they were scattered in temples, all full, and the supply of food was not without cost every day. The town was also on the main road, and there was no peaceful day for passers-by, who asked for things without asking whether they had them or not. They all took the responsibility from the chief, and the chief collected from the people to respond, disturbing their homes, and often fled. The tax revenue was increasingly insufficient, the supervisors kept coming, the officials and soldiers held the documents, shouting on the roads every day, arresting and filling the prisons. Most of the chiefs ended up with broken families.

As a filial friend, he also took charge of the tax. When the lord took his place in office, the envoys supervised the arrears of taxes and services. The public houses were narrow and moved to temples, and the demands were like a prison. The people were not at peace in their homes. As a chief, he was in a difficult situation and could not bear it himself. The lord was good at dealing with it. The county chief said: Bin has a grandson.

At that time, the northern capital was just built, and the supply from all over the sea was billions, but the meeting in Wu was extremely huge. The envoys were very annoyed and worried at noon, and the public and private demands were so numerous that they could not be distinguished. The people could not bear the orders, and the chiefs could not bear the affairs. The lord alone was superior and did it for them.

Facing such a cruel reality, the reason why Shi Heng could gather things was because he adopted the generous strategy of "prefer to cut himself, not to exploit the people", which enabled him to complete the tasks assigned by the government office without making the people suffer. This rare act of righteousness was highly praised by the county magistrate, who wanted to "make him always pay the taxes of the long village" and continue to serve as the permanent grain chief. However, the increasingly heavy burden did not let Shi Heng choose to stick to it, so he finally resigned with the reason of "not his preference".

When it came to Shi Heng's son, Shi Jian, he was not only unwilling to accept the position of grain chief, but even unwilling to manage household affairs. His father "once called for a drink with his clan and handed over the family affairs to his son Jian, Jian declined, and the clan encouraged the lord to follow his son's words, but the lord insisted on handing it over to him." The beautiful story of the four generations of the Shi family's long room and the long-term grain chief finally came to an end.

Section 2: The Son Leads the Sacrifice

Starting from Ju Ren's marriage into Huangxi to Shi Heng, the Shi family has been serving as the grain chief for four consecutive generations, becoming one of the best cases for studying the long-term grain chief. What's more noteworthy is that all those who served as the grain chief were the eldest sons, and there was not a single case where it was passed on to other sons, as Zhou Ding's "Inscription on the Tomb of Yougui Shi Jun" says:

Your great-grandfather Ju Ren came from Jiahe, married into Huang, and gave birth to your grandfather Bin. Bin had five sons, and your father Sheng was the eldest son of the family, and you are the grandson of Bin's family. You were quiet and not a little wise, Bin loved you and gave you more property, not to all his sons. The family grew larger, starting from Bin, who was the tax chief of the village, and his reputation filled the whole village. Your father inherited it. (Heng) was also the tax chief for his filial piety and friendship.

As a kind of "household service", the grain chief was often served by brothers and nephews, and it was not exclusively enjoyed by the eldest son in the system. The special arrangement of the Shi family in Huangxi to pass on to the eldest son and then to the eldest grandson naturally has deeper reasons behind it. This has been revealed in the epitaph of Shi Heng. Shi Sheng, as the eldest son, enjoyed special privileges different from other sons when Shi Bin divided the property, "gave him more property, not to all his sons". It is also clearly written in the biography written by Shi Jian for Shi Bin and in the tomb table written by Wu Kuan:

The lord once said: In terms of etiquette, the legitimate and illegitimate sons have different ranks, and I should implement it in one family. Therefore, when dividing the property, he made it so that the other sons could not compete with the eldest son. He also said: The future generations should uphold this law without fail.

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Shi Jian also deliberately emphasized the status of Shi Sheng and Shi Heng as the eldest sons in other occasions, "(Shi Bin) had five sons, and the lord of Xiyin Mansion was the eldest son," "The late lord Heng was the eldest son." In the biography written for his father Shi Heng, he even pointed out that Shi Bin's last words were specifically for Shi Heng:

The late lord was serious and quiet when he was young, he did not meddle in affairs, and everyone thought he was not wise. Qingyuan alone loved him uniquely, often holding him on his lap, and proudly told his guests, "He will be a fine vessel in the future, but I won't be able to see it." On his deathbed, when dividing his property among his sons, he ordered that they should not compete with the eldest son, intending to pass it on to him in turn, and said that future generations should uphold this law and not change it.

In the late ancient Chinese society, when dividing property, the system of equal division among all sons was often adopted, and only the nobility would adopt the system of primogeniture. Under the system of equal division among all sons, the father, at least under normal circumstances, cannot deprive any son of his qualification as an heir, which has certain restrictions on the father's arbitrariness. However, Shi Bin's emphasis on "different ranks of legitimate and illegitimate sons" and the practice of dividing property "so that the other sons cannot compete with the eldest son" allows the father to freely determine the division of family property, which seems to show a typical trend of the nobility's etiquette becoming popularized on the surface. But once combined with other Shi family documents for analysis, the mystery can be found:

At the beginning of the country, the corvee was hard, and my family had many fields, all of which were given to the eldest son. The younger sons only got a hundred acres of land, and they were not involved in the corvee. This has since become a family rule.

At the beginning of the country, the corvee was very heavy, so the lord of Qingyuan established a family law, giving only a hundred acres of land to the illegitimate sons, who had no involvement in other matters, and only the eldest son was responsible for everything.

From the above historical materials, it can be seen that Shi Bin left most of the property to the eldest son, and only gave a hundred acres of land to the younger sons, with a gap of more than a hundred times between the two. This is actually determined by the consideration of the joint relationship between the tax burden and the property, not purely the result of the popularization of the clan law. According to the family law established by Shi Bin, the eldest son needs to take on the responsibility of the grain chief, while the other branches can be exempted from most of the heavy tax burdens. The fact that the position of grain chief was succeeded by the eldest son for four generations in a row is the best embodiment of strictly implementing this family law. As for why only a hundred acres of land were given instead of more, refer to the relevant records in the "Wujiang County Annals" of the Chongzhen era:

Families with land consider the corvee to be a burden. How much is the rent per acre, and in addition to the autumn grain, there are many corvees. In the past, there were mouse hair counts (commonly known as spear tips), those with more cultivated land were in the front, and those with heavy corvees were in the front, and they ended in turn. Therefore, most of the men with a hundred acres of land have no corvee burdens. Recently, there is no land without corvee.

The "corvee" here specifically refers to various miscellaneous services outside of the regular services of the Li Jia, which are primarily concerned with urging the autumn grain. In the tax system of the early Ming Dynasty, the method of assigning miscellaneous services was to first correspond the specific service targets to the corresponding household rules, and then assign them to the corresponding households, more precisely, mainly through measures to levy miscellaneous services from wealthy households with strength to ensure the operation of the tax system. Accordingly, not all households in the compilation have to bear this kind of corvee. If implemented at the specific operational level, it is often assigned to wealthy households with strength to deal with miscellaneous services in an irregular form, rather than using a rotation method like the regular services of the Li Jia. It was not until the establishment of the Equal Corvee Law that the method of assigning miscellaneous services on a per capita basis officially appeared. According to this principle, there is indeed a possibility that those with less than a hundred acres of land do not have to serve various miscellaneous services. However, Japanese scholar Takemi Naohiro found another example of not serving the regular services of the Li Jia but only assigning miscellaneous services: in the Li Jia system established during the Hongwu period

According to the "Tombstone Inscription" written by Wu Kuan, Shi Bin had five sons: Shi Sheng, Shi Min, Shi Hao, Shi Chang, and Shi Ang. Apart from Shi Sheng, who inherited the family property and the position of grain chief as the eldest son, Shi Min, Shi Hao, and Shi Chang successively moved out and engaged in various industries, becoming the founders of Wanli Room, Louxia Room, and Suzhou Room, and did not stick to the hundred acres of land given by Shi Bin. Among them, the second son, Shi Min, "made a living by farming and reading," and "never entered the public office in his life"; the fourth son, Shi Chang and his descendants "moved to Wuchang, engaged in the business of fine cloth," and achieved great success in Suzhou city through business; the youngest son, Shi Ang, became a hereditary military household in Nanjing Shence Gate, and his descendants successively served as the total flag in Yunnan Anning Thousand Households. By the time of his great-grandson, Shi Yonggui "inherited the call to Shaanxi Yulin Guard, accumulated military merits, and was promoted to the hereditary commander."

Shi Sheng had two sons, in addition to the eldest son Shi Heng who served as the grain chief, there was also the second son Shi Huang. Unlike his uncles, Shi Huang did not leave his hometown, but "made a living by farming and planting. On his days off, he would dig canals to irrigate the garden, plant pines with a hoe, fish and hunt, and enjoy himself in leisure. People thought he had the style of Pang De Gong, so they named him 'Jia Xuan Scholar'." Shi Huang's second son, Shi Tang, "was good at managing life, although he inherited his father-in-law's property, his fields and houses were expanded, and his assets were huge," and he embarked on the road to wealth through his own efforts and the substantial family wealth of his wife, Mrs. Zhang.

By the time of Shi Heng, the Shi family had grown large and prosperous, "with thousands of members, all governed by public principles," and gradually shifted the focus of family management to investing in cultural construction. Behind this transformation, there is an interesting story. According to the "Biography of the Late Friend Gui Mansion Lord" by Shi Jian: One day, "the Minister of the Ministry of Rites, Xie Langzhong, was touring the southeast, and he summoned and asked about the benefits and diseases, and the late lord answered them all. He then asked about his studies, and he declined because he did not study. He said: 'You are a rich man's son, young, and if you don't study now, when will you?' The late lord heard this, was deeply moved, and studied daily, even when he was very busy, he did not give up." Under the guidance and advice of Xie Langzhong, Shi Heng was no longer satisfied with just being a grain chief, but turned to study wholeheartedly, "As a result, he further encouraged himself to study hard, and although he did not study for the sake of chapters and sentences, he practiced the business of raising children, and there was nothing

When Shi Heng passed on his substantial family property to his son Shi Jian, Shi Jian was initially somewhat reluctant. According to the "Biography of the Late Friend Gui Mansion Lord" written by him:

One day, he suddenly called for a drink with those he had been dealing with, and told them that he was handing over the family affairs to Shi Jian. Shi Jian wept and refused, and everyone insisted on refusing for him. The late lord said, "Let me enjoy my old age." So he dared not refuse.

Shi Jian, also known as Xicun, was born in the ninth year of Xuande (1434) and died in the ninth year of Hongzhi (1496). Unlike the early heads of the Shi family, he was a person who "had a teacher's inheritance and understood world affairs", and was able to "interpret the Book of Rites and other books, bringing out what the virtuous scholars have not had; manage water and taxes and other matters, considering what should be done according to the times." Although he himself did not serve in the government, and even did not serve as a grain chief, he used his family wealth to entertain guests from all over the world, becoming a famous hermit in the Wu region, and was known as one of the "Four Great Commoners of Jiangnan" along with contemporaries like Shen Zhou. Wu Kuan, who was of the same age as Shi Jian, was a famous official in the Ming Dynasty, and served as the Minister of Rites, and had a good reputation in the Suzhou area. He and Shi Jian "were friends for forty years", and after Shi Jian's death, he wrote a tombstone inscription for him, which became an important source of information about Shi Jian.

According to Wu Kuan, Shi Jian "had a remarkable appearance, with his beard and mustache bristling; he loved socializing all his life, and because of his integrity, scholars from all over the world never stopped visiting his door. He was especially good at face-to-face confrontation, so people praised him for his straightforwardness," "His footprints did not go beyond a hundred miles, but people in Jiangsu and Zhejiang knew his name. Even the county magistrates all respected him," and he was appreciated and trusted by high officials such as Xu Youzhen and Wang Shu. He had offered advice and strategies for local affairs many times, "His thoughts on governing the country, correcting customs, water conservancy, money and grain, thinking about changes and difficulties, resisting and correcting his will, he could surely bring peace to the country, proclaim peace to all sides, adapt to the times, propose plans for peace and prosperity, truly a vessel of both civil and military virtues, a pillar of integrity and burden." Shi Jian had a close relationship with the famous people in Wu region. He often gathered a few old friends, either to appreciate antiques and calligraphy and paintings, or to travel in the mountains and rivers, and made friends in

During Shi Jian's lifetime, the Shi family of Huangxi became even more prosperous. With strong financial support, Shi Jian quickly became a famous collector in Jiangnan. According to the "Biography of People in Wu Region" written during the Longqing period, Shi Jian "especially liked to collect artifacts from the Three Dynasties and the Qin and Han Dynasties, as well as calligraphy and paintings from the Tang and Song Dynasties," such as "Chu Sui Liang's Book of Emperor Tang Wen's Mourning Text" and "Zhao Mo's Copy of the Thousand Characters of the Jin People" from the Tang Dynasty. Shi Jian also built a large number of buildings. The Xiaoya Hall he built in the first year of Hongzhi (1488) was "a foot high, made entirely of paulownia and cypress"; in addition, he built a series of places for leisure and entertainment, and built a large house in the east of the river for his second son. All of these reveal the economic strength of the Shi family of Huangxi during Shi Jian's time from different perspectives.

Against this background, as the eldest son of the Shi family, Shi Jian began to use the language system of the ritual system to renovate the family temple, compile the family tree, establish the sacrificial system, and personally or invite friends to compile various biographies of his ancestors. According to Shi Jian's "Xicun Collection", the Shi family temple was started to be built during Shi Sheng's time. He set up four niches in the temple, "respecting from the great-grandfather Nanzhai Wenxue to the father Qingyuan Gong", that is, according to the small clan sacrificial law, he worshipped the three generations from Shi Sheng's great-grandfather Shi Rong, grandfather Shi Juren to his father Shi Bin. Among them, Shi Rong represents the great clan of the Shi family in Jiaxing, and is the ancestor. Although Shi Juren has moved to Huangxi, he is still only considered as a small clan of the Shi family in Jiaxing.

Shi Heng inherited Shi Sheng's will and made improvements to the niche system designed by his father, where the niches for the ancestors, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers were arranged in a line to the right of the "spiritual path". According to the small clan ritual system, "from the great-grandfather down, the ancestral hall also has four niches standing side by side. Those who succeed the great-grandfather can prepare four generations of main coffins. Those who succeed the great-grandfather, leave the easternmost niche empty. Those who succeed the grandfather, leave the middle two niches empty. Those who succeed the father, leave the three niches in the middle empty. If the number of generations of the great clan is not full, the niches of the respected ones are also left empty according to the rules of the small clan." Shi Heng probably followed the principle of respecting the east, moved Shi Rong to the easternmost niche that was originally vacant, and moved his great-grandfather Juren and grandfather Shi Bin to the right in turn, placing his father Shi Sheng in the niche on the far left, forming a line of niches for the ancestors, grandfathers, great-grandfathers, and high

In the beginning, Xiyin once built a temple... The late father made sacrificial vessels according to the rites... He chose more than eighty acres of fertile land to supply for the sacrificial affairs. After issuing a written notice to his descendants, he also set several rules and engraved them on a stone under the temple. The main teachings were to strictly distinguish between the legitimate and illegitimate, to be sincere and respectful, and to strive for abundance and cleanliness. He was particularly earnest in warning against negligence and forgetfulness.

The management rights of the Shi family temple were passed from Shi Sheng to Shi Heng and then to Shi Jian, all under the control of the eldest legitimate son; they also paid great attention to the principle of "strictly distinguishing between legitimate and illegitimate" in sacrificial affairs, all of which reflect the special status of the eldest legitimate family in clan sacrifices. The four generations of Shi Bin's ancestors and grandchildren served as grain chiefs, accumulating a large amount of family property. Compared with other family members, they had absolutely superior economic strength. The Shi family temple was established and has been managed by the eldest son of the Shi family, which confirms this point.

According to the "Wujiang County Annals" completed during the Chongzhen period, Shi Jian began to renovate the Shi family temple in the fifth year of Chenghua (1469) and completed it two years later. Zhou Ding's "Record of the Shi Family Temple" has a detailed record of it:

This summer, Songling Shi Jian completed the family temple. I went to see it, it was not newly built, but renovated from the old... Since the first great examination, Xiyin Gong had a special niche system, which was slightly more luxurious, and the examination friend Gui Gong removed the algae paintings as per the rites, and the special four niches still remained the same. Jian... made three niches... In the autumn of the seventh month of the seventh year of Chenghua.

The main reason for Shi Jian's renovation of the family temple was the issue of the niche system. When Shi Sheng founded the family temple, he set up four parallel niches to worship three generations of people from Shi Rong to Shi Bin. By the time of Shi Heng, the worshippers also added his father Shi Sheng. From the perspective of Shi Heng, this is in line with the relevant regulations on the worship of ancestors by rank officials in the "Ming Ji Li", which is based on Zhu Xi's family rites:

Inside the ancestral hall, there are four niches in the northernmost rack, each with a table. The great-grandfather occupies the first niche in the west, followed by the great-grandmother; the great-grandfather occupies the second niche, followed by the great-grandmother; the grandfather occupies the third niche, followed by the grandmother; the father occupies the fourth niche, followed by the mother.

However, for ordinary people, they could only worship two generations of ancestors according to the regulations. In the seventeenth year of Hongwu (1384), under the suggestion of Hu Bingzhong, the county magistrate of Xingtang, Zhu Yuanzhang changed the worship of two generations of ancestors by common people to three generations of ancestors, and tacitly allowed common people to worship four generations of ancestors in the "Teaching People's Plaque". In Wujiang during the Ming Dynasty, many families of scholars and officials "used pillars to supply three generations, and there were also those who worshipped four generations according to the system of Hu Bingzhong, the county magistrate of Xingtang at the beginning of the country". The reason why the Shi family temple created by Shi Sheng adopted this "rightward path of the gods" niche system to worship three generations of ancestors is that it swayed on the boundary of the clan law between the common people and the nobles, and flexibly mixed the rituals of the common people and the rituals of the scholars' family temples. However, Shi Sheng's understanding of the small clan law is still at a primary stage, and the four niches he made are "slightly more luxurious", which is somewhat presum

Shi Juren was not the eldest son of Shi Rong. He had an elder brother, Shi Zizhen, in Jiaxing. After he moved to Wujiang, he could only be considered as a concubine son compared to the Shi family in Jiaxing, but for the descendants of the Huangxi Shi family, he could be considered as the first ancestor. By analogy, Shi Bin, as the only son of Shi Juren, can completely become the great ancestor of the succession in Huangxi according to the saying "the other son is the ancestor, and the succession is the clan" in the ritual system. However, due to the deep-rooted feelings for the small clan ritual system, even in the era of Shi Jian, the great-grandson of Shi Bin, Shi Bin still did not completely get rid of the identity of the small clan concubine son under the Jiaxing great clan. In the biography written by Shi Jian for Shi Bin, he once positioned his great-grandfather's identity like this: "He belongs to the continuation of the small clan of the prefecture lord, but he is not like the incompetent, so that Jian is famous and makes him known at the time." Shi Jian, who is proficient in the

When Jian was in mourning, he referred to the rites and family rites, and the Yu sacrifice had already been announced. The great examination of Qingyuan Gong should be moved to another niche, and your examination should enter this niche, there is a gradual process. Suddenly, after two years, the heart of the sacrifice is unbearable to speak, but the ritual has a constant system? Moving the sacrifice and all the masters are moved, not sacrificing to the ancestors, but not what is often told.

In order to prevent Shi Bin from moving to the shrine from becoming a reality, Shi Jian decided to use the clan law of the great clan. First, he repositioned the identity of Shi Juren, changing from a small clan son to a different son, that is, the ancestor who did not move when he first moved. In this way, Shi Bin immediately succeeded as the great clan of the succession. Then, in order to cooperate with the great clan sacrificial method, he also specially renovated the niches of the family temple, hoping to change the four-niche system of "the path of the gods to the right" to the three-niche system of "left Zhao and right Mu", and find the sacrificial rules that meet his wishes. However, he soon discovered that according to the current system of left Zhao and right Mu, the biggest change is to change the worship of Shi Juren's different son, and correspondingly, Shi Rong no longer needs to be specially worshipped. And as the second ancestor of the great clan, Shi Bin will still be moved out of the east niche when the sixth ancestor enters the temple:

Therefore, three niches were made. The central niche worships the first ancestor, called Dongxuan; the eastern niche worships the great-grandfather, which is Qingyuan; the western niche worships the ancestor Xiyin. When the auspicious sacrifice is about to be offered, the sacrifice is on the left of the central niche, like the legacy of the ancient Zhao Temple. The master of Yougui is in the eastern niche, as the fourth generation. The master of the central niche always lives in honor and does not move, and the fifth generation will be sacrificed in order. The sacrifice of Xiyin is on the right of the central niche, like the intention of the Mu master. The sixth generation will then sacrifice the master of the eastern niche, enter the sacrifice in the central niche, like the ceremony of the second generation. The master of the second generation will be buried in the tomb.

Therefore, Shi Jian, who "loves the old but does not stick to it", after repeated discussions with his teacher Zhou Ding from Jiashan, invented a set of strategies that seemed to be left Zhao and right Mu, but could keep Shi Bin in the family temple for a long time. Through this revision of the niche system, Shi Jian once and for all regarded Shi Bin as the ancestor who was always sacrificed but not buried:

Let the master of the fourth generation move to the south of the position of the second generation, then the second generation will always be sacrificed but not buried, and the master of the fifth generation should move to the position of the third generation, then the master of the third generation will be buried as the ancient law. It is appropriate for the master of the fifth generation to live in the south of the third generation, and to be Zhao and Mu with the fourth generation, not to face the master of the second generation, so that the position of the third generation is always empty in the north of the middle and right, until the sixth and seventh generations are to be sacrificed, then the masters of the fourth and fifth generations are also buried. And the first and second masters, those who are always respected get the constant of the ritual, and those who are always sacrificed get the change of the ritual. Those who move and sacrifice and bury are all not lost their constant. Private grace is used to express public justice, and to make the order of Zhao and Mu not confused. Reduce the four niches to three, and the system is set here.

The issue of burial is one of the most sensitive topics in the clan system. It is not as simple as where to place the ancestor's tablet, and it often involves many interests of living people in real life. If handled carelessly, it will be heavily criticized. After Shi Jian's efforts, he finally transformed the small clan sacrificial method and the four-niche system of "the path of the gods to the right" created by Shi Sheng. Under the new great clan sacrificial method, Shi Bin is often sacrificed in the north of the eastern niche, and has the same high status as the ancestor Juren. Shi Juren is worshipped as a constant respecter with the identity of a different son, and Shi Bin is worshipped as a constant sacrificer with the identity of a great clan son. And the third generation Shi Sheng and the following generations can no longer cite the example of Shi Bin, they must follow the strict Zhao and Mu system, "bury as the ancient law". The three generations of the Shi family have been tirelessly making articles on the niche system, indicating that the ritual is selectively followed with the personnel, which is the so-called "the peace of the ritual, arises from righteousness". More importantly, Shi Jian handled the contradiction between

Alas! It is easy to build a temple, but it is difficult to change the niche system. The niche system is set and the burial is not buried, the system is particularly difficult. It is said that the Shi family temple was built by Xiyin, not the beginning of Jian, it is appropriate to say that Jian's dedication to filial piety and righteousness between the rituals, the work is twice as much as the author. Therefore, it is said: it is not new, but also made.

Zhou Ding completely denied the construction of the Shi Sheng father and son's family temple, and then evaluated Shi Jian's transformation action is not as simple as "old and new", but the real initiator of the Shi family's clan law practice, which shows from one side the deep fear of the Zhu family's family rituals and the Daming Ji rituals in the practice of the clan rituals in Wuzhong. Even if the restriction of "the ritual does not go down to the common people" has been broken through in the folk at that time, those sacrificial methods that do not conform to the ritual system will still be despised by the literati. By timely and flexible reform of the niche system, Shi Jian indeed felt much more at ease. Four years after Shi Jian changed the niche system, in the eleventh year of Chenghua (1475), Zhou Hongmo, the wine of the Imperial College, proposed to rectify the system of the ancestral hall, replacing "the path of the gods to the right" with "left Zhao and right Mu". From the beginning of the Ming Dynasty to this era, the rich class like the Huangxi Shi family has experienced about a hundred years of development, and has reproduced four to five generations. The various arrangements

From Shi Sheng to Shi Jian, they have always followed the family law of Shi Bin allowing the eldest son to monopolize the family wealth, instead of adopting the most popular equal division system at that time. Shi Heng's second son, Shi Duo, and his son Shi Yongji also had to find another way out, going to the prince's mansion to serve, respectively serving as the companion reader of the Qin prince's mansion and the food official of the Yi prince's mansion. However, when Shi Jian himself passed on to his son, he encountered some troubles. Shi Jian had two sons, the eldest son Yongxi, nicknamed Nanyuan, and the second son Yongling, nicknamed Songqiu, "The Lord of Xicun Mansion loved the Lord of Songqiu Mansion because of his cleverness and good writing." According to the "Tombstone of Songqiu Shi Gong" written by Lv Nan:

The public surname is Shi, the name is Yongling, the word is Dezheng, and Songqiu is his alias. ... The public has a strange bone, soaring high and high, with bright eyes like electricity, and a beard about a foot long like a halberd, looking like a fairy. He is simple and alert, and he has no childish heart when he was a child. Every word and every step is self-disciplined. His mother died early, and the public called the sky and jumped on the ground, crying in the rain and wind. Although it is out of childish admiration, it is actually strong. When the husband's energy is slightly longer, he inherits his family's learning, and is dedicated to the career of raising a child. He reads almost a full car. The people who the Xicun gentleman interacts with are all famous people in the world, such as Wu Gong of Paoan, Du Gong of Xuanjing, Li Gong of Fanan, and Wu Gong of Lizhai. The public is engaged in the classics and has a great understanding. The Xicun gentleman is happy and says: This is my family's dragon matchmaker.

From these heartfelt words, it can be imagined that Shi Jian himself should be very fond of his second son Yongling, even at the expense of building a new house in Hama East outside the main house, to give Yongling to establish his own family. On the occasion of the completion of the house, he specially wrote the article "Sacrifice to the New Gate of Dongbin", showing special attention: "The family's exit is only governed by the gods. My son Yongling will live here, so I dare to use the ceremony of clear wine and common shame to announce to your great god, God, please inspect it, and still enjoy it." This shows his special favor for Yongling. However, in his later years, he still passed on the management rights of the family business and the sacrificial field to his eldest son Yongxi, "dividing the family business and following the ancestral law", thus practicing the concept of respecting the eldest son. In the family temple, he informed the ancestors of this decision, showing a very contradictory mentality:

I have inherited the family business for twenty-eight years, but I am not good at playing and have nothing to gain, which is a shame for my ancestors. Now I am tired of diligence, and I will pass on the family affairs to my eldest son Yongxi tomorrow, and my second son Yongling will move to the new house in Hama East. I dare not tell. Be careful to tell.

Despite this, the eldest son inheritance system still could not be maintained forever. By the generation of Shi Jian's eldest great-grandson Shi Chang, the family law of Shi Bin, which had been adhered to for more than a hundred years, was finally completely changed. Shi Chang and his two brothers, Shi Lun and Shi Duan, adopted the method of equally dividing the family property, "the three brothers each got 4,000 acres of land." In fact, as early as the generation of Shi Jian, serving as the grain chief was no longer the patent of the Huangjiaxi clan. For example, Hong Kui, the son of Yongling, once served as the grain chief as the head of the Hama East House. However, Shi Hongkui was not proficient in this way. "He entrusted Xu Huaicha, a relative, to take charge of it due to his old age. Xu, however, spent his days gambling and spending money. He also used the family property of the main house, which was over 10,000, and leveled the bushel with the water valley, thus invading more than 10,000 gold." Due to the wrong person entrusted, this fraudulent behavior was reported, and Hong Kui had to

For the Shi family of Huangxi, the abandonment of the eldest son inheritance system corresponds to the decline of the grain chief system. Because as explained earlier, the original intention of implementing the latter was to match the former. By the generation of Shi Chang's eldest son Shi Xueshi, the system of the eldest son leading the sacrifice could still be barely maintained. Xueshi's second son Zai Shi and his eldest brother Zai Dao had serious disagreements on the issue of ancestor worship. At that time, "the ancestor's tomb has been missing for a long time, (Zai Shi) gathered the clan to worship once a year, although it was not satisfactory to the elders, but the knowledgeable people praised his filial piety." The two sons completely gave up the previous ideal of the eldest son leading the sacrifice by separately sweeping the tomb. By the middle of the Wanli period, the Shi family temple was abandoned, and the "eldest son also ended." At the same time, the Hama East House adopted the method of "four sons rotating to offer sacrifices every year" to take over the responsibility of the main house to worship the ancestors. Shi Ce, the head of the Hama East House, expressed deep dissatisfaction with the long-term inaction

Section 3: The Decline of the Family

Starting from the early Ming Dynasty, in addition to undertaking the duty of the grain chief, the Shi family also had to "serve as the post duty of Dongguang, Shandong, and spend hundreds of gold each year", which became an additional heavy burden. Japanese scholar Yasuji Shimizu attributed this unique phenomenon to the aid of Jiangnan to the post transmission of North China. As early as the 1950s, he conducted a special study on this topic and pointed out that during the Hongwu period, North China was sparsely populated and there was a serious shortage of horses for transportation. Therefore, the method of selecting rich households from the southern provinces such as Jiangsu and Zhejiang to raise horses and deliver them to various places in the north was born. Those who cultivate and pay heavy taxes on official land are not included. Those horses that aid to North China are specifically called "South Horses" and have a relatively independent management mechanism. However, because "the people in the south are not accustomed to the water and soil, do not know the nature of horses, and often hire local people to raise horses, they not only pay wages, but also do not return to farming", it becomes a heavy duty. The Shi family of Huang

At the beginning of the country, those with many households and light grains were chosen as horse heads, and those below were watermen. The head duty is the heaviest, with three pairs in one. Those who do not have enough land are attached to it and become horse armor; those attached to the armor become horse households; those who pay rice annually to help with the cost of workers' food and forage are called horse grains; those who collect money from time to time to buy horses and supplies are called horse prices, all of which are calculated by verifying the acreage, generally exceeding the tax grain. The horse head is bred and raised in the northern post, and the cost is endless.

As can be seen from the above, the heavy duty of "South Horse" includes many names, among which the horse head duty is the heaviest, and the horse armor, horse household, horse grain, horse price, etc. are all attached duties, with the degree of lightness and heaviness decreasing in turn. The Shi family's main house alone bears the horse head duty, and the cost is endless, which shows the large number of cultivated civilian fields. At the same time, the heavy burden also adds another important chip to the practice of the eldest son inheritance system. As for why the Shi family has so many civilian fields, some clues may be found in a decree issued in the first year of Hongxi (1425): "The decree orders all households to join the army, all families to die, and the deserted fields left by the confiscated households. The local officials should find ways to reclaim them, and the official and civilian fields should all be taxed according to the civilian fields." According to the "Ancestral Examination of Qingyuan Prefecture" recorded by Shi Jian:

At the beginning of Hongxi, the decree ordered that if there were households that were extinct and the fields were barren, they would be exempted from the quota, allowing the people to reclaim them and tax them lightly. However, the laws and regulations were heavy, and those who were false would die together with the officials and the elders. The clerks danced with words, demanding a hundred ends, and the noisy ones held the short and long to please their private, others shook their hands and touched the ban, and dared not report. The prefecture lord said with emotion: This is the virtue of the emperor, can we fear disaster to harm the people? He then submitted a report, which could reduce taxes by several stones, and the prefecture lord's family had no private. The old and the young cried and thanked, saying: Without you, we would not have been blessed by the emperor.

Shi Bin led the villagers to actively arbitrage from the system, and reclaimed a large amount of deserted fields from extinct households. The pattern of "no other clans from Xinan to Shengze" may have been formed under this opportunity. Shi Bin, with such a keen sense of smell, not only made the Shi family of Huangxi quickly develop into one of the leading large landlords in Wujiang, but also established his lofty status in the family history. Whether the newly reclaimed fields were originally official or civilian fields, they were all taxed lightly according to the civilian fields, effectively avoiding the risks borne by the heavy official fields. However, the Ming Dynasty's corvee compilation followed the principle of "heavy taxes and light corvee, light taxes and heavy corvee". The corvee burden rate of official fields was much lower than that of civilian fields, especially the labor force used for transportation, communication, and civil engineering. All were assigned to "civilian fields", and official fields were not among them. The Shi family, which owned more civilian fields, therefore undoubtedly had the heavy duty of "horse head duty".

The rich households who undertook the post duty often could not serve in person, and they adopted the method of "hiring people to serve" very early. They were served by the households who undertook the duty, or servants, adopted sons and other relatives. Shi Ren played such a role. Even so, the Shi family still spent hundreds of taels of silver on raising horses in Shandong every year. To commend Shi Ren's special achievements, after his death, Shi Sheng specially "erected a pillar in the east of the temple to worship him". It was not until the Hongzhi period that Li Bing, the patrol officer of Ying Tian, converted all the summer taxes and other public lessons into rice, and paid them differently with the autumn grain. The water horse station's attached duty was no exception. All were "compiled into the autumn grain items, levied silver to solve the prefecture, and transferred to each post to buy and supplement horses for use". The system of South Horse aiding North China existed in name only, which made the Shi family of Huangxi breathe a sigh of relief, so "the main house was rich in Jiangnan during the Zhengjia period".

From the beginning of the Ming Dynasty to the Chenghong period, the four or five generations of the Shi family's main house had accumulated a lot of wealth through farming. Shi Jian not only built gardens and rooms on a large scale, but also collected a large number of "Three Dynasties Qin and Han objects and books, paintings and famous utensils since the Han, Tang and Song Dynasties", becoming one of the most famous collectors in the Wuzhong area. Collecting is certainly a hobby of literati, but in Jiangnan during the Ming and Qing Dynasties, it was also a common way of investment. Some scholars have found that in the Jiangnan region, some wealthy families have organically integrated industries such as rice, silk weaving, and art pawn through the establishment of pawnshops, and the art works as collateral have also become an important source of collections for pawnshop operators. The famous Xiang Yuanbian, Wang Shizhen and others were all pawnshop operators and collectors active in the Jiawan period. The pawnshop business not only brings substantial profits to the operators, but also makes the ways of wealth accumulation and investment more diversified. In this sense, the Huangxi Shi family's investment in calligraphy, painting and ant

In the first year of Hongzhi (1488), the Huangxi Shi family's house unfortunately caught fire, and "the utensils and playthings, books, calligraphy, famous paintings, hanging scrolls, steles, etc. that have been collected for generations, a total of eighteen rooms, were all gone." The loss of antiques, playthings, law books, and famous paintings in the fire cannot be fully accounted for. Shi Jian's friend Du Mu once selected the main ones in his "Yuyi Compilation" and made a special statistic:

Cai Duanming's eight posts (Hong Xingzu, Fan Dayan's postscript, Hu Gui and others' titles); Lu Huang's Zhaojun Picture; Monk Juran's Landscape (large size); Han Xizai's Night Banquet Picture; Li Longmian's Nine Songs Picture; Song Xian's Various Posts; Wang Yi's Two Posts (large cursive script); Song people's painting of Wenji returning to Han; Zhao Qianli's Fulu Shouxing Picture (long size); Zhu Kaoting and Liushilang's posts (Gong Shangshu Yang Tieya's postscript); Song Xiaozong's hand-written edict to Yu Prime Minister; Qianli Spring River Waiting for Crossing Picture (small size); Guo Xi's One View of Pine Picture for Birthday; Zhao Ziguo's Three Poems of Plum and Bamboo; Zhao Ziang's True Book (Dong Kai's postscript); Chen Juzhong's Five Horses Picture; Yuan Zhang Shidao's Book Mulan Flower Curtain Poem (post-Yuan people's inscription); Shunju's Painting of Hanging Silk Begonia (with poem); Shunju's Banji Fan Picture (with poem); Zi Ang

Such a painful loss indeed made the daily life of the main branch of the family become strained for a while. Shi Jian's son, Yongxi, "led his subordinates to be more frugal and diligent, living only in plain clothes, not indulging in luxury food and clothing", but it still did not fundamentally shake the wealth accumulation of the Huangxi Shi family over the years. On the one hand, because Shen Zhou had appreciated some of Shi Jian's collections in the Shuiyue View a few days before the fire, a box of valuable Tang calligraphy and paintings and a box of Ming Dynasty calligraphy and paintings were fortunately spared, including "Xue Shanggong's copy of Zhong Ding's suspected true relics, twenty volumes, ... and Ou Lu's dream banquet post, Zhao's copy of Ji Jin's thousand characters, Chu Suliang's Emperor Wen's mourning album", "Tang's right army's Orchid Pavilion Preface, Song's Zhiyong's Thousand Characters, Yan Zhenqing and Zhang Xun's books, Chu Suliang's copy of the Orchid Pavilion Preface, Shen Du, Song Ke, Xu Tianquan and other books, Dai Wenjin, Shen Shitian and other paintings" in

According to the "Xicun Diary", in the great fire of the first year of Hongzhi, the rooms that were burned also included "three rooms of rice warehouse, five rooms of old machine room, and sixty rooms of pestle room", indicating that in addition to the grain processing industry, the Shi family had been involved in the silk weaving industry at the latest during the Chenghong period. This was exactly the critical period when the production center of Suzhou's silk weaving industry shifted from Suzhou city and Wujiang county to the towns in the south of Wujiang. The strong intervention of the Huangxi Shi family was by no means a historical coincidence.

At the same time, the academic and social network accumulation completed by Shi Jian gradually began to exert its power. His favorite son, Shi Yongling, "inherited his family's learning, devoted himself to studying for the imperial examination, and read books almost to the full car." He was expected to make a breakthrough in the imperial examination with the expectation of several generations of farming and reading since Shi Heng. "After entering the school, he was ranked first in the annual examination by the school inspector, and there was still a surplus reward; when he was taken to another county for the examination, he was always ranked first." However, "he went to the autumn examination eight times, and was listed in the second list five times, but the uncut jade of Lingyang was never cut."

Shi Yongxi's son, Shi Chen, finally became the first Jinshi (successful candidate in the highest imperial examinations) of the Huangxi Shi family in the second year of Jiajing (1523). Shi Chen was a bookworm since he was a child. During the Hongzhi period, "the family suffered from depression, he had no worries, he just held a book and ran away." He successively held the positions of the principal of the Ministry of Works, the staff member of the Henan Department of the Ministry of Punishment, the joint affairs of Shandong, and the adviser of Yunnan. Because of his upright character, he was repeatedly frustrated in the officialdom. Not only did he not rise rapidly, but he also offended the imperial inspector Zhou in Shandong. Before he took office as the adviser of Yunnan, he was dismissed early and returned to Huangxi to live at home. "He devoted himself to the study of the imperial examination, talked tirelessly every day, built a hut on the south of Ying Lake, and was therefore named Nanhu." Shi Chen's unsuccessful official career was soon forgotten by later generations, as can be seen from the preface written by Xu Yinglei for the "Xic

Shi Chen's eldest son, Shi Chang, was originally a seed of reading. Later, because of his father's complaint, he sued the imperial inspector Zhou, and was implicated. "He was reprimanded and could not show his articles", losing his bright future, so he "closed his door and did not communicate, occasionally singing and responding with Shen Jiangcun, Wu Fengjiang, Peng Longchi, Xu Gaoyang and other officials." The second son, Shi Lun, served as the Tongpan of Lijiang Prefecture as a tribute student of the year, and then "served as the Tongzhi of Baochang Prefecture for his contribution to the spread of the news." The third son, Shi Duan, only had the status of an ordinary student. The most significant move in Shi Chang's life was to formally abolish the family law of Shi Bin, which had been adhered to for more than a hundred years, and to deal with the family property in an equal distribution. The mansion "Duanzi House", which was built by Shi Chen himself with "the energy of his whole life", was also sold to others. The Shi family's industry, which was rich in the south of the Yangtze River during the

In contrast, Shi Chen's brother, Shi Xiang, managed to recover slightly from the cultural construction since Shi Jian. Although Shi Xiang himself was only a national student and once served as a ceremonial official in the Prince Yi's Mansion, his eldest son, Shi Tianyu, also "entered the Southern Supervision by chance, and was not sold for several times". However, his grandson, Shi Mo, first became a provincial graduate in the year of Renwu (1582) in the Wanli period, and then became a vice-list in the year of Yiwei (1595), ranking second in the achievements and fame of the Shi family's descendants. Shi Mo successively served as the push official of Nanxiong Prefecture and the Tongpan of Wumeng Prefecture. His son, Shi Zhaolin, and Shi Ce jointly collated the "Zhi Shen Lu" and printed the record in the second year of Chongzhen. This edition became the earliest existing engraved version of "Zhi Shen Lu".

Chapter Three: The Benefits of Silk and Satin

After the middle of the Ming Dynasty, the official weaving bureau located in Suzhou city, in order to meet the increasing extra demand for silk from the court, massively adopted the "civilian machine" weaving system. This directly led to the gradual spread of the core technology of the silk industry from Suzhou city to ordinary towns. Towns in the southern part of Wujiang, including Huangxi, gradually rose, and a large amount of commercial capital poured in. All kinds of people in and around the towns relied on the loom for their livelihood, taking full advantage of the benefits of silk and satin.

This process coincides with the gradual decline of the Huangxi Shi family's main branch. At the same time, the branch founded by Shi Jian's second son, Shi Yongling, quietly rose with the rise of Huangxi market, gradually moving to the forefront of history. After five or six generations of attempts, their way of life changed from purely farming and reading to also engaging in the clothing business. They, along with the branch that had earlier moved to the vicinity of Changmen in Suzhou city, were deeply involved in the booming development of the silk industry in the south of the Yangtze River. Through the Shi family's documents such as "The Family Ride of the Shi Family in Wuzhong", "The Documentary Spectrum of the Shi Family in Wuzhong", and "The Self-Introduction of the Loyal and Dedicated Scholar of the World Ancestor", not only can we find some important clues about the family's involvement in the silk industry in Huangxi market in Wujiang and the western Jin Chang area of Suzhou city from the middle of the Ming Dynasty to the early Qing Dynasty, but it also helps to understand the deep social mechanisms why the Suzhou branch and the Bangdong branch actively participated in the production and circulation of "Zhi

Section One: The Rise of Huangxi Market

As mentioned earlier, Huangxi was still an ordinary village with hundreds of households in the early Ming Dynasty. In the "Wujiang Annals" compiled by Mo Dan during the Hongzhi period, it was still called "Huangjia Village", belonging to the second district of the twenty-three cities in the upper township of Fanyu, while the famous "Shengze" was also listed as a village, located in the first district of the twenty cities in the upper township of Chengyuan. The only decent town south of Pingwang in Wujiang County was Xinhang Market, which was also located along the canal. The market was "in the twenty-one cities, with a large population, forming its own market". Xinhang Market is separated by a river from Wangjiangjing Town in Jiaxing, Zhejiang, the latter of which "makes a lot of money from weaving silk and collecting white goods", and is even more prosperous than Xinhang Market. In the Wanli period of the Ming Dynasty, "there were more than 7,000 households, and they did not engage in farming". Although the two towns belong to two provinces, they are economically integrated. There is a Taiping Bridge between them. "The

Although the cultivation of mulberry and silkworm in Wujiang made significant progress in the early Ming Dynasty, with only 18,033 mulberry trees planted in the county during the Hongwu period, the number had increased to 44,746 by the seventh year of Xuande (1432), it was far from comparable to the nearby Zhejiang Jia and Hu prefectures. Some scholars have found that since the Ming Dynasty, places such as Changxing, Deqing, Gui'an, Wucheng in Huzhou, and Chongde, Jiaxing, and Tongxiang in Jiaxing, have generally planted mulberry and raised silkworms. Accordingly, towns such as Linghu, Shuanglin, and Puyuan have also developed into important centers for the production and sale of silk and silk products. In Wujiang County, apart from the slightly earlier rise of Zhenze Town, the later famous silk-weaving towns all gradually appeared at least after the Jia-Wan period. The Jiajing "Wujiang County Annals" first listed Shengze as a town:

Shengze, located in the twenty cities, is sixty miles southwest of the county seat, with a hundred households, and the market is based on cotton and silk.

With only a hundred households, its prosperity and scale obviously cannot be compared with Xinhang Market, which had a thousand households at the same time. The Chongzhen "Wujiang County Annals" once made a more vivid comparison of the town: "Next to Shengze Pond, it was a small village in the early Wanli period, and the houses were not connected, and a pig could be raised in a day." According to this statement, Shengze was still in the initial stage of transitioning from a village to a town during the Jia-Wan period, and it was somewhat forced to classify it as a town.

The establishment of Huangjiaxi Market was even later, and it was not until the Kangxi "Wujiang County Annals" that it was added as a new market town. Although according to the description in the Daoguang "Huangxi Annals", the local population increased daily during the Ming Xixuan period, and gradually pursued the benefits of silk weaving, this is after all a retrospective account by later generations. Most people tend to believe the more cautious statement, represented by the Daoguang "Huangxi Annals":

Before the Ming Dynasty, (Huangxi) was named after the village, and there were only a few hundred households. During the Kangxi period of the Qing Dynasty, there were more than 2,000 households, and trade was quite prosperous, so it was called a market.

The author of "Huangxi Annals", Qian Chi, clearly stated that the original source of this information came from the "Wujiang County Annals" compiled by Shen Tong during the Qianlong period. The earlier historical book, the Chongzhen "Wujiang County Annals", used "the land is frugal for two miles, there were a few hundred households in the old days, and now there are four to five thousand households" to depict the leapfrog development of Huangxi into a market town. The key to determining when Huangjiaxi became a market town mainly lies in judging whether the "now" in the Chongzhen "Wujiang County Annals" refers to the end of the Ming Dynasty, and if not, which time node it refers to. First of all, this passage in the Chongzhen "Wujiang County Annals" does not come from the mouth of the historical book, but from the supplement of his grandson Shi Zai Xiang, which can be determined from the original text of the annals introducing Huangjiaxi Town. After the words "now there are four to five thousand households", there are the words "the historical book has 'Huangxi Annals

The development from a few hundred households to more than two thousand and even four to five thousand households is not an overnight achievement, it requires a relatively long historical process. At present, the available literature, if we put aside the special case of the Chongzhen "Wujiang County Annals" that has been supplemented and processed, only the Shunzhi "Continued Wujiang County Annals" compiled by Chen Jiyan and Dong Erji remains among the Wujiang County Annals between the Jiajing and Kangxi periods. Unfortunately, this annals is a typical continuation, only recording the content of the continuation, basically not repeating the previous annals, not only does it not have separate volumes, but also does not see any content about the market town situation of the county. Fortunately, some important information is revealed in the tombstone of Shi Zongqin, the son of the historical book, given by Qian Jiang, a person from Jiaxing:

At the beginning of the change of the dynasty, ... the imperial historian Wu Yi had a grudge and wanted to slaughter the creek. He had already arrived at Pingwang, and everyone was in fear and didn't know what to do. Only you (referring to Shi Zongqin - note by the quoter) knocked on the camp to ask for a meeting, and spoke highly of the many good people in the place, insisting that there was no other, and repeatedly explained. The army was very pleased and went to the creek with you, and then dismissed it after admonishing. All the houses and huts of the creek people were preserved, and the descendants are still protected to this day, thanks to your efforts.

The "Imperial Historian Wu of the Army" here refers to "Wu Shengzhao, the General Town of Suzhou", who is known for his "cruelty and unkindness". It is not easy to be persuaded by Shi Zongqin. Shi Zongqin was born in the year of Dingwei in Wanli (1607) and died in the year of Renxu in Kangxi (1682). He was a county student in his early years. At the time of the Ming and Qing dynasties, "he gave up his ambition to advance, ... in his spare time from fishing and hunting, he planned strategies and became very wealthy." This shows that he mainly engaged in business after entering the Qing Dynasty. The end of the Ming Dynasty and the beginning of the Qing Dynasty happened to be the key period when Huangxi developed from a few hundred households to more than two thousand households. His choice to engage in business at this time was not accidental, and it reflected the historical fact that local business opportunities were emerging one after another. In the eyes of people like Wu Shengzhao, Huangxi can be listed alongside Pingwang Town and become the target of their looting and killing under the pretext of

After Huangxi escaped this disaster, the commanders of the Qing army in Suzhou increasingly understood the importance of Huangxi's position, and successively sent several town guards to station in Huangxi. The town guards were responsible for important tasks such as catching thieves and litigation, and they had great power and often harassed the people, causing the creek people to repeatedly strike the market, until the 13th year of Shunzhi (1656), when the patrol Li Sen first dismissed the town guards, which brought an end to the chaotic situation at the time of the change of the dynasty.

In the market towns of Jiangnan, the waterway with the most prosperous business and the most concentrated shops in the town is generally called "market river". The banks of the market river often become the place where ships dock and trade. If there is more than one bridge on the market river, it indicates that the daily contact between the settled population on both sides is becoming increasingly close. Therefore, the time of bridge construction can be used as one of the important indicators of the market town's development from the beginning to gradual integration. By the Daoguang period of the Qing Dynasty at the latest, there were a total of 5 bridges on the Huangxi Market River from east to west, namely:

Anxi Bridge, initially made of wood, was replaced with stone in the 16th year of Qianlong in the Qing Dynasty, and was rebuilt by the locals in the second year of Daoguang.

Changchun Bridge, built by Shi Sheng, a local resident, in the fourth year of Xuande in the Ming Dynasty, and rebuilt by Lu Shiyu, a local resident, in the 23rd year of Qianlong in the Qing Dynasty.

Tai'an Bridge, built in the fifth year of Chongzhen in the Ming Dynasty.

Sanyuan Bridge, commonly known as West Wooden Bridge, was built during the Ming Dynasty with stone foundation, rebuilt during the Qianlong period of the Qing Dynasty, and rebuilt by the locals in the 13th year of Jiaqing.

Wufu Bridge, built by Monk Zijue in the 31st year of Qianlong in the Qing Dynasty, with seven wooden arches, spanning the mouth of the North Angle Pond, like a long rainbow, collapsed in the 56th year of Qianlong.

Among them, Changchun Bridge and Tai'an Bridge were built in the early and late Ming Dynasty respectively, witnessing the significant historical transformation of Huangxi from a village to a city. The two bridges hold an important position in Huangxi City. In the mid-Qing Dynasty, "those who hire people set up Changchun and Tai'an bridges, waiting for people to be hired, known as 'walking the bridge', also known as 'looking for work'", becoming a special place for employers to find workers. In addition, Anxi Bridge and Sanyuan Bridge already had wooden prototypes in the Ming Dynasty. Among the five bridges over the Huangxi River, four were built before the end of the Ming Dynasty. From this, it can be inferred that the development of Huangxi in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties had reached a considerable scale.

Although the biography of Shi Zongqin and the construction years of the bridges on both sides of the Huangxi River have not perfectly filled the time gap before and after the establishment of Huangxi City, the Shengze Town nearby has been promoted to the first place in the county in the "Wujiang County Annals" in the 24th year of Kangxi:

Nowadays, merchants from far and near gather here, with more than ten thousand households. The prosperity and atmosphere make it the first among all towns.

Although the prosperity of Huangxi cannot be compared with Shengze, due to their geographical proximity, the two towns have an astonishing synchronicity in the development of sericulture and silk weaving. The "Wujiang County Annals" in the Qianlong period stated: "After Cheng Hong, there were also locals who excelled in their industries, and it became a custom. Therefore, among the residents within 40-50 li between Shengze and Huangxi, they all pursued the benefits of silk weaving." From this, it can be seen that at the latest after the mid-Ming Dynasty, the overall development trend of the silk weaving industry had appeared in the Shengze and Huangxi areas in the southern part of Wujiang, it's just that the degree of development and the time of becoming a town were in order. Nearby towns such as Zhenze, Shuangyang, and Yanmu are all within this range. In the early Qing Dynasty, in the area south of Pingwang in Wujiang County, with Shengze Town as the leader, and towns such as Huangxi City and Yanmu City as guards, the largest silk trade center in the country was formed:

The silk trade is most prosperous in Shengze, gathering merchants from all directions for trade, with daily transactions amounting to hundreds of gold, bustling streets, and soaring goods. It was once called Jin Chang, and now it is the most prosperous town. As for Yanmu, Zhenze, Pingwang, and Huangjiaxi, there are only silk trades, which are not even one-fifth of it, but they are also known for their prosperity, and people have become extravagant.

Driven by this trade network, "the southwestern road of the city from the fourth to the twentieth are all planting mulberry and sericulture." By the Qianlong period, "silk and cotton are expensive daily, sericulture is profitable, more people are planting mulberry, and there is almost no wasteland between the villages. At the turn of spring and summer, the green shade is everywhere, and there are hundreds of thousands of them in the city." In Huangxi, "the people of the stream did not practice sericulture in the Ming Dynasty. In the early Qianlong period of the national dynasty, there were quite a few silkworm farmers in the area of Diaozixu and Wuzixu." The large amount of mulberry leaves and silkworm silk produced locally undoubtedly provided a relatively sufficient raw material for the silk industry town group centered on Shengze, but it did not breed a new silk weaving center in Wujiang, "those who pursue the benefits of silk weaving with family businesses, only Shengze, Huangjiaxi, and Zhenze in the city are the most, although there are others, they cannot be one-tenth." The reason why the silk weaving industry towns are still concentrated in the southern part

If we want to trace the historical background of the silk weaving technology moving down from the city to the town, it may be related to the large-scale dispatch of silk weaving products by the official in the Jiangnan area. At the beginning of the Ming Dynasty, the annual production was set, "the total annual production is more than enough for expenses", but since the middle of the Ming Dynasty, with the increase in royal demand and the daily abuse of rewards, the annual production could not meet the growing official needs. Therefore, in addition to the annual production, there appeared additional dispatches, and the number increasingly exceeded the annual production and the quota for supply. Among the dyeing and weaving bureaus across the country, Nanzhili and Zhejiang are the key areas for annual changes and additional dispatches. To cope with this complex situation, the existing city official weaving and dyeing bureaus could not only expand their production scale, but also due to the dilemma of the craftsman system itself, the number of bureau craftsmen was greatly reduced compared to the early Ming Dynasty, and the production capacity of the weaving and dyeing bureau was also greatly reduced. Apart from a large number of changes to recruit civilian machine owners to lead the weaving, there is no other way

There is an important historical material in the "Wuqing Literature" of Kangxi that can be further confirmed: "Silk, there are two times for the head silkworm and the second silkworm. ... When the silkworm is finished, merchants from all over the big counties come to buy it. At ordinary times, there are machine owners in towns such as Zhenze, Shengze, and Shuanglin who buy warp and weft for weaving. There are also silk traders who go to various towns to sell to machine owners, called peddlers. The four townships in this town produce a lot of silk, but because there are no machine owners, the price is always lower than that of other towns." The "big county merchants" here should refer to the silk merchants living in big cities such as Suzhou and Hangzhou. They come to Jiaxing, Huzhou, Wujiang and other places to buy a large amount of silk goods every time the new silkworm is on the market, and bring them back to the city to weave into silk. At the same time, with the rapid development of spinning and weaving technology in the southern part of Wujiang and its surrounding areas, the machine owners in towns such

As the situation of receiving silver for weaving becomes more and more common, where to weave and who to weave has become less and less important, and the craftsmen "live in private homes for weaving and dyeing", no longer concentrating on production. The scattered craftsmen and craftsmen who cannot keep up with various market conditions in time have room for operation between the government and civilian machine owners. They are not only active in Suzhou city, but also take the opportunity to move around and widely seek opportunities for profit. In the Ming and Qing Dynasties, there was a special profession of dealers in Shengze Town, called "silk leaders". They either went to various villages to collect silk, or sat in the town, selling the silk pieces of machine owners in the surrounding four townships to all parts of the country, as recorded in the "Huangxi Annals" of the Daoguang period: "Those who sell silk are called silk leaders. They collect silk every day and sell it to Shengze and Wangjiangjing tooth lines. The patterns and weights must meet the needs of northern customers, otherwise they will be returned to the village." The emergence of these silk leaders is not only due to the single demand for silk trade, but also closely

The prosperity of rural handicraft industry is not only limited by the commercial capital that controls it, but also depends on the dispersed labor force capable of producing a large number of medium-quality silk products. Accompanied by the spread of textile technology from the prefecture city to the southern towns of Wujiang, the private silk weaving industry trade center moved southward. The "formerly known as Jin Chang, now the only prosperous town" in the previous materials depicts this situation.