Title and Fate of Scholar-Gentry Households in Chinese History: An Examination of the “Zihlu” Lineage within the Wujiang Huaxi Dynasty.

Informal: Table of Contents.

Formal and Academic: Table of Contents: (This statement stands alone as a heading without further explanation.)

Formally and academically, the text commences at introduction section, located at page 1.

Title: Chapter One - Family Manuscripts

or

Chapter One: The Family Manuscripts I apologize for the misunderstanding. Kindly find below the requested formal and academic English version of a given Chinese sentence:

[Chinese Sentence]

I regret to inform you that without a provided Chinese sentence, it is impossible for me to generate its formal and academic English equivalent.

The initial portion. The West Village Collection comprises the following: [Provide specific details about what the collection contains.]

The second section follows without further discussion or comment. “To the Registrar: [blank space for specific instruction or document title]”

or, if there is no specific title to include:

“To the Registrar:”

Chapter Two: The Designated Text

or

Chapter Two: This Chapter Discusses… (Specify the content of the chapter) Litian commencing domestic proceedings -—————————————……22

Title I: Adequately Provisioned, Previously Unmet Needs (First Section) I regret to inform you that no Chinese sentence has been supplied for translation into formal and academic English.

The second section follows without further discussion or comment. In the ritual proceedings, Zongzi presides.

Section three. Domestic-bred talents diminished to the tune of forty-one.

In formal and academic English, the sentence could be written as:

Chapter Three. (No additional discussion or comment.) Title: Silk and Splendor… (Chapter forty-seven)

The initial portion. Xing City, specifically located in Huangxi District, … .

In formal and academic English, the sentence would be:

The second section.

Can be revised as:

The content of the second section.

Or:

Section two contains the following information. In Fengjie District, Suzhou, the living quarters encompass an area of 52 square meters.

Section three. The residence located at Huangxihuan East number 56 holds no further discussion or comment.

Chapter Four: The Discourse in Question

Or, more succinctly:

Chapter 4. The Literature House encompasses a total area of approximately sixty square units.

The initial segment. (This is a more formal and academic way of referring to “The first section” without adding any further discussion or comment.) Produce the “Zi Shi Lu” artifact … Sixty units in total.

The second part of the discourse. At the age of sixty-five, Shi Zhongbin was (state the action or condition).

The third segment.

Or, if you prefer a more formal and academic style:

The third part. Kindly render homage and present offerings to the designated deity or entity at the prescribed altar. (Note: Replace “deity or entity” and “designated altar” with the specific objects, places, or deities being referred to in the original Chinese sentence.)

Chapter Five: The Discourse in Question

Or:

Chapter Five: This Chapter’s Analysis

Or:

Fifth Chapter: A Detailed Examination

Or:

The Fifth Part: In-Depth Exploration

Note that the title of the chapter remains unchanged, but the introductory phrase is formalized. The pixel color values are erratically shifting between black and white, approximating around the 80th instance.

The initial segment. (This maintains the original meaning but adopts a more formal and academic tone.) Proposal for Casket Design………….80

In formal and academic English, the sentence would be:

The second section.

Can be revised as:

The text comprises a second section. Upon approaching the temple grounds in Jinshing County. [Or]: Commencing entry into the temple complex located in Jinshing County.

Formally and academically, the finding presented in this study is as follows: Conclusively. I regret to inform you that no Chinese sentence has been supplied for transformation into formal and academic English.

Formally and academically, this discourse is designated as an introduction.

During the Ming Dynasty, encompassing a total of sixteen reigns, two palace revolutions occurred. The first coup took place during the Building Era of the Yongle Emperor’s reign in the Yongle Period, which is historically referred to as the “Yongle Palace Revolution.” The second coup transpired during the Jingtai Emperor’s reign in the Jingtai Period and is known as the “Restoration of the Southern Palace Coup.” Despite the substantial disparities in character, Event One and Event Two precipitously brought about the demise of the Han and Jing dynasties. These historical epochs underwent deliberate alterations or even intentional expungement. Following the ascension of the Ming Emperor Hongwu, the historical position of his precedessor and uncle, the Jing Emperor, or Emperor Jianwen, was restored posthumously. His temple name was formally designated as “Emperor Kangxi of Jing,” with the reverent titles “Reverentially Resplendent” and “Steadfast.” Following his self-proclaimed ascension to the throne as emperor, Mingde took deliberate actions including elimination, distortion, and concealment to comprehensively eradicate the architectural and political remnants of the Buildings and Reforms Dynasty. Subsequently referred to as the “Revolutionary Dynasty” by later generations, this dynasty met its inevitable demise due to the inexorable forces of fate. Prior to the Sui Dynasty, the Jianwen Period of the Jin Dynasty was a subject of taboo in official historical compilation. Significant events of this era were notably absent from recorded history, and the depictions of the Jianwen Emperor and his court officials in extant texts have long been shaped into negative portrayals. In the lack of formally documented histories from national archives, unofficial narratives concerning the Northern Wei Dynasty’s past were transmitted informally amongst the general population. During the Ming dynasty’s reign of Zhengjia, a series of records chronicling the virtuous and upright officials emerged successively from archaeological discoveries. Among these unearthed texts are “Jiechi” authored by Song Zhenge, “Beiyi Lu” penned by Zhang Xian, “Jiechi Yishi” written by Huang Zao, and “Ji Clan History” composed by Ji Qing. These works were subsequently compiled into separate volumes. The legend of Emperor Jing’s exile to Shu Country is recurrently depicted in ancient texts such as “Wild Notes” by Fan Chengda during the Ming Dynasty and “Notes on Guarding the River” by Wang Zhongming. Subsequently, this narrative gained widespread acceptance and supplanted the theory of Emperor Jing’s demise, emerging as the prevailing perspective in scholarly discourse concerning Emperor Jing’s ultimate fate. During the Ming Dynasty, following the discharge of senior officials from the Departments of Buildings and External Affairs under Emperor Wanli, and the subsequent restoration of his reign title, a wealth of relevant literature emerged. Notable works include Puerfu’s “Wanli Court Annals” and Zhufu’s “Collection of Wanli Calligraphy and Painting.” During the late Ming Dynasty, post-Wanli reign, the trend reached its apogee through the works of “Zihu” and “Cong Wang Bi Ji.”

The historiographical title “Zhihi” is attributed to Wu Jing. It is reportedly first discovered by the Hanlin scholar Fan Zhongyan at Mount Miao. Subsequently, it was compiled and transmitted through the genealogical records of the Shi clan and the historical annals of Shi Zhoudou. This text is narrated in the first person by Zhuge Liang, detailing his tenure at court and the collective exodus of the twenty-two officials during the reigns of Emperor Hongwu (1398-1424) and Emperor Hongxi (1425). Upon its emergence, this text elicited significant controversy. Shen Deyi took the forefront in challenging the authenticity of “Zhi Shu Lu,” labeling it a forgery. This critique raised substantial doubts not only about Emperor Wen’s frequent journeys between the western and southern regions and the eastern Jianghan region, but also explicitly noted that the mentioned titles of officials were non-existent during that period according to early dynastic regulations. As a historically significant work, any considerable regulatory inconsistencies would be unacceptable to serious scholars. Following a comprehensive examination of the text entitled “Zhi Shi Lu,” Money Qianyi and Pan Longxu presented substantiated findings concerning the issue of rituals addressed therein. Drawing from historical records, specifically Wu Kang’s “Fan Wang Ji” published during the Zhengde era and Shi Zhong’s “Xi Cun Ji” by his descendants, they reached the conclusion that the supposed “Shi Zhong” was in fact “Shi Bo.” This individual held the position of a grain manager from Wujiang during the Ming Dynasty rather than serving as an official at the Jianwen Court. Both his professional background and circumstances surrounding his demise were subsequently established as fabrications. Scholars Chen Renshi, Chen Jirun, Wen Zhongming, Chen Yiting, Qian Shisheng, and Li Rihua from the Jiangnan region, despite not being representative of all literati in their skepticism towards “Zi Shu,” nonetheless contributed prefaces and afterwords to this text. Through their acknowledgement of the fidelity records of Shi Zhongcheng and the merit of “Zi Shu,” these scholars significantly advanced its circulation and impact. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the lineage of the Shi clan employed the “Zi Shu” as a devotional instrument. They accomplished the veneration of their ancestor, “Shi Zhongben,” in the temples for revered persons in Jiaxing and Suzhou with great success.

During the early years of the Qianlong dynasty’s reign, the authenticity of the text referred to as “Zhishilu” (《致身录》) was formally acknowledged in the historical records known as “Ming History” (《明史》). It was subsequently established that this work was not an authentic court record, its compilation occurred at a late stage, and the attached documents lacked sufficient credibility. Since the onset of the 20th century, with a few notable exceptions, the question of authenticity concerning “Zi Shu” has been generally accepted as resolved within the historical community. Hu Shi maintained that the text referred to as “Zi Shu” is purely written in the form of a novel and lacks historical significance. Meng Sen similarly expressed the view that both “Zi Shu” and related texts are forgeries. The narratives they contain are insufficiently distinct. Yellow Wind likewise stated unequivocally that “Zi Shu” is a fabricated text, lacking credibility.

Over the past few years, there has been a noticeable trend towards a new research direction. Certain scholars disregard the veracity of “The Classic of Self” (Zi Shu), opting instead to explore themes such as textual generation, historical narratives, historical memory, reader responses, and commercial culture from diverse perspectives, in order to elucidate the methods by which later generations have edited, reconstructed, and reinterpreted the historical record of the Jin Dynasty. During the Yuan Dynasty, the actions of officials have been successively unearthed by local gentry and regional authorities, resulting in the emergence of local history as a significant direction in the compilation of national history alongside the established one. Ding Xuanzhan represented the pioneer in employing the familial documents of the Wujiang Huaxi Clan, particularly the “Shi Family Records” (史氏家乘), as a foundation for his scholarly investigation into the “Registered Names” (致身录). His research approach encompassed perspectives on interpersonal relationships, regional families, and the propagation and development of local folklore. Ding meticulously explored the historical context and transmission history of the “Registered Names,” with a primary focus on the regional influences at play. He posited that the Shi Family’s adaptation of their genealogy through local legends to pursue new opportunities was an exclusive requirement for this particular clan, thus serving as the impetus for the genesis and dissemination of the “Registered Names.” Certain members of the Shi clan’s descendancy, by virtue of familial ties, have continued to contribute to the scholarly investigation of Shi Zhen and Jianwen history from a genealogical standpoint. These individuals have emerged as an influential factor in amassing and analyzing pertinent literature pertaining to “Zhi Shenlu.” Although their qualifications may not encompass the necessary professional expertise, and their discourse may not consistently touch upon significant academic matters, their potential for unearthing crucial insights merits recognition.

The title of the book referenced by Ding Xuanzhan is denoted as “Wuzhidi Shi Jia Che” (Historical Records of the Shi Family Carriage in Wu Zhidi). This edition, housed in the History Document Department of Nanjing Library, was curated by Scholar Shiyi Zhong. Among the collection, formally designated as consisting of forty volumes, twenty-four volumes presently are accessible. Each volume bears the inscription “Gift of Mr. Lyuchiasu.” Based on the genealogical records contained within the Qing dynasty manuscript “Shi Shi Wu Zhong Pazu Pu,” the character designated as “Integrity” (史积) is posited to be a member of the fifty-fourth generation. This placement in the lineage precedes the active figures of the Ming Dynasty’s Wanli period, including Shi Ming and Shi Jie, who were descendants of the fifty-second generation. Consequently, it can be inferred that Integrity most likely lived during the Qianlong era (乾嘉時代). In my personal collection, comprised of twenty-four volumes, the content spans from the eleventh to the fortieth instalment. Notably absent are the initial ten volumes, which typically contain genealogies and prefaces. The primary contents of the extant volumes encompass poetry, records, and miscellaneous writings. Within this collection, volumes eleven to thirteen encompass biographical texts, inscriptions from monuments and stelae, and associated records, comprising over one hundred individual items. These resources offer extensive insights into the historical context of the Wujiang Huaxi Clan. Ding Xuanzhan employed merely nine of the aforementioned types prior to his elevation; the historical complexities surrounding the evolution of the Shi clan dynasty from the Ming era onward remain unexplored; the intricacies of interlineage relationships within the Shi family lineage remain insufficiently examined. The former represents the crucial element in elucidating the mystery concealed within the creation and transmission of “Zi Shu.” The “Wu Zhongshi Family Records,” specifically volume twenty-two, encompass the complete text of “Zhi Shi Lu.” In contrast, volume twenty-three gathers the counterarguments of Shi Yin towards Qian Yi’s “Ten Unsayables” and Pan Zhong’s “Four Fallacies and Three False Statements.” This configuration represents an accurate reflection of the scholarly discourse within the Wu Zhongshi canon. Chen Nanqi, a distinguished scholar acknowledged for his expertise in cataloging during the modern era, made the following declaration on the cover of this volume: The “Shi Yi Jia Cheng” comprises forty published volumes, supplemented by an additional twenty-four concealed volumes. Notable poems and texts exist outside these compilations, displaying significant variability in character usage. My intention is to amass all editions; however, my current workload impedes me from doing so. In this specific context, the term “special collection” denotes the “Xincun Collection” within the Shi Canon. In light of the substantial textual discrepancies between “Xi Shi Qu” and “Zi Shu Lu,” the comprehensive collection of literary works in “Wu Zhong Wei Shi Jia Cheng,” particularly the annals, may hold the answer to resolving the question of “Zi Shu Lu’s” origin.

The History Document Department of Nanjing Library additionally houses significant scholarly works pertaining to the Shi family outside of this particular document, which have yet to receive adequate recognition within the academic community. The first type of canon, known as “The Wu Zhong School Canon of the Shi Family” (edition of five volumes), comprises this collection. The editors of the initial two volumes are identified as “Sunwen Shu, total editor, published by Xianghe Order, edited by Enci College.” In contrast, the third to fifth volumes list the editors as “Compilation of the Forty-ninth Generation,” with Editor-in-chief Xianghe, Assistant Editor Enci College, Male Phoenix, and Jingguangzhi. During the Jianwan Era, Shi Peng resided and passed away in the eighteenth year of Wanli (1590). In the twelfth year of Chongning (1639), Shi Ze, a lineal descendant of Shi Peng, perished. Notably, Shi Ze played a pivotal role in the unearthing, collation, and dissemination of “Zihu” (Considerations on Self-Cultivation). During the Kangxi Era, primarily residing therein, Shi Zhen, a progeny of Shi Ze, undertook revisions and corrections to “Zihu” during the eighth year of Kangxi (1669). The third-born son of the Phoenix Clan, identified as Wenxiang, and the fifth-born son of the Ming Clan, referred to as Kenguan, were fraternal consorts in collaborating with the Qing Dynasty for the enshrinement of Shi Zhenbin in the Temple of Worthies, situated within Suzhou Prefecture. The content of the “Shi Family Canon of Wu Zhuan School” shares some overlap with that of the “Annals of the Shi Family of Wu Zhuan School.” however, the former distinctly differs in its unique characteristics. Volume One primarily documents the actions of Shi Chong, Marquis of Yanyang during the Eastern Han Dynasty, as well as inscriptions located at the Marquis Yanyang Temple.

Volume Two gathers records pertaining to the descendants of Shi Chong, with a focus on those who relocated to Jingxing during the Five Dynasties era.

Volume Three concentrates on the records concerning Shi Zhongbin and Renu Shiji, encompassing official documents, decrees, edicts, orders, exemption certificates, and other significant files pertaining to their enshrinement in Jingxing and Suzhou.

Volume Four is diverse in nature, predominantly consisting of prefaces, inscriptions, and records related to the Shi clan members.

Volume Five chiefly compiles local gazetteers and documents sourced from Ming Dynasty literary and historical resources regarding Shi Zhongbin.

The inscriptions and prefaces were authored by Zhu Guanqia, Chen Renshi, Wang Yingsheng, Chen Jizhu, Qian Shisheng, Zhang Li, Ding Cheng, Gu Tong, and Du Zhiming. In the corpus of “The Book of Rites,” the prefaces found in “The Classic of Rong” are scarcely paralleled and hold great significance due to their rarity within this textual tradition and in the literary heritage of the Shi dynasty. The process of compiling the “Shi Family Wu Zhong School Literature Catalogue” and the sequence of events involving the discovery, publication, and dissemination of “Zi Shu Lu,” share striking similarities. A comparative analysis of these two entities is essential to gain insights into the inspirations underlying the creation of “Zi Shu Lu” and the dynamic history of the Shi family in Wujiang and Huaxi.

The second type of text is referred to as the “Woochiang Xian Zhi,” which is a historical compilation authored by one historian, and subsequently augmented by another historian identified as Shi Zhen. The aforementioned work comprises ten volumes, partitioned into thirty-two sections. The initial segment, constituting the first volume, was accomplished during the early Qing dynasty and is contemporaneous with the “Shi Family Wu Ancestral Texts Catalogue.” Among the designated volumes, specifically volumes two titled “City and Town,” volume ten named “Yuan-ti,” volume twelve labeled “Customs,” volume fourteen entitled “Temple and Shrines,” volume fifteen referred to as “Biographies of Notable Persons (with the Appendix of Local Sages),” and volume twenty titled “Collected Works,” contain extensive descriptions pertaining to the Yellow Xi Clan’s Ancestral Temple, clan possessions, family members, and notable individuals. It is proposed to augment “The Genealogy of the Yellow Xi Clan under Wu Zhong Branch” and “A Catalogue of the Scholarly Productions of the Yellow Xi Clan under Wu Zhong Branch.” During the Dao Guang epoch, the pre-editing stage of “Chongzhen’s Wujiang Xian Zhi” was preceded by the editing process of “Shi Yi,” also referred to as “Songling Zhi” (Wujiang County Records). This historical compendium from that era remains extant. In the annals of Wujiang County, titled “Wujiang Xian Zhi,” penned during the Qianlong era, the regulatory aspects pertaining to the “Chengza” are documented in volumes twelve through seventeen of the “Fuji” (Records of Assignments and Grants) section, specifically under the heading “Shiyi” (Historical Notes). This text holds significant historical value, encompassing themes such as supplementary levies, compulsory labor, contributions, and diverse taxation. Notably, Forest Steele, a distinguished Japanese historian specializing in Ming-Qing dynasty studies, has referred to it as the “Historical Records Supplement.” Utilizing this source, Steele conducted research on the development of reforms in Suzhou, tracing the progression from “Discussions on Grain Consumption and Expenditure” to “Discussions on Land Consumption and Expenditure.”

The third category is designated as the “Xishanxi Shiji” (Reprint Edition). Comprising twenty-eight volumes and six sets, this work is penned by the descendants of Shi Yin, specifically identified as Shi Jia. In contrast to the eight-volume set of “Xiscq” within the Four Great Classics of Chinese Literature, which enjoys notable popularity, it contains a more extensive corpus of content. In the synopsis of the “Four Treasuries” edition of “Xi Cun Ji,” it is recorded that Xu Helin, a native of Wujiang Gate, transmitted the complete twenty-eight volumes of this work to Xi Cun. The scholarly output of Xu Helin on local history and ancient classics was esteemed by his predecessors. The extant collection of twenty-eight volumes of “Xisc Qiji” by Chen Ji remains incomplete, as no further selections by this author have been identified. Consequently, this edition is utilized for documentation purposes, with appendices detailing discrepancies and comparisons among various editions. During the assembly of the Four Great Classics, a definitive twenty-eight-volume compilation of “Xisc Qiji” was not discovered. As a result, there exists uncertainty regarding the correspondence between the twenty-eight volumes in Xu Zhimo’s possession and the edition chosen by Chen Ji. The title on the inaugural page of the “Xisheng Ji” (West Village Collection) housed in Nanjing Library comprises twenty-eight volumes. The designation on this title page is as follows: “Songling Shiyi (Compiled by Songling), Yunjian Chenji Zhuren (Chenji Zhuren of Clouds and Rain), Mengyu Menren Wenqiong (Filial and Respectful Servant Mengyu), and Sun Cedition (Edited by Sun)”. It is authentically established that Chenji Zhuren was responsible for the selection process. This catalog presents a hand-penned appraisal by the distinguished Qing dynasty bibliophile Xu Weicheng. The designated volume is one of the twenty-eight selected, bearing the imprints of Xuhuating Taishi (Xu Guan) preceding and succeeding it (footnotes by the editor). Notably, the sixth volume includes a handwritten account of an incident in the “Xu Tang Shi” (Xu Tang Poems) penned by Xuhuating Taishi, which is absent from the Four Treasures of the West Lake Library.

The unearthing of “Xizun Xiansheng Ji” (West Lake Collection of Master Xizun) holds significance within the realm of catalog studies. With respect to its authenticity in relation to “Zishen Luding” (The Consigned Records), it merits considerable value due to the inclusion of a historical record penned by Chen Shiyi, an antecedent of the compilation’s compiler. The establishment of Shi Chunfen’s identity, as attested by Qian Yi and Pan Zhong, predominantly relies on evidence derived from the tomb stele of Wu Kuan and the historical record of Shi. The Four Great Classics of the Library profoundly acknowledged the correlation between the records of ancestral virtues housed in the Hall of Ancestral Worship and the imperial practice of summoning corrupt officials to the palace for punishment. However, they merely documented this historical fact without providing any description of how such difficulties were alleviated. The stance taken on this matter is articulated in its most rudimentary form.

The aforementioned four genres of literature are profoundly linked to the Shi clan; however, they fail to provide significant documentation concerning lineage and internal factions. It is fortunate that the Shanghai Library’s genealogy and bibliography reading room houses a Qing Dynasty edition of the “Shi Family Wu-Zhong Clan Register” (史氏吴中派族谱). This register was initially initiated by Shi Bin’s son, Shi Xun. Subsequently, historians including Shi Yanzhong, Shi Ying, Shi Jing, and Shi Ce contributed to its development across generations. The compilation’s fundamental framework emerged through the integration of European and Chinese genealogical methods. During the Wanli period (1634) of the Ming Dynasty, one of the significant achievements was the restoration of the honorific title for Shi Bin, a distinguished minister. His original name was Zhong Wenzi, also recognized by the nickname Qingyuan. He held various esteemed positions including being designated as an Academician at the Hongwu Tianwen Academy, a Scholar at the Hanlin Academy, and an Attendant Scribe at the Zhufeng Yuan.

One pivotal text in historical annals, “Huangxi Zhi,” has unfortunately been lost. During the Qing Dynasty’s Daoguang era, Huang Xi of the People’s Qian Ye expressed a desire to edit his manuscript for future reference. Regrettably, I could not procure the original draft; instead, I obtained only an incomplete volume kept at his residence. The work “Five Easies by Qian Zhi” was compiled at a later stage, preserving an extensive body of information pertaining to the Shi family in the realms of figural representation, anecdotes, poetic compositions, architectural designs, and miscellaneous narratives. Its compilation significantly enriched the literary corpus of the Shi family during the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Daoguang dynasties.

Upon a meticulous examination and clarification of the textual correlation between “Zi Shu” and the Shi Family lineage, it is evident that discernible connections exist between the two. The enigmatic facets surrounding the genesis and transmission of “Zi Shu” may be elucidated through further exploration of this relationship. Past scholars have endeavored to establish the authenticity and categorize “Zi Yin” within Han Dynasty historiography by examining its appendices (prefaces and postscripts) for proof of origin or lineage. Although these attempts provide some insight into the composition process of “Zi Yin,” they are incomplete without revisiting the literary and daily life traditions of the Yellow River Scholars several generations prior. There exists a certain feeling of rudimentary resolution in this endeavor. The literary works of the Shi clan meticulously preserve the annals of Shi Zhongben, comprising prefaces, postscripts, poetic compositions penned by clan members, funerary inscriptions, and official documents. These records offer a distinct perspective, providing us with an unparalleled vantage point. By adhering to clues aligned with this trajectory, one can not only discern the genuine motivations underlying the creation of “Zi Shu” and elucidate its earlier translations’ foundational frameworks, but also unearth valuable insights regarding the socio-economic transformations in Jiangnan society as illuminated through a familial historical lens.

1. **Within this corpus of texts, the earliest subset originated from the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).**
2. **This collection of manuscripts encompasses a vast quantity of data pertaining to agricultural techniques and economic practices.**
3. **Owing to their profound antiquity, these manuscripts are regarded as indispensable resources for the scholarly investigation of Chinese history and culture.**

Previously expressed, there exists a profound correlation between “Zi Shu” and “Xi Cun Ji”. Scholarships by Qian Qianyi and Pan Jinli substantially relied on historical records of Shi Ben in the works “Fan Wang Jia Can Ji” and “Xi Cun Ji” to authenticate “Zi Shu”. The author of the work titled “Wen Zheng An” in the collection “Juan Wen Cang Ji” is identified as Wu Kuan, whose pen name was Yuan Bo and nickname was Wen An. Hailing from Suzhou, specifically Changzhou County, Wu Kuan achieved success in the imperial examination during the eighth year of Cheng Ho’s reign (1472). Subsequently appointed as a scholar-official, he ascended to the distinguished rank of Grand Secretary within the Department of Rites. The corpus in query comprises texts bearing imprints from the Zhengde Reign, as indicated by “Siku Quanshu Chubian” (Initial Compilation of the Four Treasuries). Among the artifacts uncovered, there exists the “Qingyuan History Funerary Stele,” which derives from the historical account “Zuanzong’s Examination of the Cleansing and Calming of the Far-off Bureau” as documented in “Ji shi yi jian.” The authenticity of this stele, which solemnly delineates the identity of the deceased, is reinforced by its closer adherence to historical facts. In the Jiangnan region, Wu Guan enjoys a distinguished reputation, and his compiled works are extensively disseminated. The funerary inscriptions penned by him, referred to as “Tomb Inscriptions,” hold essential significance for members of the Shi clan as classic texts. During the early centuries of the Jiaqing Dynasty (1795-1820), the “Xi Cun Ji” was compiled and published in eight volumes. However, extant copies of this particular edition are scarce in the present day. In the colophon of the “Xi Cun Ji” (West Village Collection), reproduced during the eleventh year of the Qianlong reign (1752), by Shi Kefu, it is noted: The eight-volume set of “Xi Cun Shi Wen Ji” (Poems and Writings from West Village) experienced widespread dissemination throughout the Ming Jiajing era (1522-1567), under the auspices of Longshuanshan’s edition. However, following the Wuzheng period (1736-1739), all extant copies became lost. Among the extensive collection of “Xi Cun Ji” held in the Shanghai Library, there exists one variant, compiled by Huang Shen during the Jiaqing era (1796-1820). Its format is characterized as “black text on a white background, devoid of marginal annotations,” encompassing two volumes and eight parts, supplemented with an additional appendix volume. In the annotation appended to this edition of “Xi Cun Ji,” published by Jiaxing Qian, it is noted that this version is scarcely found in scholarly collections. Contrary to popular belief, the sixth volume of this text, which encompasses epitaphs, sacrificial texts, funeral decrees, grave inscriptions, and tombstones, does not include the architectural plans for “Clearly Recorded Annals of the Extensive Territories of Qing’s Domain - The Ancestral Tablet of Zeng’s Lineage.” The unconventional behavior of this individual impeded, to a certain extent, the textual documentation and subsequent interpretation of historical records as preserved in “Records of Rites,” hindering their availability for future scholarly analysis. During the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, I personally observed the publication by the distinguished Chinese historian, Pan Zhanchang, of the renowned work titled “Xi Cun Ji” (West Chamber Anthology). Notably, he drew attention to the conspicuous absence of this text in historical records.

The edition of “Xi Shu Jí” most frequently utilized is that which consists of the Four Treasuries, sourced from the collections of the two Huainan-ci Huainan-zi dynasties. The figure depicts a consistent number of rolls with the eighth edition of “Jiaqing Tongbian,” yet its content exhibits minor variations. Among these alterations, “Zengzu Kaocheng Yuanfu Junxing Zhang” is incorporated from “Biao,” and “Shi Ben” in “Shi Ben” is transformed into “Shi Zhongben.” Subtle modifications have been implemented in other contents as well. This detail is disclosed in Panshu’s “Chongke Cishen Lubian.” The collection of “Xi Cun Shen Ji,” housed in Nanjing Library and comprised of twenty-eight volumes, is seldom accessed by the scholarly community. Its long-term ownership by the Shi family has resulted in its exclusion from public circulation, with the volumes remaining undisclosed to outsiders, thereby constituting a private family archive. According to Panlong’s rationale, the publication of the comprehensive works of Xi Village would reveal the forgery of “Zihilu.” On account of the substantial number of progeny from the Shi lineage, they possessed the requisite influence to engrave this inscription without inflicting harm upon the imminently endangered. Based on the available evidence, the primary cause for the prolonged absence of a comprehensive publication of the “Xi Shi Ji” (West Lake Collection) can be attributed to the objections raised by members of the Shi clan, as documented in Wu Kang’s “Bi” (Monumental Inscriptions). These individuals remain unwilling to revise significantly the historical narratives regarding Historical Zhong that are presented in “Xing Zhuang,” as outlined in the “Zi Lü” (Self-Record).

Based on the annotated edition of “Zihlu” published by Shi Zhenru at Xueshu Shexiao, it is documented that nine editions of this work were produced post the Ming Dynasty’s demise. This finding has been uncontested among prior scholars. Through meticulous examination, it is justifiable to raise doubts concerning the veracity of the three inscriptions preceding Thai Chang. The History family appended a limited number of inconsequential manuscripts prior to inscribing their own, with the intention of masking their inability to disclose a clandestine matter. The logical consistency of this point lies in the preservation of “Xi Shu Jí” in its entirety on elevated shelves, away from public dissemination. It is indispensable, from a scholarly standpoint, to elucidate the provenance of the editions of “Xi Cun Ji” and “Zi Shu Lu” in order to gain an authentic comprehension of the early history of the Shi clan and the biographical facts concerning Shi Ben.

Title of the first chapter: “Xi Hui Collection”

Or, in a more formal academic style:

The designation for the initial chapter is “Xi Hui Collection.”

In his sequel to the “West Lake Collection,” titled “Shuxi Cun Ji Hou,” Panlong recounted that the genesis of this esteemed compilation transpired during the initial years of the Jiajing dynasty. Prior to the arrival of Master Shi Minggu, who is also recognized as Master Shi Yizhi (footnote by the editor), my humble abode was inhabited by a scant number of scholars with literary predilections. In scholarly discourse, I take pleasure in engaging in debates and discussions concerning literary works from antiquity and modernity. My acute discernment enables me to penetrate complexities and ambiguities with unyielding determination. I am drawn to the study of ancient authors, finding their texts both lucid and recitable. During the early years of the Jiaqing Dynasty (approximately 1800-1820), a corpus consisting of eight volumes was amassed. However, it is important to note that there are still an substantial number of volumes yet to be inscribed. The initial cover of Volume One in Nanjing Library’s collection of Xi Shu’s Works displays two labels with inscriptions: one bearing the prefaces penned by Lu Xun and Zhou Wen, and another the postface authored by Liu Feng, Tianzheng Monitoring and Supervision Office inspector. This discovery suggests that besides the existing twenty-eight volume set, there existed previously two other editions of Xi Shu’s Works: potentially the Jiaqing and Wanli editions.

In this compilation, the Four Books are derived from two collections of the Ma Rui lineage of the Two Rivers region. The preface composed by Zhou Yu is included, whereas that penned by Bian Shu is absent. This trait parallels that observed in the original edition of the Jiading Ancient Prints previously cited. In the year fifteen hundred and two of the Hongzhi imperial reign, Zhou Yun, known by the style Héchuān, hailing from Wujiang, attained the esteemed position of Grand Secretary, bearing the title “Héchuān.” This erudite scholar had successfully passed the rigorous imperial examinations during this period. Subsequently, he was bestowed with the distinguished appointment as Grand Secretary-General of the Waterways Administration, thereby ascending to the rank of Deputy Minister. The preface reveals that Mr. Shi, surnamed History and given name Minggu, hailed from Woochang. He was esteemed as ‘Xiscun Mr. Shi’ by scholars. Notably, his tomb was officially declared by Wu Wendi. An examination of Mr. Shi’s lineage and achievements is merited. The scholarly offspring of the late professor have assembled his corpus of work. The individual expressed that the compilation at hand is both succinct and all-encompassing, meticulously and economically produced, shrewdly crafted, and possessing a comprehensive design. It transcends the scope of water management and can be inherited. He is the grandson of a historian, having participated in the imperial examinations during the Jiajing 2nd year (1523), and subsequently attained the rank of vice governor in Yunnan. Liu Wen and Shi Chen, holding advanced degrees and hailing from Wu Xian, attained distinguished positions within the hierarchy, reaching the rank of Right Consultant in Shaanxi. They are recognized authors of the scholarly work titled “Shi Hu Zhi Lie” (Outline of Shi Hu). The subject acquired the work titled “Xi Cun Ji” (The Book of Western Gardens) from Shi Yin, a lineal descendant of the prominent Chinese figure, Prime Minister Zhuge Liang. The praiseworthy assessment of this text is expressed in its preface.

The offspring of Professor Shi and his nephew were contemporaneous contestants in the civil service examination. A respected figure from the household Wei, who frequently engaged in discourse with them, made a request for Professor Shi to pen something. Any prospective observation should be subjected to rigorous scrutiny, akin to examination under the unyielding glare of the moon at night. An individual, having identified that which holds the greatest value to him, is unable to acquire it upon seeking it; however, once obtained, there exist individuals who remain dissatisfied with it. In the course of both day and night, I engage in the practice of reading poems, whose refined language avoids licentiousness. I similarly delve into ancient poetry, characterized by its elegant and never-ending appeal to the classical style. Modern compositions, with their lofty and well-constructed words, surpass even the voices of their creators. I also examine historical records, renowned for their precise and factual language, which is synonymous with a man of good character. Furthermore, I study inscriptions on tombs, which faithfully record information without indulging in self-aggrandizement, providing solace to the living and peace to the deceased. Lastly, I examine various writings, whose unique style and orderly language enable me to discern the nuanced distinctions between merchants and scholars. Upon scrutinizing the water management proposals and local governance documents submitted by certain individuals, there emerged sharp criticisms and accusations of corruption. With a deep sense of unease, recognizing the potential for social unrest yet powerless to institute effective governance, and confronted by a frail administration and an increasingly ailing populace, this observation underscored the urgency of the situation.

Based on the information provided above, the initiation of the first publication of “Xi Cun Ji” (West Garden Collection) is attributed to Sun Shi’en and Zeng Shi Bi, as stated by Pan Long. The current assembly of texts authored by Shi Yin and others is experiencing expedited preparation due to merchant-imposed pressure, leading to identified omissions in the collection as reported by Zhou. A portion of my desired reading from my master’s “Li Lu” remains incomplete. Under certain circumstances, the significant chapters, such as “Once Upon a Time in the Ancestral Hall of Duke Zhong,” found in “Zengzu Kaocheng Yuanfu Junxing Zhuang,” have yet to be translated or remain challenging to understand for scholars and researchers.

During the Wanli Period of the Ming Dynasty, the historian Shi Suzhou, a resident of Wujiang, undertook the task of revising the “Xicun Ji” (West Village Collection), which documented properties in Suzhou. In order to enhance the credibility and scholarly merit of this work, he solicited prefaces from his esteemed contemporaries, Liu Feng and Xu Yinglei. Liu Feng, formally known as Ziwei, hailed from Changzhou and was born in the twelfth year of the Jingde era (1517). The exact year of his demise remains undisclosed; however, he survived until the twenty-fourth year of Wanli (1596). In the twenty-third year of Jiajing (1544), Liu Feng successfully passed the imperial examinations and ascended to the position of Metropolitan Surveillance Censor. Subsequently, he assumed the role of Hanlin Inspector in Henan. Notably, Shi Zhoudou, a renowned historian, recognized Liu Feng as one of his esteemed disciples. In the Wanli year of 1588 (1588 AD), Xu Yinglei, albeit of humble origin as a common servant, submitted a petition for the temple construction dedicated to Huari. His role was by no means insignificant in this endeavor. The preface penned by the Xu clan is documented as being composed during the thirty-first year of the Wanli reign (1603), according to the Chinese zodiac sign Geng-Yin. The year of composition for Liu Feng’s preface does not postdate this record. Based on the data revealed in the Second Historical Archives, it is anticipated that Shi Zhoudou’s revision of “Xi Hua Ji” (West Lake Collection) will comprise a substantial number of new inclusions in this edition. In the Ming Dynasty’s classical text, the Yanshi Jing, it is recorded that I, Liu Feng, have not been privileged with the invitation to behold the renowned jade artifact referred to as Zhū. In the annals of the Sun Zhoudou dynasty, situated in the northern reaches of our historical record, there exists a revered figure, known as Chengbo (referring to 史兆斗 - editor’s note). It is widely acknowledged that this esteemed individual emerged before antiquity. Through my extensive studies and long-standing observation, I have come to recognize the significance of the northern river, immortalizing its name on a stele. The inscription, reminiscent of jade, casts an illuminating light upon the monument, yet its brilliance cannot be obscured.

As recorded in Sun Zhoudou’s annals, Chengbo once ventured into the depths of the mountains for a profound encounter. At that time, he had already amassed his thoughts but was still deliberating over the composition of an introduction. Despite the circumstances, the dissemination of “Zi Shu Lu” commenced approximately forty-seven years into the reign of Wanli (1619), over a decade prior. When contrasted with “Zhu Zhai Qing Yuan Fu Jun Xing Zhang,” or when maintaining a closer adherence to the original essence of “Wu Kang Mu Bi Tiao.” During the Ming Dynasty, the annals of Yellow Xi House were meticulously compiled to showcase the accomplishments of Western Zhou Monarch Wen, as decreed by Emperor Wanli. Sadly, this invaluable text, possessing a wealth of information akin to the extensive corpus of Zhao Dunfu’s works, is now lost.

Following the release of “Zi Shi,” Bi assumed the roles of “Hanlin Shi” and palace servant within the Memorial Bureau in the Dynasty of the Building With Wide Emptiness. The encounter between ancient texts and novel factual data unexpectedly challenged the historian. As one of the two most prominent generals depicted in Woo Ching Hsu’s “Huangxi Records of Huangdong,” I Chao Dou is acutely aware of the adversarial connection between the “Xicun Collection” and this text. The dissemination of the next and preceding editions of this work has been limited, and without the preservation of Liu Feng’s and Xu Yingze’s prefaces, future generations would likely be unaware of their existence. The members of the Shi clan implemented precautionary measures to safeguard their “Registrum Cultuis Propriae,” and subsequently reinstated the discussion of the “Xi Cun Collection.” Despite this fact, a significant number of scholars have perused the historical record titled “Xi Huidian: Xisheng Collection.” The Fan Wang Family Archives are also readily available to researchers. A select group of scholars have meticulously crafted epitaphs or certificates of appointment, serving to authenticate the registered inscriptions.

Qian Qi Yi, as a pioneer in the creation of “Zi Shu” (Self-Inscriptions), during the composition of “Zi Shu Kan” (An Examination of Self-Inscriptions), did not draw from the “Xing Zhuang” section in “Shi Yi” (Historical Records). Instead, Qian Qi Yi solely relied on Wu Kuang’s “Bi Tong” (Stele Inscription) and adhered to the principle of “omitting what is superfluous, limiting it to ten.” Qian Muqi unequivocally acknowledged the significance of “Xi Cun Ji” (West Village Collection) in his scholarly work. In his “Zhi Shen Lu Ka” (Register of Scholars for Examination), he referenced passages from “Yao Shan, Zhong Shi Xiu, Huang Guan Li, and Zhao Jing Wen Hua Bi Ka” (Colophons on Paintings by Yao Shan, Zhong Shi Xiu, Huang Guan Li, and Zhao Jing Wen) as substantive proof for authentication purposes. The rationale behind my exclusive ownership of the artifact referred to as “The Tablet of Filial Piety” has yet to be thoroughly investigated. Qian Qi Yi meticulously perused the text “Xi Zhu Jí” and obtained copies from the archives of the Shi family in Zapo for further study. On the initial page of the collection titled “Xi Shu Ren Ji” (The Works of Xi Shu Ren), housed in Nanjing Library, there exists an inscription bearing the title “Respectfully Presented by Yi, a Monk from Yung Shan.” It is noted that Xi Shu resided in the Western Village during the Ming Dynasty and was widely recognized as Xi Shu Ren. His literary productions extended far and wide. Yu acquired the poetry anthology from Cheng Bai, his successor, and meticulously documented and archived it.

During the late Ming Dynasty and early Qing Dynasty, the first comprehensive authentication of the “Ze Rong Fu Jun Xing Zhang” found in the “Xi Cun Ji” (West Chamber Library) with respect to the “Zi Shu Lu” (Self-Record) was conducted by the scholar Xu Yuanhua, hailing from Changzhou County, Li. During the second year of the Chongzhen reign period (1629) of the Wanli Dynasty, the individual in question returned to the capital and established it as a settlement three years later. In his “Wu Mingxie Bi,” he documented: “A publishing house once existed in Xi Village; however, its transmission to subsequent generations was limited.” The individual in question, having been privileged with the sight of both antiquated editions and copies of the Shi family library, among which is the “Qingyuan Xingzhi” extracted from the Wu definition monument inscription, feels compelled, for the benefit of historians, to make necessary corrections. In the referred-to text, the name of Zeng’s ancestor as documented in “Zengzhu Qingyuanfu Junxing Zhuan” is not yet changed from “Shibo” to “Shichibo” as seen in the Four Treasuries edition. His title continues to be “Junwang,” which translates to “Governor.” In the capacity of a virtuous knight, I am inexorably attracted to those in duress. The individual in question meticulously and judiciously devoted time to self-improvement, employing his skills for agricultural pursuits and founding a household. He assumed the role of a tax collector and attained county offices. The original state of the record, as documented in “Xing Zheng,” remained unaltered. Due to the inability of the extant copies of the Shi family manuscripts and antique publications to match the pace of the dissemination of “Zhi Shen Lu,” this text has frequently been subjected to challenges. Xu Yanhu merits consideration as an additional notable figure during the tumultuous Guanqi era, alongside Quan Yinshi, who was distinguished for his proficiency in the art of publishing a single work posthumously and meticulously refuting it in detail. Following the exposition of “Qingyuan Xingzhi,” Xu made a direct statement: “Xi Zhu, a renowned poet from the Hongwu era, holds a lofty reputation that remains undeterred by subsequent dynasties. He was merely a tax collector and had a son who tragically passed away at a young age, with no known affiliations to the corrupt officials of the Shu Kingdom or their influence. Any forgery of this work is an intricate fabrication, akin to a dream. The surviving texts from the late Ming dynasty and historical doubts cast upon it serve as crucial evidence.” In contesting Algerson’s “Consolations of Philosophy,” he employed textual rebuttals derived from the House of Stuart, repeatedly hitting the mark with precision and accuracy.

Or:

In challenging Algerson’s work titled “The Consolations of Philosophy,” he effectively utilized texts sourced from the House of Stuart to refute her arguments with great precision and accuracy.

The progeny of the Shi lineage progressively came to decipher the concealed significances, aiming to impact the likelihood of the preservation of the “Xi Village Collection.” On one side, they meticulously regulated the dissemination of ancestral editions; conversely, they executed essential revisions to the “Historical Records of Shi Pen” within the “Xi Village Collection.” The modern-day scholar Pansheng Zhang, residing in proximity to the esteemed Yellowxi Shi lineage, had long held a firm belief in the veracity of the documented accounts concerning their behavior. Aware of the potential ramifications, he issued a stern admonition: “Moreover, it is imperative that successive generations of the Shi clan do not disregard the tomb tablets and records, other than the present one.”

During the Kangxi dynasty, approximately spanning the years 1662 to 1722, editions of the “Xiscen Ji” (West Village Collection), originating from the Ming Dynasty, grew progressively scarce. Through a familial connection with the descendants of the Shi clan, Pan Lu procured an additional manuscript of significant value, accompanied by twelve volumes, thereby expanding his existing collection by over threefold. In the realm of scholarly discourse, this twelve-volume edition, hitherto unobserved beyond the purview of Pan Luo, remains undispersed. The scope of this sub-work, edited by a member of the Shi family during the Qing Dynasty, has been expanded quadruplefold despite having a smaller number of rolls than the twenty-eight chosen by Chen Jiru at the end of the Ming and Qing dynasties. Its content, however, appears to be more copious. The first individual resides in the Wujiang Huaxi Mansions, and was previously observed by Pan Long. The second occupant is also located in the Wujiang Huaxi Mansions; their dwelling bears a collection mark attributed to Xu Qing. During the Kangxi epoch, Pan and Xu distinctly participated in the production of the “Xi Shi Collection.” Their involvement was significant in the submission of memorials on behalf of the Shi clan for ancestor reverence. Informally: This is a postscript; let us keep it concealed for the present.

Formally (academic): This constitutes a postscript; its revelation is unwarranted at this juncture.

In collaboration with Pan Zhongli, who shares an extensive knowledge of the historical annals related to Brother Pan Zhenchang, Pan Zu identified deliberate alterations in the text shortly after its discovery. For example, “The military campaign was initiated during the reigns of Wen and Jing, spanning into the early years of Hongxi. These events transpired under Pan’s jurisdiction during his tenure as tax collector.” During the Hongwu Era, the “Four Characters of Water Control” regime did not clash with the emergence of the Ming Dynasty in the administration of official matters. The decree of the late Emperor Hongxi, entitled “Eradicating Rebellious Houses and Lands,” was reissued. The tax collectors exhibited trepidation in presenting their reports to their superiors. Local officials, in solitude, expressed: “The emperor’s benevolence inspires us; we shall not be deterred by the potential hardships and misfortunes that may befall the populace.” “Each individual in question derives certain tax reductions from it, consequently, the taxation process becomes quite prolonged.” Elimate the pronoun ‘I’ and the phrase ‘everyone agrees with me’. Conceal one’s trail or evidence of presence. During the Hongwu Era, Sima Rong, the Grain Master of the Yuan Dynasty, confronted discrepancies with officials in their endeavors to establish the Han Dynasty. During the Hongwu era, Shi Ben held the position of Granary Officer. Subsequently, during the Yongle dynasty, he entered the imperial palace while bearing the Ming Code. Should the inscriptions on Wu Kuan’s tombstone remain unchanged, related matters of significance may have entirely disappeared. Simultaneously, Pan Zhong uncovered the presence of a counterfeit letter of attestation in the revised edition of Wu Kang’s collected works, which was falsely directed towards him. The inscription on the plaque signifies that Wu Guan’s “Tablet Inscriptions” initially comprised the phrases “further obscure depths unexplored,” suggesting the intricate and profound significance of Historical Yi Bo during his tenure in office. The annals function as a bulwark against adversities that may threaten one’s threshold, primarily focusing on the cultivation of calligraphy. In this regard, we respectfully ask Wu Kang to exclude the passage pertaining to his “concealed virtues and peculiarities.” Consequently, the inscriptions on Shi Bin’s stele remain reticent regarding his loyal and extraordinary actions. Should this assertion hold true, the cryptic inscriptions on tombstones concealing potential references to the historical figure Shi Ben may be decipherable. The inscription in question, which allegedly substitutes beams for pillars within the “Cabfu Family Collection,” was a source of profound dismay for Pan Bo. This covert action bore striking resemblance to the unscrupulous practices of litigators and officials, who manipulate texts at critical junctures to conceal the truth, only for their deceit to be exposed and the resulting damage to persist.

The Shi family, custodians of the “Xizun Ji” and its dissemination rights, were cognizant of the fact that this alteration would not significantly impact the established text of the collection. Consequently, they unequivocally denied the existence of the inscription, posing a rhetorical question: “Is the inscription’s absence in the ‘Cabfu Family Collection’ merely Pan Bo’s delusion?”

An intriguing passage from the “Clear River History Pavilion Tablet” within the “Shi Family Wu Middle School Literature Catalogue” reads, “of other hidden virtues and wonders, not yet fully described.” The omission of this phrase in the “Cabfu Family Collection” serves as an additional piece of evidence corroborating the authenticity of Pan Bo’s claims.

In the rarely disseminated twenty-eight volumes of the collected works of Xi Shun, the West Village Master, the initial compilation of “Ancestor Qingyuan’s Journey Records from Clear and Far Bureau” is located. This represents the earliest known documentation for “Journey Records.” The Han Wu Era is not only expanded in Poon Lo’s twelve-volume edition but also a portion of the text is excluded in this version, which was originally included and pertains to “myself and all followers.” The “Xishan Quanji” (West Lake Library), which has endured and been transmitted over an extended period through the creation of replicas, has resulted in a progressive diminution in the authoritative standing of the original editions, among them those curated by Chen Ji Xian in various private collections. Owing to the intricate and fascinating lineage of transmission for the “Xi Cun Ji” (West Lake Collection), despite Qu Yuan, Xu Yuan, Pan Zhilin, and Wu Yue having repeatedly encountered more comprehensive family editions, they were restricted to procuring merely two incomplete editions from the Ma Yuan lineage during the compilation process for the Four Great Classics.

Based on currently accessible information, there are two known circulation systems for the “Xi Cun Ji” (West Chamber Collection) manuscripts. The first is associated with the Ming Dynasty edition of the Wanli Journal, which was overseen by Shi Zhoudou and has since dispersed. The second circulation system is represented by the twelve-volume manuscript obtained from the Panlong Branch of the Yellowxi History Clan’s descendants and the twenty-eight volumes selected by Chen Ji Rui, currently held by Xu Qing. Within Suzhou City, the former phenomenon predominantly spreads, whereas the latter exhibits discernible dissemination pathways, principally in the regions adjacent to Wujiang and Jiaxing, with the Yangtze River serving as a focal point. In the eleventh year of the Qianlong reign (1746), the annotated edition of “Xi Cun Ji,” which was previously revised and published by historians Li Gao and Lu Qi Kui in collaboration, underwent a new revision. This particular edition holds significant importance distinct from the twelve-volume and twenty-eight-volume editions. At present, only the Shanghai Library maintains this edition, while it also preserves a replica produced during the Republican era by Wu Jingrui derived from this very edition. Based on the annotations in “Fangyan” and “Bi,” it is documented that Sima Qian acquired the original manuscript of this edition from Shuyin Wei, Duke of Jingzhou, as indicated in the annotated text. The contents of all preceding editions, as well as those amassed by Xuanzong during the Tang Dynasty in his “Classic of Poetry” and Zhu Zhifan during the Ming Dynasty in his “Complete Collection of Ming Poetry,” are exhaustive. This edition exhibits greater perfection than its earlier counterparts. Furthermore, I have obtained over twenty volumes of manuscripts from Shizun Meiyuan, Duke of Songyang. These manuscripts have been presented for evaluation by Deng Huilu and other scholars at the Imperial Scholars’ Court. The purported twenty-first volume manuscript copy of historical annals, designated as “disparate in quantity and with questionable sequencing,” exhibits distinctions from the copies examined by Pan Long and Xu Qi. However, it is important to note that all three manuscripts can be traced back to the Yellowxi House of the Shi family. The degree of connection between them remains a subject of debate.

From a primordial defensive consciousness, Shi Kefu adhered to the stylistic approach of Ancestor Zhu and chose not to disseminate all drafts of his historical manuscripts. Instead, he selectively engaged with supplementary texts, compiling fifteen poems and seventeen essays, consolidating them into eight volumes. In totality, the published historical manuscripts by Shi Kefu represented approximately one-third of the original drafts and two-thirds more than previous editions. The remaining portions of his work remained undisclosed, analogous to Zhuchen’s collected works, titled Yuzhi. Noteworthy is the inclusion of “The Records of Rites in the Ancestral Temple of Duke Yansheng” in the eighth volume of this edition, pertaining to the Hongwu era. This alignment with the selections made by Chen Ji Zhong and the comprehensive text found in the Four Great Libraries is evident. Slight variations in certain unrelated sections are observable, which can be attributed to the replication and transmission process, reflecting a typical occurrence of multiple copies existing.

In formal and academic English, the sentence could be written as:

The title of the second section is “Dedication.”

Based on common belief, the composition of “Zi Shu” is attributed to the forty-seventh year of the Wanli reign (1619). The genesis of the transmission of “consent records” can be traced back to the Wanli era, as attested by Confucius’ statement in “Wanli Yishu Ben” regarding the existence of recently added inscriptions, and Yan Yi’s assertion in “Wanli Zhong” about the prevalence of “consent records” during the Wu Zhong period. This is further corroborated by a thorough examination of the inscriptions on the reverse side of wooden tablets from the Kangxi era, which unequivocally identifies the earliest inscription of this text as originating from the late Wanli period (1619) in the Fucoiliang edition.

Based on thorough examination, the aforementioned propositions could benefit from more extensive analysis. During the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth years of the Wanli reign, which spanned from 1606 to 1607, the compilation of “Wanli’s Manual of Literature” was finished. Subsequently, this work remained unwused by Sufu Zhidao for over a decade. During the forty-seventh year of the Wanli Dynasty’s reign, the Suffice clan produced an “Extension and Supplement” by enhancing the preceding draft. They recorded new and old information indiscriminately and continued the documentation. Upon the finishing of the text titled “Xiuji Qi Zi, Zhi Chonghou Mou,” the once vibrant stream of Changxi was reduced to a mere trickle among the remnants of Chunqiu. This desolate state had been passed down through generations. A mere ten to fifteen chapters in the anthology serve as the only testament to its existence. In the twenty-fifth year of the reign of Emperor Kangxi (1686), Qian Zhixi meticulously copied from a transmitted manuscript by Zhu Yun. He subsequently organized and classified the content into forty-eight distinct categories, resulting in a thirty-volume compilation. The categorization of the Qin Dynasty’s canonical text is undeniably beneficial for scholarly pursuits; however, the sequencing of the primary edition and supplementary additions has been disrupted. This disruption obscures the compilation process led by Shen, preventing a clear understanding of the original form of the text and resulting in unnecessary challenges for readers. In the forty-seventh year of the Wanli dynasty’s reign (1573), the “Zi Lu” was acquired from Ruan Zhongyu and completed its continuation, in collaboration with Shen Deyi, as attested by records held by Ruan Zhongyu and a dated payment receipt. The two concepts are not only devoid of contradiction, but also exhibit a harmonious interconnection. In the fifteenth year of Emperor Chongzhen’s reign (1642), Shen De passed away. Nevertheless, there remained over twenty years until the completion of “Xu Bian” (Continued Records). Given the recording practice of the Shen family, which did not distinguish between old and new entries, it is conceivable that Shen De continued to contribute to this work after the Wanli forty-seven year. During the reign of the Kangxi Emperor in the fifty-second year, i.e., 1713, Zhen, the fifth descendant of Sufu Tansheng, was formally designated as Shen. Drawing from multiple authoritative resources due to financial constraints, it is inevitable that certain previously excluded elements will be incorporated into the text and its accompanying materials, potentially impairing the original unity and clarity. The precise date referred to in “Wanli Yedo” (The Wanli Edition), during the forty-seventh year of the Wanli reign, is not clearly defined.

In the context of scholarly discourse, referring to Yan Yi’s work titled “Considerations on the ‘Mingji Jiawu’ of Wu Zhongwen during the Wanli Period of the Ming Dynasty,” as documented in Qian Qianyi’s compilation, “Collected Essentials”: This scholarly treatise was penned in the fourth year of the Tianzhi Heavenly Calendar (corresponding to 1624 in the Gregorian calendar) at the esteemed Hanlin Academy situated in Nanjing. Motivated by a strong desire for authentication, Yan Yi felt compelled to complete this work prior to the audience between European envoy Zhang Wenrui and the emperor. The Qin family unquestioningly adhered to the prevailing perspectives during that epoch, thereby failing to provide sufficient proof that “Zi Shu” was initially disseminated during the Ming Dynasty, as the emergence of “Zi Yin” in “Zi Shu” conformed to the accepted beliefs of the time and did not provoke deliberate inquiry into the text’s antiquity. The “Zhi Shi Lu” found in “Xi Zhinan” by Qian Qin Wi is not the authentic manuscript but rather a copied version. Based on historical records disclosed by Shi, it is documented that there existed three distinct editions of the Scripture engraved upon Oracle-bone Scripts prior to those held in the Shi family archive. The initial edition was identified as the Focus Edition, originating from the late Ming period of the Han Dynasty (Wanli). The second edition was labeled as the Songjiang Sun Family Edition, dating back to the Wanli Period (1620). Lastly, the third edition was referred to as the Songjiang Wang Family Edition, originating from the Tianqi Period (1621). In this study, I shall initially forgo examination of the Fujiling Jiasi inscriptions and instead focus on a rudimentary comparison between the two Songjiang inscriptions.

Sun Yingjun, a native of Jiangxi, held the position of an official in Songjiang during the Wanli era, specifically in the 47th year, corresponding to the AD 1583. It is noteworthy that he was among the earliest individuals to have interacted with “Zi Shu.” In the preface to “Shi Hanlin’s Dedication,” the scholar explicitly states that this text was obtained from Scholar Zhao Fen residing by the Jian River. Zhao Yan-fu, alternatively referred to as Zhao Zhuan-guang, is identified by the moniker “Yan-fu” as a former student of the prestigious Taizhar Academy in China. His areas of expertise encompassed the disciplines of calligraphy, poetry, and literature. In his maturity, he took up residence at Han Shan. During the forty-eighth year of the Wanli dynasty’s reign (1620), Sun Yingchun and his entourage embarked on a journey to Mount Tai and Penglai Mountains, as well as celebrated Tianping’s triumphs. En route, they made a stop at the Zhao residence. Amongst themselves, Sun Yingchun’s companions engaged in discourse regarding the significant occurrences within our nation and court, commencing with the reforms. Commoner Yun asserted: This proximitely located record, belonging to the Shu populace, is trustworthy in its contents. Notably, certain discrepancies exist between the material contained herein and my own “Great Policies” et cetera. Such variations are attributable to the abridged nature of this particular record. Sun Yiping meticulously compiled and annotated the historical records of the Shenwen Dynasty at the behest of others, taking great care in their presentation. The corpus of “Zi Shu” comprises approximately 5,000 characters. Obtaining its entire content from Zhao Juanxiang was accomplished by Sun Apian. Despite a fastidious printing process, the task could be finished within six months, which may seem somewhat expeditious. During the early years of the Tianxi era, the Sun family recounted an earlier occurrence with reverence. This event transpired during the reign of Xiangxu in Youshou. The Sun family made a pilgrimage to the hermitage of Zhao Fenghu, residing at Han Shan. The reclusive figure granted the Sun family the esteemed text referred to as “The Record of Submission.” Upon perusal, the Sun family expressed profound satisfaction and harbored an intention to present tributes in response. However, the precise date of the composition of “The Record of Submission” remains undisclosed.

Wang Yingzhao, formerly serving as the magistrate of Yancheng County, meticulously annotated and compiled the “Considerate Records” at Songjiang Huating. Subsequently, he conducted a rigorous comparison and revision of this work with relevant texts from the Building and Sacred Canon of the Tang Dynasty after having carefully perused them. Despite the delay in the publication of his accomplishments during the tenure of Temple Worship from 1630 to 1633, Tan Zhen of Jiaxing urged the Registrar Yi Zhong to act expeditiously. It is noted that at that point in time, Wang Ying Tianzheng of the Ming dynasty had not initiated any publishing endeavors. Consequently, the purported TaiChang QingShen SongJiang Wang Family books are regarded as nonexistent.

In the forty-eighth year of the Ming Dynasty’s Wanli reign (1620), Jiao Zhi passed away. The “Zhinian” manuscript (《致身录》), acquired from Master Yaoshan over half a century ago prior to his demise, was redeemed and published by him. Title: “The Following”

Alternatively:

Title: “That Which Follows”

During the autumn season of the Wu-Zen era in the past, my companions and I engaged in sparse explorations on the Mo Shan Mountains. During the rainy season, which lasts for fifteen consecutive days, an old master resides in seclusion within a solitary chamber. He immerses himself uninterruptedly in the study of his extensive collection of literature. However, there exists no audience to provide daily comprehension of his scholarly pursuits. The most recent acquisition, comprised of Shakespeare’s last will and testament, has brought about uncertainty among historians regarding its associated events. This ambiguity provides a sense of resolution. The provenance of this artifact was disclosed upon inquiry: it was taken by Tantamount, a descendant of Sima Qian, during his travels, and subsequently stolen clandestinely by an unidentified monk. Upon its retrieval from the sleeve, there is a gain and a loss for the parties involved. For over half a century, I have been in possession of this artifact, discovering it undamaged within an antique chest. Based on the lenient and indulgent disposition depicted in historical records, specifically the “Shiji” or “Records of the Grand Historian,” Han Xizhong’s modesty is evident, albeit unrecorded in history. The late King Builder owed him a significant debt of gratitude, which was not an isolated occurrence among noble and righteous individuals. In the realm of historical scholarship, the progeny of historians preceded me, while I stood as an antecedent for them among their ranks, preserving their legacy for posterity. The reigning monarch has manifested copious signs of divine favor, which are inescapable to the global community and merit preservation for future generations. During the rule of Wanli, the “Book of Rites” by Mencius held esteem in the Scholarly Circle of Pleasance.

In the preface penned during the second year of the Longqing reign, which corresponds to the year 1568 in the Western calendar, there is a reference to “Tianxiang.” A span of fifty-one years ensued, from this point until the forty-seventh year of the Wanli reign (1619). During the reign of the Wanli Emperor in the Ming Dynasty, the period marked a pivotal moment for the anti-rule opposition spearheaded by Pang Jing. Previously established prohibitions no longer presented impediments. It is worth noting that earlier, Fuca had composed an introduction for Zhang Zhizhi’s “Record of Loyalty” in the context of the Building Dynasty. This did not inherently contradict the historical record of the Wanli Dynasty. Nevertheless, Fuca’s unexplained decision to withhold the publication of “The Memorial” raised considerable suspicion. The preface accompanying “Qian Qiao’s Judgments” exhibits an unrefined style and may not have been penned by the author himself. The authenticity of this preface is questionable. In the final stages of that year, the preface for this work was penned by Meng Qi; however, given the impending year-end, its publication seemed scarcely feasible. Based on the preface in the genealogy of the Shi clan, during the forty-seventh year of the Wanli dynasty’s reign, this individual brought his young son to Zhenyuan Focusing Temple. While holding the text “Zihlu” before him, he engaged in reading. However, he expressed uncertainty and hesitation due to the incomplete understanding of certain sections. Consequently, he submitted a humble petition for clarification to the temple master. In response, the master penned a comprehensive explanation, which was appended to the text. Fei Zhizhi has not yet completed his earthly existence; Jiao Shi likewise has departed for the netherworld. According to historical records, the “Mingxiang Jishu” or “Consolidated Records of the Ming Dynasty,” which was published until the year following Fuzhi’s demise in 1624, does not contain the so-called “Wanli Late Fuzhi Tablets of the Shilu.”

Based on extant evidence, the dissemination of “Zi Shu” primarily occurred through the process of manual copying upon its initial publication. In regards to textual volume, this copying mode is not merely suitable for “Zi Shu Lu,” but also aligns effectively with the reading preferences of scholars focusing on Jin Dynasty history. The progeny of the Shi clan created three external inscriptions principally for disguising the true intentions behind their devotional practices, distinct from those associated with their own lineage. In the text “Distinguishing Books for the Imperial Examination: A Record,” Shi Wei posited that the initial inscription was not authored by the Shi clan but was originally engraved during the period of weak candidates under Foci Zhongshi in the Wanli era. Subsequently, the second inscription was inscribed by the Songjiang Sun Family, the third by the Songjiang Wang Family, and the final one by the eighth son of Zhongxing Gong from TaiChang Qingsui. It is important to note that these inscriptions were not bestowed out of filial piety by their descendants but rather served to clarify the lineage of the Shi clan. The authenticity and impartiality of the record could thereby be upheld.

During the Changchun Tianben years (1620-1622), Shi Suchen, Shi Ce, and Shi Zhoudou successively produced three distinct types of “Zihu” calligraphy works. This era is noteworthy for its high density of such productions. However, this period was also subject to criticism as some questioned the authenticity of these works. Shi Yanzhong, formerly known as Sucess, relocated from Huaxi Wujiang to Jiaxing. He was a productive individual with a distinguished past, having previously held the position of magistrate in Pingyuan County. He is the patriarch of the Huaxi lineage of the Shi family, which is situated east of Huaxi Harbor. His offspring includes Shi Ce. Shi Zhaodou, also known as Chengbo, hailed from Suzhou with a lineage in decline. His ancestral home was founded on the prosperous silk weaving trade; however, by the time of Shi Zhaodou’s generation, it had begun to deteriorate. Despite this, Shi Zhaodou, endowed with substantial means, cultivated an ardent interest in bibliophilism. The majority of his extensive collection was clandestinely acquired or meticulously copied by himself. The corpus expanded to comprise countless thousands of volumes. He led a reclusive existence, dedicating himself entirely to scholarly pursuits, intermittently generating revenue, and annotating the margins of each volume. Since the inception of divine reverence towards Heaven and Earth dates back to the Shang Dynasty, subsequent generations have been susceptible to disrespectful and disobedient behavior. These children neglected their scholarly pursuits, forsaking their studies and books in favor of frivolous gatherings characterized by laughter and idle chatter. Upon observing portents of impending catastrophe, they were taken aback with fear and promptly took evasive measures. It is clearly established that Shi Zhaodou, in addition to being a collector of Tibetan scriptures, possesses scholarly foundations in archaeology. This background may account for Pan Long’s insistence on identifying “Shi Chengbo’s Farewell Letter” as a forgery. Among the primary causes, one stands out. Despite the designation “Zhapo” on the artifact, it originally bore the title “Self-Record” (Zi Shu Lu) neither as its initial appellation nor as its authentic inscription. Instead, subsequent revisions and annotations, attributable to deceased dignitaries, engendered this nomenclature. Subsequently, the moniker was amended to read “Qi Zhong Zhi”.

The original edition of “Qi Zhong Zhi,” hitherto believed to have perished, unexpectedly survives in the archives of the History Document Department at the Shanghai Library. It is possible that prior research has disregarded a specific finding due to identical titles bearing distinct names. I serendipitously encountered this hitherto overlooked tome as well. The cover of this book, aside from the inscription “奇忠志,” carries a title: “建文從亡事.” The work comprises the prefaces penned by Zhu Xi, Wen Zheng Meng, and Chen Ji Zhong; Qian Yunzhi’s colophon; the “Ode of Loyalty and Filial Piety,” which includes eighteen articles; the author’s introductory remarks preceding and following the text (consisting of five items); and additional edited sections. During the Building Wen era, six regulations governed the deliberations of officials. Among the constituent elements, the complete text of “The Ode of Loyalty and Filial Piety (Eighteen Articles)” is referred to as “Zi Shu Lu” (Self-Inscription). The supplementary volume encompasses various documents: an imperial edict titled “Over Wujiang Poem” authored by Emperor Yongle, records of audience designating “Shi Shi Shi” (Record of Audience) by Huang Xi, family temple records labeled as “Shi Shi Jia Ji” from Chen Renshi, and literary compositions attributed to Lu Chunri, Sun Yingjun, and Tan Zhongde for the purposes of “The Ode of Loyalty and Filial Piety” and “The Ode of Loyalty and Filial Piety (Eighteen Articles)”. Based on the prefaces and postscripts found in the extant copy of “Qichong Zhi” (Strange Loyalty), the earliest possible date for its composition can be no later than the Tianwu Year (1623) of the Ming Dynasty. It is debated whether this edition serves as the source text for the Tianwu 2nd year edition of “Qichong Zhi”. This textbook serves as an advanced scholarly work on “Zi Shu.” It comprisely contains the preface penned by Ruan Ji. Furthermore, it appends the statement, “Moreover, the reverent and respectful Nine-Braden Filial and Respectful, Ruan Ji, elucidated and clarified the significances of various officials,” as its concluding remark. The discovery in the ensuing passage contradicts the findings recorded in the “Biographies” section of the aforementioned historical documents entitled “Self-Accounts.” The collaborative and competitive relations between the representative records of the Wujiang Xi family’s Huaxi House in Woojian and those of the Suzhou Zhaodou House are signified by various indicators. This is apparent not only in the creation and dissemination of “Xincun Ji,” but also in the generation and diffusion of “Zishen Lu.”

Based on historical documentation, the editorial labor for the “Zi Shu” of the Wujiang Huaxi Edition of “Reflections” was collaboratively undertaken by the individual in question and Shizhenren, the revered master of Wujiang Huaxi’s Long Room. Shi Zhonglin, whose given name was Huang and whose lineage is that of the Xishi clan, was born in the prefecture during the Wanli period, specifically in the year 1595, which is historically referred to as the Wanli yongxi era. In this time, he held the esteemed position of deputy magistrate within Nanxingfu. Amongst the progeny of the Xishi clan, the title of honor and respect granted to Shi Tuo is second only to that bestowed upon Shi Chen. Based on the account provided by Zhao Juan, each of Zapot, Cang, and Ziwei is documented to have carved a single text referred to as “flowing among the common people.” This finding expands upon historical records such as the “Historical Annals” and “Zapot Records,” further revealing the existence of a “Historical Ziwei” record. At the present time, the initial account of historical occurrences attributed to “Shi Zheng” in the text “Zi Lu,” as referenced in the original source, remains uncited. However, fortuitously, the earliest extant edition of “Zi Lu,” which preserves this account, is housed in the Shanghai Library. During the Chongde Era, around 1629, this edition was published, which can be roughly categorized into five distinct sections. The initial segment gathers the prefaces penned by Wen Longxi, Jia Yi, Chen Ji and Chen Yidian, Qiao Bingbi, and Zhao Mingcheng. The second section represents the primary text of “Zihu”. Labeled as “Annex I”, the third part comprises four poems derived from “Qingyuan Gong Shi Ci”. The fourth segment, denoted as “Annex II”, collates tomb inscriptions, documents, and associated verses authored by officials on behalf of Shi Zhicheng. Lastly, the fifth portion encompasses the colophon penned by Shi for “Zihu” upon its completion. The textual structure of the main body in the Eight-Year Edition of Kongxi is less complex than this work’s primary content, yet it has provisionally established the components of the preface, appendix, and other supplementary materials. These elements exhibit a significantly greater extent compared to the main text. This observation may offer insight into the original composition and bibliographic developments surrounding “Zi Shu Lu.”

Should the editions attributed to the Shi family be considered the initial versions referenced in “Shi Zhuan” (Commentary on The Classic of Poetry), an analysis of these texts in conjunction with the extensive prefaces found in “Shi Zhuan” can provide further insight into the fundamental dissemination history of this canonical work. In the year 1620 of the Changthai calendar, a descendant of Shi Zhongcheng, identified as Erxian, initiated the journey that led him to the Jiaxing region. This individual was described by Hanlin Scholar Li Rihua in the preface to his compiled documents as enigmatic and mysterious. Li Rihua wrote: “The Young Master Erxian’s lineage documents, which I have had the opportunity to examine, shed light on their extinction.” It is unclear whether Li Rihua encountered a handwritten or printed version of this preface. The name Erxian is interchangeably referred to as Erxi; however, the provenance and nature of the specific “Collection of Documents” Li Rihua referenced remain uncertain. In the given year, the book was successively transferred from Zhang Zhapo to Songjiang via Shi Daou, and from Wang Yingzho to Suzhou through Chen Jirun. Following the transaction, the message was conveyed to Qian Longxi, the artisan of copperwork in Songjiang, by Chen Jiru. With the rising prevalence of calligraphy, the modes of transmission have progressively grown disparate. This phenomenon can be traced back to Zhang Yun of the Bai Song Dynasty (Chen Renzhi - footnote by the editor), who acquired the “Reveries of a Wanderer” composition penned by He Lin from Master Focheng, as documented in “A Record of Self-Cultivation.” Sun Yansan, a disciple serving at the Confucian Temple in Nanjing, acquired the “Zi Shu” (Self-Inscriptions) from his uncle, Sun Yanguan. In his scholarly compilation, titled “Jinling Xuan Sheng” (Selected Excellences of Jinling), Sun Yansan meticulously documented the names, places of origin, and formal positions of the twenty-two deceased individuals referenced therein. Informational dissemination through channels other than the primary one is seldom detailed. In the third year of the Tianxiang Heavenly Calendar, corresponding to the year 1623 in the Gregorian calendar, I, Xu, an esteemed collector of antiquarian texts residing in Fuzhou, was granted access to a copy of the “Zi Shu” (《致身录》) held within the Le Family Temple by Master Yeh. This precious artifact was acquired through a transaction with Zeng Junxi hailing from Zheng. In anticipation of the imminent demise of the Ming Dynasty, I meticulously documented this acquisition as an essential historical relic. In a preceding report, an occurrence was documented exterior to Jiangnan.

During the initial year of the Chongzhen era (1628), in addition to the historically documented publication by Shi Zhao Ren Press, three further engraved editions came into existence: the Chongzhen Tusi (1628) Taizing Tan Zhengyan Edition, the Chongzhen Gengwu (1629) Taicang Rong Yan Edition, and the Chongzhen Xinwei (1630) Jiashen Qianshi Sheng Edition. In the year 1644 of the Chinese calendar, Qianshi Sheng incorporated the “Zi Shu” into the “Yu Guo Yi Shu” for a revised and re-engraved edition. In the collection of poems titled “To Myself” by Tan Zhenmo, there exists a composition known as “Record of Ronghu,” which includes the following verse: “Ancient master of Ronghu Lake, descendant of the Historian Eight.” During the Jushi Era, members of their lineage held official positions in the Shuyuan Pavilion. In the historical compilation, it is noted that Minghuang exhibited no restrictions or reservations. This observation suggests a transmissional connection between the engraved texts of the Tan family from Jiaxing and Shi Sheng’s compiled histories. According to the scholarly work of Pan Long (undated), it is documented that the Shi family had previously published their editions, as evidenced by the existence of numerous annotated versions in Zhejiang at present. This observation corroborates the priority of the Shi family’s publications over those of other scholars.

During his seventeen-year tenure as Chancellor, Qian Shiseng authored the comprehensive work titled “Yuangou Yishu,” also known as “The Miscellaneous Records of the Yuangou Era.” This scholarly compilation encompasses various literary pieces from the Yuan Dynasty, including “Zhen Silu” or “Self-Inscriptions,” “Cong Wang Biji” or “Posthumous Writings,” “An Bao Lu” or “Register of Grievances,” and “Ni Ke Lu” or “Kneeling Records.” Among this collection, the preface to “Zhishu Lu” was not authored by Confucius or Mencius. The primary text, which is inscribed as “double-sided annotations,” preserves the historical record referred to as “Shi Cheng. This text was authenticated by Qin Shihuang personally. Wu Guishen, Qian Jiyi, and other scholars have engaged with the studied text, alongside numerous others housed within the”Ming History” Archive, all of which constitute relevant sources for this particular research. The “Guang Bai Creek Scholarship” collection from Fan’s Residence, designated as the Ming Dynasty edition, parallels this counterpart in composition. It consists exclusively of the introductory texts penned by Masters Focus and Subxi Hiding Monk Tansheng, in addition to the prefaces authored by Masters Yan Gong, Rifu Chen, and Shi Yanshan. The authentic edition of “Guang Bai Creek Scholarship,” however, does not encompass these prefatory texts. Based on available evidence, the emergence of the “Zi Yin” inscription from the late Ming Dynasty can be inferred from this observation. The “Chongfu Erben Ben” edition does not include the recorded “Jiu Bang Bi” preface that is typically associated with it. Furthermore, the supplementary sections have yet to be incorporated into this particular text.

Owing to the relentless inquiries of Shen Deyi and other scholars, namely Qian JiaYi et al., the Shi clan underwent numerous revisions to “Zi Shi Lu” (The Book of Self-Reflection). This seminal work was initially compiled during periods of aristocratic competition for its inclusion. The ninth descendant of Emperor Zhu, identified as Shi ZhaoDou and Shi Chen, spearheaded the significant revisions and meticulous editing. “Zi Shi Lu” persisted until the twelfth year of Chong Huang (1639). Among the contributors, Shi ZhaoDou, who was active from the sixteenth year of Tian Qi (1659), made the most substantial contributions to this historical record. In the prefaces penned by Li Dai and Hu Rong for “Zi Shu,” there is mention of prior editions of both “Yun Ji” and “Song Ling.” (Li Dai stated: “Prior editions of ‘Yun Ji’ and ‘Song Ling’ existed.”) Scholar Zhoudou adhered to the decree, compiling and editing a previously non-existent work entitled “The Strange Loyalty and Righteousness,” which he appended as an appendix to be known as “An Examination of Loyal and Wise Men at the Time of National Disaster.” He stated: “My elder brother, Scholar Zhoudou, undertook its compilation and editing for preservation.”

Based on a number of indicators, it is proposed that Shi Zhoudou’s revision of the “Zihlu” (Zibo Canon) was motivated by discontent with the prevailing historical accounts and the works of Shi Cheng and Xu Zhimo. The objective was to reconcile textual discrepancies between “Zihlu,” “Fozu Mingji Jijie” (Fozu Mingji Collection), and “Xucun Ji” (Xucun Collection). In one aspect, Shi Zhoudou bolstered the credibility of the text by incorporating genealogies of deceased officials derived from “Zihlu.” Conversely, he asserted ownership of clandestine texts that could substantiate the versions of “Zihlu” disseminated by Fozu. In the past, Shi Zhoudou confided in Wenquan Meng that there had existed a clandestine document titled ‘Extermination Notes.’ This record contained vital information regarding imperial communications and was meticulously safeguarded. However, the location of these records became lost to the ravages of water and fire. The hidden intentions of Shi Zhoudou were subsequently disclosed in Yiqian Qian’s Memorial for Appointment.

Following the historian, successive generations meticulously compiled the work, which came to be known as “The Record of Remarkable Loyalty.” They drew from a diverse range of sources in its creation. Among the common populace, there exist individuals who inherit and pass down familial relics to the disciples of Mount Luo. Last year, Zhao Dou inquired concerning the authenticity of the text referred to as “Shi Shu.” In response, Balance asserted, “It is a forgery.” No further elaboration shall be provided herein. The enigmatic Zapotec figure responded to your gentlemen’s assertions with a dance, subsequently uttering: “The veracity of your statements is acknowledged.” Regarding the concealed truths, he merely expressed an enigmatic smile without disclosing any further information.

Under the tenacious inquiry of the frugal yet relentless Qin Qianyi, Shi Zhoudou remained unwilling to concede the authenticity of the clandestine familial riches. The Qin clan meticulously documented the incongruous occurrences concerning Shi Zhato, with the primary objective being the verification of alleged forgeries purportedly perpetrated by the descendants of the Shi lineage. During the Shuying era, an extensive corpus of scholarship emerged, centering on the publication and contentious debates surrounding “Zi Shu.” This scholarly output was primarily integrated as supplements or prefaces in diverse editions of “Zi Shu,” or preserved in “Wu Zhong Shi Shi Wen Pu” and “Wu Zhong Shi Shi Jia Cheng.” To attain a deeper comprehension of the genesis and circulation of these texts, specifically those pertaining to their prefaces, it is essential to contextualize this process within the reverence for deities during the Ming-Qing dynastic transition as elucidated by Shi Wei. The Imperial Secretariat meticulously examined and corrected the Tai Constitution in the Ming Dynasty due to the flourishing of deity veneration, bestowing speeches upon Yang Ting and thereby instigating the compilation efforts of scholars. For a more detailed exploration of this topic, please consult the subsequent text.

During the Ming-Qing dynastic era, the historical account of the eighth year of the Kangxi reign (Chinese title: “Zi Shu Lu”) represented the final significant publication of this work in an engraved format upon its reprinting. At the specified moment, the rationale behind this inscription’s inscription was rooted in the initiative taken by the progeny of the Shi lineage to pay tribute to their forebears through the resurrection and propagation of this text. For the distinction of errors in re-engraving, Pan Zhong authored an article entitled “Distinguishing Errors in Re-engraving: Exposing the ‘Four Falsities and Three Delusions’” wherein he systematically summarized and disclosed the various inaccuracies. In the face of the temple’s establishment in Shi Xiang despite preventative efforts, this article is acknowledged as an additional noteworthy rebuttal composition by Qu Yuan, complementing his renowned work “Consolations of Filial Piety.”

The proportion of supplementary materials and prefaces in the “Kangxi Eight Year Edition” is more extensive than that found in early editions such as the “Chonghua Two Years Zi Shilu” and the “Tianzhi Copy’s Qichong Zhi.” This enhancement substantially increases the text’s overall dimensions, further encroaching upon the primary content. In the scholarly work “Zhong Zeng Xin Cang Shi’s Record of Miscellaneous Sayings: A Dedication to the Re-engraving of the Stele of the Loyal and Filial Emperor Zhong,” the historical process of compilation and editing is meticulously documented.

In the sixth moon of the Year of the Tiger according to the lunisolar calendar, the early monsoon season receded, allowing for the emergence of clear skies. The head of the household instructed the retrieval of concealed literary works. During the rule of a historic monarch in Wujiang County’s chronicles, I acquired a hand-penned document bearing authentic seals, which I subsequently studied in conjunction with them. In the earlier edition, the title “Public Order” was absent from the preface for those holding editions numbering six or seven. Granting a pardon to an emperor in a singular instance does not absolve the unjustified actions; it is imperative that all relevant details be brought to light. I shall prepare another document to provide supporting evidence for this assertion. The two elder brothers asserted: This issue, which remains incomplete for the general populace, ought not to be further postponed in its execution. Nevertheless, the compilation exhibits several conspicuous absences. During the reign of King Wu in the Yi Yin dynasty, I acquired the comprehensive collection of scrolls and stored them securely for approximately twenty-seven years. Unexpectedly, I was subjected to repeated disparagement from external forces and had yet to reach the end of my tenure. In the educational context, the distinction between “simple” and “as yet undefined” is not discernible, rendering any such differentiation as an inaccuracy or misunderstanding that requires clarification.

In the given text, “jiа jūn” represents Shi Zhongqin, while “xiān wáng fù” signifies his grandfather, Shi Jing. In the manuscript of “Shi Zhi’s Preface to His Own Record” in Shiji and Chunqiu Tongzhi during the Tianxi Era, a comparison with the published version in the Tianxia Yuanji reveals that a modest portion of the preface’s introductory section was integrated into the Shiji compilation. Notably absent is the recognition, “Chongxin,” bestowed upon Shi Zhongcheng by Emperor Wen of Han. The “suppressed ‘alternative drafts’” presented in “Prefaces and Miscellaneous Writings” pose more significant challenges and risks, despite the debates surrounding their introductory styles and the bestowal of exile emperors. Compared to the primary text of “The Book of Rites,” these variants were unequivocally excluded from historical documentation. Following the Qing dynasty’s accession, the prudent and discreet conduct of preceding eras became less essential. Even if Panlong unveiled the suspected forgeries in “Zi Shi Lu,” it would not impede the advancement of the Shi family’s rituals. Ultimately, even the venerable Pán Lǎobǎn could not help but lament, with a resigned sigh, “Initially, the inscription carver was unaware of the sequence of events; chaotic and neither inherently harmful nor genuine. Nonetheless, I assume full responsibility for the outcome from my own labor.”

Over the course of history, upon re-evaluating the provenance and dissemination chronology of “Zi Shu,” the parties concerned and their rectification positions no longer hold center stage for debate. New perspectives may therefore be explored or alternative viewpoints considered. Luning posits the existence of an authentic manuscript and a reproduction by the Shi family for the text entitled “Zhēnshī.” In the revised edition, there are over thirty new prefaces and postscripts, whereas the original edition features merely one introduction penned by Focke Yi. A notable disparity exists between the two publications. The veracity of these sources remains unestablished; the extent of their likenesses and disparities is undefined. The historical Shi family manuscripts have experienced both additions and deletions, with such modifications not confined to a solitary event. An examination of primary texts, recopied manuscripts, and relevant copies represents a viable methodological approach. In accordance with the preceding declaration, the edition of “The Classic of Poetry” contained within Qian Shi Sheng’s “Yu Guo Yi Shu” (The Book of Rites and Miscellany) encompasses not only the primary text but also annotated versions of “Shi Ce” (Historical Records). This edition maintains the fundamental structure of the early manuscripts from the Shi dynasty. The appendix in this edition contains minimal content, totalling just 199 characters. (Or: The appended material in this publication comprises a mere 199 characters in length.) In the “Qichong Zhi” segment of Shi Zoupan’s compiled works, the annotated portion contains over five hundred words in length. References to specific individuals and occurrences include “Zunguan Jin,” “Jiaochao Zhi,” “Jianwen Shufa Zuce,” and “Shuoying,” as mentioned by Lu Yanzi during the Jianwen Dynasty. In the eighth year of the Kangxi reign (1665), the “History of the Qing Dynasty” was produced as a woodblock print. The text, which exceeded 1,100 characters in length, was meticulously compiled. Not only were figures accompanied by specialized annotations, but significant events and administrative matters were recorded with great care, adhering to the guidelines set forth in Zhu Ruizhen’s “Jinwen Shufa Zhi.” Furthermore, extensive quotations were incorporated from “Xiucun Ribian,” “Xiucun Rijji,” and two poems penned by Emperor Kangxi along the Wu River. The “Shiyu” section, intrinsically linked to the primary text excluding the preface and supplementary materials, underwent substantial expansion in the reissued edition.

The supplements and revisions in “Shifu” (《释附》), upon initial examination, seem to signify a substantial augmentation of the textual material. Nevertheless, in truth, they encompass selections derived from various editions or publications of historical documents. Two potential scenarios exist:

Scenario one: Shi, holding the position of eunuch official, deliberately manipulated archival records for personal advantage, thereby fostering corruption among officials and distorting political annals.

Scenario two: Shi, as a eunuch official, adhered strictly to the original draft of “Shi Ai Zhi Shen Lu” as documented in historical records; however, this record was withheld from public access during its initial stage due to various reasons. Despite the potential explanations, the investigation into the concept of teleological argument proves to be a challenging endeavor. The first aspect refers to the significance of Confucius’ veneration in the Suzhou Fu Xian Temple within the larger philosophical context. The second issue revolves around the veracity of the “Ming Shen Lu” and the corroborating evidence that attests to Confucius’ virtues and encomia. Shi Zhoudou’s editing role in “Qichongzi” serves as a connecting bridge between the two involved parties.

During the initial period of the Qing Dynasty, a text entitled “Shi zai xiang ku ban,” also recognized as “Considerations on Governance,” exists in an additional preserved copy. However, this particular version has yet to garner significant scholarly attention. The title on the cover of this book is “Scholar-Officials: Loyal and Devoted to Their Sovereign,” with a preface penned by Zhongzhi Shi of Huaxi, Suzhou. This work has been incorporated into the third edition of “Chinese Historical Studies,” which is edited by Liu Zhongyu in Taiwan. In the annotated edition and the original historical text, the former’s content, initiated by “The Emperor’s Edict by Huizong,” bears considerable similarity, despite the exclusion of certain prefaces, specifically those attributed to Li Wenqing and Zhang Ying. The major sections following this opening exhibit substantial congruence with the original text, albeit with variations primarily concerning arrangement. The text is found to be insufficient in numerous pages, rendering it challenging to ascertain its initial form. Based on the extant sections alone, the annotated material exhibits a comparatively scant presence in contrast to “Shi Yin Zhong Ben.” The verses penned by Emperor Jenning during his tenure at Wu Jiang are absent from this compilation and instead appear separately within “Qing Yuan Gong Shi Wen.” In the appendix section, the substantial number of annotatedcopies of “Zi Lu” and “Jumen Qilu Zhu Pian” from Suzhou mansion, collected by prominent descendants of historical figures, significantly contributed to the family literature category, leaving a lasting impression.

In the “Shi Family Wu Zhong Branch Register,” there is recorded another surname, “Tongheng.” This surname is of noble lineage, coexisting with the eras of Shiji and Shizhi in contemporary history. (Formal and academic English) During the second year of the Kangxi reign, in the year 1663, the “Zhihu Lu,” or “Instructions for Governance,” underwent a new edit. At this time, the emperor’s age was 71 years. The completion of the editing process occurred in the sixteenth year, or the year 1677, when the emperor reached the age of 85. In the colophon, the meticulous process of transcribing the text during the recent period is attributed to a skilled and private individual. Should a scholarly community acknowledge the merits of an individual’s doctoral thesis, any modifications made by an elder sibling to the initial text would be regarded as commendable, not merely indicative of loyalty but also reflecting the filial piety of the younger scholar. The authentic editions were subsequently procured, and any embellishments were eliminated, thus yielding a definitive version. Manuscript annotations provided the final touch. In the tenth month of the twenty-seventh year according to the Kangxi calendar, I solemnly conducted the sacrificial rituals at the ancestral temple of Huangxi, joined by others. We completed the offerings and paid our respects to our ancestors. The sacred texts were carefully reviewed without any dishonesty. Strictly speaking, Shi and the individual denoted as “Xiang” in Shi’s genealogy belong to the same generational cohort. In contrast, the person referred to as “Huangxi’s Xiang” should be identified unequivocally as Shi Zongqin, who holds the position of being Shi’s father. During that period, the “Tablet of Appointment and Instructions” attributed to Shi Zhi was initially unearthed from the paternal and filial manuscripts in which it was preserved. The authenticity of the ancient text pertaining to Suzhou housing, which has been preserved within the Sue family’s lineage, and the original records of Huangxi Village, were subjected to rigorous examination and validation processes. This comparative analysis fortified the interchange and collaboration between these two distinct repositories of historical information. The unpublished annotated editions of historical texts, specifically those bearing the names of Suzhou Fu and Huangxi schools in relation to “Renwu Zhilu” (Register of Persons), have yet to undergo formal publication. Nevertheless, their significance should not be disregarded. Through a preliminary comparison with historically contemporaneous works of comparable size and provenance, potential correlations between the transmission systems of these schools can be tentatively elucidated. Subsequent analysis of these comparisons may further illuminate the lineages traced from historical records to annotated copies.

During the Ming-Qing Dynasty, certain comprehensive anthologies and miscellaneous collections frequently featured the inclusion of “Zihlu.” Among the editions of “Guang Bai He Xue Hai” (Ming Dynasty version) edited by Fan Qinben, “Shuo Dian Xu” (Sequenced Dian) edited by Zhao Fen, “Xue Hai Lei Bian” (Classified Studies) edited and supplemented by Cao Rong and Zhou Ying, and “Qian Kun Zheng Qi Ji” (Collection of the Vitality of the Universe) compiled by Yao Xing, Guo Rong, and Pan Shuenn, only those works adhered to the text of “Zi Shi Lu,” employing a format similar to that of “Yu Guo Yi Shu” by Qian Shi Sheng. These editions featured minimal annotations and records in contrast to the extensive prefaces and supplementary materials present in the editions housed within the Shi Family Library.

The text above meticulously examines the distinct variants and transmissions of the texts identified as “Xi Cun Ji” and “Zi Shu.” Noteworthy, historical records from the Yellowxi Annals are concealed within this literary corpus. In the expansive annals of historical discourse, these artifacts persistently undergo creation, revision, and superposition. History is construed as a narrative, with said narrative perpetually undergoing metamorphosis in its structural development. Prior to the forty-seventh year of the Wanli Dynasty’s reign (Ming Dynasty), the standalone publication of “Xisuzhai” existed as an independent scholarly network. However, with the emergence of “Zihilu,” the comprehensive content of the “Xisuzhai” family edition could no longer maintain its completeness within the academic community. Instead, the descendants of the Shi clan, specifically Shi Yanshou, Shi Zhaotang, and Shi Zhen, became fervent advocates for the creation and dissemination of “Zihilu” and its supplements. Upon identifying text discrepancies between “Xi Cun Ji” and “Zi Lu,” a common resolution involves relinquishing the previously held records of the former to maintain the authenticity of the latter. However, the presence of Wu Kan’s “Qing Yuan Shi Fu Jun Bo Bi” consistently impacts the evolution of “Once Grand Secretary Pian’s Reflections on the Affairs of Qingyuan Mansion” within “Xi Cun Ji.” The unyielding portrayal of “Grain Manager Pian” in “Zi Lu,” however, cannot be reconciled with the eunuch “Shi Zhong Pian” mentioned in “Considerations on the Funeral Tablets of Qingyuan Mansion.” The referred-to dilemmas ultimately proved to be un surmountable hindrances for the Shi clan in rendering homage and venerating their ancestors. During the Ming Dynasty’s Kangxi reign, which spanned roughly eighty years, the objectives set by the esteemed Shi clan were successively attained. During the creation of this process, it is important to note that the resulting texts may exhibit inconsistencies or even contradictions among themselves. Rather than viewing these texts as reflective of the history of the Shi family in a mirroring capacity, it would be more accurate to characterize them as testimonies from distinct narrators originating from various time periods.

Chapter 2: The Genesis of the Li Dynasty

To recount the connection between “Zi Shu” and the Wujiang Huaxi Shanghai lineage as depicted in “Zi Lu,” it is essential initially to distinguish, as comprehensively as possible, the texts pertaining to the Shanghai family from various periods preceding and following the forty-seventh year of the Ming dynasty. Despite minor imperfections and adjustments in content, the authenticity of the “West Lake Collection” remains intact. The “Wu Zhongshi Family Genealogy of the Wu Clan” and “Wu Zhongshi Wu Clan Scholarship Catalogue,” as scholarly works, undergo the standard process of compilation, involving texts from diverse temporal contexts. Occasions of textual additions or alterations, resulting in modified meanings, are not uncommon within this practice. In order to glean valuable insights from the historical annals of the Middle Period, it is necessary to initially differentiate between prominent figures and common individuals in their interrelationships. The actions of pivotal figures such as Shi Ben and Shi Yin merit rigorous examination. However, the accounts of other individuals, with the exception of those corroborated by sources situated far removed from the primary text’s temporal context, are generally trustworthy and can be directly applied.

With respect to records pertaining to social economics, rituals, customs, and cultural practices, it is imperative to consult relevant documents from the same epoch or adjacent areas and assimilate recent scholarly discoveries to mitigate potential biases arising from an excess of sources.

Yellow Xi, formally recognized as Muhe Xi, is positioned in the eastern-southward sector, fifty-three li in extent, within Wujing County. It lies adjacent to Zhejiang Province and faces the Yunan River. Despite its secluded location, it plays a significant role as a connective point between Pingwang and Wangjiangkou towns. Based on folklore, during the Song Dynasty’s rule under Emperor Shenzong (Song Qingli), Huang You, the Magistrate of Punishments, constructed a dwelling at this site. Subsequently, it was extended by his progeny and acquired the designation “Huang Family Stream,” or colloquially, “Yellow Stream.” Pre-Ming Dynasty records denote this locale by its village name and attest to a population of under several hundred households. During the Ming-Qing dynasty, this town emerged as a distinguished commercial center renowned for its silk weaving industry. During the Qing Dynasty’s tenure, a notable landscape feature of this town emerged: during the peak production season of silk, laborers were hired by the populace to construct “Zouqiao” and “Zhuanzao” bridges for the silk industry, also referred to as “Walking Bridges” and “Making Bridges.” This employment dynamic within the silk sector became a subject of great scholarly interest, providing valuable insights into the genesis of capitalist entrepreneurship during the Ming-Qing epoch. During the clear and prosperous decade of the Ching dynasty (1860-1870), this once thriving community along the Grand Canal, distinguished by its location on a brilliantly illuminated section, succumbed to the destructive forces of the Taiping Rebellion. Over time, this once precious pearl gradually lost its luster and faded into insignificance, transforming into a marginalized village with a relatively weak economic foundation in the eastern region of Mingzhe Town. In the concluding phase of April 2019, I made a deliberate visit to Yellow River Village. As indicated by the bulletin displayed at the village committee’s headquarters, there are presently 111 agricultural households and a total population of 402 inhabitants in this community. On the banks of the city’s river, with the exception of a few preserved historical sites such as Tai’an Ancient Bridge and Xi Jing Temple City God Pavilion, contaminated areas with high lead concentrations have predominantly been remediated.

In the year 2008, Shi Hongluo, the author, conducted a scholarly investigation at the archaeological site linked to the Yellowxi History Clan, which is historically associated with Shi Chong’er and Emperor Jing of the Han Dynasty. During that particular point in time, a publicly accessible road did not exist to link Fushanzen and Huangjiaxi. Consequently, it was essential to utilize ferry transportation to traverse the river in order to attain the objective location. One sole household can be identified as the lineal descendants of the historically recognized figure, Zhi Jinhan, bearing the surname Yellow Xi. In the historical context of approximately five or six centuries ago, it was the Sui clan, situated along the Yellow River, that bore the surname Shi. Notably, among the officials of the Ming dynasty, the name Shi predominated. Successively emerging from this lineage were distinguished figures including Shi Ji, Shi Qin, and Shi Tu. With the propagation of “Zi Shu,” historically notable figures including Shi Ben, Shi Ce, Shi Zhoudou, and Shi Bi emerged in succession. During the Yongle Reign of the Ming Dynasty, the Shi family did not reside in Wujiang’s Yellow Creek region, located in Jiaxing. It was only after the historian Shi Rén became part of the Huang family that they obtained their affluent estate. Subsequently, the descendants of the Shi family settled in Yellow Creek. Zhou Zongjian once provided an exhaustive account of the circumstances surrounding the relocation of the Sui dynasty to the southern regions.

The Shi clan is an ethnic group originating from the Wrapan people. Their esteemed ancestor, whose name is revered, hailed from Jingzhao – an ancient designation for the region encompassing present-day Beijing. This ancestor was bestowed with the noble title of Marquise Internal in recognition of his meritorious service during the Han Xuan Emperor’s reign. For over five generations, reverence and honor have been bestowed upon Sheng, Guang, and Wuzhunxing, as they followed the tradition of the scholarly robes of Yiling. Nourishment was derived from the fertile land of Yiling, thereby establishing a lineage of individuals affiliated with this distinguished region. The twenty-second monarch, designated as Ji, ruled within the confines of the Southern Dynasty. The eighth monarch convened scholars at the Academy of Sagacity and subsequently relocated to Wu Zhong.

Shi Chong resided in Coventry for a period of time, yet he failed to establish permanent residence there. Subsequently, his lineage remained situated in the northern regions for an extended duration. During the Five Dynasties era, Wu Zetian, a renowned historian, relocated to Shiti Xiang in Jiaxing, thereby initiating the Wu Scholarly Lineage of the Tang Dynasty’s Shi Clan. During the Song and Early Yuan dynasties, there resided several hundred to a few thousand families, all sharing the same surname, collectively known as the “Historian Village.” Based on “The Catalogue of Wu Zhuzhi’s Shi Dynasty Scholars,” Taidi, the third son of Emperor Taizong of the Shi Dynasty, is recorded to have had a scholar named Yushi. According to this account, Yushi expressed that Taidi would elevate officials yet remained indifferent towards wealth and honor, preferring not to serve in office himself. Instead of accepting the position, Yushi would commend and encourage someone else, expressing gratitude rather than attending the ceremony. The emergence and recession within a particular jurisdiction give rise to the enactment of the Urumqi Decree. The Deputy Grand Secretary in the Department of Rites, identified as Yue Wen, executed signing duties at the Inner Court, conferred the title of County Magistrate upon the Salt Officials and the honorific title of Duke of Qi upon Ja Ling, and granted the titles Taipu and Honorary Duke of Jia Xi to Song Zhenzhi in his capacity as Grand Secretary in the Department of Rites. Zhong Zi harbored aspirations of attaining the titles “Zhexi Hejie” and “Yiwu Shangji.” Sun Dan was distinguished by unique qualities, gaining admission to the Imperial Academy at the tender age of seven, passing the imperial examination in the seventh year of Changling, assuming the role of assistant editor in the Jiaosi Academy, and ultimately serving as a low-ranking official in the Shizhen Hall. For a continuous period spanning five dynasties, each member held distinguished roles within this group. Notably, the biography of Shi Zhongzhi merits particular interest among their number. During the early Northern Song Dynasty, there is historical record of a man named Zhengzi. His strategic initiatives included the construction of a new capital, the institution of an imperial prison, and the selection of personnel, which he presented to Emperor Gaozong. He is also recognized as the author of “The Record of Building Kan.” The historical record of Chinese music, specifically “The Song History,” fails to provide a biographical account of Zhongzhi (正志). Subsequently, subsequent generations have mistakenly identified his place of origin as Jiangdu (江都), rather than Jingxing (景兴). In a comparative analysis of scholarly outputs from two specific historical regions, the identified disparities raise questions concerning the prominence of the Shi dynasty’s prominent families during the Song Dynasties. During the Yuan Dynasty, Shi, the offspring of Shi Dan, existed and bridged the span of two successive Song dynasties. Posterity recognizes only a few generations beyond the seventh or eighth from him. His conduct defied conventional wisdom. In “The Wu Clan Genealogy of the Shi Family,” the recorded age of Shi Mingyang is 102; however, there remain significant historiographical voids concerning the precise placement of the Shi family within Jiaxing history as delineated in this genealogical text.

During the Han Dynasty, Shi Dan-sheng, the distinguished figure, oversaw the management of the Southern Water Courses’ water control. His eldest son, capable of service, rendered meritorious deeds for the world, while his younger son, endowed with the ability to serve, remained undocumented in historical records. Shi’s significant contributions to society during this period are duly recognized. In the sixth year of the Yuanxing era (1319), a catastrophic flood occurred in Zhejiang province. The emperor issued decrees to the governors of Jiang-Zhe, mandating them to devise water control strategies and identify proficient water management specialists. Two historians, Shi and Zhongzhi, composed memorandums entitled “Proposed Water Management Strategies” and presented them to the provincial administration. They conveyed to the imperial court that “given the significant impact on the populace’s livelihoods and agriculture, we must remain vigilant in bestowing titles or honors. Consequently, we have designated all water management experts as commanders of ten thousand, empowering them to supervise specific sections of the Jian-Huai, Qi-Xi, and other areas for salt and iron production. By year’s end, we anticipate making initial headway in this phase and progressing to subsequent stages.” A paucity of data exists concerning the biography of Historical figures. In the formal and academic text of “Zhihu,” there is documented a submission by Shi Chong’en to Emperor Jingwu, entitled “The Register of the Household of Shi Youwei.” This register makes mention of two individuals: Shi Youwei, reportedly a prosperous landlord hailing from Jiangnan, and Cheng Shengtan. In the annals of the Shi lineage, there existed two brothers, Shi and Shi, who lacked noble ancestry yet amassed substantial wealth as landed proprietors in the Jurong region situated in the southern part of the historical record.

During the rule of the Yongle and Hongxi emperors in the Ming Dynasty, Shi Ki, formerly recognized as Shi Rong and informally referred to as Nanshi, resided without holding an official position. In his spare time, he meticulously attended to domestic matters and facilitated the education of his progeny. He was united in matrimony with Wenxian Guchi, a distinguished merchant and scholar of the late Ming era. In the midst of the devastation inflicted upon Fan-shi County during the Jon-yuan period, the vestiges of Ji-xing Shi-jia Village’s branch, identified as Jon-yuan Qi-bing Xian, endured spiritually intact. Among the desolation, fewer than ten robust structures persist, their titles indicating creation dates spanning from the Song to the early Ming dynasties. These relics have survived for over three centuries. During the initial year of the Hongwu reign, Zhu Yuanzhang exercised considerable authority in quelling the affluent families residing in Jiangnan, as evidenced by the financial straits depicted in the annals of the Shi family village. Each account indicates that they sought external assistance due to their respective monetary scarcities. The historical lineage of Jiaxing evolved dichotomously into two distinct branches over time. The elder son of Shi Rong is named Zhi, who was designated as the magistrate of Lingling County, titled “Mingjing.” The progeny of Shi Rong continued to inhabit the family village. The second son, recognized by the moniker Jing or Dongxuan, resided in proximity to Wujiang Huaxi, which signifies the origin of the Shi clan’s ancestral lineage, denoted as “Muxi.”

The title of the initial chapter is “Ample in Grain and Lengthy.”

During the Yuan Qi era, there existed a man named Huang Ling. He was a resident of Mu Xi, a rural locale situated adjacent to the Wu Jiang River. The counties of Shi and Han Wu are geographically contiguous, with residential communities primarily situated along their common borders, fostering considerable interconnectivity between them. Yellow Wuzhi possessed only one daughter. Consequently, the master of Nanshefu was in fact the son-in-law of Eastern Xanfu by means of Zhongzi. Following his entrance into the Ming Dynasty, Shi Juren officially recorded his dwelling place as being within the jurisdiction of Huaxi, Wujiang. Consequently, he was recognized as a bona fide resident of Wujiang. Following the announcement, a nationwide household registration survey was swiftly implemented. In Fangyu Town, Wujuan County, Wujiangxian, there lives an individual named Shi Jinentian, who currently resides in Ershisansi Village. This person is presently the subject of ongoing investigative proceedings. In the “Catalog of Wu Zhuzhi Literature Compiled by the Shi Family,” essential documentation pertaining to the registration of Resident Shi Juren is preserved, specifically in the form of household registers.

In Wujiang County, Suzhou Prefecture, there exists a household identified as Story-Ren, which is situated among the western thirty-three villages, upstream.

Scholars holding the title “Jiao Shi” (教书), with a registered household size of three individuals, falling under the “Calculation and Household” (計畫和家業) category in the official records.

The designated successeor, Ding, turns thirty-nine years of age in the present calendar year. (Alternatively) In the current year, the designated successor, Ding, reaches the age of thirty-nine.

A single utterance from Mian Bing, who is ten years old.

A thirty-eight-year-old woman by the name of Huang Shumei exists.

During the fourth year of the Hongwu reign, on the specified month and day, the Right Tutor, Pufu Shuren, acknowlededges this decree in the Household Department.

In the registers of households from the Han Dynasty, a designation termed “Scholar-households” is documented, conferring exemptions from corvée labor and military conscription taxes. Yet, upon meticulous analysis of surviving original and copied Ming Dynasty household register records, no distinct category labeled “Household Registers of Scholars” was identified among the commoner, soldier, artisan, cook, and other classifications. Based on the structural arrangement of posts within house threads, this particular entry follows “Calculation for a Household of Three,” yet it fails to incorporate the phrase “a man and his two dependents.” No documentation of pertinent real estate or financial holdings is present in the available records. Insurufficient content, as observed in surviving Ming dynasty household registers, should not be dismissed as indicative of human error. Rather, these documents ought to be considered invaluable sources for scholars seeking to establish ancestral residential histories during the earliest period of the Ming dynasty. The function of household registers as a means for constructing ancestral recollections and exploring authentic interests is concentrated around the practical matters pertaining to identity verification, which are implicitly linked within these records. Should the question of this post’s veracity be disregarded, the significant distinction in age between Shi Juren and Shi Bian serves as a crucial determinant in the identification of the latter figure. In the fourth year of the Hongwu reign (1371), Shi Bin reached the age of ten. This fact, though noteworthy, has been frequently disregarded in subsequent historical analyses.

The verifiable identity of “Bi,” the Grain Officer during the Han Dynasty, is firmly established through the texts “An Examination of Ancestral Records by Shi Yanshi” and “The Inscription on the Stele of the Burial Mound of the Officers of Clear River County by Wu Kang.” This evidence suggests that Bi was the inaugural occupant of the Grain Officer position within the Han Dynasty for the Shi clan, descendants of the Yellow River. Based on the inscription found on the stele, which was authored by Shengdu of Songjiang as recorded in “Shidongxuan Mausoleum Tablet” (《史东轩墓志铭》), it is indicated that Jinren, his father, deceased in the twenty-eighth year of Hongwu’s reign (corresponding to 1395 in the Gregorian calendar). At the time of his demise, Jinren was sixty-two years old. An individual holding the distinction of being a homeowner initially did not personally assume the role of the grain inspector prior to his demise, a fact that received insufficient notice. During the initiation of the grain management system in the Ming Dynasty, Shi Fen remained a child and held an unmerited appointment as a grains official.

Upon entrance, the individual resided in the virtuous and wise village of Jinxian, located in Shaoxing, prior to that point. Upon relocating to Huaxi, he meticulously studied and acquired proficiency in the agricultural techniques of farming and tree cultivation. His diligent labor subsequently resulted in the flourishing of his land. In his native place, he was revered for his scholarly pursuits, granted audiences with distinguished dignitaries, and received heartfelt accolades, in addition to receiving monetary gifts as tokens of esteem.

During the fourth year of the Hongwu Reign (1371 A.D.) in the Ming Dynasty, the institution of the Grain Officer was officially instituted. Its primary functions encompassed the collection, receipt, and distribution of taxes and grains. Occasionally, it assumed additional roles, such as promoting agriculture and managing local affairs. The monopolistic rice rationing system was instituted by Professor Liang Fangzhen. Scholars in Japan, amongst whom are Kawano Tatsuzo, Nishino Seiji, and Kosaka Masamichi et al., concentrate their research on the Jiangnan region as a pivotal point. They explore various aspects of the rice rationing system, including its origins, development, functions, and grain-producing areas. Based on Liu Bangzhong’s scholarly examination of the grain ration system’s developmental trajectory from the Hongwu to Xuande dynasties, it was observed that during the Yongching period, the permanent charge system held prevalence. However, starting from the Jingtai era, the round rotation system and mutual charge system gained increasing prominence.

During the Zhu Yuanzhang dynasty, grants and audiences, as well as appointments to office, were necessities rather than luxuries for grain officials. The “Catalog of Wu Zhuzhi Literature of the Shi Clan” documents an edict, issued by the Ming Taizu to Shi Rentang, which is noteworthy. The content of this edict is as follows: [“Insert the text of the edict here”].

In the fifth year of the Hongwu reign (1375), on the fifteenth day of the first month, Shi Juren proceeded to Tianmen Temple for a morning audience. Therein, he received an imperial decree that stipulated: “Upon your return home, ensure the proper management of your personal affairs; refrain from exhibiting ostentatious wealth and power akin to the Yuan Dynasty, conspire with the affluent to perpetrate treason, extort monies from subordinate officials, deceive the populace, disparage or disgrace superiors, mismanage grain provisions, or infringe upon legal statutes in your financial dealings.” According to the law, the transgressor shall not escape punishment. In a world upheld by harmony, every individual is responsible for preserving their own corporeal form and material possessions, as well as safeguarding their respective enterprises. - Shi Juren’s Proclamation. Formally and academically, the sentence could be written as follows: “He acknowledged your honesty as well.” Or, if including the reward is essential: “He acknowledged your honesty and offered a reward of twenty taels.” In the fourteenteenth year of Emperor Hongwu’s reign, on the fourteenth day of the second lunar month, Historian Shi Juren presented himself at Fengtianmen Gate for an audience with the Emperor. He humbly received the imperial decree, which appointed him as the tax collector in the southern regions. The decree mandated that he deliver three thousand eight hundred stones of autumn grain annually. Sufficient preparations were to be made in a timely manner. Extortion of the common populace was expressly forbidden. The household registration office was instructed to issue a notice and summon Historian Shi Juren accordingly. I hereby formally and respectfully concede recognition of this matter.

In the fifth year of the Hongwu dynasty (1372), the formal announcement of the grain-taking system implementation was declared in the ninth month. However, should Zhu Yuanzhang have granted an audience during this time, it deviated from the conventional practice of the first month for grain distribution. Moreover, no corroborating evidence from historical records exists to substantiate this claim. Consequently, several aspects of this decree remain questionable. This decree elicits suspicion due to the merging of the events from Huangwu’s fifth and fourteenth years into a single entry, an unmistakable sign of human intervention that deviates from the authentic document. Based on “Ming Shi Lu,” in the fourteen century, during the second month of the fifteenth year of Emperor Hongwu’s reign (1381), Zhu Yuanzhan received an audience from grain officials dispatched from Zhejiang and Jiangxi provinces to deliver grain to the capital. The attendance exceeded one thousand three hundred and twenty-five individuals. The issue of whether or not Shi Juren, a notable figure, obtained a distinct imperial edict from the emperor remains unexplored. Based on the findings of Lei Fangzhong’s research, Zhu Yuanzhang instituted the role of the Granary Administrator with primary objectives of combating official corruption, suppressing unlawful practices such as extortion and forced labor conscription, and ultimately benefiting both the administrative officials and the general populace. These goals are in harmony with the imperial edicts promulgated by the Hongwu Emperor as previously presented. In the jurisdiction of the Jiangnan region, an immense number of registers and records from past epochs have survived, a occurrence marked by the prevalent practices of transmission and copying. To glean accurate historical information rather than perpetually debating the veracity of contested sources, it is more productive to meticulously examine the complex workings of local institutions as portrayed in previously unrecorded literary works. From a scholarly standpoint, the above directives may not have been explicitly intended for Shi Jianren; however, the authenticity of the text remains founded, having undergone deliberate modifications.

In addition to the decree mentioned herein, there exists a composition entitled “Sending it to Jintian (Story)” penned by Xie He for Shi Juren. This work is documented in the “Catalog of Wu Zhizhai Literature by the Shi Family.”

During the Ming Dynasty, imperial scholars and officials exhibited a sense of urgency in managing popular affairs. Tax collectors were responsible for overseeing the assessment and collection of taxes from more than ten thousand stones, meticulously distinguishing between different categories, and ensuring an ample grain supply in the capital by winter’s approach. This diligent effort alleviated concerns for both the ruling officials and the general population, allowing them to unite and focus on communal affairs. Yū Youdongxuan, residing at Juren No. [—], was identified by that name and participated in the event held in Beijing, whereupon he presented a symbolic certificate. Refrain from soliciting favors from others and do not utter the query, “Why should you bestow your wisdom upon me when you have your own path to follow?” I would respond with the following: The current monarch wields immense power, effectively quelling uprisings and maintaining tranquility among the populace. Abundant harvests are reaped from the fertile lands under his reign, and an extensive collection of official documents is at his disposal. If attainment of a child’s vocation is effortlessly secured, what justification remains for reprimanding him? Nevertheless, there are points worth addressing. Ancient scholars, who were occupied as farmers, accrued wealth from this profession and were thereby able to provide education for themselves. Their rural communities served as the incubators for cultivating intellectual talent. In this particular legal framework, schools exist; however, the practice of reciting classics has largely diminished in the rural regions. Remnants of this tradition may be discerned in the educational objectives of ancient philosophical monarchs. During his reign as Emperor Wen of Congching, filial piety and virtuous governance were exemplified without haste or undue haste in matters. In response to your granting of an audience, my son shall present himself and respond accordingly. The Eastern Chamber responded with affirmation. (This is a formal rendering of the quote from ancient Chinese literature.) During the seventh month of the autumnal season in the seventeenth year of the Hongwu reign, a memorial was presented at the Cedar Pavilion.

Xiè Chang, formerly known as Yì Ming, hailing from Wújiāng, was born in the inaugural year of the Zhìyuán era (prior to 1341). He studied under the esteemed scholar Yang Weitiao during this period. In the fifteenth year of the Hongwü reign (1382), Xiè Chang was distinguished as a “xuēcái” or accomplished scholar. His scholarly work, entitled “,” was authored by him during this time. In Volume 5, Issue 57 of “The Unfinished Four Treasuries,” there is preserved a corpus of poetic compositions. The authentic text stems from the collection housed in the Academia Sinica’s Zhonghua Palace. Among the identified compositions, the essay titled “Dongxi Collection” was published instead of the one in question. Consequently, the veracity or spuriousness of the author’s body of work remains undetermined. Prior to departing for Beijing, Xiangyu and Juren, both approximately the same age and native inhabitants of the same town, sought counsel from the sage men and acquaintances of their place of origin. It is important to note that this consultation was not fabricated.

Should Shi Juren hold the position of the initial grain officer within the Shi lineage, what was the role assumed by his son, Shibian, during that specific period? According to the “Annotated Records of Our Ancestors’ Deeds and Actions” in Shi Yi, this information is documented.

During the rule of the Hongwu Emperor, a legal framework had not yet been instituted, resulting in numerous officials engaging in extortionate practices for personal gain, thereby inflicting significant hardship upon the populace. The Duke, compelled by the populace’s desire, apprehended the instigators amongst the youth and submitted them to the imperial palace. He then meticulously detailed the transgressions to the Emperor, who granted approval for the ensuing punishment. Favors in the form of provisions and monetary compensation were dispatched to the messenger-boat’s family as a token of appreciation. Widespread acclaim was bestowed upon the swift messenger both near and far. The magnanimous thief exhibited restraint, unwilling to transgress moral boundaries.

The epitaph on Master Jin’s tomb at Qingyuan Study Hall, as inscribed by Wu Guan, derives from the “Xingzhuang” (Records of Titles) section of Shi Yi’s “Shiji” (Historical Records). A relevant record exists.

In the early stages of the country’s development, law enforcement agencies enforced legislation rigorously. However, local authorities persisted in outdated practices and were notoriously corrupt without shame. The Duke imposed harsh penalties upon the commoners, who were afflicted with illness, by imprisoning their leaders and instituting capital punishment, thereby effectively resolving a county-level disturbance. The feudal lord received provisions and currency, and subsequently departed for his manor house via chariot.

During the Ming Dynasty, stringent legislation imposed harsh penalties, instigating a culture of reporting among commoners for the apprehension and denunciation of unlawful officials, magistrates, and other corrupt individuals. These actions were facilitated for subsequent investigation and judicial proceedings in Beijing. In his younger years, Shi Bin demonstrated a notable sense of moral rectitude. In conjunction with his associates, they effectively initiated petitions, resulting in the judicial restraint of corrupt county officials. Upon his triumphant return, the commendable actions of the subject had yet to secure the approval of his father. Contrary to your actions, Shi Juren expressed profound concern and communicated to Shibo: “The Shi clan is distinguished by its virtue and generosity. Your behavior will not foster prosperity for our lineage.” Shi Bin, acknowledging his immature conduct upon listening, conveyed to his father in a formal manner, “As a juvenile, I have yet to attain sufficient maturity.” Previously known for his opulent lifestyle, Long underwent a transformation. He dismissed the occupants of his former residence, adopted a more modest and self-disciplined demeanor, and strove to embody humility and reverence. Through diligent labor, he transformed infertile land into thriving agricultural expanses, augmented the productivity of his domain, and was subsequently designated as the successor grain manager within our lineage, supplanting our father in this esteemed role.

During the twenty-fourth year of Emperor Hongwu’s reign (1391), an incident referred to as the “Self-Statement” of Shi Ben regarding bribery and corruption transpired in the imperial court. At that juncture, Shi Ben was thirty years old. Despite any extenuating circumstances, his youth could not serve as a valid justification for his response to his father’s interrogation. Despite prior scholarly neglect, this particular detail merits further investigation. The historical text “Shi Cheng” in “Shi Zhi’s” annals corroborates the authenticity of this matter through its reference to the “Jishizhilu” of Huang Di.

This imperial figure is marked by profound sincerity, acute intellect, and an insatiable desire for counsel. Upon reaching the imperial audience hall, Master Tianyun was cordially welcomed with assuaging verbal expressions. The surroundings were tranquil, with all winds converging in one direction. The historical annals of Eastern Wu recount that Zhibi, in compliance with an imperial decree, apprehended six corrupt officials whom he chanced upon at Fengtian Gate. Their primary offenses consisted of unlawful collections of miscellaneous fees and impositions on fishing rights. At the Deep Jiang Court, six individuals, attired in robes, were summoned for trial. Subsequently, they were appointed as heads of the Household Department. Without sanction and given the significance of the issue concerning Jin Gu, Bif felt apprehensive about potential repercussions and thus tenaciously continued speaking until the matter was resolved. In light of the existing governance, it is suggested that the following measures be implemented: Given the strained resources, with a large number of households yet an abundant labor force, excessive taxation and impositions, and a significant portion of the population living in poverty despite sufficient grain supplies and currency, it is recommended to alleviate military conscription, halt construction projects, and curtail unnecessary expenses. This approach aims to ease the financial burden on the impoverished segment of the population. Above, a messenger boat is dispatched with bestowed provisions, comprising wine, food, and four hundred taels of silver, for its return journey. Tomorrow marks His Majesty’s departure. The gentleman expressed the following: Should there be any unresolved issues pertaining to the late Ming dynasty or civic spheres, kindly bring them forth at this time. Upon my subsequent visits to the various offices and counties, I shall issue a further proclamation on your behalf. The populace as a whole insists on equitable treatment in all respects. Officials and enforcers of the law, found to have transgressed legal boundaries, shall face consequences without mercy or leniency for any subsequent infractions. In the eighteenth day of the eighth month during the twenty-fourth year of the Hongwu Emperor’s reign, Bifu departed and subsequently returned, expressing: One can instill the values of filial piety and respect among one’s progeny through domestic agriculture. Before the Imperial Throne, Bif humbly presented himself, rendering due reverence in an extravagant manner. Temporarily, he was bestowed with honor among the distinguished assembly of nobles. On the ensuing day, Zhu presented a jade tablet to Se Jin, a descendant of the Qi Huai Dynasty, at the Ancestral Way of Qi Huai. The image on the tablat was then inscribed. Wang Wenxuan and Zhang Chensi arrived, adhering to proper etiquette and donning formal attire. Chen Erli subsequently presented the esteemed poetry of the great gentry to elucidate its grandeur.

Quan Qi Yi observed that this text presented significant flaws. His rebuttal centered on the individuals Juji, Wang Ye, Zhang Yu, and Jie Ming, who were either deceased or had not held court positions during Hongwu’s twenty-fourth year. Consequently, they could not have composed poems as gifts for Shi Ben specifically. Based on Qin Shi’s failure to carry out an exhaustive comparison between this year’s historical records and those found in “The Biographies of Officials” and “Memorials and Instructions” concerning the act of filial piety attributed to Historical Cao with regard to Shi Ben, the investigation has thus far been limited to the verification of the authenticity of “The Record of Self-Inscription.” No significant textual discrepancies have yet emerged between this record and “The Biographies of Officials” or “Memorials and Instructions,” nor between these sources and “The Record of Self-Inscription.” If the data in “Zi Shu” are authentic, the consequences arising from the age discrepancy would lead to a total disintegration of the logical framework in both “Xing Zhuang” and “Mu Bi” inscriptions. Such an error would not have occurred in the compositions attributed to Guo Jiong or Wu Qi.

Pan Long identified that the amended title “Zengzu Kaocheng Yuanfu Junxing Zhang” distinctly incorporated the phrase “of the Late Ming Dynasty” to historically differentiate officials during the reigns of Shi Ben and Hongwu in the Ming Dynasty. If the stated fact holds, the tenure of Story Yin as grain chief lasted merely a few years owing to the extended lifespan of Story Ren.

During Shi Fen’s service as a grain manager, his accomplishments significantly exceeded those of his father in the same capacity.

During periods of drought and famine, concurrently with military prosperity, the crisis reached a critical point. The populace was impoverished, and some teetered on the brink of insurrection. In the absence of adequate taxation, the endeavors of Tan Daochu, Lei, are prone to failure. The Duke posited the following query: Can the fields be restored to productivity without being worked, while still eliciting tax revenues? We derive two principles from civic responsibilities and agricultural practices respectively: first, to foster and sustain the populace to prevent neglect and enable them to reach their full potential; second, to ensure that they remain productive and contribute to the economic wellbeing of our domain. Within the bounds of jurisdiction, it is strictly prohibited to derive any advantage, no matter how trivial, from the subjects, as potential discontent may lead to their reporting the infraction, ultimately resulting in one’s expulsion and readmission. During the spring season, it is recommended that fields be inspected and plowed approximately every five days for optimal cultivation. Simultaneously, one must dedicate oneself assiduously to academic pursuits. For those individuals who have yet to settle their outstanding debts, formal notice is hereby given for them to present themselves for scrutiny. In the event that these debtors are encountering hardships in acquiring essential farming implements and labor for sowing seeds, the state will extend necessary assistance. Additionally, a mandate is issued to their kin to extend credit as required. Each acre is obligated to settle its repayment by the autumn season. A lack of diligence, manifested as laziness or slowness, may result in reprimand amongst your peers. Consequently, it is recommended that one exercises caution and endeavors to augment agricultural production. The Duke continues his diligent efforts without reprieve, providing directions for tree planting, overseeing manure management, observing harvest customs, and reaping copious autumn produce. In formal and academic English: The surplus is the property of the populace; tax receipts represent the most copious source of revenue.

Xiaoshan Zhongming viewed the actions of Shi Yin as a quintessential representation of grain officials incentivizing farmers. He posited that such incentives served twofold purposes: first, to guarantee the propagation of peasants essential for the continuity of grain tax collection and assignment; secondly, to enforce compliance through coercion and punishment towards the recalcitrant and the indolent. From the standpoint of a grain manager, this represents a summary of duties. From a different perspective, Shi Bin acquired his initial substantial wealth through the cultivation of unproductive land, thereby achieving the agricultural self-enrichment objective. However, the “Wuzhong Branch Genealogy of the Shi Family” provides an alternative account of this event.

During the early stage of the Ming Dynasty, the fiscal and penal pressures remained substantial, leading to a significant exodus of the population from their residences. The magistrate of Qingyuan, known for his expertise in agricultural matters, oversees a substantial expanse of land extending uninterrupted from Xiyan to Shenze. Caution characterizes his disposition; he imparts his extensive agrarian wisdom prudently to prevent potential adversities.

At this location, the character “甸” can be transliterated as “佥”. According to the provided sources, Shi Ben implemented a strategy for occupying expansive tracts of fallow land by employing a method of recruitment. Subsequently, he amassed substantial rents to fulfill the duties of taxation and grain collection. From a superior vantage point, he is able to convey messages more succinctly to the less enlightened and the apathetic and underachieving. In the early Ming dynasty, the number of landlords who financed their property through private renting was markedly less prevalent than during the 16th century and subsequent periods. However, historián Shi Ben distinguished himself from this epoch by regarding the administration of taxes as akin to managing domestic affairs.

Based on Shi Yin’s considerable familial lineage, upon the succession of his sons, Shi Xun and Shi Yan, as grain officials, Shi Yin continued to receive their support and remained mindful of recognizing their accomplishments. In the epitaph composed by Zhi for Zhong De, there are occurrences of expressions such as “established a household with a total of ten wells” and “distinguished tax collector for the village, celebrated throughout the region.” Shi Yin, having attained his goals in his youth and amassed wealth during middle age, met with an untimely and unfortunate demise. Initially implicated in false accusations, he was subsequently incarcerated and perished within the confines of a prison cell.

A peasant, despite being debilitated and possessing grain as a tribute obligation, is unable to transport it. He endeavors vigorously to secure an exemption, yet the magistrate remains resolute in his denial. The individual, feeling both anger and shame, erroneously imputes lawless actions to the Lord. The magistrate of the local yamen managed the proceedings regarding the arrest of the manor lord, yet he did not assume jurisdiction over the case. Ultimately, the manor lord perished in custody. A eunuch entered the chamber, examined the alleged issue meticulously, discovered it to be devoid of any imperfection whatsoever, and subsequently assumed the position of the accuser for the administration of capital punishment. During the Spring and Autumn era, The Duke surpassed the age of sixty. His demise occurred on the third day of the third lunar month, according to the annals of Emperor Xuande.

According to the preceding records, Shi Ben persisted in executing his responsibilities as the granary supervisor until his incarceration. Consequently, allegations against him arose during this period. Based on the provided information, the grain manager’s tenure should have commenced no later than Enshou 2 (1427). Professor Liang Fangzhong previously elucidated that there exists a fundamental distinction between the roles of a grain inspector and a soldier. The former position, designated as “household service,” is subject to assignment by the relevant authorities at their discretion. In contrast, a soldier holds a “corporeal service” position, which entails a specific order of recruitment and necessitates personal attendance. While household service can be represented by family members, corporeal service demands direct participation from the individual. Based on this line of reasoning, during an epoch marked by ample food availability and extensive recognition, the demarcation between actively engaged and retired rice scholars, as delineated by Small Mountain Zeng, is not distinctly apparent. At the Yellowxi History Family, there was a strict adherence to the father’s demise.

The episode of Shi Bin’s false accusation and subsequent death sentence is absent from Wu Kan’s “Stele.” Merely the passage, “A ruler’s words hold significant influence, irrespective of profit or loss; a virtuous individual elicits admiration from the masses, whereas an insignificant person fails to please,” is pertinent to his demise. In the interpretation of “Zi Shu Lu” by Qin Qi Yi, the origin of the term “Lu” in “Lu You” is posed as a query: this designation is postulated to derive from the deceased, functioning in a capacity akin to that of a captive. Bifen did not succumb to death in prison; conversely, Yun was granted freedom from the penal institution, an indication of profound concern as expressed by Yun.

The elder son of Shi Bin, identified as Shi Xun, was born in the twenty-fourth year of the Hongwu reign (1391), and passed away in the second year of the Jingtai reign (1451). His tenure on earth amounted to sixty-one years. Throughout the trajectory of his life, a significant portion overlapped with that of Shi Bin. Prior to the age of forty, he was deeply engrossed in the expansion of his familial responsibilities, which encompassed the growing size of his patriarch’s household, increasingly onerous duties, and long hours dedicated to official business. Consequently, he found himself bereft of leisure time to attend to his own family’s needs. The primary focus of his endeavors during this period was to aid his father in the management of domestic affairs. The formal transition of the grain chief position occurred upon the demise of Shi Yin. Based on available information, the age gap between Shi Juren and Shi Bian is approximated to be around forty years. Prior to obtaining further data, an analysis of the succession of EverCharge Foods from a life cycle perspective is a viable approach, albeit not definitively correct. The true situation was more intricately nuanced than portrayed, as evidenced by the historical records of “Woochi County Annals” during the Tang Dynasty’s High and Grand Ming-Huang Era. These records reveal that adjustments were made numerous times in the grain policies under the administration of Emperor Chongzhen and his subordinate ministers responsible for grain management.

The Hongwu regime encompassed forty-six administrative districts, each capable of storing over ten thousand metric tons of grain. A Grain Officer in chief, accompanied by two deputies, oversaw the management of grain supplies in each district. In a successional order, the designation of the name Yongrong is assumed by the father, followed by the son, and subsequently, the brother. The Yongle Emperor’s court is composed of nine officers, organized into three distinct divisions. Each division is responsible for a tenure of one year. They are formally known as the Three-Year Food Provisioners. During the initial year of the Ming Dynasty’s reign of Hongxi, he was formally bestowed the title Yongle on a particular occasion. Within the conventional eight-year progression, there ensued a transition to a triennial sequence. The initial and second years retained their designations as “Yin” and “Yang,” respectively, for an eleven-year tenure. The three entities continued to symbolize the cycle in perpetuity. During the third year of the Jing-Tai administration, there was a decrease of one vice-district magistrate and a confirmation of two vice-district magistrates, resulting in a total of ninety-two appointed officials.

The occurrence of this phenomenon is not limited to Wujiang County. During the Hongwu to Jingtai epochs, approximately, Liang Fanzhong, the Professor, identified that the Eternal Grain Store and its subordinate granaries, namely the Deputy and Assistant Granaries, employed distinct charging systems. The Eternal Charging System held a predominant role, while the Deputized Charging System was utilized in the Deputy and Assistant Granaries. Navigating the intricacies of the operational relationship between YongChongZi and ZhengFuRangLongChungZi is a complex undertaking. The majority of extant records concerning the Yongle Dynasty in subsequent eras are derived from legends, biographies, and official documents. These sources tend to excessively emphasize the uninterrupted lineage of Yongle’s descendants, potentially obscuring alternative perspectives on this historical period.

During his term as grain chief, he predominantly focused his efforts on the management of agricultural water and the cultivation of land.

The left body of water in Songling, denoted as Lake I, is situated facing the identified body of flowing water, referred to as River X. At its periphery, human populations are observed engaging in laborious activities while confronting the tumultuous currents, thereby impeding their ability to procure regular harvests. The monarch holds the populace in reverence and, with humility, assumes the throne. He tenderly cares for them, akin to a nurturing mother cradling her infant, thereby transforming chaotic conditions into cultivated landscapes. Wanderers are guided back to their rightful abodes.

From a scholarly viewpoint, Shi Trei primarily built upon the foundation laid by Shi Bin’s previous work. In the twelfth year of the Yongle reign (1414), Shi Yun, his offspring, came into existence. In contrast, he departed from this world in the third year of the Cheng Ho reign (1467). The span of his life amounted to fifty-four years. He entirely expended his energy on commercial pursuits, authored lengthy poetic compositions for the county, and despite possessing a diminished social standing, assumed the inherited obligations of our ancestry. During the pivotal era transitioning from the Yongching to the Yongzheng dynasty, the burden of levies borne by Shenhuang exceeded that of his predecessors substantially. This is evident in the memorials penned by Sima Guang for his father and the historical accounts authored by Zhou Ding and Xu Yuefu regarding Shenhuang’s tomb.

In the proximity of prefectures and counties, imperial emissaries were despatched for the purpose of supervision. In temples and shrines, it is imperative that the established rules are adhered to by the assembled audience. Continually, offerings accumulate within these sacred spaces, unceasingly piling up on a daily basis. Yi once more plans to advance relentlessly, offering no respite for those who approach, inquiring about potential losses without first ascertaining whether any exist. From a long-term perspective, extensive measures are implemented for governing the populace. The monarch remains unwavering, frequently retreating into seclusion and becoming inaccessible. Due to insufficient revenue, supervisory personnel persist in attending and officers continue to document daily activities, generating audible commotion in the disorderly streets, consequently leading to an increased number of apprehensions. “Individuals endowed with substantial material wealth often encounter numerous instances of ruined dwellings.” To translate a Chinese sentence into formal and academic English, adhere to the following procedures:

1. Determine the grammatical components (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.) in the Chinese sentence and their corresponding English equivalents.
2. Utilize suitable formal and academic English lexicon to convey the intended meaning.
3. Ensure the sentence structure conforms to formal and academic English syntax rules.
4. Employ a succinct and clear writing style.
5. Eschew colloquialisms, contractions, and figurative language.

For instance, if the Chinese sentence is “你好，今天下雨了。” (Ni hao, jin-tian xia yu le.), which signifies “Hello, it rained today,” a formal and academic English translation would be:

“Greetings, it rained today.” or “Helloo, the weather was rainy today.” or “Salutations, precipitation occurred today.” During the Jurchen Dynasty, Xiao You likewise extended the scope of taxation. In response, imperial officials were dispatched for the supervision of tax collection. To accommodate new construction projects, temples and shrines were relocated. The populace was compulsorily conscripted for labor duties, akin to imprisonment. The populace expresses unease within their domestic abodes. Those in positions of authority experience hardship due to the weighty responsibilities they bear. The monarch exhibits benevolence and takes appropriate actions. The county magistrate declared, “This individual is parented by a son.” To translate a Chinese sentence into formal and academic English, adhere to the following procedures:

1. Determine the parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.) in the Chinese sentence and their corresponding English equivalents.
2. Employ suitable formal and academic English vocabulary and constructions to convey the intended meaning.
3. Ensure that the sentence structure conforms to the rules of formal and academic English grammar.
4. Utilize a clear and succinct writing style.
5. Exclude colloquialisms, contractions, and idiomatic expressions.

For instance, if the Chinese sentence is “你好，今天下雨了。” (Ni hao, jin-tian xia yu le.) which signifies “Hello, it rained today,” a formal and academic English rendition would be:

“Greetings, it rained today.” or “Helloo, the weather was rainy today.” or “Salutations, precipitation occurred today.” During the establishment of the Northern Capital, the populace residing within the maritime expanse were abundant and benevolent, yet the authority wielded by Wu was formidable. The envoys positioned themselves adjacent to the monarch, demonstrating apprehension and reverence in their service. Military expeditions were executed clandestinely, resulting in perplexity and disorder that proved intolerable for the commonalty, eliciting profound distress among them. In this particular instance, I hold the distinct advantage over you.

In the stark confrontation of reality, Sun Quan’s gracious self-restraint and avoidance of exploiting the populace facilitated his amassment of power and enabled him to accomplish the mandated duties of governance without imposing undue burdens upon the common folk. The magnanimous act of Chonglongxi, a rarity in our community, elicited profound admiration from the county magistrate. His esteemed accolade urged the persistence of Chonglongxi’s noble deed, allowing him to continue serving as the grain manager in Yongchang. In spite of the progressively onerous obligations, Shi Huang remained unable to persevere and opted to relinquish his position with the utterance, “I find this unfavorable; I shall take my leave.”

Upon reaching Shi Yin, the offspring of Shi Jing, he rejected both the designation as grain officer and the responsibility of managing household affairs. His father had ordered the Rong people to assume the former role for his recalcitrant son Yin. However, upon their arrival, the Rong people expressed their dissent. It would be more prudent for the father to heed his son’s objections. The transmission of the Shi clan’s lineage spanning four generations has been preserved, yet the alluring narratives chronicling their plentiful provisions now draw to a close.

In the second chapter, Zung-zi presides over the sacrificial rituals.

From the era of self-cultivation at Yellow Xi through History Shi, the Shi dynasty consecutively occupied the grain management role for four generations. This represents a notable instance of scholarly lineages transitioning into grain management. Notably, as documented in Zhou De’s “Tablet Inscription for the Marquis Wen of Guo,” the role of grain master was exclusively held by eldest sons, without any deviation or succession to other cadets.

An antecedent of your noble lineage resided in the ancient state of Jin, entered into matrimony with Huang, and bequeathed to posterity your forebear Pen. Bifu serves as the fifth-born male offspring in the lineage, yet it is Tsi who assumes the role of adopted patriarch within the household. I am the descendant of the progeny of Bifu. In quietness, the value of wisdom is not negligible; revered are the containers, their productivity unwavering, perpetually augmenting for posterity. In ancient times, the progenitor of this lineage hailed from the X and Y lineage, holding the distinguished position of overseeing local taxation affairs. His esteemed repute extended beyond the bounds of a single region. It is recorded that Your Majesty’s sire took him under his protective care. (Subject): Jū

(Verb, past tense): exhibited filial piety and (verb, present participle): collected taxes over an extended duration.

The role of a granary chief is not confined to the eldest male member of a family, as observed practice permits brothers, sons, and nephews to assume this position. Institutionally, it is not restricted to the eldest son. The succession pattern of the Yellow Xi History clan, with the position passing from grandson to grandson, is rooted in deeper historical reasons alluded to in Shiqi’s stele inscription. As the eldest grandson, Shitre received preferential treatment during the distribution of property among the offspring, as attested by the phrase “doubling the production, not for the other sons.” In the biographical texts pertaining to Shi Yin within the “Shi Jing,” and the epitaphs penned by Wu Kang for his tomb, an explicit declaration is made.

The Duke expressed: In ritual contexts, the precedence of filial piety over fraternal respect varies; I intend to champion this priority within my lineage. The historical practice entails the segregation of offspring born to concubines, in order to prevent contestation between them and the primogenitor. This custom is to be strictly adhered to by subsequent generations. Formally and academically, the sentence could be translated as follows:

“Greetings, today I will present my research project.” The Duke announced: “Distinct rituals apply to concubines and primary wives within my domain. I intend to institute this practice in my household. Regarding inheritance, I decree that my eldest son shall not share property equivalents with his siblings.” Furthermore, this legislation shall not be squandered by the progeny of future generations.

In certain other contexts, Shi Yin explicitly highlighted that Shi Treasurer and Shi Lao are descendants of the same lineage. The record states that Shi Bin was the father of five sons, one of whom was interred in Xi Yin Fu Jun Ciang. It is noted that Grandfather Lao held the title of senior grandson within the family lineage. In the account penned by Historian Qi, it is unequivocally mentioned that Zhifan was the designated beneficiary of Zhiben’s last will.

In his youth, the erstwhile monarch exhibited an uncanny tranquility and apathy towards all affairs, maintaining a grave and unwavering demeanor. In the imminence of relinquishing his progeny, Qingyuan remains reluctant to surrender his younger son. With unwavering devotion, he asserts to the assembled audience, “This offspring shall prove invaluable in the future; I lament not having had the privilege to witness it firsthand.” As the inevitability of separation looms, Qingyuan vows to perpetuate this legacy and addresses posterity with unyielding resolve, “Let it be known: this decree shall not be altered.”

During the late stage of ancient Chinese civilization, two distinct modes of property succession emerged: equal division amongst offspring was prevalent amongst the commoners, whereas the aristocracy adhered to the tradition of long-term inheritance through the eldest son. In the equitable inheritance system among the Zhuzi, a father is prohibited from unilaterally disqualifying any of his sons from their right to inherit in standard circumstances. This inheritance regime sets specific constraints on paternal arbitrariness. Shi Bin underscored the observance of “differential etiquette between eldest and younger sons” and the taboo against “younger sons sharing teeth with the eldest son” in public spheres. Notably, the equitable distribution of family property was a matter left to the discretion of the patriarch, seemingly reflecting the emerging assimilation of aristocratic customs into the populace. Upon synthesis with other texts of the Shi clan for scholarly examination, its enigmas become discernible.

At the onset of my military service, my family possessed an abundant extent of arable land. I have allocated the larger dwellings, yet the smaller residences are incapable of accommodating over one hundred acres for the requisition. The assigned tasks have yet to be concluded. In accordance with family law, this is the fact. To translate a Chinese sentence into formal and academic English, adhere to the following procedures:

1. Determine the parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.) in the Chinese sentence and their corresponding English equivalents.
2. Employ formal and academic English vocabulary and constructions to convey the intended meaning.
3. Ensure that the sentence structure conforms to the rules of formal and academic English grammar.
4. Adopt a succinct and clear writing style.
5. Eschew colloquialisms, contractions, and idiomatic expressions.
6. Utilize proper punctuation marks to denote sentence structure and meaning.

Illustration:

Chinese: 你好，今天我要買一本新書。(Hello, today I want to buy a new book.)

Formal and Academic English: Greetings; today, I intend to acquire a novel volume. The onus of corvée labor at the genesis of the country is substantial, consequently, the Qingyuan Bureau Magistrate institutes a household regulation, limiting the allotted land grants for offspring to a maximum extent of 100 acres, while exemptions apply to other matters. However, the oversight of large houses remains an exception.

Based on the provided sources, it is uncontested that Shi Yin transferred the bulk of his real property to Chang Fu, allocating merely a few hundred acres to Xiao Fu. The disparity in the size of their bequeathed lands was over one hundred-fold. The cause of this phenomenon is rooted in servitude obligations and intricate property relationships, rather than being merely a consequence of secular clergymen. In accordance with the provisions of the Shi Yin Household Law, the designation for grain storage duties falls upon the long room, whereas other chambers are relieved of the majority of onerous labor responsibilities. For exactly four consecutive generational successions, the History lineage maintained the tradition of their eldest grandsons assuming the role of grain officers within their familial hierarchy. With respect to the rationale behind the allocation of merely 100 taels of land rather than a greater quantity, kindly consult the pertinent records contained within “Woochiang Xian Zhi” (Annals of Woochiang County) during the reign of Chongzhen.

The labor of a farmer’s household takes the form of servitude. For each acre, there exist rents beyond those associated with autumn grain production. Furthermore, a substantial workforce, colloqually referred to as “the pointed ones,” engaged in agricultural activities in a rotational manner, preceded by individuals responsible for more strenuous labor tasks. In antiquity, a husband with a hundred-acre estate bore minimal responsibilities. Contemporaneously, there exists no agricultural land devoid of laborious endeavors.

In this context, the term “liyong” denotes irregular troops distinct from the regimental soldiers, who were subordinated to the command of the lieutenant general during the autumn grain procurement operations. In the corvée system of the Ming Dynasty, the assignment process began with correlating designated corvée tasks to particular households. Subsequently, the heads of these households were mandated to undertake the assigned tasks. Notably, a primary focus was given to imposing corvées upon affluent households to ensure the efficient functioning of the taxation system. In accordance with regulations, not every editor is subjected to imposing such a penalty. In practical implementation, it is more frequently observed that influential and wealthy individuals are irregularly assigned roles, as opposed to implementing a rotating system akin to the roles of plaintiff and defendant in a legal dispute. Following the enactment of the Militia Law, the “Alfa” research personnel formally emerged as auxiliary troops in an official capacity. Based on this principle, it is plausible that individuals possessing less than one hundred mu (approximately 0.165 hectares or 0.041 acres) of land are exempted from performing various labor obligations. During the Hongwu period, Japanese scholars, including He Qifeng, identified an additional class of households within the Li Jia system. This group, distinct from long-householders, first-householders, and those unable to bear taxation (referred to as “deformed households”), consisted of smaller households categorized as “guan houses.” These households were exempted from serving as regular laborers in the Li Jia but were obligated to perform auxiliary duties. In Wujiang County, the eligibility criteria for registration as an irrigated farmer are rather rigorous. Only individuals possessing an average landholding of fewer than ten acres are qualified to hold such a designation. The aforementioned farmers, possessing expanses of land exceeding several hundred acres, unequivocally fulfill the criteria to be designated as large-scale farmers, elite farmers, or non-irrigated farmers. These categorizations are distinct from small-scale farmers, subordinate farmers, and irrigated farmers frequently encountered in scholarly discourse. The passage in Chongzhen’s “Woojiang Xian Zhi” (Annals of Woojiang County) describing “houses with lands and their attached labor services entailing hardship, and a husband overseeing one hundred acres frequently bearing disproportionate burdens,” holds greater significance to the haphazard method of conscripting affluent individuals for corvée labor preceding the establishment of the equalized system. Regarding the Yellowxi History Clan particularly, Shi Bin established a commonwealth comprised of long houses as its fundamental structure, apportioning land in increments of one hundred acres. This arrangement enabled the long houses to assume sole responsibility for managing the commonwealth, independently shouldering the land tax burden, and excluding smaller dwellings from the rotating governing body, which follows a prescribed proportion for membership in the commonwealth. In doing so, Shi Bin sought to strike a balance between the capacity to sustain assessments and the corresponding labor and productive resources. In interpreting this distinct phenomenon, rather than viewing it as the impact of large houses on smaller ones, it may be more appropriate to consider it through the lens of feudal logic, whereby larger landlords are exempted while smaller tenants bear the burden. This aligns with the principle of burden sharing inherent in the Ming Dynasty’s land tax system.

Based on Wu Guan’s “Bi Table,” it is recorded that Shi Bin gave birth to five offspring: Ting, Yun, Hu, Cheng, and Yang. Upon assuming the familial inheritance and the role of eldest sons, Zhong, Zhou, and Chang were likewise appointed to diverse positions. Subsequently, they established residences and real estate holdings in the bay area, Suzhou, and other locales. Nevertheless, they refrained from maintaining the land bestowed upon them by Shibo. Amongst this lineage, the second-born son, identified as Shi Yin from the Shi clan, led a life as a farmer-scholar and abstained from holding public office. In contrast, the third son, named Shi Chang and his progeny, established themselves in Woo Yuansi, Wu County, and engaged in intricate commercial dealings within Suzhou city, attaining significant success. The youngest son, designated as Shi Long, became an hereditary military household stationed at the Jin Gate in Nanjing. Their descendants, up to that of Shi Yonggui, assumed the role of military governors in Shaanxi Tonglin Wei.

The progeny of Shi Tresong consist of two male descendants. The eldest, identified as Shi Yijun, holds the position of granary chief. An additional son, named Shi Yu, is also among them. Shi Yu contrary to the actions of his elder uncles, remained at home and devoted himself to agricultural pursuits through farming and horticulture instead. During leisure hours, one performs agricultural tasks such as draining and irrigating fields, pruning willows and pines. One also engages in fishing, positioning oneself by the self-sufficient pond, evoking memories of the grandeur of Pangde Gong, thereby earning the scholarly name Ruan Xiaohu. Shi Yuanxi’s offspring, identified as Shi Zhi, exhibited a remarkable aptitude for healing. Born outside the patriarchal household, Shi Zhi significantly expanded his agricultural holdings, amassing assets valued in the millions. Through his own initiatives and those of his spouse, who hailed from the esteemed Zhang lineage, Shi Zhi ascended to affluence.

By the epoch of Shi Yin, the membership of the Shi clan had expanded substantially, encompassing thousands of individuals. Concurrently, their commercial endeavors began to evolve, with a progressive concentration on financial investment. In the historical account recounted in “The Annals of Prime Minister Bo Yi during the Eastern Han Dynasty” within the Historical Records, an event of note transpired. On a particular day, the Minister of Works, Bo Yi, was engaged in overseeing the eastern territories. Falling ill unexpectedly, his condition drew deep concern from the Emperor. During a visit, one should not neglect study. In the presence of a young nobleman who was not engaged in scholarly pursuits at this time, the ruler expressed profound disappointment. Subsequently, driven by the counsel and motivation from Xishuangxiang in Xielang, he renounced his role as a mere grain administrator. Instead, he immersed himself fervently in learning, delving into Confucian classics not only for their renowned maxims but also implementing their teachings. As a result, he gained profound insights into their underlying principles. This event initiated an era of refined evolution within the Xielang dynasty. During the Zhengting and Jingting periods, Shi Huangdi was bestowed with the dual titles of Duke Xu and Huanxiang on two occasions, not as a result of any self-acquired status, but rather in recognition of his meritorious acts of alleviating famine through the distribution of grain.

Upon assuming stewardship of the copious estate bequeathed by his late father, Shi Jia, Shi Yin displayed an initial sense of apprehension. Based on the compilation in “Friendly Records of Guiguzhou Prefecture,” as detailed therein:

On a particular day, without prior notice, the monarch convened those present in his study for tea and discourse. He delegated to them the responsibility of managing his family affairs during his absence. With tears streaming down their faces, they implored him not to dismiss them. The assembly continued to plead with him. However, the sovereign, as an elderly man, requested a reprieve for personal relaxation. His request could not be disregarded.

Shi Yin, formally known as Xuzu, was born in the ninth year of the Xuande reign (1434) and passed away in the ninth year of the Hongzhi reign (1496). Unlike his predecessors in the Shi family, he was distinguished as a “scholar, possessing a master to acquire knowledge, proficient in managing practical affairs.” His expertise encompassed the fields of “classical text editing and annotation, surpassing the achievements of sage scholars; water and land management, demonstrating adaptability to various situations.” During the specified timeframe in China’s Wu region, the individual, who had not held an official position nor served as a granary manager, was renowned as one of “The Four Great Hermits of Southern China.” Despite this lack of formal authority, his affluent lineage enabled him to extend hospitality to visitors from diverse directions. During the Ming Dynasty, Wu Kuan, contemporaneous with historian Shen Zhou, held the esteemed role of Grand Secretary within the Department of Rites. His eminence extended beyond Suzhou, earning him a distinguished reputation. For more than four decades, there existed a close friendship between the individual and Shi Yin. Following Shi Yin’s demise, the former composed a funerary inscription as a tribute, thereby contributing significantly to scholarly investigations concerning Shi Yin.

Based on the account provided by Wu Guan, the biography of Shi Yin is characterized as follows: His physical presence was marked by grandeur and imposing stature, distinguished by a lengthy beard. Throughout the course of his life, he exhibited a propensity for social engagement. However, it was his unwavering commitment to moral principles that served as a deterrent, preventing unwanted visitors from frequenting his presence. To individuals of considerable influence, there exist prior actions, notably commendable, for which this individual is colloquially referred to as “straightforward.” Despite having a geographical reach limited to no more than one hundred li, the populace of Jiangze remains cognizant of his esteemed reputation. With respect to the county-level physicians, they merit equal regard. With the endorsement and faith of distinguished figures such as Xu Youzhen and Wang Cheng, I have repeatedly provided counsel and proposed solutions pertaining to local issues. My proficiency encompasses governance, water resource management, and finance. The intricacies of these domains necessitate robust determination and a visionary perspective to foster tranquility in all directions, announce peace throughout the region, and implement policies with judicious flexibility and stability. I propose plans to bolster our economic prosperity and extend a warm welcome to scholars and martial artists of literature and the arts. As an effective instrument, I am prepared to fulfill significant responsibilities. The connection between Shi Yin and Wu Zhongming was characterized by a deep familiarity. On a regular basis, they convened a select group of three to five long-standing companions. Their shared pursuits included the appreciation of antiquities, the examination of art in the form of paintings and calligraphy, or excursions into natural landscapes, thereby fostering friendships through the engagement in sophisticated and refined pastimes. Prior to his departure several years ago, there remained numerous elegiac inscriptions at the location frequented by his friends on that day.

During the tenure of Shi Yin, the Yellow Xi History Clan experienced further prosperity. With considerable monetary support, Shi Yin expeditiously acquired a distinguished reputation as a collector in Jiangnan. Based on the text “Wu Zhong Ren Wen Zhi” (People of Wu Zhong during the Longqing Era), which was compiled, the antiquities “Yu Ho Cang San Dai Jin Han Wucai” and “Tang Song Shu Huahua” (Scholar-Officials’ Paintings from the Tang and Song Dynasties) are referenced. Specifically mentioned are “Chunxiu Liangshu Tangwen Huanai Ce Wen” (Collection of Tang Literature and Mourning by Chunxiu Liang) and “Tang Zhao Mo Xi Ji Shen Ren Qianwen” (Thousands of Filial Acts by the Subjects of the Sui and Tang Dynasties). In the annals, it is documented that during the initial year of the Hongzhi reign in 1488, the subject under consideration erected a Small Yaso Hall, which measured “li” in height and “zhang” in width, utilizing sandalwood and red sandalwood. Additionally, a sequence of bathing locales were constructed. For his offspring, there emerged the Eastern Sea Grand Mansion. During the Shiji Era, the economic power of the Yellowxi History Family was manifested from diverse perspectives.

In the specified context, the designated heir of the Shi clan, identified as Shi Yin, instigated the implementation of formal linguistic systems grounded in ritual etiquette. He undertook the responsibility for revising ancestral temples, compiling comprehensive family registers, instituting worship regulations, and either personally orchestrated or invited esteemed acquaintances to oversee the compilation of extensive records documenting their lineage. Based on the records inscribed in “Xishanji” by Shi Yin within the Annals of Shi, the initiation of temple construction for the Shi lineage occurred during the rule of Shi Tong. Within this temple, there existed four reverential niches, denoted as “Ancestors Zengzun Wenxue Zhikao Qingyuan Gong.” This designation signifies the offerings rendered according to the minor zoning ritual for ancestors, encompassing Shi Tong’s great-grandfather Shi Rong and his father Shi Ben, spanning three generations. Among the various branches of the Shi clan residing in Jiaxing History Village, Shi Rong is identified as the major lineage. In contrast, Shi Juren, who resides in Huqiu (Yellow Brook), is classified as a minor branch within the broader context of the Shi clan of Jiaxing History Village.

Shi Yun successfully implemented his father’s decree, addressing the ancestral tablets arranged in the “Way of the Gods Turning Right” style, according to which he supplemented what was deficient and eliminated what was inappropriate for ritual observances. In accordance with the rituals prescribed by the Xiaozung dynasty, the altar comprises four equidistant tablets, each dedicated to the veneration of ancestors from the High Ancestor down to the fourth generation. Those who assume the role of High Ancestors are responsible for preparing the primary offerings for their respective generations. The ancestors, specifically those from the great-great-grandparent generation onward, are respectfully interred in designated niches, with one niche allotted for great-great-grandparents, another for great-grandparents, and a third for their immediate predecessors. Should the number of revered ancestral forebears yet be fully enumerated, their commemorative sanctuaries bear similarity to those of modest temples. In accordance with the principle of honorarily designating the eastern direction, Shi Yun is required to position Shi Rong in the initially unoccupied eastern niche. Simultaneously, Yen Zhen and Zhu Fen are expected to shift rightward successively, assigning Shi Xian to the westernmost niche. This arrangement establishes a hierarchical sequence of “respect, ancestor, revered ancestor, superior” within the niches. He instituted the founding of temples for sacrificial purposes, oversaw the construction and administration of familial educational institutions, and inscribed this decree upon stone tablets, titled “Zongzi Leading, Established Conventional Temple”.

Initially, a hermit constructed a temple adjacent to the flowing stream, wherein he performed ancestral rites by offering sacred items in homage. Select a parcel of land exceeding eighty taels in size (a historical unit of measurement from China) for agricultural pursuits, specifically designated for the performance of religious ceremonies. In religious practices, both ancient artifacts in the form of tablet shrines and inscribed stone tablets are revered. The tenets associated with these objects carry significant weight, including strict observances and meticulous adherence. The teachings enshrined within them underscore the importance of gravity and authenticity, diligence and purity.

The management rights of the Shi clan temple are systematically transferred from Shi Xian and Shi Ying to Shi Jie, with each transition taking place under the jurisdiction of the eldest son. Adherence to the “strictly follow the matrilineal line” principle in religious matters is meticulously observed by this branch, underscoring its prominent role within the clan’s reverential practices. For over four successive generations, the progenitor of the Shi lineage, Shi Bin Zhu, and his descendants held the hereditary position of grain officers, amassing a substantial fortune. Relatively to other clans, the Shi family enjoyed an unrivaled economic advantage. The establishment and management of the Shi family temple by its descendants since its founding serves as irrefutable evidence of this historical fact.

Based on the historical records documented in “Wujiang Xian Zhi” (Annals of Wujiang County), dating back to the Chonghua era, the commencement of construction for the Shi Temple of the Shi clan occurred in the fifth year of Chengzi (1469), with completion being achieved two years thereafter. The “Shi Family Temple Record” penned by Zhou Ding offers an exhaustive narrative on the subject.

During the summer season of this current year, the mausoleum of Scholar Zang, a notable figure in Songling History, was officially concluded. Upon my visit, I discovered that its construction exhibited both antiquated and modern characteristics, suggesting the presence of forgeries. The secluded temple of the revered hermit Zi Shun, situated preceding the Imperial Examination River, exhibits a degree of grandiosity subtly surpassing the commonplace. The lost brushwork offerings of my comrade Guo Qi at the quartet of shrines continue to preserve their initial condition. Based on the inscribed data, it can be deduced that these three niches were built during the seventh year of the Chongzhen Era, specifically in the autumn season.

The principal rationale for the reconstruction of antiquated sanctuaries revolves around the matter of statuary. In the temples founded by Historian Shi Tong during this era, four parallel niches were established for the reverence of ancestral figures spanning from Shi Rong to Shi Pian. Notably, within the current generation, Shi Feng’s father, also identified as Shi Tong, has been incorporated as an object of veneration. From the standpoint of Shi Yuku, this practice is consistent with the prescribed regulations for ancestor worship by officials, as outlined in “Mingji Li” of the Zhu Dynasty Rituals.

Within the temple hall, there exists a shelf situated in proximity to the northern wall, containing a table in each of the quadrant recesses. In the first shrine, the Ancestor Emperor is revered, and in the second, the Ancestor Empress is honored. The occupants of the second shrine are the Ancestor Grandfather and the Ancestor Grandmother. The third shrine houses the Ancestor, while the Ancestor Consort is venerated in the fourth.

According to regulatory guidelines, individuals are limited to honoring the ancestral lineage up to the second generation. In the seventeenth year of the Hongwu Emperor’s reign (1384), at the recommendation of Hu Ruizhong, magistrate of Tang County, Zhu Yuanzhang instituted a change in the ancestor worship practices among commoners. This modification allowed for the veneration of third-generation ancestors, as recorded in the “Register of Instructions for the People.” Unspoken approval was given for the acknowledgment and reverence of fourth-generation ancestors within this context. During the Ming Dynasty, in the Wujiang region, there existed numerous residences of the gentry class with a lineage spanning three generations, supported by pillars. Additionally, there were families who adhered to the prescribed rites for a span of four generations, in accordance with the stipulations set forth by Hu Quzhong, the magistrate of Tang County. The temple erected by Shi Tong in the Shi dynasty, which adhered to the unconventional “worshiping ancestors with their backs facing right” altar arrangement, can be characterized as occupying a pivotal position between popular and aristocratic religious practices. It deftly assimilated the ritual customs of the commoners and the temple rites of the nobility. Shi Tre’s grasp of Xiao Zong Tong Fa remains rudimentary, and the fabrication of his four stupas exhibits a hint of an extravagant, potentially feudal or mandarin, character. Shi Yun, a scholar versed in Bopu Tang tradition, advocated adherence to ancient practices during the construction of his ancestral temple with regard to offerings for rituals. He ensured that these offerings neither fell short nor exceeded the required amount. Furthermore, the inclusion of Shi Renzhong, the grain master of the first generation, in the temple ceremonies, despite being an external addition, was deemed acceptable. This set of taboos is of paramount importance and can be consonant with the specified succession rules and their progeny, as outlined in the works of Shi Ben.

In historical records, Jurin is identified as not being the elder son of Rong. In Jiaxing, there exists a younger sibling named Zhen to whom the given individual is related. Upon arrival in Wujiang, this individual assumes a collateral status within the Jiaxing lineage. Conversely, for the Huaxi clan’s progeny, this individual is regarded as the pioneering ancestor instigating their migration. In accordance with the conventional ritual practice, Shi Yin, being the sole male offspring of Shi RenzhI, could have assumed the role of ancestor, while his descendants would have become patriarchs. This was a feasible scenario in Huangxi. Nevertheless, despite holding this potential position during the tenure of both his grandson and great-grandson, Shi Yin persisted in maintaining his status as a subordinate under the Jiading Temple’s jurisdiction in Kaifeng, due to his profound emotional bond with the minor ritual tradition. In the memoirs penned by Scholar Shi Yin for historical documentation, the esteemed ancestor, a member of the minor zong within the court nobility, is described as follows: Should the customary sacrificial practices of the small zong not be modified, and if the “gods’ way turns right” temple tradition were upheld, the great-grandfather of the Clarity and Reaches would ultimately face exclusion from the family sanctuary. In accordance with historical precedent, the status quo regarding Shi Yin’s role within the Shi clan must be maintained. Our great ancestor, Shi Tai, preserved our familial lineage and property for a hundred generations. He also established traditions that have since been passed down through the annals of our family history. With the demise of Shi Yong, the significance of these traditions has become increasingly pertinent. Therefore, it is necessary to consider neither constructing new temples nor disturbing the existing ones, while continuing to show reverence and respect for our ancestors.

In accordance with established protocols for mourning and funerary observances, it is hereby announced that Emperor Jing has departed from this world. This information has been formally communicated to the Yi Bureau. Upon Zeng Daxako’s relocation of the stele from a distant location, it was soon to be your turn for placement within this monument. In solemn reverence and pious contemplation, why is it incumbent upon an individual to maintain silence during rituals as customary practice, while offerings are being presented? When the collective body moves in unison, is it not essential to adhere strictly to established traditions rather than deviating from the norm, as is generally recommended.

In order to thwart the emergence of Shi Fen as a historical figure, Shi Yin elected to employ the Great Zong Faith for this purpose. The initial action involved altering Shi Renzhong’s lineage status, transforming him from a minor scion of the Zong Faith into an alternate heir, thereby designating him as the ancestor who remained in his original locale. Subsequently, Shi Fen assumed the role of the Great Zong Faith’s heir. In adherence with established rituals, the individual deliberately undertook the restoration of the altar niches within his residence. This action was motivated by an intention to deviate from the traditional rule of having “four niches facing right” in the shrine, and instead adopt the less common arrangement of “three niches with the left ones visible and the right ones concealed.” This shift was pursued in order to establish a form of worship that aligned with his personal preferences. In conformity with ancient Zhuxu and Yuju customs, it was subsequently determined that the most significant transformation occurred through the adoption of Shiyentan’s offspring. Consequently, the veneration of Shiyong was deemed unnecessary. As the descendants of the second patriarch, Shi Yin, in the esteemed lineage of the sixth generation, he was scheduled for relocation from the eastern niche during the enthronement proceedings.

The three shrines are designated as follows: the central shrine is consecrated to Ancestor East Xuan; the eastern shrine is devoted to the distantly revered ancestor, Clear and Far; the western shrine is dedicated to Ancestor Zu Xian. According to the ancient intents of the Shao Temple, the Jade Emperor bears the Tablet on his left side. In the Eastern Niche, the Fourth World is inhabited by the Master of the Friendly Fragrant Tree. In accordance with tradition, the custodian of the central altar maintains a reverent stance, successively transmitting the role over five generations to perform sacrificial rites. As per Mu Zhu’s design, there exists an auxiliary offering altar situated to the right of the central altar in Fuxi Hidden Temple. During the sixth dynasty, the high priest at the Eastern Altar’s sanctuary performed the prescribed rites and accessed the chamber. In contrast, during the second dynasty, the offerings were interred within the tomb.

Following numerous consultations with the esteemed Master Jia Shan Zhou Ding, who is renowned as the “Good Ancestor without Peers” in historical records, a novel collection of rituals was conceived. These rituals bear resemblance to those practiced during the Sui and Tang dynasties yet possess the unique ability to perpetually enshrine Shi Yin within the family temple. Via the amended ancestor worship regulations, Shi Yin shall be permanently designated as a collective ancestor in the ancestral tablet, without undergoing burial.

Should the throne of the fourth monarch be relocated southward for the benefit of the second monarch, the latter would perpetually reign without undergoing burial rites. Upon the accession of the fifth monarch to the position previously held by the third monarch, the latter would be obliged to adhere to ancient customary law and make the ultimate sacrifice. In accordance with tradition, the monarch of the Five Dynasties is prescribed to reside south of the Three Sovereigns, aligned with the Four Splendors, without encroaching upon the territory of the Second Sovereign. The throne in the north and east of the Three Sovereigns ought to perpetually remain vacant. By the Sixth and Seventh Dynasties, ritual offerings were paid to the tombs of the Fourth and Fifth Sovereigns. The dynamic between the esteemed entity represented by “one” and the subject signified by “two” typically involves the former being revered and bestowed with ceremonial observances, whereas the latter undergoes modifications in the context of such rites. Individuals who relocated and made offerings, along with those who were interred, adhered unwaveringly to their established routines. In a benevolent manner, I imparted the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius without disruption. The niche, originally consisting of four elements, has been diminished to now comprise three.

The topic of ancestor veneration within religious and juridical frameworks remains a highly contentious issue. It transcends mere questions regarding the appropriate placement of ancestral tablets, frequently encompassing the tangible concerns of present-day individuals. Inadvertent mishandling of affairs can elicit scrutiny and censure. Through rigorous examination of historical documents, the evolution of Shi Treg’s temple rites, specifically those pertaining to the “Divine Way Turning Right” four-niche system, has been meticulously documented. Under the recently enacted major ritual statutes, Shi Yin frequently presided to the north of the eastern niches, and attained an equal standing with the ancestor Zhuren in this role. Shi Zhuren was perpetually revered as a venerable figure in his capacity as a son, while Shi Yin was perpetually revered as a constant officiant in the role of a distinguished clan descendant. In the historical record, the Third Dynasty, following Yi’s precedent no longer serves as a valid justification. Instead, it is imperative that this dynasty adheres rigorously to the funerary practices prescribed by Zhoumu, referred to as “ancient burial customs.” For three successive generations, the Shi clan have penned scholarly treatises on the observance of ritual customs. This body of work underscores the context-dependent nature of rituals, a fundamental tenet of “the tranquility derived from virtuous conduct through adherence to rites.” The Annals of Wei effectively managed the discord between Constantin and Wenping, thereby eliminating criticisms from peers regarding Constantin’s interactions as a breach of etiquette. Furthermore, they successfully addressed the ritual and rites controversy surrounding the great eunuch Shi Ben within the Shi family, resulting in a restoration of peace among them. Presently, tranquility prevails. Concerning this issue, as expressed by Zhū Deng:

Informal: Building a temple is a relatively straightforward task, yet determining the regulations concerning the altar proves to be a significant challenge.

Formal: The construction of a temple represents a comparatively uncomplicated endeavor; however, the establishment of appropriate altar protocols poses a considerable degree of complexity. Defining the nature and use of an altar, as well as depositing offerings therein, constitutes one aspect of this issue. Yet, the absence of suitable offerings for burial presents a distinctly formidable challenge. The shrine of the Shi family, situated beside a secluded stream, is often described as a retreat. Although this was not its initial purpose, the structure’s intricate curves effectively convey themes of filial piety, righteousness, and propriety, surpassing the original intentions of its creator. The expression used is: “It is a new figure of criminal enterprise.”

The refutation by Zhou Ding of the temple construction initiated by the Shi Dan patriarchal lineage does not signify an “old and new” dynamic as it might appear, but rather designates the authentic pioneers of the Shi family’s religious traditions. This discovery sheds light on the profound respect held by Wu Zhongshi towards the Shi family rituals and the magnified Ming imperial rites. In spite of the prevalent disregard for “ritual taboos amongst the populace” during that epoch, unconventional ritual practices continued to be unfavored by the aristocracy. Through judiciously implemented and pertinent modifications of ancient practices, it is a veritable fact that numerous concerns documented historically were ameliorated. In the annals of history, four years elapsed following the amendment of temple regulations. In the eleventh year of the Jiazing era, which corresponds to the year 1475, at the National Academy, Zhu Hongwu proposed rectifications to the ritual practices. These adjustments entailed the replacement of “the Way of the Gods turning right” with “Left Shao and Right Mou.” From the Ming dynasty up to the present day, the Yellow River Historian family, which represented the affluent class, underwent approximately one century of development and expanded to encompass four or five generations. The original institutional frameworks for ancestor worship, however, no longer sufficed to address their religious needs. As a result, Reneren Temple evolved from a subordinate branch into an independent temple, while Pingshi was elevated to the position of major temple master. The proposition put forth by Zhou Hongbo represents a reactive initiative in response to the prevailing trend, functioning as an ancillary consideration within the broader context of grassroots religious doctrine reforms.

Between Shi Xie and Shi Yin, adherence to family law was unwavering such that the elder son of Shi Pinglan solely acquired the patrimonial wealth, contrasting the prevailing customary practice during that epoch which favored equal distribution among offspring. Shi Yun, the offspring of Shi Jing and Shi Di, was compelled to explore an alternate path. They subsequently sought employment in the courts of feudal lords: Shi Yun was designated as a tutor within the Qin Wangfu, while serving as a steward in the kitchen of Yi Wangfu. Upon passing down the familial customs to his progeny, the annalist encountered certain challenges. The Shi family comprises two offspring: the elder, named Yongxi and affectionately known as “Nanyardu,” and the younger, referred to as “Songqi” (Yongping). The Lady of Xisufu harbors a fondness for the Lady Songqi due to their mutual passion for literature. In accordance with the “Shi Hu Mausoleum Tablet,” compiled by Luo Guanzhong, the following is documented:

The given name of this individual is Yong-ling, the style name is De-zheng, and the surname, which is properly denoted as a family name, is History. The moniker used colloquially for this person is Song-qiu. Carrying weights of varying magnitudes and reaching great heights, surpassing valleys and ascending into the heavens, their eyes emanating intense brilliance akin to electricity, their beards extending lengthily, resembling formidable swords, they present an image of immortals. An individual exhibits solemnity and caution, constantly vigilant, devoid of the innocent naivety typical of childhood, acting autonomously with every spoken word and footstep. The matriarchal figure is characterized by dominance, while the patriarchal figure is portrayed as heavy and unpredictable, weeping profusely under the precipitation of rain and wind. Despite this melancholic demeanor, there exists a surprising reservoir of strength. With a lengthy temperament, one’s familial lineage places significant emphasis on education, nurturing not only oneself but also one’s offspring’s professional development. The household is filled with an abundance of literature for perusal. In the revered Western Village resided the distinguished figure, Mr. Xi. His reputation extended far beyond the boundaries of his community, encompassing figures of great repute such as Master Hanxuan of Chan Temple, Master Xuanzang of Fengshui Temple, Master Fenghan of the Range Pavilion, and Master Lisi of the Lingzhi Hall. Mr. Xi held esteemed relationships and mutual respect with these individuals. With a sense of delight, Mr. Xi addressed his visitors: “I am pleased to welcome you, my esteemed guests, who hail from illustrious origins.”

Based on the emotive text, it is implicit that the author of “Shi Yin Ben” held a profound affection for his son Changdong, evidenced by his construction of a distinct mansion named Hongdong, exclusively for his use. Upon the completion of constructing a dwelling, a scholarly treatise entitled “” was authored to express profound reverence towards the deities inhabiting it: “Within a domicile, there resides only the service of divinities.” A particular intermediary shall perpetually reside there, exhibiting both audacious and bashful comportment, proclaiming to you, the omnipotent deity, should you be privy to this knowledge, while continuing to revel in it. This observation underscores his distinctive affinity for eternity. In his advanced age, Yongzhi, the eldest son, was entrusted with the administration of both the family business and agricultural endeavors, in accordance with the established succession customs of our ancestral lineage. In his domestic temple, he conveyed this decision to his ancestral and in-law ancestors, displaying a paradoxical disposition.

A member of our lineage, having labored for a span of twenty-eight years without producing noteworthy accomplishments, inadvertently squandered precious time and thereby brought dishonor upon our ancestral legacy. On the day of Xusi, I shall relinquish my responsibilities, entrusting our family affairs to my eldest son, Yongxi. Concurrently, Introzhi will occupy his new dwelling at Huan Dong. The concealment of this transition can no longer be maintained. Kindly take notice that:

Or, more succinctly:

Attention:

Both options maintain the original meaning while adopting a more formal and academic tone.

Despite its resilience, the primogeniture system underwent significant transformation during the rule of Emperor Shi Zong in the Shijian Dynasty. This pivotal monarch marked the end of the long-standing Shibu family law, which had been rigorously adhered to for over a century. Historically, the two eldest brothers have engaged in extensive deliberations and reached consensuses concerning the distribution of property. Employing an equitable method on average, the allocation has been determined such that each of the three siblings will receive approximately fourteen hundred and sixty-six and two thirds acres. By the aforementioned epoch, the monopoly on the title of “grain master” in historical annals no longer resided exclusively with the Yellow River Delta clan. Evidenced by the fact that Hongfu, an offspring of Hengtong, had already assumed the role of “Longshi” or assistant grain master under the Eastern Sea Palace’s deputy ministerial rank. In the course of his advancing years, Zhistihu Shi delegated the administration of his affairs to Xu Huanxian. Simultaneously, Xu was engrossed in daily gambling activities and held extensive property from long-standing tenures. Moreover, Xu encountered disputes with the Water and Plains factions, amassing debts exceeding ten thousand li. Due to his mismanagement of non-human entities, this corrupt conduct was uncovered by an anonymous source. Consequently, Shi narrowly escaped punishment through the financial assistance of his wife’s family, the Pters, in the form of a dowry. In the broader socio-political landscape, the role of the grain inspector has become disadvantaged. With territories being repurposed and external power insufficient, the once noble duties of upholding justice and benevolence have given way to potential corruption. The inspector now amasses wealth within his household, significantly increasing fees, borrowing excessively from subordinates, and exacerbating their debts. These actions contribute to a gradual decline in the inspector’s domestic sphere. During the reign of Shi Hongxu, the propensity for grain cultivation territories to amalgamate became increasingly inescapable due to the widespread adoption of circular and rectangular field configurations.

For the Huangxi Shi clan, the decline of the grain-long system was concurrent with the relinquishment of the primogeniture succession. Based on the information provided in the previous text, the justification for promoting the second option was initially meant to supplement the first. Upon reaching the age of poetic scholarship, the elder son of Shi Zhang initiated the ancestral rites of “Zongzi leading the sacrifice” to some extent. However, during this period, the younger brothers Lodu and Lodao held opposing views regarding ancestor worship. The neglected graves of our distant ancestors had long gone unattended. Seeking to rectify this, Lodu rallied the clan members to collectively perform sacrifices, albeit not fully satisfying the elders. Scholars commended their filial piety despite these shortcomings. However, the brothers ultimately adopted separate ancestor worship practices, thereby abandoning the ideal of “Zongzi leading the sacrifice” as prescribed by ancestral law. During the Wanli era of the Ming Dynasty, the temple of the Shi clan succumbed to ruination, and the tradition of preparing and venerating “Zongzi” ceased to exist. In accordance with the traditional practice of “Four Sons’ Rotating Yearly Sacrifice,” the occupants of the Hangdong House assume the solemn duty of conducting ancestor worship on a annual basis, each taking turn in this sacred responsibility. Since the Ming Dynasty, the familial registry of Hangdong House has expressed profound displeasure towards the inactivity concerning the designation of the larger and smaller zones. The record indicates a division within our lineage: one segment resides on the left and is recognized as the primary branch, while the other segment inhabits the right and holds the status of the secondary branch. In formals and academic English, the sentence could be written as:

The Great Tradition does not abandon the Great Orthodoxy.

Title: The Third Chapter: Settlement of Family Matters

Alternatively:

Title: The Third Chapter: Resolution of Family Issues

Since the Ming dynasty, the Shi family have held the dual responsibilities of grain transportation and acting as “Eastern Zhongyi Express Riders.” Remuneration for these duties was significant, amounting to several hundred gold coins. This added burden has been a heavy one for the family. Scholar Cleanshire Takahashi of Japan designates this distinct economic interaction as that occurring between the Yangtze River Delta and the North China Plain. In the last century’s 1950s, he carried out specialized research on this subject and was among the pioneering scholars to note the sparse population and insufficient number of horses for transportation in the Huang-Huai-Hai Plain and the northern regions. As a result, strategies such as enlisting horse owners from the affluent farmers and merchants in Jiang, Zhe, and Suzhou’s southern areas to breed horses and transport them to various northern destinations, instead of relying on cultivated officials’ land tax payers, emerged as viable solutions. In the northwestern region, specifically labeled as the “Southern Horses” area, those equines involved exhibit a comparatively autonomous management structure. Due to the populace of the southern region being relatively inexperienced in water and soil management, possessing limited expertise in horse breeding, and predominantly employing agrarian laborers for equine rearing, thereby entailing considerable wage expenses and impeding their agricultural responsibilities, he proved to be an encumbrance. Yellow Xi Shi was wholly occupied in cultivating his own lands, resulting in plentiful grain surpluses. Consequently, he was drafted as a “horsehead tax” servant. In addressing this undertaking, the Story family initially assigned “Story Rendao, related by name,” to oversee horse breeding in Dongguang. During the Yongle dynasty, Story Ben granted a thousand acres of arable land, designating it as “Land with the Character ‘Grain’.” The responsibility placed upon this undertaking was significantly onerous. Based on the account in Shi Zhu’s “Woojiang Xian Zhi” (Annals of Woojiang County), this portion is described in great detail as a source of profound distress.

In ancient Chinese Water Horse Corps’ formative period, individuals of limited means were designated as “horseheads,” whereas those of lower rank were identified as “water soldiers.” The chief officer holds the greatest degree of accountability, with an annual salary of three thousand units, while those who fail to meet the established quota are designated as equestrian personnel. Additionally, there exist subordinate staff members, identified as horse keepers, stationed below the equestrian personnel. The compensation allotted to officers responsible for overseeing agricultural production during specified seasons, encompassing grain procurement for work, food, and fodder provisions, is denoted as “horse feed.” When funds are amassed for the acquisition and organization of horses, such resources are termed “horse prices,” calculated per acre, typically surpassing the imposed tax on grain production. At the Northern Stud, the equine subject maintained an elevated head position, yet no refund was granted for the associated fees.

Based on the given information, it is apparent that the term “Nanma” encompasses a range of items pertaining to its reuse. Among these components, the horse’s head holds the greatest significance. Attached to this finding are various elements: horsehide, horsehair, horse feed, and horse price. The importance of each element decreases in a hierarchical order as follows: horsehide, horsehair, horse feed, and lastly, horse price. The chief of the historic lineage is solely accountable for the labor on his self-owned estate, receiving inadequate remuneration. This situation underscores the extensive acreage under cultivation by peasants in the field. Concurrently, the onus further amplified the significance of the primogeniture inheritance system’s implementation. During the Hongxi era (1425), a decree was issued mandating the enlistment of all households into the military and the extinction of those without registered residents. Consequentially, fallow lands abandoned by such families were to be cultivated by local authorities. The designation of these lands as common land was uniformly applied, encompassing both official and commonhold parcels. Based on the account in “Zheng He’s Annotated Annals of the ‘Record of the Grand Ancestor’s Inspections of the Extreme Limits of the State’” (Annalium Magni Rerum Inspectionotariorum Zheng He):

During the Early Hongxi reign, a decree was promulgated exempting from taxation any realms’ households lacking land. This measure enabled the general populace to engage in agricultural self-cultivation. The consequence of law infringement is rigorous, entailing potential penalties such as official reprimands and extended periods of incarceration for the transgressor. Subordinate personnel carry out procedural duties, requesting clarification from all relevant parties, while some individuals manipulate situations to their advantage through various means, including the use of ropes of varying lengths. However, there are those who choose to remain silent due to apprehensions regarding potential retaliation. The Duke expressed concern: “The virtues of this prince are subject to scrutiny; ought we not to address potential adversities affecting the populace? Consequently, a petition was presented to the court for the consideration of tax reductions, devoid of personal profit for the Duke’s household.” The elderly express sentiments of unworthiness in relation to my favor.

Shi Bin acted vigorously among his kinship group, substantially procuring vast tracts of uncultivated arable land from the expansive ethnic regions stretching from Xi Jiang to Sheng Ze. Under such circumstances, this construct may have emerged. Holding olfactories of exceptional acuity akin to the historic figure Shi Yin, this individual not only spearheaded the transformation of the Yellow Creek Shi lineage into a distinguished landed gentry in Wujiang, but also etched an exalted niche within familial annals. During the Ming Dynasty, newly appropriated lands, irrespective of their previous ownership status, were subjected to minimal taxation. This tax policy mitigated the risks associated with state-owned lands, adhering to the principle of “light taxes, heavy labor” versus “heavy taxes, light labor.” Contrastingly, the Ming Dynasty’s corvée draft system strictly followed the principle of “heavy taxes, light labor, light taxes, heavy labor.” The labor burden for state-owned lands was substantially lessened compared to privately owned lands. It is worth noting that conscripted labor forces were exclusively utilized for transportation, communication, and construction projects on private lands, while state-owned lands remained exempt from this requirement. Wealthy families who possessed a greater quantity of privately owned lands fulfilled the criteria for paying heavier “head taxes.”

Wealthy individuals, who assume the role of messengers in a relay race, frequently find themselves unable to personally discharge this obligation due to their financial means. Instead, they resort to engaging intermediaries, referred to as “proxies,” to carry out the duty on their behalf. Historian Ren exemplified such a role. Despite the fact that there are costs associated with the Shi family’s annual flower expenditures for horse rearing in Shandong, these expenses remain above several hundred taels of silver each year. In memory of Renzhi’s distinguished accomplishments, a pillar was constructed eastward from his temple posthumously. During the Fengzhi era, Li Gui, the magisterial inspector overseeing agriculture, systematically transformed summer taxes and other public impositions into measures of bushels. Autumn grains were collected distinctly, with both water horse stations and their produce being documented under this category. Consequently, silver was accumulated at the treasury for distribution to various relay stations and procurement of additional equine forces. The southern horse alliance on the brink of disintegration in Huabei relieved the tension along the Yellow River, thereby permitting the Xishi clan to prosper during the Zhongjia period in the fertile regions of Jiangnan’s southern area.

During the early Ming Dynasty up to the Shengde Era, descendants of the Shi clan, specifically the fourth and fifth generations, established their lineages in the region of Li. Accumulated wealth substantially during this period. The annals (or records) not only accumulate extensive repositories of architectural structures and chambers, but also amass an impressive collection of “Three Dynasties Han-Zhou Artifacts and Chinese Painting, Calligraphy, and Porcelain from the Han, Tang, and Song Dynasties.” Consequently, one becomes renowned as a distinguished collector in the Wu-Zhong region. During the Ming and Qing dynasties in Jiangnan, collecting was a prevalent investment practice among the literati, characterized by its refined nature. In the Jiangnan region, it has been uncovered that certain affluent families constructed warehouses within their expansive estates to consolidate rice cultivation, silk production, and artistic crafting industries. The artistic artifacts housed in these warehouses functioned as crucial collateral for their operation. During the Jianwu Era, notable individuals, including Jiang Yanxi and Wang Shizhen, played significant roles in both business transactions and the collection of artifacts. The founding of a warehouse generates significant revenues for merchants, in addition to facilitating the amassing of capital and expanding investment opportunities. From a particular viewpoint, the Yellowxi History Family’s acquisition of antique calligraphy and painting extends beyond the realm of mere collecting. It also functions as an alternative method for this esteemed family to amass affluence, distinct from their land-based endeavors.

In the inaugural year of the Hongzhi era (1488), the esteemed Huangxi History mansion experienced an unfortunate incident as one of its eighteen halls succumbed to the devastating effects of fire. Housed within this architectural edifice were a vast array of treasured objects, including but not limited to, utility items, recreational paraphernalia, literary works, calligraphy and paintings, axes, steles, and tablets. Regrettably, the entirety of these invaluable possessions met with complete destruction as a result of this calamitous event. In the disputed monographs pertaining to antique collectibles and their fire damage, my colleague Muci, in his work titled “Symbolic Compilation,” meticulously chose and statistically analyzed the primary artifacts for examination.

The following titles represent various works of art: “Caidanming’s ‘Pi’: Hongxingzu, Fandayan, Hu Qi et al.” (Landscapes by Caidanming, large format); “Han Xizhai’s ‘Night Banquet Picture’” (Night Banquet by Han Xizhai); “Li Longcheng’s ‘Nine Poems Picture’” (Nine Poems by Li Longcheng, one scroll); “Songxian’s ‘Various Works’” (Miscellaneous Works by Songxian); “Landu Chuanzhao’s ‘Two Old Posts’ in Large Script” (Two Old Posts by Landu Chuanzhao, large script); “Songren’s ‘Filial Piety Picture of the Girl Returning to Han’” (Filial Piety Scroll by Songren); “Zhao Qianli Fu Luo Shi San Xing Picture” (Three Star Goddesses in Sanxing Picture by Zhao Qianli, large-format); “Zhuxu Ting with the ‘Sixty Lords’ Posts’ (Yangtieya Inscription)” (Sixty Lords’ Posts by Zhuxu Ting, with Yangtieya Inscription); “Emperor Song Xiaozong’s Edict to Bo Yang the Governor” (Edict to Bo Yang the Governor by Emperor Song Xiaozong); “Thousand Li Spring River Crossing Picture” (Small-format Thousand Li Spring River Crossing Picture); “Gaode Fuzhi’s ‘One Worship Pine Tree Picture’” (One Worship Pine Tree Picture by Gaode Fuzhi); “Zhao Zisheng’s ‘Poems on Plum and Bamboo’ (Three Poems)” (Three Poems on Plum and Bamboo by Zhao Zisheng); “Zhao Zitang’s ‘True Book’ (Dongzhijian Inscription)” (True Book with Dongzhijian Inscription by Zhao Zitang); “Chen Juzhong’s ‘Five Horse Pictures’ (with Annotation and Yuan People’s Recognition)” (Five Horse Pictures with Annotation and Yuan People’s Recognition by Chen Juzhong); “Shunshu’s Painting of ‘Hanging Willows and Ripe Persimmons’ (with Poetry)” (Painting of Hanging Willows and Ripe Persimmons with Poetry by Shunshu); “Shunshu’s Painting of ‘The Girl Holding a Fan’ (with Poetry)” (Girl Holding a Fan Painting with Poetry by Shunshu); “Subansi’s Post to the Great Minister” (Post to the Great Minister by Subansi); “Subansi’s ‘Book of Self-Poetry’ One Scroll” (One Scroll of Self-Poetry by Subansi); “Subansi’s ‘Book of Coming and Going Words’ One Scroll” (One Scroll of Coming and Going Words by Subansi); “Wen Riyuan’s Poem on ‘Grapes Being Ripe for Lord Bai’ (Small Characters, Anwen Shizhi, Guzi Jing Inscription)” (Poem on Grapes Being Ripe for Lord Bai in Small Characters with Anwen Shizhi and Guzi Jing Inscriptions by Wen Riyuan); “Subansi’s ‘Horse Picture’ (with Annotation and Yuan People’s Poetry Annotation)” (Horse Picture with Annotation and Yuan People’s Poetry Annotation by Subansi); “Huang Daliu Xishan Picture (with Wangguo Qu Ware Words, Pu Yunlin Inscription)” (Xishan Picture with Wangguo Qu Ware Words and Pu Yunlin Inscription by Huang Daliu).

In spite of enduring substantial setbacks, Yongxi, the designated heir of the Shi lineage, managed to maintain a modest existence in Longxi, eschewing opulent attire and conspicuous consumption. Nevertheless, their economic foundation, accumulated over generations along the Yellow River, remained essentially intact. One side of the family’s fortune lies in the preservation of their valuable artifacts from the Tang and Ming dynasties, which were spared damage during a fire. These prized possessions, such as “Xuanzhong’s Copies of the Clock and Cauldron with Doubts as to Their Authenticity - Twenty Volumes,” “European Rat Dream Tablets,” “Zhao’s Collection of Thousand Characters of Jin Script,” “Qucheding’s Records of the Lan Pavilion,” “Song Zhizhen’s Thousand Character Classic,” “Yan Zhenqi and Zhang Shun’s Letters,” “Quadras’ Copies of the Lan Pavilion Records,” “Tang Dynasty Sculptures,” “Song Dynasty Calligraphy,” “Xu Tenghuan and Xu Tingjian’s Paintings,” and “Daidi’s Inscriptions,” had previously been studied and appreciated by Cheng Zhong in Shuyuan Temple prior to the fire. Concurrently, the family’s land and granary management strategy proved instrumental in their recovery, providing them with substantial resources for healing and regeneration following multiple fires. Therefore, it can be concluded that “adversity brought about greater prosperity.” Among these endeavors, the earnings derived from establishing a warehouse are by no means inconsequential. The Shi family’s storage facility likewise accommodates the deposit of valuable objects such as books, paintings, and other tangible assets, alongside cash and other intangible assets. In the Jiangnan market, characterized by an abundance of substandard silver and spurious currency, even the slightest inattention can result in deceit. Shi Yongxi, with limited experience in the merchant industry, on one occasion had served as a merchant for foreign clients. A scandal emerged concerning the Broad Merchant, who allegedly imported six hundred taels of silver but in reality, there were numerous false claims. It is documented that Shi Yongxi received only four hundred taels of genuine silver. With a sum of six hundred taelss of silver, it is possible to settle outstanding debts that have accrued over an extended period, thereby restoring the original financial state. In the examined materials, the phrase “pao nian lai shou” unambiguously discloses that the practice of utilizing current funds as collateral for warehousing activities in Yellowxi Longfang has gained widespread acceptance. Previously, Guangke made a cash payment of 600 yuan within its establishment, signifying that its warehousing business’s capital has attained a substantial magnitude.

Based on the entries in “Xi Zhi Riji” (West Chamber Diary), it is documented that during the Great Fire in the inaugural year of the Hongzhi Era, certain structures were consumed by the flames. Among these were three granaries for rice storage, five antiquated machine rooms, and no less than sixty pottery workshops. This discovery suggests that beyond rice milling, the Shi family’s business endeavors extended to silk weaving as early as the Jianyuan period. In the present, the pivotal phase for the textile industry production hub of Suzhou necessitates its relocation from Suzhou City and Woojiang County to significant towns in Southern Woojiang. The influential intervention of the Yellow Xi History Family during this transition is not an insignificant historical coincidence.

The scholarly and social capital amassed from the historical records compiled by History Yanshi began to bear significant influence. History Yongting, his revered offspring, immersed himself in studies, relentlessly honing his abilities, and filled his palanquin with literary works. Upholding the family legacy, he was prepared to spearhead advancements in the imperial examinations. Upon entering the temple, he secured the top rank in the metropolitan examination and received supplementary accolades; when he attempted his fortunes in other prefectures, he consistently placed first. Nevertheless, “despite attaining a position among the top five scorers in the autumn eight-level examination and being included in the imperial examination’s list of excellence, History Yongting remained unable to unlock the jade seal.”

In the second year of the Jiajing dynasty’s reign, which corresponds to the solar year 1523, Shi Cin, the offspring of Shi Yongxi, achieved success in the imperial examinations, attaining the rank of middle-level civil servant. This distinction made Shi Cin the inaugural representative from the Huangxi branch of the Shi clan to hold such a position. During the flourishing Han Dynasty era, Shi, a eunuch by birth, exhibited an unwavering affinity for literature since his childhood years. His sole connections were to the vast collection of texts, which he fervently embraced as a refuge from worldly attachments. The following entities are mentioned: The former officials of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, the Procuratorate of Henan Province, the Government of Shandong Province, and the National People’s Congress of Yunnan Province. Due to his straightforward demeanor, this individual encountered numerous setbacks in the formal sphere. He failed not only to ascend to lofty heights but also incurred the disfavor of Zhou Some, the Shandong inspector, while the Yunnan vice-governor had yet to take office. Consequently, he was dismissed prematurely and returned to his residence in Huangxi, where he devoted himself to the study of filial piety and righteousness, engaging daily in discourse, and constructing a secluded dwelling by the southern lake, christened Nanhu. The eunuch, identified as Shi Cin, was subsequently overlooked by historical records despite a tenure marked by unsuccessfulness in his eunuch role. This is corroborated by the preface to “Xi Cun Ji,” authored by Xu Ying: “The master bore a son named Shi Cin, who attained passage through imperial examinations and assumed minor offices. However, as someone who had known the master since my youth (in reference to Shi Yidu - footnote by the editor), I was unaware of this particular official’s existence.” Shi Cin perished during the thirty-fourth year of Jiajing (1555), at the age of eighty-three, representing the last surviving male descendant of the Shi clan.

The offspring of Prime Minister Zhongshi, identified as Zhongli, was a budding scholar. Subsequently, following his father’s erroneous denunciation, he denounced the corrupt official Zhou Some to the investigator. Consequentially, he was implicated and prevented from showcasing his scholarly works. As a result, poetic exchanges with Dufu, Tang Canal Village, Woo Tsingjiang, Penglongchi, and Xu Gaoyang did not transpire. The second son in the Xi dynasty, specifically identified as Xi Zi Shi Lun’s second son, was appointed as the judge of Li Jiang Fu after having rendered distinguished service for a considerable duration. Subsequently, he received the honorific title “Ping Bao Gong.” This designation was communicated formally to all officials via an announcement issued by Chang Fu. In contrast, Xi Zi Shi Lun’s third son was confined to the role of a regular staff member. During his career as a historian, Shen Shou implemented the formal annulment of the centuries-old Shi Bin family legislation, instituting instead an equitable system for the transmission of inherited property. The mansion referred to as “End Characters’ Villa,” which was constructed by Prime Minister Zhuyi from his own vital energies as mentioned in the writings of Shi Tian, has been transferred to new ownership. During the Zhengde-Jiajing dynastic era in the southern part of China, the economically thriving enterprise of the Shi lineage at Jingxi Palace has progressively waned and depleted amongst their successive descendants. In the complexities of a lengthy chamber, there exist other contributing factors. In the thirty-third year of the Jiajing reign (1554), the Wokou pirates conducted three raids on the Yellow River region. All residential contents, including books and paintings, were pillaged and destroyed, leaving behind only fragments of ancient porcelain. The decrees from the preceding dynasty were seized and the pirates departed thereafter. During the Hongzhi Year of the Ming Dynasty’s Great Fire, the surviving “Funeral Manual of Zhuge Shouling” was confiscated and subsequently sold for a meager sum of four hundred liangs by historian Shi Ze to Wang Fengzhong. The elder son of the renowned historian Longshi, who is referred to as Longshi in scholarly poetry, authored the piece “At the Gate of the Harbor.” He executed the significant modification of removing the land behind Mount Shu, thereby disrupting the intricately designed feng shui arrangement established by Master Shibo. Consequently, the grand hall underwent a decline from its previous magnificence. Over time, the Yellowxi History Clan assumed dominance in the Eastern Hall of the Harbor, shaping its discourse.

In contrast to the cultural legacy of Shyi (Shyian) from antiquity, there emerged some indications of rejuvenation in the brother of Chancellor Zhong, named Zhishi. Shi Xiaoren, who was merely a scholar, had previously held the position of an attendant in the Yi Wangfu. Notably, his eldest son, Shi Tian, had taken monastic vows at the Southern Monastery and exhibited extraordinary abilities. In contrast, Shi Ru, the grandson, secured admission to the imperial examination during the Wanli Renzhi period (1582) of the Ming Dynasty, attaining the second rank on the supplementary list. Consequently, he occupied the second position in the lineage of distinguished figures within the Shi clan. In historical documents, Shi Tu held the positions of chief administrative official in Nanyang Fu and judge in Umon Fu. His progeny, Shi Zhongren, in conjunction with Shi Ao, were responsible for the compilation and editing of “Zihlu” (Self-Portrait). This particular edition, published during the Chonghua dynasty in its second year, represents the earliest extant imprinted version of “Zihlu”.

Title Three: The Financial Gains Derived from the Silk Trade

Following the Ming and Qing dynasties, the state-sanctioned silk-weaving workshop situated within Suzhou City augmented production in response to heightened demand from the imperial court for silks. This expansion was facilitated by the extensive adoption of the “minji” leading-and-weaving system, subsequently disseminating the foundational technologies of silk weaving from Suzhou City to ordinary towns and villages. Within the southern townships of Wujiang encompassed by the Yellow Xi River, a notable resurgence is underway. An influx of substantial business capital is being invested in the region. A multitude of individuals are congregating around these towns and their adjacent areas, spurred on by the opportunities generated by this growth. They are collectively capitalizing on every prospective gain.

The temporal overlap occurs between this process and the gradual deterioration of the Huangxi Shi Family’s mansion. The mansion situated by the harbor, constructed by the historically documented descendant of Shi Jiangxi, named Shi Yongting, witnessed in silence the progressive development of Huaxi City, advancing toward prominence in historical contexts. During the Five and Six Dynasties era, the livelihoods of the populace underwent a significant metamorphosis from being predominantly agrarian and scholarly to embracing commercial pursuits as merchants and shopkeepers. They resided near the Suzhou City Gate at the Fengjia House, immersing themselves in the burgeoning silk weaving industry expansion in Jiangnan. Through the works entitled “Wu Zhongshi Family Records of the Wu Zhongshi Clan,” “Wu Zhongshi Catalogue of the Wu Zhongshi Clan Literature,” and “Preface by Master Wen Zhongxian, Filially and Loyally Presenting Himself,” valuable insights can be gleaned. The first two works provide essential information regarding the Wu Zhongshi Clan’s participation in the silk, mulberry, and tea industries within Wujiang-Huaxi City and Suzhou Western Suburbs during the Ming-Ching era. Furthermore, they shed light on the reasons behind Suzhou and Hongqiao’s active roles in propagating “The Record of Filial Piety” (Zhishu Lu).

Title I: Huangxi Xing City.

Based on prior declarations, Yellow Ravine continued to be inhabited by several hundred resident families during the Ming Dynasty. In Mothon’s compilation of “Wujiang Zhi” by Fangzhi, the designation “Huangjia Cun” is still employed. It is situated in the twenty-third district of the upper township’s western zone within Fansu County. Conversely, the distinguished locale “Shengze” is mentioned and positioned in the first district of Tingyuan Upper Townships. In the southern region of Pingwang’s Wujiang County, there exists a noteworthy urban center, named Newchang City. Situated along the picturesque Yunhe River, this city is distinguished by its thriving populace and status as an autonomous market hub, specifically located on Twenty-First Street. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, Wanjiang Chuanzhen Town, situated across the water from Xinhang City in Jiaxing, Zhejiang Province, experienced significant prosperity. Its population exceeded seven thousand households, most of whom were not involved in agricultural pursuits. In spite of being geographically distinct, with Water Yin situated in Wujing Zone and Water Yang located in Xinchang City, their economies have converged into a unified entity. The Tapiling Bridge serves as the physical connector between these two towns. Disregarding administrative jurisdictional differences, these towns could be perceived as a singular urban center.

During the Hongwu era (1368-1398) of the Ming Dynasty, there existed only 18,033 silkworm saplings in Wu County, Wujiang, despite prior substantial advancements in their cultivation. By contrast, during the seventh year of Xuande (1432), the number had expanded to 44,746 saplings. However, this growth paled in comparison to the intensive silkworm cultivation practices established in neighboring regions such as Zhejiang Jia and Hubei Fu. Scholarship reveals that the areas of Longxing, Deqing, Gui’an, Wuping, Chunhua, Jiaxing, and Tongxiang within Huzhou had been extensively cultivating silkworms since the Ming Dynasty. As a result, significant centers for silk and raw silk production and trade emerged in towns such as Linhu, Shulin, and Puyin. The towns in Wujiang County renowned for silk weaving, with the exception of Xingshui Town which developed prior to Jiawan, primarily emerged post-dating that era. In the “Gazetteer of Wujiang County, Jiaxing,” the designation of Fengjie as a town or city is first mentioned.

In the Twenty Cities region, there exists a topography characterized by Shallow Valleys, situated approximately sixty li to the southwest of the county seat. This area is home to over one hundred households and functions as the market town of Mianyang.

During the Jiawen period, the population of Shangcheng, as mentioned in the “Wujiang County Gazetteer” by Chongwu, consisted of approximately one hundred residents. In comparison to the prosperous “thousand-family city” of New Hangzhou during the same era, Shangcheng’s level of prosperity and scale were insignificant. The description from the gazetteer further reveals that the settlement was situated amidst flourishing agricultural lands and still comprised of scattered houses during the Wanli era. Consequently, it can be inferred that during the Jiawen period, Shangcheng was in its nascent stages of development from a rural village to a township, and its classification as a township may have been premature.

During the Kangxi era, the Yellow River Creek was not yet incorporated as a municipal entity; rather, it gained city status subsequently, being added as an appendix to “Woochiang Xian Zhi.” Despite the assertions in Dao Guang’s “Huangxi Zhi” regarding population growth during the Ming Xi dynasty and the gradual flourishing of industries such as silk and iron, this interpretation should be viewed with caution. A more trustworthy representation is found in the original text of “Huangxi Zhi.”

Prior to being designated as “Ming,” the population of this entity, referred to as “Yellow Stream,” consisted of approximately several hundred households. During the Kangxi era of the Ming Dynasty (approximately 1662-1722), more than two thousand merchant establishments flourished, resulting in vibrant commodity exchange. Consequently, this period came to be known as the “City of Markets.”

The authorship of “Huangxi Zhi” unequivocally attests to its derivation from the compilation of “Wujiang Xian Zhi” during the Qianlong era, as documented by Cheng Rong. The historical records predating the compilation of “Wujiang Xian Zhi” (Records of Wujian County) by Chen Shubo provide an account of the evolution of the Yellow Creek region into a settlement or commercial center. This development is described in terms of a modest expanse of land, approximately four Chinese li, and the presence of several hundred antiquated dwellings, currently inhabited by numerous thousands of households. Determining the point in time at which Huangjixi gained significance within the township context, as mentioned in Chongyang’s “Wujxian Zhi” (Annals of Wujxian County), primarily relies on interpreting the meaning of “now” in that text. If “now” refers to the late Ming Dynasty period, then that time node can be identified. Otherwise, a precise temporal reference must be established. Initially, it is important to note that the information regarding the “Woojiang Xian Zhi” (Woojiang County Annals) pertaining to the original text of Huangjiaxi Town is not derived from historical records themselves, but rather from supplements added by their descendant-compiler in the “Annotations.” This can be ascertained through a careful examination of the text of Huangjiaxi Town as presented in “Woojiang County Annals.” Within the text found in “Jin Si Wu Qian Hu Jia,” there is a reference to “Huang Xi Zhi” in historical documents, which have been edited, deleted, and compiled by Scholar Zheng, as denoted by the annotation “with attribution to Master Sun Zai Zhuhu and Master Sun Zai Xiang Jing Def.” In the biographical records, the exact years of birth and death for this individual remain uncertain. However, it is known that he was predominantly active during the Kangxi era (reign: 1662-1722) of the Qing Dynasty. According to “Wu Zhong Pai Wenwen Pu” (A Catalogue of the Wu Family’s Scholarly Works), his most prolific period is indicated around the thirty-seventh year of the Kangxi reign (1698). This correlation can be traced back to an earlier historical work (Zhufu) penned by Zhongbin, which was presented at the Suzhou Fu Xianci Temple prior and subsequent to this year.

The achievement of numbers ranging from several hundreds to over two thousand, and in some cases up to five thousand, is not an accomplishment that occurs overnight, but rather the result of a prolonged historical development. During the time span between the Jiajing and Kangxi dynasties, scant literature on Wujiang County is accessible, with the exception of the supplemented and revised edition of Wuchang Wujiang Zhi from the Chongzhen period. The Sequel to Wujiang County History by Chen Qidi and Dong Erke, produced during the Shunzhi era, represents the sole extant works. Unfortunately, this text conforms to the archetypal characteristics of sequels, primarily documenting supplementary data without a substantial repetition of prior historical content. Regrettably, it is not partitioned into volumes and lacks comprehensive information regarding the county, city, or town circumstances. It is fortunate that the tomb inscription of Shi Zong-qin, a descendant of the Shi lineage from Jiaxing’s Qianjing, reveals pivotal information:

During the onset of the Dingxi Reign, the military attendant Wu Yi of the Imperial Household demonstrated reluctance and proposed a massacre near the brook. Despite his presence at Pingwang, there prevailed a sense of trepidation and uncertainty among all regarding the genesis of this affair. The revered monk, identified as Shizongqin, respectfully petitions for an audience at your encampment. Notably, the residence is distinguished for its virtuous denizens who exert considerable energy in defense without external reliance. This aspect is consistently emphasized by the monk. Cultivate the soldiers with pleasure prior to our departure, escort you to the banks of the river, and subsequently discharge them following the delivery of commands. The dwellings of the commoners in Fengxi have been maintained by their descendants and remain standing to the present day, serving as an enduring testament to the ruling authority.

The referenced figure, Su Zhou Zhen Wu, the renowned eunuch who cultivated soldiers at this location, was infamously harsh and unfeeling. It posed a significant challenge for Emperor Shizong to convince him. Histor Zongqin was born in the Wanli Dingwu year, which corresponds to the calendar year 1607. He passed away during the Kangxi Renxu year, or the calendar year 1682. In his formative years, Histor served as an official at a county temple. Throughout the tumultuous periods of transition between the Ming and Qing dynasties, Histor demonstrated unwavering commitment to advancement. His proficiency in archery was meticulously honed, and he devised and implemented strategic plans with great precision, ultimately amassing substantial wealth. During the Ming-Qing dynastic transition, following his joining of the Qing Dynasty, the Yellow River region experienced significant growth, expanding from several hundred to over two thousand families. It was at this pivotal juncture that the subject primarily pursued commercial endeavors. This decision was not haphazard; rather, it mirrored the emerging business opportunities within local history. According to Wu Shengzhao and his associates, Huangxi holds equal status with Pingwangzhen, resulting in their exploitation and violence towards Huangxi under the guise of uprising. Informal: A quintessential rural village is scarcely perceptible to these soldiery bearing a resemblance to wolves.

Formal and Academic: A prototypical rural community remains largely undetected by these militaries, who exhibit an uncanny similarity to wolves. Without the meticulous endeavors of Emperor Shizong, the preservation of the Yellow River would have been a significant challenge.

Following the catastrophe at Huangxi, the military authorities of Suzhou acknowledged the event’s importance and despatched several magistrates to be posted at Huangxi. During the garrison town’s Shunzhi era, in the 13th year (1656), the magistrate held significant authority, responsible for maintaining law and order, adjudicating disputes, and performing other duties. However, his actions frequently disturbed the populace, leading to numerous uprisings among the river people. The tenuous situation worsened during the Donglin period’s turmoil, ultimately necessitating the replacement of the magistrate by Inspector Li Senxian, who began restoring order.

Within Jiangnan City, there exists a town where the commercially vibrant district and the densest concentration of shops are situated alongside a waterway. This area is colloquially known as the “City River.” The banks of the urban river serve frequent function as anchorages and commercial hubs for watercraft. The presence of multiple bridges crossing the river signifies the growing interdependence of the populations residing on its opposing shores. Based upon this finding, the duration of bridge construction serves as a significant indicator in the progression of a township, from its rudimentary stages to its eventual unification. During the Qingdao Guang era, extending from the latter stages of the Ming Dynasty, a total of five bridges were constructed in Huaxi City, each designated by the following names:

During the Dao Guang era (1821-1850) of the Qing Dynasty, Anxi Bridge, initially constructed from wood, underwent a reconstruction by the populace, sixteen years subsequent to the Yi Sheng reign (1796-1805) of Emperor Jiaqing. To translate a Chinese sentence into formal and academic English, adhere to the following procedure:

1. Identify the components of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.) in the Chinese sentence and their corresponding English equivalents.
2. Utilize fitting formal and academic English vocabulary and constructions to impart the intended meaning.
3. Ensure that the arrangement conforms to the regulations of formal and academic English syntax.
4. Employ a succinct and clear writing style.
5. Avoid colloquialisms, contractions, and idiomatic expressions.

Example:

Chinese: 你好，今天我要買一本新書。(Hello, today I want to buy a new book.)

Formal and Academic English: Greetings, today it is my intention to acquire a novel addition to my collection. During the Ming dynasty, specifically the reign of Emperor Xuan De in the fourth year (1426 AD), Changchun Bridge underwent reconstruction. Subsequently, during the Qianlong era in the twenty-third year (1753 AD), the bridge was reconstructed once more. To translate a Chinese sentence into formal and academic English, adhere to the following procedures:

1. Identify the components of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.) in the Chinese sentence and their corresponding English equivalents.
2. Employ suitable formal and academic English lexicon to express the intended meaning.
3. Ensure that the sentence arrangement conforms to the regulations of formal and academic English syntax.
4. Adopt a succinct and clear writing style.
5. Eschew colloquialisms, contractions, and idiomatic expressions.

Example:

Chinese: 你好，今天我要买一本新书。(Hello, today I want to buy a new book.)

Formal and Academic English: Greetings, today I intend to procure a novel addition to my library. The Tai’an Bridge was constructed during the fifth year of the Ming Dynasty’s Chongzhen reign. To translate a Chinese sentence into formal and academic English, adhere to the following procedures:

1. Determine the grammatical components (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.) in the Chinese phrase and their corresponding English equivalents.
2. Employ suitable formal and academic English lexicon to convey the intended significance.
3. Ensure that the sentence arrangement conforms to the regulations of formal and academic English syntax.
4. Adopt a succinct and clear writing technique.
5. Eschew colloquialisms, contractions, and figurative expressions.

Illustration:

Chinese: 你好，今天我要買一本新書。(Hello, today I want to buy a new book.)

Formal and Academic English: Greetings, today I aim to acquire a novel addition to my library. The Three-Yuan Bridge, formally recognized as Xi Wood Bridge, was constructed during the Ming Dynasty by Zhongde, and underwent extensive reconstruction during the Qing Dynasty in the reign of Emperor Qianlong, specifically during the thirteen year of Jiaqing (1802). Subsequent modifications were carried out by the local populace. To translate a Chinese sentence into formal and academic English, adhere to the following procedure:

1. Determine the components of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.) in the Chinese sentence and their corresponding formal and academic English equivalents.
2. Employ suitable formal and academic English vocabulary and expressions to convey the intended meaning precisely.
3. Ensure that the sentence structure conforms to the rules of formal and academic English grammar.
4. Maintain a clear and succinct writing style.
5. Avoid colloquialisms, contractions, and idiomatic expressions.

For instance:

Chinese: 你好，今天我要買一本新書。(Hello, today I want to buy a new book.)

Formal and Academic English: Greetings, today it is my intention to procure a newly published volume. In the thirty-first year of the Qing Dynasty’s Kangxi era, which corresponds to the year 1685 in the Gregorian calendar, a monk engineered the Five Fuk Bridge with seven arches. This architectural marvel extended northward at its northern terminus, bearing a striking resemblance to a long rainbow. Regrettably, during the fifty-sixth year of Emperor Kangxi’s reign, which is equivalent to the year 1723 in the Gregorian calendar, this bridge collapsed.

During the early and late Ming Dynasty periods, the construction of Changchun Bridge and Tai’an Bridge transpired, marking significant historical milestones in the transformation of Huaxi from a rural village into an urbanized city. During the Ming-Qing Dynasty, the localities of the Longchuan and Taian Bridges in Huangxi City held great significance. These structures were historically referred to as “Zouqiao” or “Zhua Zuo,” and were the sites where laborers were recruited for employment purposes. During the Ming Dynasty, Anxi Bridge and Sanytian Bridge were constructed as wooden arch structures. In Yellowxi City, five bridges are located on the river; among these structures, four were originally erected prior to the termination of the Ming Dynasty. During the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, the expansion of Huaxi had attained substantial dimensions.

The diligent records of Zongqin and the construction chronicles of the Huangxi River bridges at Yellow Creek, albeit not providing complete temporal context preceding and following the establishment of Yellow City, are referenced in “Wujiang County Annals,” compiled during the Kangxi reign’s twenty-fourth year, as the initial township under Wujiang County’s jurisdiction.

In the prefectural capital, where a large assembly of merchants reside, alongside a significant population of residents, the advantageous climate distinguishes it as the foremost town amongst all the districts.

The level of prosperity between Huangxi and Shengze cannot be equated, yet the textile industry growth trajectories of these adjacent localities demonstrate striking parallelism. Based on the “Wujiang Xian Zhi,” compiled during the Qianlong era, it is recorded that following Chengfeng, there existed diligent local farmers who adopted weaving and spinning practices. As a result, within an approximately 50 li radius between the Mingze and Huangxi Rivers, the entire population had forsaken agriculture in favor of silk production. This discovery suggests that by the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, the region situated south of the Wujiang River exhibited significant progression in the silk industry. However, it is essential to note that the level of development and the duration required to establish towns varied. The seismic events occurring in the proximity, specifically those in Shunzhi, Shuang Yang, and Yan Miao towns, fall within this designated range. During the Eastern Qing Dynasty, Wujiang County, specifically the southern region including Pingwang, functioned as the primary hub for silk trading in China. Notable settlements within this area were Huangxi City and Yanbo City, which served as fortified towns of significant importance.

The Silk Road thrives under the prosperity of Zhengze, attracting merchants from various regions for trading activities, with daily transactions amounting to several hundred units of gold, and the streets brimming with vigor and commerce, characterized by a bustling atmosphere. In antiquity, this locale was referred to as Jin Yuan. Presently, it exists independently and flourishes under the designation Zhen. At the most stringent of archaeological sites, Zhenze, Pingwang, and Huangjiaxi, there remain only scant vestiges, representing a mere fraction of their past opulence, which continues to be designated as prosperous.

As a result of the established trading network, the section between Si’er Xi Lu in the Four Duties District and Er Shi Er Lu in the Twenty-Fourth District is exclusively cultivated for sugarcane and silk production. During the Qianlong era, there was a prevailing fashion for silk garments. Cultivation of silkworms proved to be financially rewarding. Consequently, an increasing number of individuals engaged in the cultivation of mulberry trees. However, the interspersed villages possessed limited arable land. During the transitional period between spring and summer, there is a strong desire for the refuge provided by verdant shades. In the process of calculating the area of an estate, there is no concern for the tallying of tens of thousands of trees. During the Ming Dynasty, the residents of Yellow Xi infrequently engaged in the cultivation of mulberry trees for sericulture. During the early Qing Dynasty, specifically the Kangxi period, there existed numerous locales teeming with mulberry trees ( Mulberrae arboreae) and persimmon trees (Diospyros kaki). In Wujiang, the plentiful supply of locally produced silkworm cocoons, which are the primary source of raw materials for the silk-focused townships, has not yet resulted in the establishment of a new silk weaving center. The majority of those who derive economic advantage from family businesses reside in affluent regions such as Mingzhen, Huangjiaxi, and Zhilin. Despite his geographical proximity, he remains unable to rank among the top decile. The preponderance of weaving townships in the southern region of Wujiang is attributable to the substantially greater technological demands inherent in the silk industry relative to cotton textiles. The latter can largely be executed in the households of ordinary farmers, whereas weaving represents a marked departure from rural subsidiary occupations, necessitating a comparatively high level of technical sophistication. As documented in the “Wujiang County Gazetteer” during the Qianlong Dynasty, the production of silk and hemp was historically monopolized by the gentry prior to the Song and Tang eras. During the Ming Xi dynasty, circa 1426-1433, the residents of the prefecture initiated the gradual formation of organizations. They continued to regularly engage rural laborers for the production of mourning attire. Prior to the Ming Dynasty, the expertise in silk and cotton weaving technology was predominantly possessed by skilled artisans residing in Suzhou City. Subsequently, during the Hongxi and Yongle periods, the inhabitants of Wujiang engaged craftsmen from Suzhou for the initiation of silk-weaving industries. Following the Cheng-hou era, local populace gradually assumed control over the essential weaving technologies, subsequently instigating an unchecked expansion in Wujiang’s silk industry.

In investigating the historical evolution of weaving technology from urban to rural areas within Jiangnan, one can anticipate finding a correlation with the institutionalized large-scale silk production that prevailed in this region. During the early Ming dynasty, a prescribed duration was allotted for the generation of specific sections of official documents, with one year’s production calculated and surplus expenses permitted. However, commencing from the mid-Ming era, the expanding demands from the imperial court and extravagant bestowals rendered the predetermined duration insufficient to satisfy the escalating needs of the administration. Beyond the designated annual quota, an excess dispatch occurs, resulting in a quantity that surpasses both the established limit and the available supply. In the realm of domestic textile bureaus, Guangdong and Zhejiang provinces hold significant importance in terms of seasonal readjustments and dispatches. In dealing with this intricate situation, the current urban administrative and industrial infrastructure is unable to expand production capacity, while the artisan system is facing its own predicament, resulting in a substantial decrease in the number of local craftsmen since antiquity. Consequently, the productive capability of weaving and dyeing factories has correspondingly waned. Among the masses, extensive solicitation for donations represents the primary means for securing funds necessary for loom repairs and maintenance. No alternative method exists. During the nineteenth year of the Jiajing Dynasty (1527 A.D.), Wang Jingwei, the eunuch, initiated the practice of recruitment and supervision within the Suzhou Fu property. He sourced skilled artisans locally and extensively searched for high-caliber silk and cotton. By the fourteenth year of the Jiajing Dynasty (1530 A.D.), upon receipt of an order from the Judicial Department, Wang Jingwei travelled to Suzhou and Shaoxing to oversee the production of taxed cloth in these regions. Officially instituting this practice, he came to be known as the regulator of local artisans, who were subsequently enlisted to work in the imperial workshops. During the Longqing era, the Hangzhou Silk Bureau established a new office, building upon the foundations of its predecessor. This new office initiated the recruitment of local “minji” artisans for the production of seasonally varied silk threads. The emergence and development of Wujiang Machine Works, as evidenced by numerous indicators, aligns approximately with the formalization of China’s preeminent textile industry and its leading silk weaving system following Cheng Feng’s tenure. This alignment is not easily attributable to a mere historical coincidence.

In the bibliographical work “Wu Qing” of the Kangxi epoch, there exists a significant historical text which provides corroborative evidence: “Two distinct broods of silkworms were reared, one for each occasion.” Following the emergence of silkworm hatchlings, merchants from diverse districts invest and make purchases at banks nationwide. In regular economic conditions, thriving markets and prosperous industries exist in locales such as Zhenze, Shengze, Shuanglin, et al., where artisans independently produce silk utilizing their own looms in a self-sufficient manner. A silk merchant makes visits to every town, transacting business with vendors who function as retailers in those localities. In the designated region, there exist a considerable number of villages renowned for silk production, distributed across the four townships. The scarcity of household registration in these localities results in lower market prices for silk goods relative to other areas. Referred to as “merchants from the greater jurisdiction,” these individuals reside in urban centers such as Suzhou and Hangzhou. They specifically travel to Jiaxing, Huzhou, and Wujing during the new silkworm market season to procure substantial quantities of silk goods. Upon their return to the cities, these merchants utilize the acquired silk to weave threads for various textile products. In the southern region surrounding the Wu River, there has been a concurrent advancement of textile technology. Artisans residing in towns such as Zhenze and Mingze have responded accordingly to this technological progression. They have been granted the opportunity to receive commissions for weaving from official dispatches, while also having the ability to sell their woven goods on the open market. As a result, merchants specializing in the provision of thread have arisen to cater to the demands of these skilled artisans. In some prosperous silkworm townships, not all labor forces are endowed with proficient weaving artisans. Uqing Township unfortunately lacks such skilled individuals, resulting in its designation as a “low-price marketplace” within the realm of the silk industry. The transmission of artisanal technologies from Suzhou Municipal City to ordinary towns can be inferred as an adaptive response to the implementation of the grassroots leading system. During the Jurning Period, some scholars posit that significant advancements in silk weaving occurred in the Jiangnan region, a hypothesis that is plausible.

In the growing prevalence of receiving silver Yuanbao, the location and identity of the artisans engaged in its creation hold diminishing significance. They now focus less on production within their individual workshops. In disparate locations, laborers and artisans are unable to acquire real-time market intelligence. Consequently, intermediaries occupy a functional role bridging the gap between governmental entities and private machinery proprietors. The silhouettes of these entities are not merely confined to Suzhou City, but rather extend their reach to various locales, capitalizing on opportune circumstances extensively for financial gain. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, in Mingchengzhen there existed a distinct profession designated as “silk masters.” As documented in the “Yellow Creek Annals” of the Daoguang era, these individuals were responsible for marketing silk. They either traveled to rural areas to sell their wares or remained in the town to cater to regional and national markets from the surrounding four counties. The designation “silk master” was applied to any individual engaged in this line of business. Their daily activities involved arranging the flowers and lightness of the silk, according to the preferences of northern customers at Mingchengzhen or Wangjiangli. Failure to comply with these market demands risked expulsion from the trade by merchants originating from higher-ranking regions. The attire of these leaders, adorned in silk, is not merely attributable to the Silk Trade’s demands, but rather bears a profound link to the emergent weaving guilds during the Ming Dynasty and the Middle Ages. During the Qianlong era, it is calculated by a scholar that there existed approximately eight thousand looms in the rural vicinity of Zhensze. These looms represented a significant potential market for silk producers, who engaged in intense competition to cater to this demographic.

The economic success or failure of rural handicrafts is not solely contingent upon the regulating commercial capital, yet significantly hinges upon the geographically dispersed labor force capable of generating a substantial volume of intermediate-quality textile goods. The dissemination of textile technology from Fuzhou to the southern townships of Wujiang was a consequence of the southward migration of the private silk weaving and trading hub, previously referred to as Jinfeng yet currently thriving as Zhenzhou, as documented in earlier sources.

Chapter II: The Mansions of Gusu Quarter.

During the Ming Dynasty, the primary production sites for the silk weaving industry in Suzhou were located in the eastern sector of the city. The manufacturing of “brocade, silk, gauze, and raw silk” predominantly occurred within the jurisdiction of the county seat, leading to the prosperity of both regions. However, it was the eastern part that experienced remarkable growth, as indicated by the abundance of weaving and spinning enterprises in this area. The commercial hub of the silk industry is situated in the western sector of the city, in close proximity to Golden Gate Two. It is consequently designated as “The Enigmatic and Intricately Woven Silk Trade Centre by the Seashore.” The concept of the “Golden Fleece” assembly. During the Tongzhi Restoration, the Yellow Xi History lineage maintained a residence in the vicinity of Suzhou City’s Pingjian Gate and Qiqiao Bridge. For several generations, they have been involved in the silk weaving industry as their means of livelihood, also recognized by the moniker “the Pingjian Gate Qiqiao mansion.”

Based on the previous chapter’s content, Shi Benli instituted a stringent lineage succession system for the transmission of property, intricately linking the inheritance of assets with the duty of servitude in order to address potential complications when designating the grain-manager role to offspring. In accordance with the Household Regulations established by Shi Ben, Long House is obligated, as per the regulations’ provisions, to assume the primary responsibility for the cultivation and provision of a substantial portion of the grains, as well as other related duties pertaining to the property allotted to them. Conversely, the responsibilities and burdens connected to these assignments are minimal for the other designated houses. Shi Xi assumed the familial inheritance of the estate and the title of Rongzhong through the eldest son in the lineage. Simultaneously, Shi Huan, Shi Yao, Shi Chang, and Shi Ang, among other younger siblings, pursued individual endeavors and established properties in Wanli, Loushan, and Suzhou respectively. Based on the historical record of House Shi, the lineage of Shi Xun and Shi Chang, descendants of Shi Ben’s fifth son, experienced the most significant growth and prosperity among his five offspring.

Shi Chang, the fourth-born son of Shi Bin, is scarcely represented in historical records. However, according to Zhou Ding’s “Xi Hidden Sages Tablet for Shi Kin’s Tomb,” Shi Chang met an untimely demise at a young age. His elder brother, Shi Xing, as documented, married a woman named Mimi and constructed a dwelling and agricultural property. In his mature years, Shi Jing relocated to Wu Yuan and became instrumental in establishing Suzhou Qi Li Sheng through intricate business dealings. Since its founding, the Suzhou Qili House has demonstrated an innate entrepreneurial mindset among its inhabitants, as evidenced by their ability to commercialize their skills upon leaving their towns. Jasper produces copper, which was utilized in the creation of the Stone Tablet of Emperor Yongle. The Stone Tablet, in turn, bestowed the title of Duke on Banmei’s lineage. For several generations, they have been involved in the silk industry, amassing substantial wealth. During the eras of Shi Jing and his progenitor Shi Yan, a shift in residence occurred to Huasen Street, where they devoted themselves to the lucrative enterprise of silk production. By the tenure of their offspring Yongji, their domestic realm flourished with copious quantities of gold and silk, their precincts adorned with imposing structures, and their thresholds perpetually received distinguished visitors for a span of over thirty years.

The father-son duo, identified as Shi Jing and Shi Zhang, were interred at the base of the embankment in Wujiang; their progeny have persistently carried out ancestral rituals during the winter solstice. They maintained a relatively proximic relationship with their Yellow Xi lineage. During the dynasty’s Shi Yongneng and Shi Yongji eras, these individuals were separately interred: Shi Yongneng in Wu County, within the Wu Mountains; Shi Yongji at Xing Shan Camp. Over time, their rural affiliations waned significantly, signifying a pivotal moment in the process of localization.

Benme Gong Wenxian occupies a pivotal role in the Qi Li Mansion of Suzhou. The proprietor of this establishment reached unprecedented heights in its commercial success through implementation of a distinctive business philosophy, characterized by the virtues of integrity and substantial profitability. In Suzhou’s vibrant real estate sector, his influence attained unparalleled significance. Under his leadership, the business’s reach extended to encompass warehousing, shed construction, and associated industries, culminating in the establishment of an official branch in Yancheng. Based on folklore, Chensheng, a young native of Shiyuan by name and subsequent official at Southern Lake, is said to have uncovered his exceptional business aptitudes. He was concurrently recognized as Wu Qiangyao, an appellation signifying “the affluent Wu,” denoting him as the consort of the Southern Lake’s princess. The repercussions were profound. In the inscription for the tomb of Shi Yin, Yang Cheng referred to him as follows: “Of the surname Historiographers, given name Yin, with the courtesied title Zhizhi, and the styled name Benme.” In the year 1501 of the Hongzhi reign, Ben Mei was born. He departed this world in the year 1566 of the Jiajing reign.

Ben Mei conducted business in the realm of weaving and trading fine silk. His acumen and guile were notable, yet his industry and frugality were commendable. Throughout the course of his life, this individual resided during the time of the Satsuma Rebellion and at one point donned armor to contribute to military endeavors. Despite the absence of advancement in their entrepreneurial pursuits for certain offspring, the patriarch succeeded in securing administrative positions for them through philanthropic contributions, utilizing his substantial wealth. The elder son, Shi Guo Yuan, assumed the role of supervisor at Yinguang Temple. The second son, Shi Jici, was appointed as Judge at Zhongqing Ting. The third son, Shi Shu, who had not yet commenced his tenure, held esteem among scholars in the Li Bureau.

A victorious attendee remains a losing guest in this context. The preeminence of Shi Yin posed substantial risks for potential internal discord within Qi Li Sheng in the ensuing future. Due to the prolonged absence of an heir from the elder son, Shi Guo Xian, and Madam Shi, the younger brother, Shi Yuan, assumed the role of designating his younger sibling as the successor. The title “Four Younger Brothers Carrying the Blood” was bestowed upon him, with the selection of a name, education within the palace confines, and arranged marriage being the subsequent considerations. Forcibly, Shi Yuan imposed his younger brother as his heir upon Shi Guo Xian, a practice that deviated significantly from societal norms. Concealed family secrets underpinned this unconventional succession. The marriage ceremony of Shi Yukun was officiated by his spouse, comprised of two individuals. The primary wife, Fang Shi, gave birth to the eldest son, Guanxian. The secondary wife, Chen Si, bore sons Ji and Shu. With respect to the Matriarch referred to as “The One to be Reached” in the given context, she is not cited in either “The Genealogies of the Jing and Yi Clans,” as documented in the Classic of Filial Piety, or “The Wu Family Genealogy,” belonging to the Shi Clan. Based on available evidence, it is highly likely that Mustachio is Shi Yuan’s biological offspring. If the statement is factual, the enigma surrounding the Stanley family’s eldest son being recognized as the legitimate heir by Sir Rong can be resolved without complication. Upon the demise of Shi Yin, in contrast to Yellow Xi Longxu who transmitted the majority of his possessions to his firstborn son, an equitable distribution method was implemented for the dissemination of his assets amongst all his offspring. Based on the biographical account penned by Yao Xing regarding Shi Huiji in his memoirs, it is unambiguous that the monarch, upon assuming the throne at birth, was obligated to advance and relinquish shares thereof to his eldest brother and other siblings, devoid of personal benefit. This historically documented practice within the Shi clan, while accurate, warrants some degree of skepticism in light of potential over-glorification. The ancient equal inheritance system adversely affected the capital amassment of Chinese merchants, with the Yellowxi History Family of Fengjia being among those constrained by this restrictive practice.

Shi Guo, alias Chiang, was distinguished by an elder sibling, designated “Two-Year Senior,” who predominantly encountered business-related events in the formative stages of his life. Despite repeated unsuccessful attempts in these pursuits, he subsequently demonstrated remarkable competence in overseeing domestic matters and managing a household with deftness and without undue severity in his advanced years. At the age of forty-eight, she entered into matrimony with the Chen family and subsequently gave birth to two offspring, one of whom is a female. In the fifteenth year of the Wanli dynasty’s reign (1587), the emperor, who was then 69 years old, passed away. Historian Wang Shi continued to serve as the representative of the Wanli emperor’s grandson’s lineage, holding unique privileges in the inheritance of property beyond the equal distributions among all siblings. Bestowed upon him were the revenues from designated lands, the oversight of warehouses and shops, and exclusive access to a mansion valued at two thousand taels of gold. Furthermore, he relocated to reside near the Thousand Li Bridge and received the lake house as a gift from Qi Liang, a public figure.

Following the demises of Shi Yin and Shi Guanxian, who held successive positions, Shi Jing emerged as the most prominent figure amongst the younger generation at Fengjia Hall. The subject individual exhibits a notable resemblance to his elder brother in the realm of business, yet has experienced limited accomplishments and attained the position of deputy sheriff. Contrary to popular portrayal in “Seeking Lampreys Alliance,” he did not harbor desires for a marriage alliance with Wei as depicted, and instead held various esteemed positions throughout his career. These roles encompassed that of a military officer in Ganzhou, magistrate of Yangjiang county, and judge of Zhaoqing prefecture. During his tenure, he was renowned for his unwavering integrity and served in the courts of Yan, Qi, and Yue successively. However, the accumulated neglect within the four ministries resulted in a substantial financial deficit, which remained unresolved for over a decade despite the efforts of subsequent generations. Lady Dong contributed to public affairs by removing her headdress on various occasions and donated generously to offset the officials’ negligence.

The persistence of Fengjia House, as depicted in “The Book of Shu Jing” by Ji and Zhu, can be attributed exclusively to the relentless endeavors of its three sons. In accordance with available reports:

During the Kun era, three individuals hailed from the Shi clan resided in proximity to Rongjiang. Amongst this triad, one distinguished himself through extraordinary aptitude. With unparalleled authority, he presided over the Eastern and Western territories of Kun. The younger sibling expeditiously managed his personal matters concurrently with frequent journeys to the eastern and western realms. On a subsequent visit to Yong, the sovereign abstained from traveling, thereby permitting his nephew an extended return by two days. Nonetheless, the family’s affluence persisted unaltered. In the jurisdiction of Jia, initiating businesses is not an arduous task; however, catering to requisite needs poses a challenge. Two monarchs of the same dynasty succeded and perished in succession. The monarch held one personified role, concurrently discharging three distinct offices. Princely figures demonstrated fervor and competed vigorously for allocated resources. The individual, despite facing the burden of sole responsibility for the provision of security for both families, meticulously amassed his resources and assumed this duty with unwavering determination. Consequently, his nephew was motivated to focus on scholarly pursuits rather than being distracted by menial tasks. This decision led to the emergence of progeny endowed with numerous refined qualities, who subsequently made substantial contributions to the field of Confucian studies.

The character “史” in the given Chinese sentence refers to the historical figure named “Shi Yin,” who holds the title “Dao Qing” and is also colloquially known as “Rong Jiang.” He is the third-born son of “Shi Ke,” more formally recognized as “Historian Shi.” Under the fastidious leadership of Lord Bamey, not only did his elder and younger brothers’ businesses maintain an orderly state, but the grandchildren were likewise inspired by his magnetic persona and voluntarily invested to perpetuate the legacy bequeathed to them. Among the descendants of Shi Yin and Shi Guoshu, there is a scarcity of individuals engaged in merchant activities. The offspring of historian Zhifu was obligated to pursue an education during his father’s absence from the court, functioning as a complement to his contemporaries. Yet, he fell significantly short in comparison to his uncle’s proficiency in business matters. The account of Shi Guo Ji reveals that he traversed the Shi River and Mount Bing, fell ill en route and subsequently returned, symbolically presenting an empty cart to the populace as a sign of selection. In response, the public expressed condolences and compensated him generously, enabling his family to amass over a thousand gold coins in secrecy, without disclosing this information to Shi Ji (the public). This narrative suggests that, like his predecessor, Shi Guo Ji lacked proficiency in commercial affairs and was unable to bridge the financial deficits left behind. Due to a series of disappointing early career outcomes, historical records indicate that he expressed profound regret over his juvenile accomplishments during his advanced age. There existed individuals who had known him, yet he failed to acknowledge their presence when they visited. The magistrate, Zheng Jin, sought an audience with him, but he likewise declined the invitation. The recently established Xianggong temple requested his presence, yet he persisted in his refusal. His demeanor grew increasingly obdurate, even disregarding the wishes of his ancestors and covertly disparaging the tombstone of his father-in-law, Confucian scholar Jiang Bo. As a consequence, he was compelled to undergo three years of mourning rites, adopted the name Zong, and resided in the ancient four-room dwelling. During that particular timeframe, the matriarchs of the Shi lineage, namely Shi Yin, Shi Guoxian, and Shi Mingxi, passed away in a consecutive manner. This sequence of events carried substantial consequences for the maintenance of order, yet it unfortunately instigated further discord among the clan members, resulting in a disruption of ancient customs thereafter.

The designate individual, Shi Zhao Dou, was comparatively deficient in business aptitudes. After surpassing his contemporaries, he expressed regret and renounced his achievements. He demonstrated proficiency in the art of storytelling, with a particular expertise in ancient literature and classics, as well as the anecdotes of his forebears and elder relatives. He had these narratives committed to memory, ready to recite upon request, and was celebrated for his eloquence day and night. Upon amassing a substantial fortune, he devoted it entirely to acquiring literary works. His collection derived solely from personal annotations or manuscripts, resulting in an extensive library consisting of countless volumes. The pursuit of Tibetan scriptures as a private endeavor entails significant financial investment, yielding minimal, if any, monetary returns. Valuable and scarce editions are reluctantly relinquished, while the ancient amassments, once acquired, can be swiftly diminished. In his advanced age, Zhapo, who lacked biological offspring, was compelled to designate his adopted son, Chizi, as his heir. Subsequently, following Zhapo’s demise, all of his literary works vanished without a discernible trace. The gradual decline of intergenerational wealth distribution in Suzhou’s affluent commercial sector is becoming increasingly apparent. The Story family, a branch of the Shi clan, remained in Huaxi and became engulfed in the expanding merchant community with the emergence of Huaxi City.

Section Three: Yellowxi Hydrolab Eastern Housing

(Or, more formally: The third part of this study is dedicated to the analysis of Yellowxi Hydrolab Eastern Housing.)

During the waning years of the Historical Yellowxi Family’s mansion, the emergent edifice of Historian Shi Yongding, a progeny of Historian Shi, commenced to materialize discreetly within Huanghuangchi. Subsequently, it gained historical prominence. Historically referred to as Songqiu No. 64, holding a middling position amongst the Five Universities, appointed as a Special Trustee and an Attendant at the Hanlin Academy, distinguished as a guest at rural feasts; this individual was married to the daughter of Shen Zhong, a member of the illustrious Sheng clan. They were blessed with two offspring: their eldest child, named Hongxu, and their second-born, named Hongfen. During the Five and Six Dynasties era, the economic activities of Hamanaka’s inhabitants underwent a significant transformation. Initially, their existence was centered around agriculture and scholarship. However, there emerged a trend towards a more diverse economy, with commerce playing an increasingly important role. Based on the preceding discourse, the historian exhibited a distinct preference for Emperor Yongle. Despite granting the title of Zongzi to Yongxi, he constructed a new edifice expressly on the opposite bank of the river from Longfu Residence and bestowed it upon Yongle as an independent dwelling. Despite dwelling permanently at the eastern coastline of the East China Sea, the figure of Eternity has been subjected to rigorous scrutiny in historical documents. Eternity’s decree, instructing his subjects to plant an extensive number of orange trees, was subsequently denounced as “unfilial acts” by the Lord residing at Xischeng Palace. This reproach resulted in a stern reprimand for Eternity, leaving no latitude for leniency. This observation underscores the meticulous household management that prevailed prior to the recording of historical records.

Shi Hongxu, known as Wan Hu, asserted to be a disciple of Confucianism. In contrast, his predecessors, titled as noblemen, consistently associated with powerful elders. However, Shi Hongxu distinguished himself through an abundance of imperfections and repeated failures in commercial dealings. In the Yellow River basin, the expanding weaving industry led to an increasing prevalence of local attitudes characterized by the absence of hereditary power, the pursuit of effective management, production without financial gain, and living frugally. Consequently, farmers and officials abandoned their previous occupations and transitioned into merchant roles. The select few who persisted in agriculture and scholarship assumed the disparaged position of relief administrators for the forsaken population, essentially assuming others’ burdens. The elder son of Hongxu, named Yangsheng, experienced financial difficulties within his household and consequently relocated to the outskirts of Suzhi. In contrast, the second son, identified as Pengcheng, continued to reside in Huadong. During the Jiajing era (1540) of the Ming Dynasty, Pengcheng, also known as “Sho Yen-shih” in the Middle Wu Dynasty, distinguished himself militarily by repelling the Wusun forces. Subsequently, he was bestowed with the title of commander within the Wu Shuisi Military Corps. In matrimony, he united himself with the sister of the Jiading Methodist Prefect, a notable figure in Jiaxing. Formally and academically: The Tu clan, being affluent, provided substantial dowries. During that period, the Yi and Rong tribes waged destructive campaigns, accompanied by an immense number of conscripted soldiers. Amidst this chaos, Father Huanxian demonstrated unwavering resolve, disregarding the risk to his own life, thereby inflicting further hardships upon the inhabitants of Huangdongfang. Already heavily taxed for grain, they were unexpectedly compelled to pay an additional two thousand tax units. This sudden imposition forced them into immediate action, hastily preparing themselves for this new burden. The Pu family’s third daughter, who had recently been married, mournfully contributed grain and silver as relief efforts. Through the intercession of their relative Pu Zhulü, who held a distinguished position as a secretary in the Southern Court, they were able to secure crucial assistance and successfully surmount this challenge. During the Jiaxing epoch, Hongnan, the sibling of Hongxu, experienced challenges in his participation in the Shouchun construction project. In order to secure exemption from adversity, he resorted to bribing the relevant parties with the designation “Zhao Chuqian Wen Tiao.” The post, originating from the Hongzhi Era and bearing the marks of the Great Fire with charred papers and radiant ink, unequivocally represents an authentic silver hook iron painting if observed rising above the damaged parchment. This invaluable artifact is among the scholarly treasures amassed by Xu. Its worth is beyond dispute. With the arrival of the Pengs’ substantial brood, living conditions grew progressively congested and stressful. At a specific juncture, they were inundated by their own responsibilities and ultimately succumbed to poverty. During the Shi Zhongxing dynasty in Chinese historical records, the financial resources of their household were considerably limited, rendering them incapable of providing sufficient sustenance for their family. After failing the “Chongwen” examination in Shandong Province multiple times upon identification as doctoral candidates, one’s prospects for advancement to middle and senior positions in the northern region are significantly impaired.

In formal academic English, the sentence would be:

Hongshu and Hongan are contemporaries of Bai Mei from Suzhou. Pansheng and Yangshi are peers of Guoxian, Guojici, and Guoshu, referred to as The Three Distinguished Scholars. In Hermon East, housing primarily caters to agricultural pursuits and literary activities, distinguishing it from the mansions in Fengjia, which predominantly serve merchant elites. A notable disparity exists between these two residential typologies. Based on the historical records of the Shi clan, the governance of the Shu state, as portrayed in the Shu texts, was characterized not only as a solemn tribute to one’s ancestors, despite their geographical distance and the arduous journey required, but also involved the designation of Shi clan lands at Yellow Creek, which are referenced in “The Twenty-three Ancient Capitals and Western Ten Cities.” This continuity between the Shi clan and the ancient village by the Yellow Creek is evident from the Shiqi period through to the national chronicles, spanning over five dynasties. If we consider the migration of Pengcheng and Yangcheng, brothers of Shu Zhong, from Huangxi to Suzhou via the Pu’an Gate, this hypothesis could potentially provide additional insight into the historical interconnections between Huangxi and Suzhou. Unfortunately, no concrete evidence exists to substantiate this claim further. In the historical records of the lineages of Shi Hu and Gu Jie, encompassing the descendants of Shi Yong and Shi Zhizhi, the fates of these two families progressively interconnected. They engaged in a close collaboration, engaging in extensive communication, working assiduously to elevate Shi Yin from a mere eunuch into Emperor Wen, rather than a eunuch who had previously served under another regime. The enduring relationship between the two families over several generations was instrumental in the emergence of this formidable duo.

The chronicles, titled “Wen,” were meticulously assembled by Xiancheng of the county temple during the era of Chongning in the Ming Dynasty, specifically in the 24th year (corresponding to the year 1639 in the Gregorian calendar). At that time, Xiancheng had reached the venerable age of sixty-five and departed from this world. In his former existence, the ancestor was identified as “An Qi Xian.” He personally lacked affluence. Despite enduring arduous circumstances, he dedicated an immense amount of energy towards expanding the clan and tending to their memorial tablets for over six decades. Although devoid of wealth or grandeur, he demonstrated remarkable proficiency in household management. This ability elicited reverence from the clan members, positioning him as an indispensable figure within the esteemed Hongdong Fengshi family across the celestial and terrestrial realms. A life marked by an extensive catalog of experiences and journeys, comprised of distinguished compositions, “traversing diverse regions and nations,” “chronicling mountains and rivers, fields and villages, customs and manners, both virtuous and licentious,” some documented in literature, each genre distinctly defined; in locales such as grand metropolises or among intellectuals and artists, or with a yearning to revisit the past or explore the depths of antiquity, some recorded in historical documents, each document constituting a distinct category. Amongst the various compositions penned by the author are the works titled “Jianwen Jiadi,” “Sansui Jiqi,” “Longping Jishi,” “Songling Fengya,” “Huangxi Zhi,” and “Wujiang Xian Zhi.” In his formative years, my younger brother from that lineage experienced an interruption in his formal education due to familial obligations. Subsequently, he devoted himself to the study of scriptures at a local temple school, immersing himself in rigorous recitation and practice. His intense focus on his studies prevented others from engaging him for extended periods. After decades of dedication, he had committed to memory all the classical texts and reference materials. He subsequently embarked on extensive travels, refining his writing skills into a distinctive elegance and swiftness. His thoughts were deeply engaged wherever he went, yearning for intellectual discourse. Serendipitously, he encountered companions who shared his scholarly inclinations. In the western Xi region, Liu Gong infrequently encountered opportunities to engage with his texts; the majority of his time was devoted to interviews and interpersonal interactions. Despite his considerable potential for notable accomplishments, Liu Gong tragically passed away at a young age due to illness. His untimely demise left an indelible sense of regret among those who knew him, as he would never have the chance to encounter the virtuous Shi family figure. The eldest son, named Zhongzi Shi Fa, was born exhibiting auspicious physical features. At the tender age of six, he initiated his scholarly pursuits, demonstrating exceptional memory abilities that surpassed those of his instructors. He rapidly grasped and comprehended teachings, immersing himself in numerous classical texts and absorbing their fundamental principles. With unerring fluency, he recited these works aloud. Within a mere two years, he had achieved mastery over the classics. This prodigious child, whom his father held in high esteem for his exceptional intellectual promise, unfortunately succumbed to an untimely demise at the age of nine. The historical records lament this tragic loss with profound sadness and despair, expressing grief akin to that of an adult.

For generations, due to frequent financial scarcity and straitened circumstances, the Yellow River Delta Eastern Estate has been compelled to adapt its strategies beyond agriculture and literacy. It has not shunned the pursuit of mercantile business. The three young members of the History Compilation, identified as Zongzan, exhibited unwavering dedication and resolve in upholding their familial legacy. However, despite their earnest efforts, they encountered repeated setbacks in their scholarly pursuits. Subsequently, they pivoted from literature to commerce as an alternative course of action. With the vestiges of their prior endeavors, they meticulously strategized and amassed substantial wealth. In due time, they reclaimed their ancestral businesses with renewed vigor and prosperity. In the “Shiji” (Records of the Grand Historian), during the nascent stage of Emperor Suan’s reign in the Sung Dynasty, the offspring of historian Shi unsuccessfully initiated the process of “xing shi.” Subsequently, he sought counsel on tactics and gradually regained composure.

During the reigns of Emperor Suzong and Emperor Zhai in the Southern Tang Dynasty (approximately 907-923 AD), a period marked by the prosperity of cities and towns such as Fengjie and Huaxi within the jurisdiction of Wujiang, the price of silk was recorded at approximately two taels of silver per eight ounces, and two taels of silver per six ounces. This economic development significantly enhanced the affluence of the populace, giving rise to various customs. At that particular point in time, there were only two individuals, signifying mere representatives, who were affiliated with the Merchants Tide and connected to the Shi clan. The geographical arrangement of Huangxi City is characterized by a river acting as a divider, with the urban center located equidistant between its northern and southern shores. Commercial establishments are uniformly dispersed along the banks of this waterway. The quartet of Huang family members, namely Zongcing, Xiaji, Zongqin, and Zongsheng, have relocated to Huanghou Dong, Huanghou Xi, Jinma Nan, and Huanghou Xi respectively, expanding beyond the confines of their ancestral residence. This migration is attributed to both population expansion and the pursuit of strategic positions in Huangxi City’s burgeoning urban landscape. Amongst the various clans, including those of Qin and Xu, besides the Shi clan, there was a sense of urgency regarding the conduct of silk business operations. Based on the account titled “Biography of Money Zhoto” in Volume Six of Dao Guang’s “Yellow Record,” it is documented that the inhabitants of Zen currency were involved in the trade sector, specifically dealing with silk. Money Jingfu is mentioned as a merchant who frequently traversed the route between Wu and the northern regions. Additionally, Xu Fusheng managed a weaving and dyeing establishment for procuring flowers. During the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, local populations significantly contributed to the silk industry business, as evidenced by their substantial involvement.

During the reign of the Kangxi Emperor, around the mid-17th century, Huaxi had evolved into a significant urban center. The waterway was populated by an abundance of commercial establishments, with shops lined on both banks. Additionally, boats and rafts were moored beneath it.

In the region approximating 4.37 square kilometers, which previously housed several hundred deteriorated dwellings, presently exists approximately four to five thousand such structures. Previously, the Trade Office was comprised of a modest number of members. However, presently, there exists a substantial concentration of businesses on both banks of the river, with watercraft such as boats and rafts anchored in close proximity. The interconnectedness of these enterprises facilitates ease in the establishment of small businesses. In foreign territories, a significant population of settlers resides, yet jurisdictional stability prevails. However, it is important to note that in the context of Zhejiang, deception has historically been prevalent, thereby shaping local customs.

A substantial population of inhabitants hailing from Suzhou City and Jiaxing reside here, with this demographic not only underpining Huqiu City’s pivotal role as a connecting hub between the silk centers of Suzhou and Jiaxing, but also reflecting the robust involvement of external commercial capital. “Zhu Degui, originally hailing from the Maritime Salt Bureau in Jiaxing, Jiangsu Province, relocated to Huxi and subsequently flourished in business, leading to the establishment of his household there. Notably, he represents a distinguished success amongst the merchant community of Huxi, Zhejiang.” The townships situated in the southern region of Wujiang, in proximity to Suzhou and Lake Tai, experienced significant growth in the silk-weaving industry due to the dual influences of Suzhou and Lake Tai serving as advanced silk-production hubs. With the influx of substantial commercial capital, the populace of common towns increasingly relied on factories for their means of subsistence. Consequently, among the impoverished households, women wove silk domestically, while some children as young as twelve or thirteen years old labored in the urban centers of Longjing and Taian Bridges. As a result, a considerable pool of potential skilled labor forces was generated. These individuals were subsequently recruited and engaged by affluent families residing in Changchun and Taian Bridges. In the illustrious realm of the Tao, Huangxi City has evolved into a distinguished center for silk weaving: The intricately crafted brocade silk threads produced in this locality are abundant, and the Huangxi populace takes great pride in their artisanal skill. These silk threads, adorned with meticulously chosen patterns, are daily offered for sale at markets such as Mingze and Wanjiangkou. Through the refined channels of silk trade along the Wu River, the town’s creations have matured into a significant component of the national silk market network, extending beyond the Jiangnan region.

Based on the given information, Xi, located along the Yellow River, has evolved from a strictly agrarian and rural community into a specialized market town or residential center for both silk-weaving and agriculture. The scholarly and literary class also coexist within this community. From a technical historical standpoint, the genesis of weaving and trading centers, specifically Zhongze and Huqiu in Suzhou, can be attributed to the transfer of textile technology from artisans in Suzhou city to towns and cities within Wujiang County. However, when examined from a regional perspective within Jiangnan or on a national scale, more intricate explanatory frameworks are necessitated. In a professional town or market town where over eighty percent of the populace are dependent on silk production, it is unavoidable that they may encounter the predicament of grain scarcity for their own consumption. Mr. Lu Shi Yü of Huangxi Town capitalized on this situation by assuming the role of a rice merchant. He transported approximately three thousand liangs of silver and dispatched rice vessels to the northern riverbank, thereby astutely capturing the emerging business opportunity. The multitude of grain markets situated along the Run River, including Fengqiao, Pingwang, and Lili, function as vital supply points within the intricate networks of specialized textile towns. Individuals responsible for maintaining these supply stations predominantly source rice grains in an uninterrupted manner from the riverside and canal sides of the Yangtze River. Merchants originating from Dongting Lake and those residing in the Jiangnan region play varying roles in this national commodity circulation system.

Title: Chapter Four - Literature Review

Or:

Fourth Chapter: Literature Review

During the Eight and Nine dynasties, following the settlement of Zi Shi Ren in Wujiang post-the Tang and Five Dynasties era, the Yellow Xi Clan experienced significant growth. This development was evident in both scholarly literature and the silk industry. Notable achievements were made in economic and cultural spheres. In certain esteemed circles, the Yellow Xi Clan has earned recognition as one of the “Four Prominent Clans of Wujiang Prefecture,” proudly representing the distinguished lineage of this region. In spite of the challenges faced by the scientific community, the esteem of this lineage has been impeded from achieving greater prominence. In the historical records of Wu Zhong, Xisuhan is described with eloquent language as residing by the serene Western Lake. Nevertheless, in actuality, he was a modest scholar hailing from the southern region. The persona of Nanhu Wenwu of Southern Lake’s folklore faded during Xisuhan’s official journey, leaving behind only unflattering recollections amongst the Yellow Xi clan. In contrast, the bitter experiences of “plenty produced but no sales” were frequently expressed by the descendants of the Shi clan with the exclamation: “We have historically been the providers of sustenance; nonetheless, none have come forth to share in our bounty. Is it not the decree of heaven for our esteemed lineage to endure such hardship?” With the decline of the primogeniture succession system, the considerable wealth accumulated by the eldest son in each generation has been significantly diminished due to equal distribution amongst an increasing number of progeny. After the reign of Emperor Jianwen, the Shi clan of the Yellowxi faced a significant challenge in reconciling the advancements of science with the demands of agriculture. This dilemma served as the primary inspiration for the composition of “Zihlu” and certain works within the Shi family literary canon.

The initial segment is allocated for the composition of a formally titled document referred to as a “Self-Reflection Memorandum.”

During the reign of Wanli in the twelfth year (1584), Puer Ming, a relative by marriage to the Shi family, served as a deputy magistrate in Guangdong. He submitted a petition on behalf of filial and loyal officials outside the imperial clan, with the exception of Qi Tai and Huang Zicheng. The emperor granted permission for the descendants of military personnel who had not yet been expelled to return home. Those who had perished were to be removed from the records. Since the Ming Dynasty, unreserved eulogies have been delivered for loyal officials. In response, temples and shrines have been constructed in numerous locations as tributes to these martyrs, providing assistance to their descendants. A notable increase occurred in the production of stories about the Ming Dynasty within the realm of popular culture. Based on the origin of their principal proponents, who hailed from Jiaxing, these legends hold significant prevalence within the Jiangnan region. Uncle Tuo, in his capacity as compiler, disseminated the work entitled “Building Dynasty Court Records” globally.

Based on the historical records of the Ming dynasty scribes, it is reported that Emperor Jianwen of the Jurchen Dynasty, otherwise known as the Building Dynasty, is believed to have perpetrated self-immolation and expired. Subsequent generations mistakenly identified him as the charred remains of the Building Emperor, thereby engendering ample creative possibilities for future interpretations. The anecdote concerning Yang Hexian, a monk hailing from the Five Dynasties era (1368-1435), who assumed the guise of Emperor Yongle of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) and subsequently influenced the mythology of the Xuanhua Kingdom through this deception, has been orally transmitted among the populace and underwent iterative development during this process. In the literary work “Building a Monument” by an unknown author, titled “Jianwen’s Legend,” there exists an overabundance of the “From the Dead” motif in the text referred to as “Records of Loyal and Wise.” The aforementioned text sadly notes that this particular edition of the book is no longer available for purchase, as over twenty named officials and attendants have met their demise. Among these recognized individuals are Yang Yuan, Guo Liang, Yang Zhongjian, Yang Liangyong, Song He, Guo Zhen, He Zhou, Yang Liangyu, and He Shenpeng. Furthermore, more than ten unnamed officials have also perished. This banal observation has paved the way for the generation of legends and their subsequent transmission to future eras. In his work, “Zhongguo Chenjian Ji” (The Records of Chinese Loyalists), published first, are cited “Chunji Lu” (Records of Filial Piety) and “Jianwen Shufa Yi” (Draft of the Scripture for the Jianwen Era). During the Wanli dynasty, “The Records of Shu Ministers,” originally part of Li Zhen’s “Supplementary Collection,” underwent alterations by booksellers during the late Ming era. Subsequently, these falsified records were misattributed to Tu Fuchi and titled as “Genuine Records of Eminent Persons during the Xianqing Era.” The origin of the term “from the extinct” may potentially be traced back to this fabricated text. In the literary work “Zhongxian Qimiji Lu,” the portrayed characters can be categorized into two groups: those who are based on historically authentic figures from the Ming Dynasty and those who were inventively constructed to serve the aggrandizement objectives of their descendants, either bolstering their familial repute or securing tangible advantages through the inclusion of narratives featuring loyal officials. In later dynasties, historians identified and verified the loyalty of the approximately twenty individuals mentioned in “Zhong Yan Qi Mi Lu” who served Emperor Renzong. These findings also included the resolution of eleven questionable figures, resulting in a comprehensive record of Emperor Wanli’s loyal subjects during his reign, which was documented in the “Zi Shu Lu” of the forty-seventh year of the Ming Dynasty (1619). This work elucidates the names of the twenty-two “Eunuchs Who Perished,” as detailed in the preceding texts, and incorporates accounts of their collective journey with Emperor Wen in the southern regions of China following their escape from Jingling. Additionally, it introduces the character “Shi Zhongben” to facilitate the narration of the “From Waning” incident. The expression “from wreck,” uttered by Shi Zhichen, swiftly garnered widespread acceptance.

During the Ming dynasty’s Wanli era, prior to and following the forty-seventh year (1619), this text was disseminated. The authorship is attributed to Shi Zhongben, a Hanlin scholar under the reign of Chen Wen during the Chengde period. The text is presented in the first-person narrative mode, detailing the author’s lived experiences and observations during the waning years of the Hongwu reign and the early rule of Hongxi in late Ming dynasty China, reminiscent of a compiled chronicle in style. The text encompasses eighteen distinct entries. The initial eleven recount occurrences during the tenure of Emperor Chenjing, named Building, in the Sui Dynasty. Entry twelve documents the escape process of Emperor Chenjing and his retinue. Subsequent entries thirteen through eighteen detail Zhishi’s pursuit and subsequent reverence towards the concealed Emperor Chenjing. Based on the given narrative, Shi Zhongbin is documented as having denounced corrupt officials to Emperor Hongwu during his service tenure. Subsequently, he received recognition in the form of rewards bestowed upon him by Zhu Yuanzhang. Nonetheless, he was relieved of the duty to assume the role of chief administrator for the Household Department. During the Ming dynasty, Emperor Jianwen granted him nativity and conferred upon him the position of “Hanlin Academy Attendant Scribe.” He subsequently served in office from this point forward until the demise of the Southern Jurchens’ Han Dynasty (Yanwang) in Nanjing. Throughout Emperor Jianwen’s reign, he participated in noteworthy events. During the internecine conflict between the northern and southern dynasties, Emperor Jianwen initiated revisions to the imperial decrees. In the process, he composed a memorial, soliciting counsel. In the context of this strife, Emperor Jianwen publicly censured Xi Changlong while expressing support for Zhu Xu. Instructions were dispatched from the imperial court to the commanders at the forefront, mandating them to refrain from causing harm to Yan Wang. Yan Wang, stationed in Tanyang, advocated for a resolute defense of Nanking and the elimination of Xi Chongxi and Li Jinglong in consultation with Fang Xiaoru. In addition to proofreading books, transporting grain rations, and petitioning for reductions in the Jiangnan Reassessment, he performed other tasks. Shi Zhongbin, holding a modest official position, nonetheless engaged vigorously in the intricacies of palace politics. Lastly, Emperor Jen of Han met his demise. He was among the twenty-two “eternal feudal lords” who successfully fled through the Water Pass. The Ming Emperor was covertly sheltered in the resident of an individual during his time of crisis; on his southern tour through China, the Ming Emperor made occasional visits to Wu. Historian Zhong Fan received him on multiple occasions, and on one instance, he personally journeyed to the southwest to pay a visit. The aforementioned issues unequivocally illustrate the majesty of Emperor Jenwen, who likewise imparted names to his progeny with profound sentiment. During the Xuandé era, Cz’n-fen Schschy met his demise. This text asserts that it was acquired by Focsy in the “Lon-ching er-nian” year from the “Sho-shan Dao-shu.” The descendants of Cz’n-fen Schschy preserved works such as “Qi Chung-zhi” among their familial relics, engaging in comparisons and corrections with this particular text. Within the Hall of Ancestral Adoration, the “Tablets of Commemoration for the Departed” were meticulously inscribed anew with the designated epitaph, contributing to the expansive narrative of the Building Dynasty mythology through the chronicles of the twenty-two “Eunuchs Who Met Their End.” This text represents a condensed account of today’s “Zi Shu” (Self-Reflection) exercise.

Prior to the public release of “The Classic of Self,” known as “Zi Shu” in Chinese, allegations exist of additional family secretes within the Shi clan beyond the text of the Fuuzi edition. In the chronicles of history, the preface was penned during the initial year of the TaiChang era. According to the inscription’s text:

In the later stages of his life, the Marquis of Wucheng exhibited great care in documenting historical records. The works bequeathed to him by his forebear, the Marquis of Albums, included information pertaining to the prophesied overthrow of the current dynasty by the Ninth Ancestor of the Clear and Remote Dynasty. He penned down this significant prediction in his personal manuscripts, yet chose to conceal it from public scrutiny. The esteemed Elder Zung, among whom fewer possess such knowledge, may be consulted regarding the matter. It is regrettably reported that the father of the incomplete oration has departed from this world. The score exhibits incompleteness, and the annotated text in the tome is deficient. The discovery of an inscription in Wu Wending’s archive is a source of pleasure. The identification of a draft petition in Xi Cun Gong’s records likewise brings satisfaction. The unearthing of poems commending various subjects in anthologies is similarly pleasurable. The uncovering of a record detailing events at Sun Shan Zhi’s residence adds to this joy. Lastly, the acquisition of the mentioned artifacts from the defeated temple school scrolls was an intense experience, characterized by both exhaustion and elation. For two decades, I have endeavored in vain, exhausting my verbal resources and all remnants of strength. However, the esteemed virtues of governance remain undocumented.

Based on historical records, the subject gained some knowledge concerning his ninth ancestor, Emperor Chengzu of the Ming Dynasty, who left notable imprints in the Yuan Dynasty as documented in the annals of his grandfather, Duke Wenxian of Yufu. However, he did not obtain comprehensive information regarding this matter from the title “Incomplete Writings of a Lower Father.” In the course of my research, I meticulously gathered a collection of poems pertaining to Shi Ben. This compilation encompassed conventional epitaphs and monumental inscriptions, in addition to the contentious “Record of Offerings.” The anecdotes recounted in Huang Xuansi’s “Shi Yin Ji Shi” regarding the imperial decrees diverge from those found in both “Bi Table” and “Xing Zhong.” This discrepancy arises primarily from the inclusion of details pertaining to the departure of court officials. As a result, this text has been subjected to criticism by subsequent scholars, including historian Shi Yanshi himself, who acknowledged that Huang Xuansi’s assertion “this is but a time of friendship and camaraderie” may not be entirely trustworthy.

Based on historical records, for two decades I have endeavored in vain, with no strength or eloquence remaining. However, my acquisitions during this time were meager. In the archives of the temple, I chanced upon a fragmented self-account attributed to Qingyuan Gong. This account was described as “barely endurable due to its sparse and painful content.” The final seven characters on the cross were absent, rendering it illegible. While this discovery should not be construed as definitive evidence for Shi Ben’s new biography, it is nonetheless crucial in paving the way for the emergence of the “Register of Self-Immolation.” Regardless of whether the “Shouzhan Jishilu” (Records of Presenting Offerings), sourced from Shibi’s annals via Jia Yi or derived from the Yellowxi History School’s texts, is considered an essential interlink between early biographies and the dissemination of “Zishenlu” (Self-Portraits) during the Ming and Wanli eras. Its importance is evident, even under Qian Qi’s stringent scrutiny. Members of the Shi family acknowledged the distinction between “lu” (records) and “ji” (biographies), and thus did not entirely forsake the “Shouzhan Jishilu,” despite its numerous source imperfections.

From a cursory viewpoint, the most significant obstacle in retrieving ancestral records from historical archives lies in the inability to directly access the essential contents of revered familial documents. During that era, the significance of identifying a distinguished leader amongst the Shi clan to manage discourse regarding the Shi Temple and disseminate their ancestral narratives without instigating controversy on a global scale, emerged as a paramount priority. The most fitting individual for this position is none other than Jia, who previously held the title of Historian at the Hanlin Academy during the Tang dynasty’s reign and now advances in age. During the Building Dynasty era, Jiaocheng authored prefaces for historical records under the reign of Emperor Jing, as well as for Zhu Huan’s “Building Dynasty Calligraphy and Punctuation” and Zhang Chaoru’s “Loyal Records.” His impact in these domains was substantial. The inclusion of a preface by Jiaocheng for “Cleans Early Self-Account” would significantly bolster the text’s credibility. In the forty-seventh year of the Wanli dynasty’s reign (1570 AD), the historian’s offspring made a formal visit to the ailing scholar Jia Yi, bearing classical texts in hand. Upon this occasion, Jia Yi bestowed upon him the entire edition of “The Book of Songs” (Shi Jing). Following extensive scholarly deliberations aimed at resolving long-standing ambiguities, the offspring successfully petitioned Jia Yi to compile an introduction. Subsequently, both the unearthed text of “The Book of Songs” and its compilation process were made public knowledge. The preface to “Zi Shu” by Jia Yi was formally revealed, transforming it into a cryptic text, thereby linking it with esteemed historians such as Jia Yi. This connection significantly augmented the text’s credibility and worth. Following Jia Yi’s demise the subsequent year, “Zi Shu” became an indisputable work. Despite the humble persona of Yan Jiangyi, a formal and academic analysis can be conducted on Fang Bo’s preface solely in relation to its stylistic and rhetorical elements. As a compiler of historical texts at the imperial court, Focusi has long expressed displeasure towards the inaccuracies perpetuated in “wild history novels.” He advocates for the correction of unsubstantiated and baseless claims prevalent in common discourse through the utilization of official historical records. He is unequivocally unable to violate his own principles, and it is inconceivable that he would endorse with ardor an “unauthorized edition of an abandoned work” of questionable provenance.

In “Shi Ji” (Records of the Grand Historian) penned by Master Shi Chi, the account of “Zi Lu” seamlessly integrates the preceding narratives of banished monarchs and concealed officials. This narrative maintains the established tradition of Founding Dynasty legend while introducing a novel interpretation, most notably the experiences of the twenty-two officials who accompanied the Founding Emperor in exile. These accounts constitute an essential component of the text, imparting a unique perspective that distinguishes this work from prior studies on Founding Dynasty history during the Ming and Qing dynasties. In a particular epoch, the unlettered individuals are blissfully ignorant of the world and susceptible to deceit; among scholars, there exist some who discern falsity yet exhibit compassion towards the hapless, and compose eloquently on their behalf. With the propagation of “Zi Shu,” the transgressions of treacherous officials initially came to prominence in Jiangnan, subsequently pervading the realm as a whole. The progenitor of the Shi lineage, identified as “Shi Bin,” transitioned from an unranked grain officer to a valiant and loyal mandarin serving in close proximity to Emperor Jing. The veracity of this account has been subjected to repeated scrutiny.

In contrast to the controversy surrounding the authenticity of the “Zi Yin” text, this text is acknowledged as having derived from the Shi clan without raising any disputes. If this study serves as a foundation, at least two inquiries necessitate further exploration. Initially, why did the Shi family feel compelled to bypass established accounts of Shibi and pen anew their ancestral recollections? Secondly, what were the underlying incentives driving the Yellowxi Shi clan to publish and disseminate “Zihilu” throughout various generations, with some members preceding and others succeeding?

Previous research has predominantly examined this matter from the standpoints of imperial decrees, societal conventions, and reader preferences. However, investigating the reasons behind the transmission of “Zihilu” within the Yellowxi Shi clan has received scant attention. Although such studies may exist, they generally concentrate on how later generations utilized their ancestors’ legacies to bolster the family’s standing without delving into the intricate dynamics among different branches of the family or the socio-economic transformations in late Ming and early Qing society in Jiangnan. This focus might leave one feeling dissatisfied.

During the Ming Dynasty, the region inhabited by the Yellow Xi Clan in Suzhou held significance as a focal point for preserving and transmitting historical narratives. As early as the initial years of the Wanli reign (1573-1620), the magistrate of the prefecture, Song Yi, and the governor of Suzhou, Wu Shanren, constructed the Zhongde Temple to the west of Yongxi Bridge in Wuxian County. This temple served as a site for the veneration of loyal officials, Yao Shan and Huang Zicheng, who were esteemed Suzhou magistrates. The involvement of scholars from the Yellow Xi Clan, a segment of Jiangnan’s scholarly community, in the generation and dissemination of tales about the Ming Emperor was thereby fostered through this religious institution. During the Sui Dynasty, there existed a long-standing and intimate relationship between the lineage of the Shi clan and the eunuchs Jiao Shan and Yuan Shun. This relationship was further reinforced by early historians of the Sui Dynasty, including Wang Xiahnng and Zhongying Ming. Owing to their extensive familiarity with diverse narrative frameworks of Sui history and their possession of copious historical materials, these individuals were well-positioned to draft more coherent and exhaustive accounts of Sui historical records. Given the pragmatic necessities, the Scholars of the Yellowxi History Clan can effortlessly produce a scholarly monograph with ancestral figures as the central subjects, drawing upon established sources from the Annals of Shu and Shan. In the discourse of Qian Qiao, it became evident that as a compiler of biographies, I delved into the excavation of unconventional histories, drawing from precarious salvage processes, contriving associations among occurrences, and forging links between feigned and authentic narratives, thereby deceiving the masses.

In the preface to “Zi Lu,” the authoritative decrees were initially circulated, bearing the attribution to Master Zhuge for their publication. Based on extant records, in the year AD 231 during the Longching II era, Ruan Ji chanced upon the “Zi Shu” manuscript penned by Shi Chong at Mount Lu while in the company of his companions. The reason this text was concealed within the Dao Guan Temple is that it was clandestinely taken there by descendants of Shi during the Han Dynasty for an excursion. Subsequently, Ruan Ji retained possession of the manuscript for over half a century before eventually returning it to the lineage of the Shi family. Based on the hypothesis proposed by contemporary scholar Lüning, the designation “descendants of historians” in this specific context denotes historians of the Shengong era. In the opening passage of “Zi Shu,” Shi Shucheng asserted that the loss of Xi Cun was indeed among the items in his possession at the time. This observation raises an intriguing contrast between the rough and unrefined branches of Shi Yukan’s style, as portrayed in the text, and the cautious and humble disposition of Shi Pengsen in relation to “Zi Shu.” During Shi Yuan’s epoch, discourse concerning the contentious historical matters of the Shenwen Dynasty was strictly prohibited and engaging with such topics carried severe consequences, including capital punishment or even death, for the Yellow Xi Clan. Unintentionally, they came into possession of a work containing detailed information regarding Emperor Shenwen’s whereabouts. The annals, which could be taken outside for perusal by monks in a casual manner, were not eagerly sought after should they go missing, thus eliciting a sense of amazement among the population. In the eighteenth year of the Wanli reign (1590), the historian Shi Peng passed away. During this epoch, characterized by the emergence of the Building Emperor and his court as a period of aesthetic refinement, Shi Peng failed to promulgate publicly the heroic deeds of the Ancestors Clear and Far. Contrarily, he maintained the anonymity of his lineage in obscurity. Until his final breath, he denied access to his historical records held by his grandson for further scrutiny, a practice that was unconventional.

At the onset of the dissemination of “Zi Shu” (Considered Reflections on Things), beyond the widely recognized variant attributed to Jia Yi, the manuscript belonging to the Shi family was frequently highlighted as an alternative significant transmission lineage. In his “Preface to the Inscription on My Person,” Chen Jiyou asserted: The Shi family’s private collection and the acquisitions of Focus Xianxian at Mount Feng were harmoniously united, without any discernible disparities whatsoever. This declaration serves to underscore their shared provenance, thereby bolstering the authenticity and completeness of “The Preface to the Inscription on My Person,” and precluding any suspicion of external commission. Despite this discovery, the Eastern Mansion at Yellow Creek Harbor failed to yield the required manuscript. Previously, the family archives had exhausted all pertinent records, leaving only fragmentary and tedious scrolls, insufficient for comprehensive comparison with the Focusi Text. It was the duty of Qikuli Residence in Suzhou to disclose the familial scriptures of the monastic order. The antiquarian Scholar Shi Zhao Dou, residing in that esteemed household, foundedated his scholarly work, entitled “Jishen Lu,” on texts of profound value within his familial legacy. Subsequently, he augmented and enriched the preliminary composition to produce the comprehensive work titled “Qichong Zhi.” Based on the findings of Shi Zhoudou, the manuscripts he presented are not only consonant with the doctrines of Mencius, but also possess considerable referential significance. In the past, numerous eminent scholars have penned prefaces for the seminal work “Qi Zhong Zhi.” Its impact on the Wu Chinese literary circle was profound and extensive. Lately, Yan Shu obtained the manuscript of “A Letter to the Imperial Examination” from Qian Rong with profound puzzlement. Desiring to compare it with his personal collection, he was apprehensive, concerned about potential damage to Qian Rong’s esteem if discovered to be inauthentic. Ultimately, Yan Shu was unable to present it publicly. The whispers concerning the clandestine manuscripts of the Shi lineage have progressively abated over time.

In a narrow definition, Focusus editions are considered a subset of the Shirley family manuscripts. The concept of “long-term loss” is externally instantiated and its genesis and propagation are intrinsically linked to the Yellowxi History School. In the context of Yellowxi History School, each variant serves its distinct purpose. The authentication of Fan Zhongyan’s “Zi Shu” from the Ming Dynasty is essential to establish its legitimacy. This can be achieved by providing it with an authoritative provenance, thereby refuting the early criticisms levied against the text by scholars such as Cheng Sheng and Qian Qi. Unfortunately, the Yellowxi History School failed to achieve unanimity in their perspectives amongst various factions, leading to inherent contradictions that provide fertile ground for conjecture by subsequent scholars. In contrast to some implications, the housing markets in Tianjin and Suzhou, as evidenced by the data, remain indisputably strong. In the absence of annotated editions of the preface to “The Extensive Learning” penned by the esteemed scholar Zhongshi Zhu Xi, which preserved the queries of Shi Dao, Shi Zhaofeng, and other scholars, a significant portion of the transmission history of Zhu Xi’s “Records of Yellow Springs” remains undiscovered. On the one hand, the declining influence of communal discourse in long houses is evidenced by this observation. Conversely, the enduring dedication of Tianjin houses and Suzhou houses to preserve “Zhishenlu” classics is underscored by their steadfast resolve, symbolized by their clenched-fist determination. To obtain prefaces from distinguished individuals, they did not hesitate to solicit the assistance of scholars and graduates from Yunnan University, historians and vice ministers, such as Cai Ji from the Department of Personnel, and Hu Ruchun, a former director of the Jingzhou Branch Factory of the Ministry of Industry during the Ming dynasty. These individuals were compelled to write prefaces on their behalf.

Formally and academically, the sentence could be written as follows: Shi Chunyi, referred to in the text as “his person.”

In the mythos of Buildings and Transmissions, the figure of Shi Zhongbin emerged relatively late. In the scholarly work “Zhi Shu” penned by Wei Zhongxian during his tenure as Chensheng, there exists a preface named “Xiaxiang”. It contains the passage: “The names of the aristocrats have lain dormant for over two hundred and thirty years; unexpectedly, they emerge radiantly from Mount Ming’s cresting waves.” In the “Annotated Records of Emperor Taizong of the Sui Dynasty” in the “Historical Records,” as well as Wu Kang’s “Stele Inscription for the Tomb of the Officers of the Clear River Bureau,” the individual referred to is identified as “Shi Yin.” During the early reigns of Emperor Taizong (581-602 AD) and Emperor Xuan (604-618 AD) of the Sui Dynasty, this person held a humble position overseeing grain matters. He did not receive any formal titles or distinctions in recognition of his agricultural labors. With respect to the character “史” in the name “史中彬,” why is an extra “中” character present? Scholar Schaefer has provided a definitive explanation that the original name was “史中彬.” Historian Liu, in composing the “Xing Zheng” (Memorandum), included the additional “中” character in the public designation as a precautionary measure to avert misfortune for future generations. The technical disparity in nomenclature can be addressed; however, the substantial divergence in identities poses a considerable challenge. Following the revelation of Shi Jingbian’s new identity disclosed in “Zhi Shenlu,” this development has garnered notable public interest.

During the reign of Emperor Hongwu, the penalties imposed on corrupt officials were exceptionally severe. In compliance with the decree, Shi Zhifen, representing the taxpayers of Wu Jiang, delivered six individuals, previously hidden behind Pengtianmen Gate, for judicial proceedings and trial in a court of law. In a quaint rural community, the superior conferred upon the messenger gifts of wine and sustenance. Upon completing his errand, he subsequently returned to his residence, bearing the funds allotted for the relay services. During the Hongxi reign of the Ming Dynasty, a decree was promulgated mandating that no household within the realm was exempt from engaging in agricultural production. Enforcement officers were expressly forbidden from implementing any exceptions to this edict. In a deep sigh, Judge Zhong expressed great concern for the gravity of the court’s circumstances that morning. In response to this apprehension, and in accordance with established regulations, he decreased the tax burden by several units. The inscriptions on the tomb of Wu Wenming attest to Zhong Fan’s conduct in this matter. Towards the close of the Ming dynasty, a ninth-generation descendant documented in a memorial: Zhuchun held the position of an official under the reign of the Wen Emperor during the Building Era. The Wen Emperor frequently granted him this role, and he was often received at his residence. The names of Zhuchun’s descendants were noted by the ninth descendant. Zhongbin and the twenty-two other individuals, among whom were the artisan Supple Cook, the sage Cloth-and-Grass, and the monk Snow Hut, gathered in solemn silence to formulate a covenant for venturing beyond the Pass at Relian.

The epitaph on Shi Yanshou’s tombstone and his biographical account recount several pivotal moments in his life. Among these noteworthy incidents are the following:

1. In his juvenile years, Shi Yanshou reported Liang, the bully, to Jinling, thereby earning the recognition and reward from Zhu Yuanzhang.
2. Subsequently, he was appointed as a grain intendant, whereupon he devised inventive strategies for effective tax collection and petitioned the administration for tax relief.
3. Regrettably, his tenure as a grain intendant led to his unjust accusation and subsequent imprisonment, ultimately resulting in his demise. During the late Ming dynasty, the History School affiliated with the Huangxi clan progressively omitted references to “Zongzhu Examines the Archives of the Yuanquan Department” in their historical compositions. Instead, they adopted the viewpoint expounded in “Zihlu.” The title of the grain intendant Shi Ben was transformed into that of the loyal official Zhongben Shi. During the Building with Wide Embrace epoch, the biographical records have been revised to read as follows: “Birth name: Zhong, bestowed name given by Emperor Huizong, titled Zhonggu, and nicknamed Xiscun.” The “Autobiography” segment underwent revision, incorporating the narrative of Shi Yin, which led to the modification and transformation of the previously documented account of Shi Zhongyin, specifically with regard to the aforementioned incidents.

In the twenty-fourth year of the Hongwu reign, Zhong Fan was called to the imperial court under accusations of bribery and corrupt practices among high-ranking officials. The extant records indicate that both individuals were sentenced to capital punishment by the law office during this period. The High Emperor issued a command to the Household Department, yet Zhongbin, apprehensive regarding the fiscal concerns, initially declined but subsequently paid a visit to the Imperial Physician to seek information concerning his health. Formal and Academic English:

A four-hundred-tael silvers payment was made as we presented wine and food offerings to the court. Upon our return, the messenger boat arrived. During the Minghua Era of the Hongwu Emperor’s reign, which is documented in “Shi Zhong Shi Ji” (Records of Presentations), an edict was issued. This decree served as a solid foundation for Shi Ben’s subsequent appointment as an official during the Yuan Dynasty. It preempted any potential identity transformation and facilitated a seamless transition. However, it shifted the reckless behaviors of Shi Ben, as recorded in “Ming Wang Beizhong” (Imperial Funeral Inscriptions) and “Xing Zhuo” (Records of Journeys), from his youth to his middle age. If this is an accurate representation of events, then Scholar Ji Rentang’s stern reprimands against young Shi Ben in the new biography of Shi Zhong would be rendered invalid, leading to a significant inconsistency.

In the “Stele Inscription” and “Memorandum,” Shi Ben humbly requested mercy in the matter of tax grain collection, acting in his capacity as a grain officer. Conversely, in the “Biography,” Shi Zhongben petitioned the emperor directly, presenting grievances concerning tax grain collection and other related matters, while serving as a eunuch scribe in Jiangnan.

During the second year of the spring season, specifically the three-month span, I was mandatorily enlisted in the military at the Shallow River-Lake locale of Zhejiang Province. During the rule of Emperor Zhenjing in the Sui Dynasty, the edict of Zhongshu declared: A nation is entitled to be governed by the virtuous alone, and unequal taxation does not constitute legitimate governance. In Jiang-Zhe, the tax load is quite substantial. Simultaneously, the registrations of Su, Song, Jia, and Hu have been processed in Suzhou (Songjiang), Shaoxing (Shaxian), Huzhou (Jizhou), and Hangzhou (Jiaxing) respectively, thereby expanding the tax base. The question arises as to whether it is equitable to levy taxes on the inhabitants of Su during times of adversity, not as a result of established legislation but rather as a form of retribution for their perceived obstinacy. I respectfully propose leniency and exemptions for the populace of Su. In the densely populated fertile plains of Jiangnan, where not a single square meter is exempt from seed pilferage at an estimated value of less than one yuan, it is inconceivable that sufficient resources could be amassed for those bearing significant burdens. Several years ago, I submitted a substantial petition to the Imperial Court, which resulted in being granted increased opportunities for diligent work. As a subject of the Manchu Dynasty and sharing an ethnicity with the historically subjugated “Shi” populace, I exercise caution and restraint in my expression. It is fortunate indeed that the emperor exhibits both benevolence and wisdom in his rule. Matters are addressed with leniacy, allowing for the submission of uncomplicated loyalty. He listens attentively and selects carefully, exercising caution in speech, and ultimately, decrees are issued judiciously.

The decree, as documented in “Ming History - Biographies of the Ming Monarchs,” lacks verification in the authentic records of the Ming Dynasty’s Veritable Records. Based on the account in “Dingxiu Zhanzheng” (Examination of Dingxiu), the historical origin of the edict issued by Emperor Jianwen in his second year (Building) can be traced back to “Zhupu Bian” (The Precious Canon), a compilation by Yuan Yansi of the Jiashan people that is documented in “Yuanshi Jiaxunshu” (The Collection of the Yuanshi Family Instructions). A supplementary section in “Zisilu” (Register of Persons) further connects influential figures from wealthy families in the Jiangnan region, including Chen Wangsan, to this edict. This association, from one perspective, reflects the profound historical recollection of the people of Jiangnan towards Emperor Jianwen’s benevolent rule. In the negotiaciones entre intereses locales y centrales durante las Dinastías Ming-Qing de Jiangnan, la solicitud de reducción impositiva se hacía a wayas de un pie de apuntadores. Including this episode in “Zi Shu” (Memorandum) will significantly augment its reception among the populace, thereby bolstering the acceptance of “Zi Shu.”

Thirdly, in the context of individuals who met their ends in prison, there exist two distinct accounts. The first, as recounted in “The Historical Records,” is told from the perspective of commoners. The second, detailed in “The Tablet of Self-Implication,” attributes these deaths to the emperor’s protection. Despite the pardons granted to those who reported on the treasonous faction, a sense of fear persisted within their hearts. During a single funeral feud amongst adversaries, seven out of every ten individuals unfortunately met their demise as a result. In adherence to the principles of loyalty and filial piety as delineated in the Classics, conduct oneself with appropriate decorum and gravity.

This study provides a comparative analysis between the perspectives of Shi Ji and Wu Kan regarding the historical records of Shi Ben, specifically in relation to “Zi Shu.” The most significant distinction between the two resumes is rooted in the fact that Shi Bin held the position of a grain manager, whereas Shi Zhongbin was recognized as a loyal subject of Jin Wen. Their identities are unambiguously dissimilar, implying that the text creator had a specific intent in implementing these alterations. Based on Easy Speeches, Yellow Xi Shi endeavored to assume the role of Zhi Shen Lu, a loyal official from the Han Dynasty, with the intention of securing particular advantages. This motivation substantially shaped the textual composition of “Zhi Shen Lu.”

During the Wanli era, eunuchs persistently petitioned for the reinstatement of the cult of the Building Emperor and granted clemency to his faithful subjects. In specific situations, relating anecdotes concerning Emperor Han Wen Di’s reign may prove beneficial for contemplative individuals in real life. In the canonical texts on ancient Architecture and Residences, the narratives of self-sacrificing officials are extensively recounted. However, the Yellowxi Shi clan, who perished during the Wenming period in the Han Dynasty, should not be enlisted among the ancestors of the Han Dynasty mentioned in these texts. Consequently, they devised a “rising from destruction” narrative and forged their unique path within this established framework.

The term “from Wang” scarcely appeared in dramatic works prior to the Ming Dynasty, and it continues to be an under-researched topic. The statement originates from “Zhong Hua Ming Yi Ji Mi Lu,” as recorded in “Xun Guo Chen Ji” by Zheng Xiao.

During the reign of the Monarch of Songyang, an imperial decree was issued mandating a visitation and administration of Plum Village Temple. The sovereign attended religious instruction therein, yet was disturbed by the discordant voices of the monks, an anomaly in the tranquil temple environment. Intrigued, he ascended the deserted peak in pursuit of the unusual commotion, only to discover an empty scroll of scripture. Amongst the antiquities of the Jingling Dynasty, there were over twenty officials and faithful subjects who had inexplicably vanished. The document is significantly damaged, with numerous illegible areas resulting from tears and apparent charring. Over the course of six days, the following individuals were identified: Tian Yun, Guo Liang, Ling Zhongjie, Ling Liangyong, Song He, Guo Jie, He Zhou, Ling Liangyu, and He Shen. The total number of identified individuals amounted to nine. Decreed a pardon for his unwavering loyalty, resulting in an extraordinary reaction. Each individual bestowed upon him copious accolades, collectively documented in the esteemed records entitled, “The Annals of Loyal and Astute Men of Exemplary Capability.”

Based on the provided citations, the authorship of this text is uncertain, with possible attribution to Zheng Xiao, Wang Zhi, or Du. In earlier Chu-Yuan legends, there are references to nine specifically named individuals. However, the expression “over twenty officials and ministers perished with Chu-Yuan during the Chunqiu era” led to the term “the deceased,” implying that more than ten unnamed individuals met their demise alongside Chu-Yuan. During the Zhengde era, individuals such as the self-immolating officers of the Jin Dynasty, as documented in “Beiquan” and “Jiechu Shi,” were characterized. This practice persisted until the Jiajing dynasty, during which the texts “Xinfeng Yijun” and “Xinfeng Zhi” introduced the concept of concealed retreating officials. Following the publication of “Shu Guo Chen Ji,” “Zhong Jie Lu,” and “Jian Wen Shu Fa Yi” by Zheng Xiao, each comprising a chapter entitled “From Waning.” Despite their incomplete development, these works served as significant sources of inspiration and reference for subsequent narrative compositions. Consequently, the emergence of “Zi Shen Lu” was facilitated, laying the groundwork for the enduring tradition of storytelling that followed.

The “Registrum Signatum Proprium” and the “Record of Loyal and Wise Men and Esoteric Matters” exhibit a noteworthy correlation in textual content. Their discovery contexts and preservation circumstances share striking similarities, which are intriguing in their own right. In the ninth year of the Chongzhen era (1636), Xuchangzhi erroneously considered “Shuoyan Tang Hua” and “Zhongguo Fangxi” as a single text based on their titles. However, a noticeable distinction exists in their handwriting as depicted in the “From Wasting” narrative. In “The Records of Loyal and Filial Men,” the relationship between the individual implicated in the “from Wang” incident and Emperor Jianwen is not explicitly delineated, leaving it uncertain as to who were his descendants. As a result, this text cannot be utilized as proof for practical applications such as temple worship or memorial services for his lineage. In contrast, “The Records of the Worthy,” which originally depicted Shi Zhong as an insignificant figure in history, reconfigures him into the most prominent loyal official among those categorized as “from Wang.” This ambiguously alters the theme surrounding the “from Wang” label. The ensuing methods are elucidated below:

The designation of Shi Chongbian within the Hanlin Academy is that of a servant, yet this sequence is meticulously compiled in chronological order, leaving no detail unrecorded regarding his professional tenure from the Hongwu to the Yuanjia eras. This exhaustive account, executed with great care using ink and brush, serves to conceal Shi Chongbian’s true identity as a high-ranking imperial official. During the Chongzhen dynasty, the “Wu Xing Bei Zhi” (Records of the Five Elements) meticulously documented local water management practices. Subsequently, it assimilated pertinent content from the “Zi Shi Lu” (Self-Recorded Memoranda).

The themes of “Water Passing Out of the City” and “Traveling in Southern China” were initially present in the text referred to as the “Record of Self-Immolation.” The work titled “Consolations for the Departed,” situated between these two themes, contributes to the concealed history of the Shi family. This contribution encompasses the particulars of the twenty-two individuals, including their titles and offices, derived from authentic sources. Consequently, the veracity of the “From the Living Ministers” narrative is strengthened, facilitating a more receptive response to the salvific acts of Shi Chong’en.

Eighteen individuals, among whom were Yang Yanping and Ye Xiyan, were in attendance. Upon reaching Wujiang, having traversed the Huaxi River en route, the disciples convened at Bin’s residence for a duration of three days. In the prefecture of Wujiang, under the jurisdiction of the Suzhou municipal government, the designated magistrate arrived at the dwelling of Bian with orders to seize the property. The justification provided was that “His Imperial Majesty Yuanwu has been apprised of this situation.” In response, Bian asserted, “That was not the case.” In the morning, the master, two monks, and one layman commenced their journey into Yunnan province, accompanied by a faint laugh from the master. To translate a Chinese sentence into formal and academic English, adhere to the following procedures:

1. Determine the parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.) in the Chinese sentence and their corresponding formal and academic English equivalents.
2. Utilize suitable formal and academic English vocabulary and phrases to convey the intended meaning.
3. Ensure that the sentence structure conforms to formal and academic English grammar rules.
4. Employ a clear and concise writing style.
5. Abstain from employing colloquialisms, contractions, and idiomatic expressions.

For instance, if the Chinese sentence is “你好，今天下雨了。” (Ni hao, jin-tian xia yu le.) which signifies “Hello, it rained today,” a formal and academic English translation would be:

“Greetings, it rained today.” or “Helloo, the weather was rainy today.” or “Salutations, precipitation occurred today.” In the eightmonth interval of the Jiaxin calendar, the master was paid a visit by Yang, Cheng, and Ye, amongst other individuals. Upon observing their modest apparel, he chose to retain their presence for a duration of three days. Members of the aristocratic lineage possess and don dress approximately eighteen garments each, derived from diverse fabric types. Amongst them, Yang, Zhang, and Ye specifically utilize silk, aggregating roughly seventy-two and a half items in entirety. Allocated funds amount to twelve taels of white gold. On the thirteenth morning, student Bian accompanied his teacher for a twenty-three-day educational tour in Zhejiang, China. The terrace, a structural feature often found in architectural designs; the pagoda, an intricately designed edifice; a thirty-nine day journey, a significant duration for a pilgrimage. To translate a Chinese sentence into formal and academic English, adhere to the following procedures:

1. Identify the parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.) in the Chinese sentence and their corresponding formal and academic English equivalents.
2. Utilize exact formal and academic English words and constructions to impart the intended meaning.
3. Ensure that the sentence arrangement conforms to the regulations of formal and academic English grammar.
4. Employ a succinct and clear writing style.
5. Avoid colloquialisms, contractions, and figurative expressions.

For instance, if the Chinese phrase is “你好，今天下雨了。” (Ni hao, jin-tian xia yu le.) which signifies “Hello, it rained today,” a formal and academic English rendition would be:

“Greetings, it rained today.” or “Helloo, the weather was rainy today.” or “Salutations, precipitation transpired today.” During the Dinghai year’s Chunxiu third month, Zhongfen journeyed to Yunnan for the purpose of rendering homage to his esteemed teachers. To translate a Chinese sentence into formal and academic English, adhere to the following procedures:

1. Identify the components of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.) in the Chinese sentence and their corresponding formal and academic English equivalents.
2. Utilize suitable formal and academic English vocabulary and constructions to convey the intended meaning.
3. Ensure that the sentence structure conforms to the rules of formal and academic English syntax.
4. Employ a clear and succinct writing style.
5. Avoid colloquialisms, contractions, and figurative language.

For instance, if the Chinese sentence is “你好，今天下雨了。” (Ni hao, jin-tian xia yu le.) which signifies “Hello, it rained today,” a formal and academic English rendition would be:

“Greetings, it rained today.” or “Helloo, the weather was rainy today.” or “Salutations, precipitation occurred today.” During the autumnal eighteenth month of the Chinese calendar, which corresponds to September-October in the given solar year and marks the reign of the Earth Boar, Scholar Zhong Fan embarked on a journey to Yunnan province for the purpose of rendering homage to his esteemed teachers residing there.

In formal and academic English: If Emperor Jen were to host a banquet, it would be fitting for Shi Chongni, who has received numerous favors from him, to attend as a loyal subject.

Formally and academically:

The master’s residence, referred to as Clear Distant Pavilion, is situated to the west of this location. In the morning hours, he engaged in the revision of the designated topic, which was labeled Water-Moon Study Room, utilizing his own calligraphic skills.

For the past two decades, I have been the recipient of sustenance and apparel from countless unfortunate individuals, living through precarious situations. Formally and academically, the given Chinese phrase “复大恸” translates to English as “Mourning profoundly over a major catastrophe.”

Among this group, there exists a lineage directly descended from the historically distinguished Zhongfen clan. Residing in the area, they permit their kindred to engage in the “from-wang” ceremony, thereby bestowing advantages upon the Shi clan.

Commencing on the eighth day, I arrived in Wujiang. To the western vicinity of Yellow Xi lies the locale designated as Qingyuan An. To translate a Chinese sentence into formal and academic English, adhere to the following procedures:

1. Identify the components of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.) in the Chinese sentence and their corresponding English equivalents.
2. Utilize suitable formal and academic English lexicon to express the intended meaning.
3. Ensure that the sentence arrangement conforms to the regulations of formal and academic English syntax.
4. Employ a lucid and succinct writing style.
5. Eschew colloquialisms, contractions, and idiomatic expressions.

Example:

Chinese: 你好，今天我要買一本新書。(Hello, today I want to buy a new book.)

Formal and Academic English: Greetings, today I intend to procure a novel addition to my collection. A member of the Shi clan hailing from Jiaxing County by the name of Zhuanzü posed the question: “Master, what are your plans at this juncture?” The Master responded: “I shall embark on a journey to explore the renowned scenic sites associated with Tian Tai.” Huang expressed: I shall bear the virtues accrued throughout the day with me. To translate a Chinese sentence into formal and academic English, adhere to the following procedures:

1. Identify the constituent parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.) in the Chinese sentence and their respective English equivalents.
2. Employ formally and academically acceptable English lexicon to convey the intended meaning precisely.
3. Ensure that the English sentence conforms to the rules of formal and academic English syntax.
4. Utilize a succinct and clear writing style.
5. Eschew colloquialisms, contractions, and figurative language.

Example:

Chinese: 你好，今天我要買一本新書。(Hello, today I want to buy a new book.)

Formal and Academic English: Greetings, today it is my intention to acquire a novel addition to my collection. In the context of a formal and academic writing, the sentence could be rephrased as follows:

“Tsung-hsi possesses ten articles of attire and transports rice in parallel for the pilgrimage to Huiyuan.”

The narrative of Emperor Jen’s flight from the Jin Dynasty reaches its conclusion. Distinguishing fact from fiction amongst the involved officials remains a complex task. During the final stages of the Ming Dynasty, the episode of Li Qing quelling the unrest among recalcitrant officials was regrettably noted as follows: Absent the meticulous funeral records penned by Wu Ken, we would be bereft of knowledge concerning the catalyst and casualty count in this historical event. Through the eulogies on “Zhihu,” Shi Zhongcheng was designated as one of the “From Wan Ministers.” Consequently, he assumed the role of a prime accomplice to Emperor Jianwen during his demise. This text provided further clarification concerning the prolonged absence of honorific titles bestowed upon Huangxi Shi by the court. Such withholding served the purpose of maintaining discretion regarding his clandestine “revived-from-the-dead” status, in accordance with imperial decree.

The master inquired, “What is your age, young one?” In response, I stated, “I am sixteen years old.” I request that you manage the situation; however, I must remain in the study. To attain the status of an official, one is required to possess an unsuitability. This point was subjected to extensive consideration by those involved. Formally and academically, the sentence could be translated as follows:

“Greetings, today I will present my research project.” Zhongyun reprimanded his son with the following words: Despite holding a modest official position, my esteemed self has received favor from the court. In instances of adversity, adhere strictly to the decree of the late imperial monarch, demonstrating filial piety and obedience, in order to safeguard the welfare of one’s family. Formally and academically, the given sentence could be translated as follows:

Greetings, today I will present my research endeavor. The sovereign exhorted: “Maintain a steadfast adherence to the eighteen precepts of ‘Zi Shu,’ with the intention of governing one’s life with clarity. Respect for others is non-negotiable.” Regardless of the current emperor’s benevolent and generous demeanor, we remain uninformed on this issue, given the prevailing apprehensions regarding potential misfortunes afflicting the native populations. The descendants, as alleged, are criticized for exhibiting a lack of filial piety.

One distinguished individual by the name of Shi Yuan, hailing from the Shi clan, emerged during the Xuande dynastic period. It is important to note that there was no familial or other connection between this figure and the deceased. Nevertheless, “The Memorial Tablet Inscription” serves as a testament to an association between Shi Yuan and Emperor Yongle:

In the ninth year of the Jia-Yin cycle, during the fourth lunar month, a male offspring was born. The master expressed grief upon the passing of the elder, subsequently rejoiced at the birth of an offspring whom he named “Wen.” He uttered, “I am Wen; yet, shall I not cease to exist?” This event is documented under the title “Judgment” within the annals of the “Song History,” and was later subjected to renaming. The master holds filial piety in the highest regard, meticulously evaluating Suban’s statement: “This offspring is of great worth.” Tzuh expresses: “I do not strive for affluence; literacy alone is sufficient for founding a domestic estate.” In the realm of literature, one ought not to hold an inflated self-esteem, but rather assume a modest moniker.

It is fortunate that the edition of the “Memorandum” (Zihlu) from the second year of Chongwu (AD 132-134), titled “Zhongwu Er Niangshu,” preserved in extant copies, does not include the passage concerning Emperor Wen’s bestowal of the name “Zihlu” upon his historians as recorded in “Strange Loyalty” (Qichong Zhi) by Shi Zhoudou. This discrepancy underscores the textual diversity prevailing during the early transmission period of “Considering My Body” (Zihlu).

In light of the aforementioned context, the role of Shi Zhongben as a “Government Official” during the Sui Dynasty becomes more distinct. A series of ceremonies and commemorative activities were organized in honor of his illustrious biography. Subsequently, attempts were made to venerate him within the local deity system through various means, as Pansheng elucidated, “During the Ming Dynasty, officials were categorized into several groups and enshrined in the Temple of Local Worthies. By examining popular biographies from that era, one can identify categories such as founders, those with tragic demises, exemplars of filial piety, and scholars. The account of Shi Zhongben, as presented in ‘Considering His Record,’ serves to establish a textual foundation for his veneration.” During the waning years of the Ming Dynasty, Jiangnan experienced a cultural renaissance. The printing industry prospered, and there was a surge in popularity for works of Building Literature. This intellectual movement attracted not only merchants and scholars but also members of distinguished lineages. During the Hongguang Era of the Jin Dynasty, in the ninth month of the ninth year, Manqing Zhai Shizhengyi summoned a memorial from the historians. Subsequently, he granted the mourning cap to this individual. This event is recounted in the text referred to as ‘Zishenlu.’ It is noteworthy that this text was predominantly fabricated with the intention of capturing the readers’ attention through the unexplored theme of “from the living to the dead” within Jin Dynasty legends. It is proposed that Shi Zhongbin be included in the list of honorees.

In the third portion of this discourse, extend due reverence and pay tribute.

Following the “Campaign at Jingnan,” discourse relating to the Buildian Dynasty has been suppressed politically. However, sporadic memorial activities for Buildian loyalists have occurred since the founding of the Xuande Dynasty. These initiatives were instigated by scholars and officials from the original regions or those who had served or perished in that area. Since the Ming and Hongwu dynasties, there has been a growing practice to commemorate and encourage filial piety, loyalty, and morality among officials by dedicating temples in imperial palaces, counties, and towns for those who made the ultimate sacrifice for their cause. Certain individuals were bestowed with the title of “Private Scholar” as a posthumous honor. During the reign of the Ming Dynasty’s Wanli emperor, the government’s recognition and favoritism towards officials who exemplified filial piety became more overt. Individuals outside the Zheng and Wen lineages were granted various distinctive privileges upon being favored. The Yellowxi History Family’s promotion and dissemination of the “Zi Shu,” centered around the “Zi Lu,” served identical functions, whether as ancient records or genealogical tables, with the sincere objective of venerating Ancestor Zhongfen in the local temple for distinguished ancestors.

Based on the discourse surrounding the most suitable member of the Yellowxi History Clan to be honored in the Temple of Worthies, Historian Zhongbin does not emerge as the foremost candidate. In contrast, Historian Shi, holding a distinguished position within the Wu Chinese literary sphere, fulfills the fundamental prerequisites for consideration, as outlined in the Historical Record. Panon Pan, with not a speck of sand remaining in his eyes, similarly endorsed this sentiment: In antiquity, the forebears of the Shi clan were unsurpassed in brilliance and have bequeathed us with an abundance of works. Should we acknowledge their merit among our local luminaries, who would dare to dispute? It is our filial piety and kindness towards our ancestors that we honor ancient China in our town temples. The lineage of the Shi clan can be historically traced back to the Ching Dynasty; however, their endeavors did not culminate in achievement.

During that epoch, upon the historian Shi Yin’s demise and subsequent enshrement as a divinity within the temple after his achievement of passing the imperial examinations and attaining the rank of official at the highest educational tier, the likelihood of such an event transpiring was not negligible. During the same period, Yang Yi and Nanhu Public held prominent positions, and their friendship was characterized by a deep intimacy. During the Ming Dynasty, the authority to appoint scholars held by administrative officials was most profound in the realm of local governance. In standard situations, the presence of authoritative backing for pivotal figures contributes significantly to achieving success, accounting for at least fifty percent of the outcome. The election process for Wu Changji as a local hero in Wujiang County during the Jiading period (AD 1368-1375) was not as straightforward as expected. In accordance with the prescribed protocol, the Confucian temple designated representatives from the village, including Li Chuang, Me Yixi, Qian Qian, and Shen Zhan, for the township-level election to solicit public opinion. Upon scrutiny of their applications by the magistrate, Chen Wenguang, it was determined that Shi Yi’s moral integrity and scholarly accomplishments satisfied the prerequisites for “submission for approval to the county-level education authority.” Consequently, he made the decision to submit the application. The aforementioned program exhibits extraordinary intricacy, necessitating numerous translocations amongst Wujiang County, Suzhou Municipality, and Tianshi Temple, interspersed with recurring evaluations. Only upon completion of these steps can a definitive conclusion be reached. A historically frank advisor, endowed with natural frankness, had overlooked the prospective intricacies and consequently neglected to leverage his unique rapport with Yang Yi earlier for the purpose of ameliorating all relations. Regrettably, his actions were characterized by an insufficient display of emotional sensitivity, thereby precluding him from attaining success. Amidst this contentious situation, Zhu Rongming, the brother-in-law of Zhu Shun, was embroiled in disputes with the Shi family regarding the planning of Shi Yi’s matrimonial proceedings. Regrettably, during the public discourse concerning the selection of worthy men for enshrination in the Shi lineage temple, Zhu Rongming failed to offer assistance and instead made a grievous error at a pivotal moment, marring the eloquence with an unintended blunder. The initially anticipated scenario has now unfolded in an entirely disparate manner. It has been reported that certain court documents pertaining to the application process, which had been preserved by Deputy Minister Stanley, subsequently vanished in Stanley’s custody. Among the lost files were crucial pieces of information, such as applicants’ examination records and evaluations from various administrative levels. The sole surviving artifact was the initial page of the “Xi Cun Ji” (“Rural Scholars”) application.

The omission of historical records in temples dedicated to local notables may initially seem like a personnel issue; however, upon closer examination, more profound motivations underlie this phenomenon. In contrast to the pervasive reverence towards local elites during the Ming and Qing dynasties, infrequent occurrences of such phenomena are noted in Wujiang County. In the “Xiangxian Yi,” compiled prior to the Jiaqing era in the annals, there exists a record detailing the framework for honoring distinguished county and town residents.

In his natal temple within the confines of Ritze Xiang’s village, the recognized master has now arrived amongst the elder revered figures. During the Ming Dynasty, following rigorous examination, he was incorporated into the esteemed list of the forty-two deities. In the context of Zhizhou Confucianism espoused by Mingxing, the voices of elder authorities were dispensed with, leaving only a select group of ten individuals recognized. Over the past century, Chen Ti meticulously examined the writings of Wang Yinde and engaged in scholarly discourse with countless peers, securing the endorsement of five other esteemed scholars. The listed individuals consist of Mozi, Zhang Heng, Gu Yanwang, Lu Kun, Wei Yuan, Wang Li, Chen Changfang, Yang Bangfu, Lu Shichigi, Wang Fan, Shen Yiru, Wang Yanzhije, Mo He, Zeng Zhi, and He Yin. Xu Zhilie holds the third position amongst the distinguished triad referred to as the “Three Highs.” The quartet consisting of Reti, Mu, Zeng, and He occupy the fourth place. Thirteen individuals have been advanced in rank: Xu Xianxian, Wu Sheng, Mu Dan, and Zhao Khan included. During the specified period, individuals with an absence in historical records where their presence was expected, as well as those who subsequently vanished after being documented, encompassed the figures of Xu Zhan, Shen Zhong, and Du Wei. The elder’s warning, conveyed with great reverence, was particularly noteworthy. Over the course of the ensuing half century, Xu and Du were the sole recipients of invitations. Within the preceding three decades, a total of fourteen new invitees were welcomed. The neophyte usurps the throne through forceful displacement of the preceding monarch, who is subsequently cast out and supplanted by a luminous and flourishing successor. Formally and academically, the question could be posed as follows:

“Ought the practices of both the husband’s rituals and ancestral sacrifices be abandoned? This issue warrants careful consideration and reflection.”

During the early reign of Hongwu, the process for identifying and recruiting talented individuals in Wujiang County, formerly recognized as Zhizhou, was meticulously instituted under the guidance of Kongke. Subsequently, for approximately a century thereafter, despite some variations, the population of distinguished persons residing in the county seldom surpassed 10 to 15 individuals. Should new candidates be admitted, it is contingent upon the exclusion of existing ones. In the rigorous context of Wujiang County’s succession proceedings, where a novice usurps the position of the incumbent chief, the challenge of founding a local temple or shrine is significantly more pronounced compared to other regions. To address this centuri-old conundrum, the annals put forth a contingency plan, comprised of a foundation of twenty-seven individuals.

The twenty-seven individuals, all esteemed figures in ancient society, were distinguished for their suitability at temples, courts, and the wilderness. Each left an indelible mark on human life, their virtues enduring throughout generations. Arranged hierarchically above, their positions remained unchanged across centuries. Since the founding of Atami Temple, there have occurred instances that fail to meet acceptable conduct. In the context of the cosmic order, it is essential to differentiate between the realms of the upper and lower spheres; however, this distinction does not advocate for the reinstatement of outdated hierarchical reverence.

In the historical records, individuals of distinguished local renown are classified into two distinct categories: those from the reigns preceding Jiaqing and Hongwu (numbering twenty-seven) are designated as “Immutable Ancestors, Unchanged for Ten Thousands of Generations,” and those from subsequent reigns are labeled as “Realized Individuals, Significant in Later Eras.” This differentiation aims to prevent any potential confusion regarding seniority and the respect owed to antiquity. From a rigorous standpoint, the suggestions for incorporating “zhu” format in historical annals raise valid concerns regarding excessiveness. This observation is consonant with the broader evolutionary trajectory of Ming dynasty temple statutes. Yet, the recurrent instances of noncompliance with rules can be attributed to the pragmatic necessities of the populace, echoing the trend toward ethical and legal dissemination during this epoch. In the esteemed annals of history, Shi Yin and Shi Zhongbin hold prominent positions, included among the select number of 27 individuals, with a clear intent to address the pragmatic requirements of the Shi lineage. In the recorded genealogy of the Shi lineage, known as “Xiangxian Si,” the submission of a second application from this clan, despite not having been endorsed by local authorities, warrants careful consideration in light of the infrequent occurrence of multiple successful applications originating from the same clan at once. A historical figure with a past record of failure is not an optimal selection for recognition. It is pertinent to emphasize that this historical figure lacks any acquired academic degrees. His distinction derives solely from his modest attire in the southern region during the Ming Dynasty. Despite popular demand, such enshrinement as a “Scholar” in the temple of local luminaries was an infrequent occurrence according to Ming Scholars. During the early years of the Jiajing dynasty (1522-1567), the surname “Yuansheng” among descendants and juniors was not uniformly dominant, although it was not uncommon after the Wanli period (1573-1620). Prime Minister Stuart abstained from actively shaping or influencing public opinion during the legislative process to enact the Ancestor Amendment, a proposition that subsequently proved overly optimistic. During the specified timeframe, Stanley Ho’s recognition grew within the Wu Chinese forum community as a result of his progressive ordination with the name Xiangdan Chenshen. In the intellectual circles of the late Ming Dynasty, access to the Hanlin Academy was exclusively granted to individuals who had successfully passed the imperial examinations. The disputed biography of Historian Shi Zhongbin, holding the title of Hanlin Academician, stands a greater likelihood of approval and uncontested election compared to the Shiji (Records of the Grand Historian), upon recognition.

In the second year of the Tianwu era (1622), he established significant relationships at the Wenfang scholarly association in Suzhou. Subsequently, he embarked upon a prolonged endeavor to posthumously honor the historians Zhongzheng by publishing the work “Qichongzi.” The compilation and printing of this text served as the catalyst for this undertaking. In the northwest corner of Shi Ze’s residence at Huqiu, He initially collaborated with Shi Ze on the construction of Yan Zhi Chong Temple, an edifice erected to honor earlier scholars and pay tribute to their memory. Subsequently, drawing inspiration from Suzhou Prefecture’s County-level Build Filial Piety Temple, as well as the models of Jingling Tablet of Loyalty and Qin Yuan Bi Shrine of the Two Pans, He established a Five Loyal Subjects Temple in Suzhou. The temple honors Longzhou Liu Zheng, Wu Xian Chengyan, Changshu Huang Jie, Kunshan Qu Shi, and Suzhou historian Wen Zhongben collectively. Without mentioning Shi Zhongfen, the following four individuals have been recorded in the Ming Dynasty’s temple registers for their meritorious deeds. Their actions serve to underscore the unwavering and virtuous figures of the Shi clan during the Wen Dynasty as contrasting exemplars of loyalty and righteousness.

Shi Zhao Dou harbors a preference for ascending to prominent positions and intends to present “tablets of loyalty made from wood” to Wu Zetian at the Temple of Ancestral Worship in Nanjing. The Temple of Filial Piety in Nanking, erected during the fourth year of the Wanli reign (1576), represents the first Ming Dynasty temple to venerate multiple sons who made the ultimate sacrifice. Its significance extends nationwide, designating it as a “National Shrine” in China. Among the 117 individuals enshrined in the temple during Tianxiang’s second year, six posthumously honored persons - Zhai Yexiang, Ni Jingxian, Wang Liang (aged 31), Cai Yun, He Shi, and Liang Rongyu - were absent. This unfortunate circumstance is lamented, and it is expected that all relevant parties have strictly adhered to the standards to rectify this regretful oversight. During the Middle Reign of the Ming Dynasty, Lu Cang and his followers advocated below, while Hu Shizong and his supporters confirmed above. This process was not haphazard or impulsive. However, since admission standards at the Scholar Temple in Wujiang County, which falls under the jurisdiction of Suzhou Municipality, are equally rigorous, I did not pursue this path. With our village boasting an ancient history and the renowned Scholar Temple attracting applicants each year, producing future officials, my prospects for advancement to the imperial court seemed distant, while retreating with pride and arrogance was unattainable. Consequently, as a humble historian, I could only resign myself to this situation. Due to constraints in power and financial capabilities, the proposed construction of five loyalty temples within a given jurisdiction and the enshrining of the Southern Temple of Loyalty in Nanking could not be accomplished. In spite of Shi Zhounping’s persistence in advocating for the reverence of public service and law, this perspective posed an insurmountable obstacle to the consideration of applications for village entry on two distinct occasions.

In light of the infeasibility of implementing a significant strategy within Suzhou Municipality, it is justifiable to allocate substantial resources towards an alternate approach in a more permissive adjacent jurisdiction. The historically significant yet intricately connected old village of Huangxi serves as an optimal point for advancement, boasting numerous complex relationships with the Jiaxing Municipal Government. The proximity of Jiading Ancestral Hall Village and Huqiu, which are separated merely by a single canal, is not the sole reason for Shichangben, as a member of the second generation of the Shi family residing in Woochow, being able to register as a resident of Jiaxing. Rather, this significant privilege is primarily attributed to the historical connections between the Shi family and Jiaxing.

During the Chongzhen epoch, the conduct of the gentry in Jiaxing Prefecture exhibited a marked trend towards extravagance. This development is in accordance with Chen Long’s account: “Few members of the gentry cohort visited the local deities’ temple half a century ago, and they were revered by the populace.” Lately, the Jagasaki Laboratory (Alfa in English) has experienced a shortage of staff. Occasionally, students were absent, and on certain occasions, personnel from the front desk arrived late for duty. In the annals of prosperous society, one cannot disregard the scarcity of such an opportunity. Humbly and meekly as one may be, the potential rewards for mankind are varied and unpredictable.

Formalively, I extend this invitation with a heavy heart. The objective of annals, as expressed by our forebears, encompasses the following actions: supplication, rendering homage, exhibiting benevolence, and documenting historical occurrences, such as multiple demises. Among these tasks, praying serves as an inaugural endeavor. At the operational tier, Shi Zhongbin’s designation as “the one responsible for sending off deceased ministers,” title, and role, along with his jurisdiction over taxation, water resources, and local matters, were all encompassed in the sacrificial offerings to the deities. The historical records recount an instance where they voluntarily initiated contact with Zeng Cheng, the magistrate of Jiaxing during that period. Trust was swiftly gained by Zeng Cheng, a virtuous and wise official known for his moral integrity and astute governance. At Yajunfu and Yingqingyuanfu temples, despite his own financial straits, he meticulously organized ceremonies with utmost sincerity, thereby paving the way for the successful commencement of temple worship activities. Following the passage of several months after the designations “White Worshiper,” “White Butcher,” and “White Scholar,” the long-awaited event transpired when he entered the temple. Over a distance of three hundred li, messenger horses relayed the journey. Persevering through adversities, all passes were ultimately opened in the eleventh year of Chongde (1638), thereby enabling the successful enshrinement of Shi Zhenbin in the Jaxiang County Temple of Worthy Scholars.

The “Catalog of Wu Zhong School Literature Compiled by the Shi Family” and Shi’s “Personal Memorandum,” both authenticated by Shi Zhen, include the inscriptions for the Temple of the Wise Men in Jiaxing Prefecture’s Suburb, dedicated to Chongde, as attested in the scriptual record. Should we disregard archaic expressions found in official documents concerning the demise of Zhongshi Zhong and Yingying, what survives are records of scholars, magistrates, governors, and examiners, whose loyal and filial conduct were chronicled historically. These records have been meticulously collated into various collections for the veneration of local notables who dedicated their lives to their respective duties until the end. In the memorandum penned by Liu Lin, Deputy Consul-General of Zhejiang Province, there appears the following unelaborated statement: “Select a day personally, present offerings to the local scholars’ temple, and contemplate constructing a specialized temple.” This passage lacks any implicit connotations. In academic discourse, the terminology referred to as “special temples” is related to the more broadly categorized “general temples.” In the Ming and Zheng dynasties, the regulations governing the gentry community exhibited a notable characteristic: the institution of rural scholarly temples. More specifically, a comprehensive temple was established within the county or prefectural school compound for the centralization of local scholars’ veneration. In spite of the presence of schools adjacent to Town God Temples, there persist temples specifically designated or founded for distinguished rural elites in diverse locations. Nevertheless, the count of such temples has undergone a substantial reduction and is subject to formal authorization. During the Jiaqing epoch, three temples were constructed expressly as tributes to the Three Worthies of Wujiang: Wang Xianzhi, Chen Longfei, and Shu Yingfu, who were esteemed Confucian scholars of the Song Dynasty. With the exception of the present example, there exist no further instances of officially recognized temples or shrines. In the modest Yasou Hall of the Shi family mansion resides the venerated shrine and idol of Zhudouzhi. An annual rite of profound reverence was enacted, dedicating offerings to the exalted and revered deity throughout generations, Deified Zhunben. The esteemed scholars Zhuxu and Gonggao were represented by their hallowed statues during this occasion. Moreover, several tens of acres of land were donated in its vicinity, to sustain the military commander of the locale. In the formal and academic context, despite the Hanlin Emperor’s accession to the throne and subsequent edict mandating that troublesome officials be either investigated by local magistrates or honored with temple construction, or have their names attached to temples of merit and loyalty, Han Xin’s clandestine worship practices were perceived as a transgression of established ritual customs. In Liu Lin’s extended article, the perspective referred to as “another opinion on special temples” primarily functioned as a justification for the previously conducted private rituals. Based on the records contained in Volume Fifteen of “Zhi” within Chongzhen’s “Wujiang Xian Zhi” (County Annals), it is documented that Liu Renlong, Deputy Magistrate of Studies under the supervision of Zhang Yufen, the Overseer of Education, constructed a temple at Huangjiaxi during Chongzhen’s eleventh year in Zhejiang. This action signifies the execution of a proposal put forth by Liu Renlong. In the catalog entitled “Wu Zhong School Literature by the Shi Family,” there is an entry detailing the ancillary texts associated with the liturgical scriptures employed in the temples during the relocation process of the Preparatory Office of Jingxing Fu, as referenced in the text.

Under the surveillance of Commander Suzong and other local administrative authorities, Magistrate Zhang presented a formal memorial to the Hanlin Academy on behalf of servitors Yuan and Clear Water. This memorial was meticulously perused by Servitor Jingchang of the Grand Secretariat, and Historian Gyuneng of the Imperial Library exhibited considerable interest in it, both being natives of Zhejiang solely by virtue of their ancestral lineage. In the context of mountainous regions, a representative from the Three Kingdoms of Wu is not inconsequential in comparison to the Shu Mountain range. The itinerary of the steamer is explicitly provided, adjacent to which will be constructed a novel temple. At its forefront, a palace shall rise, inscribed with the characters “Carrying on Righteousness Uplifts Heaven,” followed by the corresponding year and month, and conclusively, the complete name of the Academy shall be affixed. In religious establishments, such as temples and shrines, there are suspended tablets or plaques intended for offerings or charitable contributions.

Liu Reng’s annotations and Zhang Fengyun’s critiques substantially contributed to the circuitous strategy of interpreting the Historical Records, justifying legally the clandestine veneration of historical figure Shi Zhongben by the Shi clan at their ancestral home in Huangxi. In the twenty-first year of the Kangxi reign (1679), the “Records of Xiaxing Prefecture” in Volume Seven of “Temple and Worthies” of the “Jiaxing Fu Zhi” (Annals of Jiaxing Prefecture) mentions the name “Shi Zhichben.” Likewise, during the sixtieth year of Kangxi’s reign (1694), the same source in Volume Five of “Schools” records Shi Zhichben among the registered notables. This information corroborates that Shi Zhichben was indeed enshrined as a worthy in the Jiaxing Prefectural Temple. During the preceding dynasties, the gentry population in Jiaxing Preface’s seven counties aggregated to around 230 individuals, averaging nearly thirty-three persons per county. This figure represents approximately one and a half times the number of gentry residing in Wujiang County, suggesting a relative degree of local affluence.

Previously mentioned, the House of Hongde and Jiaxing progressively assumed power over the Huaxi Clan from the Ming dynasty; however, the House of Hongde failed to achieve significant advancements in the imperial examinations. Regardless of their business expansion, they remained classified as “landlords” within the gentry, thereby retaining the obligation for corvée labor service for their households without exemption. During this time, gentry physicians in Jiangnan flagrantly neglected their military obligations, leading to a persistent issue of conscript selection, which became a significant “draft crisis.” The economically disadvantaged peasantry and petty landlords, incapable of meeting their feudal responsibilities, succumbed gradually, ultimately leading to their financial ruin. During the Longqing and Wanli dynastic eras, administrative reforms instituting policies of limitation and exemption, as well as the deployment of photographic record-keepers, were implemented in numerous jurisdictions. Notably, these initiatives yielded desirable outcomes in Jiaxing Prefecture. However, in all other prefectures, including Suzong, the endeavors met with failure. During the twenty-ninth year of the Wanli reign in the Ming Dynasty, the “Equal Punishment” law instituted by Liu Shizhun, the magistrate of Wujin County, Wujiang, met with substantial opposition from the gentry. To transcend the bonds of subjugation, the Yellow Xi Shi lineage can merely anticipate a pivotal shift in the context of restriction and exemption reforms or else endeavor autonomously to ascend into the echelons of the privileged stratum. In accordance with the prevailing preferential policies during that period, both current officeholders and scholars, as well as their lineal descendants and the general populace, received corresponding privileged treatments. Through the extensive propagation of “Zi Shu,” the compositions penned by Shi Chong’er during the construction of the Temple of Filial Piety, adherents of the Shi clan were bestowed with privileged status as “descendants of Zi.” Consequently, they emerged as the principal agents in the creation, preservation, and transmission of “Zi Shu” within the Yellow Xi lineage. In the catalogue of documents from the “Shi Family Wu Zhong School,” there exists a record referred to as an “Exemption Certificate.” It is implicit that Xianzhen Boshi, the prior official, held the entitlement associated with this document.

In Wujiang County, the current steward of Xu Wangfu, stationed at Xihuansi on the Western Yellow River, holds concurrent appointments as a guest and scribe within the esteemed Hanlin Academy, accompanied by an official rank in the imperial court. The extent of his domestic lands is reportedly 2,250.5 hectares, absolving him from mandatory corvee labor. According to the registration documents, the designated parcels under his jurisdiction bear designations such as “xi,” “gen,” “xiaxun,” “qi,” “jian,” “wei bi,” “miao,” and “dacheng.” The combined area of these plots is recorded at 1,900 hectares. In Jiaxing County, there is an unexpected exemption from military service for approximately 1,902 acres, and corresponding notices for payment are issued by the county authorities. Formal and academic English translation:

Greetings, today is a beautiful day. (Literally: “Salutations; Today exhibits comeliness and radiance.”) The date “Building the Third Year, Early September Ninth” can be expressed in formal and academic English as “September 9th, third year.” Alternatively, “September 9th, Year Three” would also be acceptable.

Upon meticulous examination of the historical contexts surrounding the enactment of pertinent decrees, it is unequivocally clear that the “pardon certificate” in question did not emerge as a singular entity during the Ming Dynasty. During the Early Ming Dynasty, commoners were exclusively granted exemptions for the categorization of miscellaneous soldiers. This privilege did not extend to the gentry with regard to regular soldiers. It was only in the Late Ming Dynasty that regular soldiers became eligible for such exemptions. Informally: The shift of conscription standards’ responsibility to land ownership regions is a recent development post-the “land-equaled, labor-shared” reform.

Formally (using academic language): The responsibility for adhering to conscription standards has been exclusively transferred to land ownership territories, marking a novel development following the implementation of the “land-equated, labor-distributed” regulatory framework. Based on a number of indicators, it is hypothesized that the so-called “Building Three Year Exemption Certificate” is more plausibly linked to the era of widening exemption privileges in late Ming dynasty as opposed to early Ming dynasty, due to its sharing of traits with both “Zhuzhi School” and “Military Service Exemptions.” During the epoch of unlimited exemptions, lands granted exemption status under the auspices of an official encompassed not only the property personally owned by said official but also frequently extended to lands hereditarily possessed by his lineage for generations. In the “exemption notice,” the term “household members of the Yellowxi History Clan” is employed with precision, implying that the agricultural lands governed by distinct branches of the Yellowxi History Clan are all eligible for the corvée labor exemption conferred in the name of Shichunben. The primary distinction among the branches of the Shi family lies in their methods for eluding “bondage” and their respective roles in propagating “The Classic of Filial Piety” and presenting offerings to Master Zhongshan. Despite Shi Zhongbin’s successful enshrining in Jiaxing County’s Xianshi Temple, the predominant portion of Shi clan’s territory lies within Wujiang’s jurisdiction. Yet, they have not entirely been released from their predicament, as they continue to confront challenges in the context of the incomplete execution of “land and labor equalization” policies in Wujiang County. These challenges include the utilization of designations such as “registry of lands” to mitigate undue corvée burdens. The significant advantages conferred upon the “descendants of loyal subjects,” as evidenced by the case of Wu Jingxiu, were not previously recognized by scholars to have stemmed from the circulation of “The Register of Scholars” in this particular region. Instead, it was through this connection that Wu acquired cultural esteem and oratorical privileges among local elites. Subsequently, they capitalized on this influence and clansman status to broaden the dissemination of this literary work.

During the Shuying year, two distinct events transpired concurrently: the supplications to the Deities and the submission of a petition for the posthumous title bestowal upon Shi Chongwen. In the matter of examinations, the primary decision-making authority resides with the former entity. Conversely, the latter entity’s role hinges on the disposition of the Central Government. The success or failure of the latter is contingent upon the cooperation of officials from the Six Ministries and the Censorate. During the late Ming dynasty, specifically in the reign of Emperor Wanli, the advancement of related matters was predominantly instigated by eunuchs within the imperial court. Notably, the drafting of titles preceded these events at their onset. In the second year of Tianwu (1622), Eu Yang Dao Zi initiated the process for posthumous honors and bestowals for Emperor Wanli and his officials. This occurred during a visit to Nanjing’s Hukeci, where he paid respects to the historical figure Shi Zhongfen on behalf of our ancestors. The preparation of proposals for title bestowal was the responsibility of the chancellors, who then submitted them to the Department of Rites. Subsequently, the Department of Rites presented these proposals to the palace, convening a meeting in its wake. Attendance at this meeting was infrequent among the Lower Rites Department and external parties. The text from the “Liji” chapter, specifically titled “Rituals of the Hall of Rites: Consultation with the Nine Ministers and Scholar-Officials,” concludes at this point without any subsequent content. Following the demise of certain officials who had made the ultimate sacrifice in support of the Jingwu cause, memorials were respectively presented by Grand Secretaries Li Ruzhü and Liu Bin, along with Zhou Wen from the Department of Ceremonies in Nanjing. These memorials advocated posthumous honors for the deceased. Nevertheless, these petitions were disregarded without consideration. Among the various challenges confronting us, two merit particular attention. The first pertains to the contested legitimacy of Emperor Jingnan within the Ming Dynasty lineage. This issue has gained increasing prominence at the imperial court since the Wanli reign. Despite debates surrounding whether Emperor Jingnan received official titles from his predecessor, the resolution of this matter remains of paramount importance to the royal household. The presence of eunuchs in the Qing dynasty signifies, on the one hand, the significant role they held in identification of their status, and, on the other hand, suggests that those who received favor had previously been documented within the official records. To gain approval and subsequently be recognized as an authentic cultural reference point for citation, the “Memorandum” necessitates rigorous examination by the designated political authorities.

From the standpoint of the literati community, Yellowxi Shi’s lack of assimilation represented a barrier to their engagement with the scribes. Among members of the literati class, relationships are influenced by various factors including social standing, lineage, educational attainment, mentorship, and professional reputation. Wealth and material possessions hold significance primarily in one respect. The annals bear the title “Amongst the Common Folk.” Upon scrutinizing their content, one can identify the language as vernacular and unrefined. Despite the voluminous body of literature he generated, he received meager recognition from scholarly circles. This circumstance further suggests that his social sphere was limited in scope. The condition of Shi Zhoudou has shown some signs of amelioration. Currently residing in Suzhou, he leads an unfettered existence, unencumbered by the pursuit of self-cultivation, and holds no favor to bequeath to his progeny. In his younger years, Wang Shifeng referred to him as a “young contemporary.” His relationship with Liu Zhiwei (Liu Feng) and Wang BaiGU (Wang Rongding) was of a merely superficial nature. Wang Bo meticulously authored a comprehensive biography encompassing the life of Botan prior to the Ming Dynasty. This work extended to include details about his ancestral home and its historical relics, as well as anecdotes and various miscellaneous matters, all of which Wang Bo was intimately knowledgeable. In their formative years, scholars and gentlement competed for patronage. During the “Shi Tou” era, Shi Zhao’s relentless endeavors led to the composition of prefaces for “Zi Shu Lu” by certain scholars in Suzhou. His supporter base consisted solely of Chen Renshi, an individual who had attained the title of “gentleman” within his domestic sphere prior to entering into concealment. Within the imperial court, there existed influential figures, among whom were Qin Qiong and Li Qingzhi. However, they did not hold close relations with the Shi lineage. During the Southern Dynasty, Historian Shi Zhoudou sought an audience with Qian Qi. It was known to Qian Qi that Shi’s petition to the court, requesting recognition and attachment of his ancestors among the “Officials and Gentlemen,” concealed deeper intentions than a superficial request. In response, Qian Qi authored the “Record of Self-Examination” as a rebuttal to Shi’s unfounded claims and revelation of his true motivations: “A man, under the guise of recommending his ancestors for recognition, wields a pen to compose such a work. Yet, I fear that this text may be expunged from existence, its veneration and offerings widespread across the realm.”

Following the institution of the Hongguang dynasty, measures were implemented to foster loyalty and allay the populace’s apprehensions. This was accomplished by fully reinstating Emperor Wen’s historical standing and rescinding posthumous penalties of varying degrees for deceased officials. Mercy and honors were subsequently bestowed upon individuals. The duration of the supplementation and presentation process spanned merely two months. A caveat accompanies the submission of this memorial: my role in its drafting is relinquished, as is your authority to accept it. Please confine your attention to rectifying any minor discrepancies. Inevitably, omissions or excesses may persist. Li Qing was tasked with the responsibility of verifying the identities and authenticity of the scientific titles conferred upon challenging ministers documented in historical records. He encountered significant difficulties in cross-referencing and authenticating these titles, particularly those mentioned in Zhou Ma’s “Zhongjian Chunji” (Records of State Affairs during the Zhongjian Era). Despite his extensive familiarity with its contents, having obtained a copy from Yin An, he unequivocally denounced “Considerations for Self-Record” as insubstantial upon encountering Shi Chengbin’s name on the list for conferring titles. His language was unyielding and unsparing.

In the inaugural year of the Hongguang Era, corresponding to the year 1645 in the Gregorian calendar, the sovereign conferred upon him the title of Imperial Assistant, with Xu Huizong being the designated appointee. In the outset, Li Qingyan from the Science Academy addressed the assembled scholars: they exchanged formalities and instituted a new order, overthrowing the previous regime. Subsequently, national records were metamorphosed into private documents, with Xu Zhongxu and others contributing at the scribal end. The most articulate manifestation of this transition is encapsulated in Shi Ben’s “Reverence for the Self-Record.” Should the inner annals of Wu Kang, the eunuch, not have contained meticulous records detailing the events surrounding the tomb of Pian, the specifics of Wu’s final speech at the moment of his demise, as well as the identities of those among the deceased who were posthumously rewarded, would remain elusive.

Based on the persistent demands of Li Qing and other prominent figures, more than 140 officials, comprised of over seven hundred scholars, seventeen military officers, six consorts, and others who met their demise during the Yuanming Yuan Incident or took their own lives post-Rehe Uprising, were collectively enshrined in the Temple of Loyal and Faithful Officers. However, they did not receive any formal titles or acknowledgments. In the given texts, specifically “Shi Bin’s Self-Record” and “From Wenxiang’s Notes,” the listed names are derived. It is noteworthy that in place of “Shi Zhongyin,” the designation “Shi Yin” was utilized in the discourse of Li Qing and colleagues. This usage signifies their cautious stance towards “Zhi Shengyu’s” claims, while simultaneously expressing their reverence for Wu Kan’s “Mu Bi.” Despite the circumstances, “Shi (Zhong) Fen” did not receive a bestowed title as a gift to prevent potential disputes. In the actuality of the situation, Li Qing failed to adhere strictly to the established protocols during the conferral and salutation rituals towards officials. Gongshu Xi, a soldier stationed at Jinmen Gate, was initially denied clemency. This decision elicited strong objections from Zhang Ado, a fellow townsperson. He addressed a petition to the Departmental Scribe Shao Ning Shen, who in turn expressed reluctance, stating “an extension of the pardon is currently impracticable.” Li Qing posited that the precedent set by Zhu Shunde’s publicly granted private pardon warranted consideration. He argued that Gongshu Xi had already received a private pardon from his community, and thus it was appropriate for him to be granted a public pardon, thereby ensuring due process in this matter.

In the context of cultural heritage preservation activities, it is essential to recognize the significance of Yellow Xi Shi, as depicted in the annals of the Sui Dynasty, within the discourse pertaining to Jiangnan and the central region. Nevertheless, the text in “Zhi Shen Lu” is marked by superficiality and numerous errors, indicative of Yellow Xi Shi’s limited influence in the cultural sphere. In the sequence of events described by Shi Zhoudou, there was no scarcity of means and resources for those who sought aid from the literati. Despite the political authority of “Speeches in the Hall of Buildings and Canals” during the Ming Dynasty, the scholarly interpretation of this discourse has been a matter of contention due to inconsistencies in the existing literature, as evidenced by the work “Recorded Sayings.” During specific timeframes, Shi Chongwen received unwarranted acknowledgement; nevertheless, subsequent praiseworthy acts initiated by the Yellow Xi Shi Family were thereafter suppressed by the decree of the government.

Chapter Five: The Disorder of Black and White

Or, more formally:

Chapter Five: A Study on the Disruption of Contrasting Colors: Black and White.

During the Yongzheng era, an cautious approach was consistently adopted by the authorities in handling the historical record of the Qing Dynasty’s early years, specifically the Shunzhi period. Despite a prevailing relaxation in political matters post-Yongzheng, out of profound respect for the dignity of the Ming Dynasty’s last monarch, Emperor Hongxi, and to avoid any potential disturbances to his legacy, related topics remained politically sensitive and were not openly discussed until the end of the Chongzhen reign. During the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279), there emerged indications of a comprehensive reassessment of the historical record of the preceding Jin Dynasty, or the “Jin Building Period.” However, due to the pragmatic necessities of legitimizing various ruling houses under the Jurchen regime, formal historical narratives refrained from deviating substantially from the official accounts. In contrast, popular genres of historical writing, including anecdotes and local records, experienced a flourishing period. One notable example is Li Qing’s “Hua Guo Shu Wei Jia Yong,” which vividly illustrates this distinctive phenomenon. In light of the relativistic nature of time, the paucity of historical records concerning Shi Jiangnan is significant, posing a challenge to the establishment of an accurate and impartial historiography within a constrained timespan. In the steadfastness of the Qing Dynasty’s reign, there transpired an extensive undertaking for the compilation of historical records from the preceding Ming Dynasty. The reexamination of Ming Dynasty history became an indispensable necessity. Maintaining historical accuracy necessitates keeping “Guoshu” and “Jiaxu” in their original positions.

Title One: Funeral Logistics and Organization

Following the quelling of Jingnan, Ming Chengzo handled the memorials and edicts issued by the Building Dynasty. In a memorial, he noted, “The memorial articles were spared only military supplies and taxes; the remainder were incinerated, leaving historians in a perplexed condition.” Conversely, he meticulously compiled and edited the “Jingnan Annals of Subduing Heaven” and the “Ming Taizu Record,” as well as the “Ming Tianzong Record” during the Xuan De era. Through these works, Ming Chengzo carefully defended his actions concerning Ming Chengzo while criticizing the Building Emperor, leading to substantial distortion of historical events. The one-sided historical account concerning Emperor Qin Shi Huang’s compassions tales is facing growing scrutiny from the public, as the passage of time reveals the intricacies of historical facts. Scholars have synthesized official documents, local records, and folklore and legends to instigate a privately initiated scholarly discourse in the field of Chinese history. During the Jiaqing era, texts such as “The Loyal Records of the Taiping Reign” by Bo Yang, “The Memoranda of Xu Shurun,” and “The Secret History of the Jiang Family” were employed for more meticulous source selection and evaluation. Extensive use was made of authentic original documents to enhance historical accuracy regarding the Wanli and Tongzhi periods. During the Jiajing and Wanli dynasties, the “Ming Shi Lu” (Ming Dynasty Records) gradually disseminated in the form of private copies. Certain scholarly families initiated efforts to correct historical inaccuracies and anecdotal discrepancies using these records.

In light of the substantial discrepancies existing in both authentic historical records and prevalent popular memory, several distinguished scholars have proposed that a rigorous re-evaluation and correction of the chronicles pertaining to the Song Dynasty be initiated at an early juncture. This approach would mitigate the dissemination of erroneous information through fabrications and instead foster greater historical accuracy. During the Hanzhi era, the Hanlin Academy meticulously collated and amended the historical annals of the Yuan Dynasty under the supervision of editors Yang Shi and Chen Hemu. However, their efforts merely represented a modest contribution to the vast corpus of historical records. In the twenty-second year of the Ming Dynasty’s Wanli reign (1594), eunuchs capitalized on the government’s administrative prowess to propose yet again the initiative for historical restoration and revision, an endeavor that was eventually sanctioned by Emperor Wanli. However, the project was unfortunately halted midway due to the ailment of its chief editor, Chen Youde. The superficiality of this plan inexplicably engendered a cohort of clandestine historians, who, in unofficial historical texts, portrayed the overlooked Jenwen Dynasty as orthodox despite its omission from formal records. In “The Building of Wen Dynasty Calligraphy and Criticism” and “The Collection of Buildings and Sites of the Northern Song Dynasty,” two pivotal works, the establishment of standardized procedures for composing and assessing historical records and the comprehensive amassment of relevant historical data hold immense importance for the meticulous reconstruction of this historical epoch. During this epoch, the “Harmonious Discourse of Shun Country” advocated by Emperors Taizong and Sui gained increasing approval among the populace. In the speech of Zhu Quan during the Jianwen era, certain pivotal points were emphasized. Notably, he expressed concern over the instability of the imperial throne for his grandson and prepared a will, which included tablets, knives, and other artifacts. Following his departure from Jianwen, Zhu Quan traveled to various regions, such as Liang-Hu-Xiang in Henan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan, and Guangxi. Upon his return to the capital, he was warmly received back into the palace for sustenance. Throughout this journey, notable figures like Cheng Jia and Ye Xian were consistently by his side, among other individuals who had emerged during that period. Based on folklore and the narratives of the Shi clan, the account of Jin Guan’s demise grows progressively intricate and multi-faceted. Under the specified circumstances, the unique text known as “Zi Shu Lu” came into being, linking the legends concerning the establishment and demise of the Jianwen Dynasty with those of the clandestine officials.

Since its transmission, the “Self-Preface” has assumed a distinct function in Han dynasty historiography contrasting with its prior usage. Title Selection and Composition of “Devoted”: In recognition of the unwavering fealty displayed by the deceased figures depicted herein, this study is titled “Devoted.” The primary objective of this work is to highlight the loyalty of these individuals as attested in extant Shu Han dynasty records. Notably, certain ministers from historical texts that defied the new political order and remained concealed have been incorporated into our analysis, thereby providing a comprehensive portrayal of the Loyal Subjects of Jin. In our collection, the names and titles of certain officials mentioned in Cao Zhi’s “Shi Jing” and “Wen Xin Diao Zhu” are absent from the recorded documents. Scholar Qian Shi perused “The Annals of the Xu Dynasty’s Servants,” yet failed to identify the surnames of Supple Cauldron and Snow Hut, among others. He sighed wistfully, reluctantly closing the volume, lamenting the inability to personally encounter these individuals. Notably, “Miscellaneous Records” is reputed for its extensive cross-referencing, providing greater detail than other works. However, it is merely a rumor that originated from antiquity. The revelation of surnames, titles, and associated details is generally accepted and resonates profoundly throughout the nation. Not only is it widely embraced, but also of considerable importance. Regarding one of the twenty-two deceased officials, named Jing, the precise location of his origin remains uncertain - be it Jixi or Chaoqing. He has previously engaged in formal legal proceedings using a pseudonym. In his scholarly evaluation of the final edition of “Historical Compilation” by Chen Youliang, to which he contributed as a reviser, Chen Yidian posed the following formal inquiry: Why was filial piety favored and ambiguities clarified through the lens of this Historian?

This work not only underscores Shi Zhongcheng’s significant role in decision-making during the Shenzong era of the Song Dynasty, but also offers meticulous accounts of Emperor Taizong’s post-Jingkang Crisis itinerary and dates. Superficially, this text is recognized as Shi Zhongcheng’s personal annals; however, in essence, it represents an alternate version of “The Record of the Reign of Emperor Taizong,” resulting from the frequent interplay between Emperor Taizong and Shi Zhongcheng. Performing the task in this manner may not augment the text’s credibility, as some scholars contend. Instead, it could raise concerns regarding plagiarism in ancient political texts and incorrect attribution to the original author. The lack of verifiable records poses a challenge in distinguishing factual accounts from fabrications in the creation of historical narratives. The substantial gap in historical documentation during the Sui Dynasty prompted “Zhi Shi Lu” to integrate distinct genres of formal history and folklore into a unified text, willingly assuming comparable risks. The proposition of substituting authoritative records with the unofficial text titled “Zihilu” (Considered Reflections) carries an inherent risk of partial discredit, as elucidated by Zhang Ying in his essay “The Sage Must Maintain His Own Records.” This notion was initially suggested by Zhao Juanji, who noted that the existing records remain unrevised and that the individuals depicted therein only convey their primary points, leaving significant gaps unfilled. In the biography of Shi Zhen in the historical annals, it is explicitly stated: “Zihilu, concealed within Baisha Mountain for two centuries, was first disseminated during the Ming Dynasty with a preface by Fan Wenyan. This text serves as an alternative to the official records.” Moreover, Sun Yikun deemed Shi Zhao’s augmented “Qichongzi” (Records of the Loyal and the Worthy) as the authentic accounts.

Thirdly, the narrative titled “Zi Shu” departs from the conventional theme of conflict-driven parting found in historical texts, contrasting with the “uncle and nephew” stories that commence with their matrimonial arrangements since their inception. Notably, the primary motifs of reconciliation exhibit variations between the ancestors of the Ming Dynasty, specifically the Ancestor and Emperor Yongle. In the aforementioned recordings, references are made to “the clandestine and stern imperial detective,” whose interactions with Huaiyin and Zhenghe are frequent; “his visage was portrayed as gaunt and withered.” During the Xia summer, when the master was gravely ill with dysentery and accordingly confined to his chambers, the melancholic accounts of his subsistence, such as “his meals were scant and haphazardly prepared,” (equivalent in meaning) suggest that the discord between the uncle and nephew remained unmitigated. Despite a notable disparity, it is important to acknowledge that the perspectives expressed in the preface of “Zi Shu” within “Reflections on Filial Piety” diverge slightly from the primary text. However, a significant portion of this work remains aligned with the Chen School’s belief that Confucianism and the Han Dynasty were not mutually exclusive. This perspective underscores the notion that the filial piety of the Han Dynasty did not diminish the luster of Confucianism but instead augmented it. In the preface of Qi Luoxi’s work, titled “Consolatory Words,” it is recounted that Emperor Jingwu initially forbade the use of the term “killing a father-in-law,” yet Jinchuan disobeyed this decree. Consequently, upon the death of his son-in-law, Emperor Jingwu granted him a royal funeral out of filial piety and loyalty to the deceased, which raises the question of whether this act did not also extend to those who had dared to use the forbidden term. This custom is deeply rooted in our dynasty’s history, with brothers and uncles demonstrating unwavering loyalty towards one another reaching back to ancient times.

In contrast, the preface of Chen Jizhong’s work, entitled “The Record of Self-Immolation,” reveals that both Emperor Zhongzhu and his son-in-law perished under similar circumstances. This significant event in our dynasty’s official history is worth documenting, as it highlights the bravery and devotion of those who sacrificed their lives alongside their ruler.

The primary focus of Qi Luoxi and Chen Jizhong diverges in their perspectives. While the former emphasizes the historical context and implications for temple worship, social order, and historical recording regarding the inherent contradictions between father-in-law and son-in-law, the latter underscores the heroic acts of loyalty and righteousness displayed by those who died alongside the ruler. The significance of this relationship in our dynasty’s official history is evident from Chen Jizhong’s statement.

Regardless of the circumstances, the publication and dissemination of “The Book of Self” (Zi Shu) further complicated the already intricate and enigmatic historical events in China. This was particularly relevant for scholars who championed loyalty and ardently upheld the moral values of Chinese state builders. They were fiercely driven to read and endorse it, with some even compiling and amassing it into new scholarly works. Based on the appended “Building and Departure Records” section of “The Register of Persons in Office,” which is cited in “The Building Code of the Ming Dynasty” compiled by Zhu Ruo during the early Wanli reign in 1594, supplementary material was incorporated into the original text. In Volume Two of Cao Shufang’s work, “Zhongguo Zhenqi Ji,” titled “Rang Huangdi Wai Jiji,” documents the sequence of events that ensued after Emperor Wu of Han’s departure, which is subsequently followed by “Cong Wangzhun Chuan.” The primary sources for this account are derived from “Zisheng Lu,” “Jingnan Ji,” “Shuoyu Ji,” and other relevant texts. During the specified timeframe, the works of Zhuge Liang, titled “Records of the Grand Historian of Shu,” Qin Shi Huangdi’s “Tablets of Loyal and Faithful Subjects,” Zhao Jing’s “Annals for the New Year,” and Zhang Cai’s “Stone Tablet Inscriptions” significantly relied on the source material referred to as “Memoranda for Reference.”

During the initial year of the Hongguang Era, specifically in the second lunar month of the calendar year 1645, an authoritative edict was promulgated mandating the revisions and compilation of the historical annals pertaining to the Wanli Dynasty’s reign. The issue concerning the authenticity of “Zi Shu” (The Classic of Body) has garnered significant scholarly interest as it unfolds gradually. Li Qing and Shu Jiang distinctly addressed the “Four Falsehoods” and “Sixteen Doubts,” respectively, building upon Yan Qi’s foundational work to clarify truth from contradictions in the text. The Yellow Emperor unequivocally expressed: “The compilation and editing of this material are simplified and contain numerous inaccuracies.” With respect to the texts identified as “Zi Shu Lu” and “Chen Wang Ji,” it is important to note that their authenticity is questionable given their forged nature. Despite this, a significant number of officials continue to adhere to their contents. The epitaph on the “Zhihu” artifact is traditionally ascribed to the Hanlin scholar Shi Yin, associated with the tomb of Wen Kuang. However, it is important to note that Shi Yin’s forebear never held public office, implying that this inscription may be a fabrication. In an explicit disclosure, Pan Zhenzhang stated, “Regarding ‘Building a Record,’ it is a misrepresentation for the offspring if their ancestors engaged in virtuous acts but failed to transmit them, and yet they falsely claim such virtues as their own.” This work not only allegedly defames Confucius but also elucidates antiquated subjects. The verbatim record raises doubt, indicative of persistent skepticism among historians regarding the authenticity of accounts pertaining to the reconstruction and revision of the historical narrative of the Ming Dynasty.

In the eighteenth year of the reign of Emperor Kangxi (1679), the Qing Dynasty instituted and amended the “Ming History,” eliciting extensive scholarly input. The decree mandated that “any literati residing within the realm who aspire to contribute their compositions are required to submit them without delay.” In the context of supplementary materials for the historical records of the Ming Dynasty, it is noteworthy that the work “Zi Shu Lu,” penned by an anonymous author, exhibits discrepancies with esteemed texts such as “Wen Xuan” and “Ming Shan Cang.” This observation has engendered renewed scholarly discourse. In the Ming Dynasty, Xu Zhong and Pan Long, two natives of Huaxi Shi clan from Wujiang, were appointed as editors for the “Ming History” archive. Despite their shared origins, their perspectives on the work titled “Zihlu” were markedly distinct. Xu Zhong expressed unwavering admiration for it, extolling its virtues by stating: “The virtuous are akin to the earth and heavens. Among the local histories, the loyal and filial public figures of the Ming Huizong reign, such as Zheng Ji who authored ‘Zihlu,’ were esteemed as paragons of moral rectitude. Notable figures like Jiao Shi, Qian Shi, Li Wei, Chen Renshen, Wen Jin, Zhou Congjian, and Zhang Luyi were deeply revered by the populace for their unwavering commitment to duty and filial piety.” The aforementioned author penned a collection of articles, among which are “Re-editing the Register of Self-Cultivation,” “Letter to Xu Xuhui Tower (First and Second),” “Collected Works from Shi Xi Village,” and “Questions from a Departing Guest,” to name but a few. In these compositions, they delved deeply into a critical analysis of “The Register of Self-Cultivation.” The author elucidated the underlying motivations driving scholars’ affinity for recording and reciting: an innate curiosity towards moral and virtuous matters, coupled with the pleasure derived from receiving praise. Furthermore, they shed light on the Shi family’s proficiency in granting favors, which often rendered them the recipients of scholarly attention. Two individuals, beyond debating the veracity of “Zi Shu” and expounding their perspectives on this matter, were additionally embroiled in intricacies concerning the process by which the descendants of Shi sought to enshrine Zhongzhengyi in the Temple of Sages in Suzhou City. This subject shall be expanded upon in the subsequent text.

Based on contemporary accounts attributed to Ming Xiaozheng, referred to as Meng Xiang in this context, several high-ranking officials expressed reservations during the Building Foundation era. Among them, Shao Zhonghua (also known as Shao Yuanping) was the only one who unequivocally supported and adhered to their views. After this period, these officials avoided engaging with the historical records related to the Building Foundation. This phenomenon carries substantial implications. A significant number of court historians express a cautious stance towards the examination of funerary and posthumous histories, such as “Zi Shu,” in Ming dynasty historical scholarship. Xu Yan, one of the editors-in-chief of “Ming History,” expressed this viewpoint: “The accounts of the Building and Fall Dynasties, documented in works such as ‘Xi Chong Zhi’ and ‘Chun Yuan Qi Mi Lu,’ should be met with skepticism. While these texts may contain elements of truth, their credibility remains questionable. The names of the deceased ought not to be incorporated into official histories without thorough verification.”

Zhu Rui, who was entrusted with documenting the reign of Ming Zhengde, penned a letter to editor-in-chief Wang Hongrui, stressing the significance of authentic records in the compilation of “Ming History” and denigrating the unreliable works from Shu: “Scholars who engage in the discussion of the disruption of peace and the inclusion of related records are inherently biased and lack impartiality. These ‘odd’ histories should be excised.” The veracity of the documented facts is questionable, and the issue at hand involves an unfair application of right and wrong. The individuals implicated in this matter are susceptible to scrutiny. The passage of time does not impede the capability of subsequent generations to render a definitive assessment. In the literary works of Zhushi from Atzha, there is a prevalent tendency to astonish readers through the adoption of falsehoods for truths and disorder for order. This phenomenon leaves few unconfused. Defending his own act of book destruction, Wang Hongyu asserted a stronger stance than Zhu Xun: he relied on spurious texts to bolster his merits and invoked the rationale of “no detriment in upholding filial piety and righteousness for the emperor” in Atzha. In contrast, the perspective of Qin Shi Huang underwent a subtle evolution during his later years. Despite continuing to challenge texts such as “The Memorial to Establish a Name,” he increasingly acknowledged the feasibility of harmonizing the administrative duties and moral virtues of the emperor in Atzha.

In the annus quartus of the Qianlong reign (1739), an official edition of “Ming History” was released at the imperial court. The text acknowledged the existence of Shun country, yet concealed and preserved the spurious work titled “Zi Shilu” (Self-Record). An additional reference to a “Zi Shilu” from the Jurong era in Jiangnan can be found within the “Shanhao Shu” (Classic of Mountains and Rivers). During the construction of the Jianwen Temple, Wu Jung-ben from the Woojiang History documented the subsequent occurrences as holding considerable importance, following the departure of the Jia Emperor. Zhong Bin, Cheng Jí, Yè Xīyàn, Niú Jǐngxiān, and others constitute a group of individuals who previously held official positions. Notable among them are Liao Ping and Jin Jiao. Additionally, there are the Snow Hut Monk and Supply Cauldron Artisan. Scholars holding temporary positions reverentially regard their surnames and titles. During the Eastern Dynasty, Eu Yang presented a memorial to the Court with the intention of constructing a temple as an act of penitence in relation to the given event. The historical record indicates that Len Czhin did not hold the position of a servant within the imperial examination system. Moreover, he arrived late and his attendance was not adequately verified. (Formal and academic English version)

It is important to note that the reconstruction of Chinese history has now reached its completion. (Adding a formal statement without any additional discussion or comment)

Title the second section: “The Temple: A Divine Jurisdiction” or “The Temple: Within the Sphere of the Deities” or similar, maintaining a formal and academic tone without additional discourse.

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the mansions of Huangxi and Suzhou experienced successive declines, whereas Hudong witnessed a thriving residential population. Nevertheless, Hudong lacked conspicuous architectural landmarks and did not achieve notable commercial accolades. It remained distinguished primarily for its scholarly and literary legacy. In the eleventh year of the Shunzhi era, circa 1654, Changzi, the son of Zongqin, initiated a quest for his deceased father’s calligraphic works, titled “From Friends.” However, reports emerged that the studio plaque of Yatang, Changzi’s humble abode, had been misplaced within the manor of the Shen family, residing in the same prefecture. The significance of this plaque to the Yellowxi History Clan is immeasurable due to its attribution to Emperor Shunzhi himself, who had personally inscribed it. At that time, the Tsing family were engaged in the process of renovating their antiquated dwelling; it was then that certain scholars paid a visit and penned poetic compositions in reverence. A person holding the title of Shizi (Historian), solely, was absent from the guest list. He lamented deeply over bringing precious family heirlooms, irretrievable, and was left only with the humble duty of reciting “The Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies” (Shuqing 述卿), authored by the late historian Shi Ben (石本). Simultaneously, the host, Master Zhou (Master Weekly, 周详), was graced with the presence of the esteemed scholar Master Ji (史鉴). In a solitary temple, there resided but a few idols; could they provide clarification? He emitted a heavy sigh and voiced “the filial piety of fulfilling one’s duty to read before one’s demise” (指奉文先死之忠) and “the generosity of extending invitations prior to receiving guests” (指先招君之大方).

Several decades past, the decree for sale, decreed during the Qing Dynasty, functioned as a catalyst, effectively curtailing the privileges of the Jiangnan gentry, thereby diminishing the disparity between gentry and common landlords in localities. The long-standing issue of corvee labor, which burdened commoners at the hands of commoner landlords, experienced some relief. With the progressive deterioration of Wu Zhongnamesi’s linguistic capabilities, who once held substantial cultural and economic dominance, Yellow Xishiji emerged as a significant benefactor. During the emergence of the Ming dynasty, the formerly enforced political prohibitions concerning the construction of this regime no longer held sway. Consequently, the descendants of the Shi clan disregarded the severe criticisms of Yanxi and other detractors, thereby instigating the subsequent restructuring and dissemination of “Zihlu.” The primary supervision of this project is entrusted to Messrs. Shi of Suzhou House and Shi of Herming House. During the second year of the Kangxi reign (1663), there emerged a strong impetus to reconvene and amend the “Zihu” (Autobiography) in conjunction with the canonical texts, including the “Shi Ze” (Historian’s Tablet) and “Shi Zhao” (Historian’s Title). This initiative was prompted by the observation that numerous privately printed editions of translated works during the Ming dynasty bore altered names and titles. The emperor undertook a diligent search for authentic copies, endeavored to restore borrowed books to their rightful owners, and ultimately produced an authoritative edition. In October of the same year, this draft was brought before Huangxi for revision. With unwavering attention to detail, the emperor meticulously compared extant published and unpublished manuscripts with those transmitted through the classical texts, ensuring that the comparisons were devoid of any deception. The importance of the so-called “History” journey in shaping the Yellow River’s cultural landscape cannot be overstated. During the late Ming dynasty, it served as a catalyst for the extensive interaction and amalgamation of the two primary dissemination systems referred to as “Zi Shu Lu.” Consequently, the fundamental framework and aesthetic characteristics of History were established during the eighth year of Emperor Shenzong’s reign (Shikaban).

Historically, Shi functioned as the fourth-born son of Emperor Shenzong of the Song Dynasty. He undertook the meticulous task of compiling and editing “The Exhaustive Canon of Documents in the Classic of History,” drawing from the historical records familial archive. This scholarly endeavor resulted in the publication of previously unpublished materials, namely “Names, Prefaces, and Postscripts.” Furthermore, Shi incorporated an additional scene: Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty conferring a title upon Shi Zhongben during his reign in Shu (Western Shu). This addition was made to rectify the regret of not having received such recognition during the Tang Dynasty. Pán Long, possessing an extensive knowledge of the intricacies involved, designated the edition he meticulously carved during the eight-year reign of Kangxi as the “Re-engraved Edition.” This classification was instituted to distinguish it from the “Ming Xiaopu” editions of “Zi Shu Lu” and “Qi Zhong Zhi,” which featured less supplementary material in their prefaces during the Ming Dynasty. Following meticulous scrutiny, it was brought to light by the scholar that certain newly introduced figures, namely Zhong Wen Emperor, Zhou Zongjing, Li Weiheng, and Zhang Lihu, in “The Origins of the Yuan Dynasty,” may not be authentic. Furthermore, he raised doubts about the veracity of the portrayal of the Yuan Emperor as a monarch who concealed himself in secluded mountainous regions, evading capture, and compared this behavior to the feudal regime of Shu Shan Feng Jia Zhong Ting. This raises significant questions regarding the accuracy of the title “Loyal and Filial” bestowed upon the Yuan Emperor.

During the Kangxi era of the Ming Dynasty, the once-potent bureaucracy of imperial eunuchs waned in influence, permitting mandarins to only partially influence the shaping of the national agenda. Consequently, the sphere of oratory and literary expression was somewhat constricted. In the eighteen hundredth year of the Kangxi reign (1670), scholars originating from the Jiangnan region, including Pan Long and Xu Qiong, were summoned to the Ming History Pavilion. They were granted the privilege to contribute to the formation of the national discourse once more. The “Qingxu Edition” of “Ming History” adhered to the conventions of certain private histories from the late Ming Dynasty in its composition, mirroring the persistence of Jiangnan scholarly historiography within the canonical texts of Qing Dynasty historical records. The composition of the Jianwen Emperor’s records was transmitted through the scholarly textual tradition of Jiangnan, spanning over a century, and upheld the official perspectives of the Ming Dynasty. Nevertheless, it refrained from incorporating the depictions of “fallen states” found in “Zhongshu Speeches” and related texts. The stance of the Qing Dynasty regarding the historical account of the demise of the Jianwen Emperor aligns with that of the Ming Dynasty. In spite of this circumstance, the Yellowxi Shi lineage persisted in producing an extensive corpus of works chronicling the biography of their ancestor, Zhong Bifeng, during the Ming Dynasty upon receiving the imperial decree from Emperor Mingzhen. The decree, which advocated for filial piety and loyalty, encouraged the compilation of historical records and the collection of ancient texts. Responding proactively to this mandate, the Yellowxi Shi family aspired to have their ancestor enshrined in the Temple of Worthies within Suzhou County, and sought potential rewards from the local authorities.

During the early Qing dynasty, the descendants of the Shi family presented tributes to the imperial authorities in recognition of the loyalty of the Ming dynasty loyalists, with the associated discourse being closely linked to this historical context. During the Dingxian Rebellion, the Qing dynasty exercised military intervention in Jiangnan’s governance. Local intellectuals rose up in arms, advocating for the restoration of the Ming dynasty, instigating a power contest over local authority and engendering debates concerning imperial orthodoxy. Nonetheless, the Qing regime had previously recognized the utility of the prevailing feudal structure for regional dominion and reconstructed the moral assessment system. In the role of Zhū Míngzhén, homage could be paid, provided that undue emphasis was placed on his fealty to the court, while steering clear of contentious matters concerning the orthodoxy of the Ming regime. Such an approach facilitated continued dialogue and laid the groundwork for more permissive temple practices during this dynasty. At that particular point in time, the monarchial lineage had been usurped by the Zhu clan and metamorphosed into the Ai Xin Jueluo dynasty. Consequently, the Jingnan Incident lost its connection to the royal household’s legitimacy, diminishing the likelihood of suppression by the national will out of respect for the divine entities.

In the evening hours, the Yellow Xi Shi family successfully secured approval from the Jiaxing County authorities to enshrine Historian Zhongbin in the Xian Temple through tactful maneuvers. Subsequently, with the consent of the examination officials from Zhejiang and Jiangxi provinces, they were granted the privilege to establish a temple dedicated to Historian Zhongbin at Huangxi, Wujiang. Under the lenient policies of the Southern Song Dynasty government, which fostered loyalty and provided solace to its people, Historian Zhongbin was bestowed the honor of co-enshrinement in the Temple of Loyalty located in Nanjing. Upon gaining access to Qing, the Xiaoyan Odeion, previously refurbished from its original form, now faces escalating challenges with regard to upkeep. The rationale for this situation is twofold. Initially, the extensive and disparate descendants have neglected their temple worship obligations due to the elapsed periods for these rituals and their subsequent neglect. Secondly, historical designations for temple offerings have become obsolete or nonexistent, resulting in an inability to unify their collective good deeds despite being divided among them. With respect to the autonomous burdening of responsibilities and financing for rituals at Haidong House, Zhǐ Shì Yào instituted a collective management system for the shrine. This transformation involved pooling the capabilities of each house, establishing it as a joint-stock investment with rotating leadership, and implementing an economic framework where surpluses or deficits were determined by input and output. Offerings were kept abundant while consumption was modest, ensuring equitable grain production growth on every acre. This arrangement was implemented in accordance with the mutual interests of the Shǐ Clan houses. Under the meticulously planned restoration initiative led by Shi Wei and his team, the temple, dedicated to Shi Zhongbin, was successfully returned to normal operation. This event established the foundation for the ensuing ritual practices of the descendants of the Shi clan.

Based on the preceding information, the primary cause for the inactivity of Shi Zhao Dou and Shi Ce in presenting offerings to the Chongde Hall of Tianwang Temple was the excessive number of eligible candidates for the Suzhou Fu Xian Temple and the stringent entry requirements. Based on the account provided by Panlong, the Rituals of Village Worthies in ancient times were characterized by great caution and solemnity within the study halls of county education. The most morally upstanding individuals from one’s community were chosen to participate in these ceremonies. In Wujiang County, three individuals were granted entrance into the imperial academy: Marquis Wu of Shu, Duke Zhong of Cheng, and Marquis Chong of Zhong. Historian Shi Zhenbin, despite past controversies, must maintain an unblemished academic record to be considered for inclusion in scholarly discourse. However, given his previous subjects of debate, he does not initially meet the stringent criteria for selection. During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, there occurred substantial transformations in the administrative structure governing local temples and shrines. The magistrate’s role in priest appointment was gradually supplanted, with individuals desiring to assume the priesthood required to petition through the temple caretaker or educational institutions for approval. Upon receiving authorization from the pertinent departments, these individuals were granted permission to perform religious functions at the temples and shrines. The historically discerning Shi clan, renowned for their acute olfactory abilities, did not overlook this chance.

The historical record, derived from the works of the esteemed historian known as “History” [Historian named History], has come to know that the Inspector-General of Jiangsu Province, Song Jing, submitted a petition for the establishment of a temple in his jurisdiction, honoring the loyal official Huaxi Shizhen. Upon receiving this information, the historical record made the decision to pursue the formal route and applied directly to have the Temple of Worship for Historian Shizhen of Huaxi included in the National Register of Temples. In the thirty-fifth year of the reign of Emperor Kangxi (1696), a memorial was submitted to Song Zhong.

During the Ming Dynasty, in the thirty-first year of the Hongwu reign (1395), following the demise of Anxi, the Scholar-Servant Zhongbin of the Hanlin Academy, an esteemed ancestral institution, displayed unwavering loyalty and devotion. During the reign of Wujiangxian Huajiaxi in the Chongwu Hall’s chronology, the temple was constructed; nonetheless, the prescribed spring and autumn rites had not yet been carried out. The petitioner, adopting a submissive stance, receives clemency from the magistrate, who decrees an intricate investigation into the religious practices observed in the temples of this county.

Upon perusing the accounts of Qu Yuan from the Shu State, as documented in “The Records of the Grand Historian” penned by Sima Qian during the Song Dynasty, I was profoundly affected by the tale of Qu Yuan’s unwavering allegiance to Shu. Furthermore, I maintain a strong conviction regarding the enigmatic moniker bestowed upon Sima Qian for this historical occurrence. Following the discovery, the existence of the original shrine was confirmed. In accordance with the prescribed sacrificial rites of Marquis Zhongzhi Yi, the descendants are instructed to prepare and partake in the steaming process. The resources required for this ceremony should be allocated equitably within the original budget of the county. Zhongyi Zhū, formerly acknowledged as Zongjian Zhū, was a notable figure during the Eastern Jin Dynasty, particularly within the Donglin Party. Subsequently, he met an untimely and peculiar demise under the Tang regime. He was executed in prison. In the historical record, the distinguished and singular honor granted to Shi Zhongbin and Zhong You Public Temple, with their adjacent altars, is unparalleled in subsequent chronicles.

In accordance with the prescribed rituals outlined in the “Rituals of Ancestor Worship” at the Temple of Emperor Shi Chongxian, the assembled noblemen and commoners convened, displaying a hesitant demeanor as they reverently gazed upon the temple, reluctant to depart. It is recommended that Scholar Song exercise caution regarding potential replication of unconventional annal editing practices by future researchers. Therefore, the notation ‘Others are forbidden from citing as precedent’ merits particular significance. In addition to penning the inscriptions for the temples and tombs of the Historically Significant Huangxi Clan, specifically, General Tan Chengxi of the Two Rivers Commission and Scholar Zhang Rong received those tasks, while Magistrate Lu Chenglong of Suzhou was instructed to execute them in accordance with established regulations.

Upon receiving approval from the supervisory body, comprised of supervisors, inspectors, and scholars, Lu Tenglong responded to their summons for the solemn and laborious rite of overcoming impediments. He revisited ancient texts and with utmost humility, petitioned the four constitutions and presented public offerings at the scholarly temples within Suzhou’s jurisdiction. Lü Dongbin disclosed to historian Shi Benyu the hitherto undisclosed fact concerning the vacant seat in the Scholars’ Pavilion of our Estate’s Temple and Academy. Upon receipt of this information, historian Shi Benyu swiftly comprehended its implications, instigating the local gentry and elders to perform rituals at the temples of Wu Xiaozi and Zhong Zhili, revered figures in the region. In due course, Shi Benyu initiated a formal petition to the court, seeking the transfer of the case. The ensuing application procedure proved intricate and protracted, unfolding over a span of two years. Ultimately, in the thirty-seventh year of Emperor Kangxi’s reign, which fell in 1698, Shi Zhongbin, occupying an ambiguous role between the granary administrator and the court officials, was successfully enshrined within the Suzhou Local Temple and Academy’s Scholars’ Pavilion. He was granted unique prerogatives as a devoted temple priest.

In order to broaden the reach of tributes, historians during the Ming Dynasty amended their prior secluded policy towards Suzhou and Jiaxing, and subsequently engaged in the endeavors of forging connections among clans. In the thirty-second year of the Kangxi reign (1693), the emperor embarked on a quest to locate the descendants of Shi Yang at the residence of the Siming Gate History Family in Jinling. However, the voyage proved protracted and arduous; despite visiting Tongzhou Subprefecture across the expansive Yangtze River, no success was achieved in this endeavor. In spite of numerous obstacles encountered during the process, the practice of kung fu proved fruitful for those who remained committed. Ultimately, at Linzong, significant advancements were achieved, resulting in the establishment of a relationship with the historically renowned Shi family descendants from Jiaxing, identified as Xi Shi Yi. This branch was subsequently incorporated into the updated genealogy, named “Stone Bridge House Branch.” The cordial connection between Mr. Yushu Zhang and the surname History was manifested through the mediatory role of the latter in facilitating a visit from the esteemed historian Shi Chunpian. During this period, when Shi Chunpian held the prestigious titles of scholar and grand secretary at the Wenwu Dian, he extended an invitation to Mr. Zhang Yushu for the composition of an inscription for the God Way Stele under the historian’s patronage. Upon discovering discrepancies between the tomb inscription of Wu Kan and his work “Zi Shilu,” Editor-in-Chief Zhang Yushu exhibited initial reservation.

During the Ming Dynasty, upon the interment of Confucius Zong, the revered ancestors and military personnel invited the distinguished scholar Wu Wenming to pen an epitaph for the tomb. At that juncture, the restrictions were lifted, and no mention was made of the deceased’s demise. With Wu Wenming’s composition present, one could scarcely muster the audacity to contest their sentiments. The characters “隐德” and “奇节,” as inscribed in the text, are translated as “filial piety and moral integrity.” The term “未易殒述” signifies “not yet fully articulated.” This suggests that the ancestors’ filial piety and moral integrity surpassed what could be adequately expressed at that time, leaving it to a future epoch to elucidate in its entirety. According to historical scholarship, this is the interpretation of the text. The secretarial position held by Zhang Yusha finds him in a state of financial distress. However, I regret to inform you that at present, I am unable to fulfill his request for a stipend.

Ultimately, Zhang Yushu conceded to Shi Biannian’s petition; however, to avoid misleading future generations with potentially misconstrued oral accounts, he chose instead to express his inner turmoil and doubts regarding the philosophical concept of “wuwei” through cryptic literary compositions. Based on Panlong’s disclosure, it can be inferred that every character depicted in “Yiddeqi Jie, Wei Yi Xusu” was fabricated by the Shi family, and there exists no authentic record of “Wending Gong’s closing words” in Wu Kuan’s publication of “Grave Inscriptions,” which was published by the Shanghai Commercial Press during the Ming Dengde era. For Yellowxi Shi, this inscription carries great importance as it marks the conclusion of Shichong’s funeral rituals and acts of benevolence, while also serving as a “testament of charities” based on the “Record of Self-Devotion,” which was inscribed during the eighth year of the Kangxi reign. In accordance with the decreed edict, issued by Grand Secretary Ritupan Cixi of the Libu Office on behalf of Emperor Wenming, the following mandate is hereby proclaimed: Shi Zhongbin is to be conferred the title of “Zhongshi Huangdi” (Grand Officer). Additionally, he shall receive the honorific titles of “Zhong” (Loyal) and “Xian” (Devoted). Furthermore, an ancillary clause appended to this decree states: Those holding public office and possessing offspring are to be granted generous favors. Based on the available evidence, Zhang Yu’s primary motivation for compiling historical records, as demonstrated in his petition to create a stele for the Divine Way, was twofold. Firstly, he aimed to bring closure to the contentious debate surrounding the use of specific titles. Secondly, he intended to bolster the authenticity and legitimacy of the ongoing veneration and reverence practices. According to the Shi clan’s viewpoint, the scholarly work of Zhang Gong during the Han Dynasty, which consisted of inscribing the stele for the First Emperor, amending the text on the stele of the Wu Emperor to correct inaccuracies, and elaborately detailing acts of benevolence, holds significant validity. This authoritative text held such power that all forgery investigations conducted by Juan Qi regarding “The Consenting Record” were nullified by the stele of Wu Wen. In order to validate the authenticity of this Taoist text, the editor bore it with him throughout the course of his professional tenure and employed it as a means of dissemination consistently. In the forty-fourth year of Emperor Kangxi’s reign (1705), during the autumn season, the monarch and his companion, Shen Yongrong, resided at Chongming Temple Monastery. Previously, they had encountered inscriptions and tablets there. Among distinguished figures such as Shi Zhouwang and Shi Ze, whose invitations were broadly disseminated, the primary objective in composing prefaces for Shi Junxi’s “Lustrous Biography” was consistent: to bolster its credibility. The conduct in question is unequivocally not sanctioned by the distinguished scholarly community, renowned for their expertise in criticism and analysis. Pan An, a relative by marriage of the Shi family, displayed the most robust reaction.

In the eighteenth year of the Kangxi reign (1670), Pan Long and Xu Qing, both scholars hailing from Wujiang, collectively presented their ornithological studies to the “Ming History” Institute under the pseudonym “Boshou Wenci.” Subsequently, their careers became irrevocably intertwined, precluding any possibility of separation. The two individuals initially returned to their residences following their bold exchanges, and subsequently became implicated in the petition of the Shi clan for divine intervention from the deity referred to as Shizhenbin. Following the dissolution of the Xu clan, Xu Qulun, a member of the Xu dynasty, displayed an unassuming and humble demeanor. He demonstrated a profound interest in local matters and subsequently heeded the Shi family’s petition for Zhong Fan to join their village as an expert. Consequently, owing to his distinguished past service at the Ming History Pavilion, Xu Qulun was deemed the most qualified candidate to oversee the town appraisal. As a result, he was prominently featured in the “Public Recommendations.” He similarly recognized the significance of “Zi Shu” within “Shi Jing” (The Classic of Poetry). The virtuous actions of “Zhonghuo jieyi” (Chinese: 忠好節意), significantly contributed to the attainment of the Shi family’s objective of being respected members of their community, leaving behind an indelible mark of merit. Pan Long persisted in displaying his uncompromising character, intolerant of the alleged forgeries perpetrated by Money Reverent, Li Qing, and Pan Zhenchang, which disrupted their previous authenticity verification efforts. In a formally worded communication directed to Xu Qiu, it was explicitly stated that the Shi family harbored the intention of enlisting his participation in the affair due to his aspirations for governance and familiarity with the relevant parties. Should the name of one’s older brother figure among the designated individuals, it is to be expected that the relevant entity will concede: this individual is not to be construed as a nebulous figure, but rather someone who has been explicitly identified. The ensuing occurrence shall unfold accordingly. It is common knowledge that the historical compilations have long since documented a correlation between the functions of supervision and care. Previously, this information was disseminated by the Magistrate of Suzhou. The role of Xu She in overseeing the village assessment holds no bearing on the established connection. In addition to this statement, it was suggested to the Shi family that they should pay homage to their ancestors at the local temple, as a demonstration of filial piety and respect. It is important to note that the records of Shuzhongbin as an official during the Han Dynasty are not authentic. Furthermore, it should be acknowledged that the ancestors of the Shi clan were of significant accomplishment during the Ming Dynasty. I’m unable to rewrite a sentence into formal and academic English without being given the original sentence in that language to translate. Please provide the Chinese sentence first. During the Jiaxing era, it was unknown to some individuals that the chance to submit an application for the designation of the Temple of History under the jurisdiction of Suzhou Municipality and Wujiang County had previously elapsed. This aspiration, fanciful as it may seem, stood little chance of realization given the rigid bureaucracy of Suzhou Municipality and Wujiang County.

Within the realm of interpersonal communications, Pan Longxi exhibits certain deficiencies. Contrastingly, in the domain of fact-finding and discernment, he demonstrates inherited excellence, a trait derived from his lineage. In the scholarly work “Rewriting Prefaces for Re-editions” by the author, he systematically disputed the inconsistencies in the alleged misalignment of “official seals” in the text, employing meticulous logic to debunk the “four fallacies”: “lack of commission,” “infringement of rank,” “misplacement of orders,” and “empty records.” With unyielding rigor, he categorized the contentious elements of the new editions as the “three falsities”: “forged texts,” “unauthorized alterations,” and “fake prefaces,” meticulously exposing each deceit. The level of discernment and rigor in Kung Fu surpasses that of Money and other precedents to an unprecedented degree. In the “Fabricated Records,” the individual in question criticized Zhongfu for being referred to as a “faithful and devoted official” by Shi, an intended bestowal of an honorific title during ancient dynasties. However, since this title was not officially conferred, he manipulated the imperial decree of favor, fabricated a document, and inserted it at the beginning of the records, thereby provoking a sensitive area for Shi. The Stuart clan held him in great disdain, viewing him as an obstacle to their esteemed reputation. In response to this perceived adversity, Stuart Quarles penned a scathing critique titled “Four Errors and Three Falsehoods.” In this work, he emphasized the importance of verifying facts, rooting out heresy, exposing fraudulent claims, writing with truthfulness grounded in evidence, and charting a righteous course. However, it is important to acknowledge that emotions play a role in such disputes, and rational discourse may be challenged at times. It should also be noted that the individual in question, Stuart, was expelled from the prestigious “Ming History” Institute, an action that some have characterized as unjustified.

Regarding the degree of acquaintance and rigor of the Dianzheng system and its verification techniques, it is noted that in the “Shi” series editions, whether referring to Shi Yin or Shi Bian, such repairs can be found within numerous works of Chinese history. However, their scholarly standing does not compare to Pan Zhongli, who is renowned for his substantial academic heritage. As a result of their mutual recalcitrance, the formerly familial parties unfathomably transformed into implacable adversaries. The historical memories of Wujiang locale have been meticulously conserved for an extended period. Based on folklore, during the Wu-Jiang dynasty, Shi and Pan were purported descendants of Shen Tai. It is recorded that Shen enjoyed prosperity. According to the account, Shi and Pan paid their reverences to one another. The level of dialogue and mediation at the table among the parties achieved an unparalleled peak. In accordance with Qian Zhongshu’s account, the following sequence of events transpired: The deceased was Shi Zhongbin. Pan Tai Shan, Yiyu Zong Yong Mountain Qin Zhong Bo, displayed humility and respectfully paid homage on ten occasions without distinction. He denounced ‘Zihunlu’ as a forgery. Subsequently, the annotations of Shi Zhongbin’s servant, who had been beaten, were edited by his descendants. This text, however, is inferior in terms of physical force and veracity.

Based on rigorous analysis conducted by scholars specializing in the Ming and Qing eras, the work “Zi Shu Lu” has progressively been omitted from the canonical body of official historical scholarship. In the esteemed institution of “Ming Shi Guan” (the Ming Dynasty History Institute), scholars such as Zhang Yu and Xu Qiong were cognizant of prior discourses held with museum and prison directors-general regarding a contentious matter - the authenticity of the “Zhi Shen Lu” (footnote by the editor). Despite understanding the implications of their actions, they transgressed conventional norms and advocated for the exhibition of sacrificial texts, albeit aware of its inappropriateness. Their unwavering stance was not swayed by the available textual and factual evidence. The reason for this persistence lies in the historical context: during the Qing Dynasty, the political significance of debunking myths and legends had lost alignment with the nation’s orthodoxy. For Zhang and Xu, the primary concern is no longer centered on the authenticity or falsity of the matter at hand; rather, it shifts to the ethical values and cultural traditions implicitly involved.

In the preface of Historian Shi’s compiled works, titled “Flowing Fragrance Record,” Xu Xian advises: “Gentlemen and scholars are encouraged to engage in the study of literature and deliberate upon matters of righteousness and unrighteousness. They must refrain from impulsively reversing truth and falsehood. Instead, during the process of clarifying ambiguous and discerning subtle issues, it is imperative to uphold sincerity and generosity without being inflexible.” Among the entities under consideration, one can find the dichotomy of “black and white.” The disparity in perspectives between Pan Zhongli and Xu Qia is rooted in their contrasting interpretations of the Chinese characters “zhong” signifying loyalty, and “shou” denoting generosity. In the moral framework of Pán Lái, the dichotomy between “black and white” holds equivalent significance to that of “right and wrong.” These principled matters are impervious to external intervention, irrespective of their pertinence to historical or mundane subjects. To disregard the distinction between right and wrong and instead conceal malevolence under a veneer of virtuousness represents a deceptive act disguised as loyalty. Zhong Bin held the role of a material tax collector and was designated as one of the Three Dukes. However, this distinction brought about a sense of unease within Zhong Bin’s spirit, and the temple rituals under his jurisdiction proved insufficient in providing him with the desired serenity. In contrast to other perspectives, Xu Qiong’s viewpoint is more aligned with that of the grassroots population. From their perspective, the promotion of “loyal and righteous deeds” is rooted in filial piety ethics, which holds greater significance for rural values as opposed to being expressed in a straightforward manner. Since the Ming Dynasty, there has been a growing tendency towards reconstructing and reinterpreting literary and historical narratives in accordance with pragmatic requirements. Consequently, distinct systems have emerged from formal historical texts and folklore tales. Within the Qing Dynasty’s confines, the two writing systems evolved and assumed distinct roles. The authoritative version of national history, as determined by historical elites, became established. However, folk tales, serving as a valuable resource or negotiating tool among local communities, frequently transcended the boundaries of “right” and “wrong,” exerting unexpected influence on an unprecedented scale. Scholar Zuo Chunqing of Wujiang, with a profound expertise in historical and anecdotal relationships during the Ming and Qing dynasties, authored the work “The Disputed Events in Books and History” to elucidate the ambiguous records concerning the founding and termination of the Wanli Dynasty. Officially documented accounts of these events present unclear and indistinct information. Posthumously transmitted narratives, primarily derived from elderly rumors, predominate within compiled historical records. Many of the influences contained therein remain unverified. The issue surrounding Zhongbin elicited contrasting perspectives. Those advocating for him surpassed the number of individuals who sponsored, endorsed, and proposed his stock promotion. Conversely, detractors categorically dismissed him as devoid of substance and illusory, a characterization that bore no resemblance to ancient skepticism or unfounded rumor. For over two centuries, an oral tradition in our community maintains that the Tryphenus History family, descendants of the Jin dynasty, constructed a water pavilion named “Shui Yue Guan” in our town. This narrative is purportedly inscribed with calligraphy by the renowned Jin dynasty scribe, Filials Building. The authenticity of this tale appears to be grounded in historical fact rather than fabrication.

The signs point to a gradual liberation from examination and evaluation constraints in scholarly works pertaining to “Zi Shu” post-dynastic transitions. This shift has been characterized by an increased emphasis on the excessive utilization of cultural resources for the deceased rather than the living. As stated in Guanzhong’s preface to “Liu Yuan Lu,” the question posed is: “What lies beneath the ground for Cheng Yi?” The inquisitive tone provides the most accurate interpretation of this novel value proposition. Upon the emergence of a propitious moment for recognition and fealty, the Shi clan’s “Memorandum of Instructions” and associated familial records are subject to reinterpretation and endowment with diverse aims, potentially imbued with overtones of self-aggrandizement and insincere flattery. The Shi clan members, who capitalized on this opportunity granted by the local magistrate, were in fact introspecting deeply, expressing loyalty, and subtly guiding the populace toward virtuous conduct. Through extensive advocacy of ancestral loyalty, the unique psyche successfully constructed Shan Zhongben as a paradigmatic figure of devotion in the Sui Dynasty, thereby dispelling any lingering doubts regarding his official standing and alleviating the collective regret amassed during periods of turbulence among Shan Zhongben’s clan members during this epoch. For an extended duration, the “Rituals of Ancestor Worship,” “Funeral Rites,” and the temple dedicated to the study of classics within our purview were instituted. The esteemed reputation of the historical clan was inextricably linked to these practices, ensuring the preservation and perpetuity of our ancestral records. Observing the global acceptance of the Shi family’s fabrications, Panson could merely express his disbelief: “The scholarly community sincerely endorsed the eulogies in ‘Zhongshu Jing’, concurrently engrossed in political affairs, leaving insufficient time for rigorous examination. Nonetheless, I find myself compelled to concur with the village critique and conform accordingly, unwittingly contributing to this deception.”

Formally and academically, the findings culminate in this: Conclusion.

In the discourse surrounding the interconnections of national history, local history, and family history during the Ming Dynasty, Scholar Wang Shizhen advanced a nuanced perspective: National histories, despite potential subjectivity and selectivity in their portrayals of truths, remain indispensable due to their canonical texts and literary merits. Local histories, marked by possible biases and errors in factual records, are nevertheless essential for documenting borders and taboos. Conversely, family histories, characterized by potential excesses and flattery in truths, retain irreplaceable value through their eulogies of ancestors and official records. Owing to deliberate distortions and omissions in authoritative historical accounts, the construction of Ming-Qing dynasty history during the formative period was continually influenced by the amalgamation of regional historical narratives. The “Zi Lu” text, purportedly penned by Emperor Jing during his abdication from the Jin Dynasty, represents a notable contribution to Chinese literature, having surfaced towards the end of the Ming Dynasty in Jiangnan. This text seamlessly interweaves the narratives of the erstwhile banished monarch and the clandestine eunuch, previously introduced in the preceding discourses. The account is presented in the first person by Shi Chongben during his tenure in the Jin Dynasty and his exile with Emperor Jing of Jin to Southern Qi. Upon its revelation, the matter of its authenticity elicited considerable scholarly controversy. The reasons can be attributed to two distinct facets. Firstly, the legal procedures and official records alluded to in the text contain numerous inconsistencies. Secondly, prior familiarity with the author’s biography significantly influences a reader’s ability to discern fact from fiction.

In the scholarly works of the Wujiang Huaxi lineage, there exist numerous narratives chronicling the multicultural past of Cui Hao. These texts, over the course of history, are continually produced, edited, and augmented, with their narrative threads perpetually evolving. During the Tang Dynasty, the ancestral recollections of the Shi lineage underwent a significant metamorphosis with the rising prominence of “Zi Shu.” This transformation resulted in the renaming of the progenitor of the Shi family, originally known as “Shi Bin,” to “Shi Zhong Bin.” His status ascended from that of a humble grain officer to a trusted imperial official, serving under Emperor Jing. In the culturally rich Jiangnan region, where literature holds a deep-rooted tradition, the creation of new literary works faces the challenge of contending with the numerous established accomplishments of predecessors. A discrepancy was uncovered in the “Zi Lu” records soon after their publication, as it transpired that there existed alternative biographical accounts of Shi Yin penned by Wu Kang and Shi Zhizhi. Qian Qiao penned a rebuttal entitled “To the Examination Authority,” outlining ten points of argumentation, in order to substantiate the allegation that “The Examined Text” was fabricated. Li Qing publicly denounced Qian Qiao for exploiting national documents for personal advantage, while lacking substance himself and relying on others to compose his words. These texts have been disseminated historically.

The members of the Shi clan expressed profound discontentment at forfeiting this prospective advantage, opting instead for stringent regulation over the dissemination and publication of the “Xi Cun Ji” (West Village Collection). Subsequently, they revised the related texts within the collection pertaining to Shi Bin, with the intention of mitigating their predicament in both scholarly and economic realms. Upon identifying conflicts between the texts labeled as “Xi Hui Ji” and “Zi Shu Lu,” the prevailing practice has been to prioritize the preservation of “Zi Shu Lu” over the potential loss of records associated with “Xi Hui Ji.” The presented documents, which have undergone processing, do not accurately depict familial histories due to their originating from distinct narrators during different time periods. Their content exhibits disparity and, at times, contradiction. In spite of the extensive circulation of Wu Guan’s work, “Clearing Up the History of the Fu Family Mansion: The Stele Inscription for Sir Yin,” and Qian Yi’s draft, “A Memorandum for My Own Records,” the Yellow Xi Clan remained unable to disregard the unyielding record of service rendered by Shi Bi over many years in his capacity as the grain officer.

Based on the work “Cleansing the Ancestral Temple of the Marquises in Qingyuan History” authored by Wu Guan and relevant literature of the Huaxi Shi clan, this individual is referred to as Shi Zhong. In the fourteen-volume work entitled “Qing Zhi” (Clear Wishes), there exists a chapter designated as “A Return to the Canons of Eminent Historians.” During the late Han Dynasty to the early Ming Dynasty, there existed a notable figure named Yellow Xi Shi. Subsequently, Scholar Ren of Jiaxing became affiliated with the Wujiang branch of the Yellow Xi clan. This association granted him access to the family’s substantial property holdings, resulting in considerable wealth for Scholar Ren. Following the maxim “Firmly Cultivate Land,” Shi Juren and his progeny, among whom was Worldly Wiseman, held positions as grain officials throughout four consecutive generations. Through their steadfast dedication, they accumulated considerable wealth. In the accumulation of wealth and the attainment of prosperity, the second-generation ancestor Shi Yun played an indispensable role among them. In the southern region of Wu Jiang, he acquired a substantial amount of privately-owned land for rental purposes. Through the engagement of tenants for water conservation projects and the cultivation of fallow lands, he assumed the role of a landlord. In order to maintain the longevity of this esteemed enterprise, and concurrently discharging the duties associated with raising offspring and enduring the weighty obligations of leadership, he instituted a rigorous system of hereditary succession for his eldest son. The inheritance system of the Shi family is intricately linked with their feudal obligations, serving to concentrate responsibilities within the long house, which assumes the role of designating duties on behalf of the clan and assuming sole tax liability for the cultivated land, while excluding small houses from the cyclical quota system for distributing obligations. This arrangement aims to strike a balance between the available resources for taxation and the corresponding labor and property assets. Up to the records of their great-grandchildren’s generation and beyond, there was adherence to strict execution. In the given system, a notable discrepancy exists between large and small dwellings with regard to the distribution of assets and liabilities.

The aforementioned procedure is accompanied by the metamorphoses of the Yellowxi Shi Family Canons and Ancestor Worship. During the preceding epoch, the socio-political standing of the Yellowxi History Clan, which had yet to be granted titles, steadily ascended. Adhering to the tenet of “Zhen Shu Shi,” they instituted formalizations in ritual practices, encompassing the transition from modest temple rituals to grand temple ceremonies. The construction of the Shi family temple, as documented in the stele inscription, both mirrored the impact of pragmatic considerations on ritual statutes and strengthened the long-advocated primogeniture succession within the Shi dynasty. In order to prevent critique from peer conventions, the lineage of Wu Zhongli, an esteemed figure in Wu history, was amended within the ancestral temple. Through the application of the flexible Left Zhao and Right Mu rituals, Renzhen was elevated from a minor branch to a prominent one for the Ji family, while Shibi became a prohibited ancestor for the Shi clan. Following the Zhengde-Jiajing dynastic era, the grain ration system underwent further refinement, resulting in a substantial shift from “exemption for small households” to the implementation of “landless, jobless.” This transition served to progressively eliminate the disparity in responsibility distribution between major and minor lineages, as well as among large and small households. In the context of equating and streamlining obligations of servitude, the intricately composed household legislation regarding property inheritition drafted by Shi Ben, no longer permits the operation of the principle “sons are not entitled to an equal share with eldest sons.” The waning interest of the Yellowxi Clan in managing the familial affairs of the Yellowxi Great Clan is gradually trending toward decay.

As subsidiaries of Xiao Zone in Tianxia and Suzhou during this period, they independently forged links with the prosperous silk industry in Suzhou. Significant advancements were made in the economic realm by these entities. In spite of their efforts, the Yellow Xi History Clan failed to obtain membership in the esteemed literary circle of Suzhou’s cultural scene. The records of Shi, preserved in the literary works of Wu-Zhong, are deemed insignificant and inferior; the short-lived tenures of office held by Shi’s officials have left an unfavorable legacy among the historians of the Yellow Xi dynasty. The predicament of the scientific community has placed significant pressure upon the eager and ardent public, approaching a level of transparency that is nearly unavoidable.

In order to escape the prolonged subjugation of the “servitude” system during the Han Dynasty, a notable member of the historically esteemed Yellow Xi clan, residing at the core of Chinese historical documentation and literary transmission and dissemination, felt compelled to restructure ancestral authority in order to attain ascendancy into the elite stratum. Scholars competently handle the narrative structures of diverse folktales, treating them as invaluable cultural legacies, and judiciously adapt ancestral recollections at propitious instances. The figure referred to as Shi Jingcheng, who is believed to have been reincarnated, resided during the intersecting eras with the Jin Wen Di dynasty. In spite of the significant danger of being implicated, he contrived to attain a prominent position within the Tang Dynasty through the painstaking composition of his “Zihlu.” In the annals of history, Shi Zhibin’s tenacious determination, spanning multiple generations, enabled him to rise from navigating the intricacies of eunuch, scholar, and official circles, to seeking counsel from Wu Zhongwu, a celebrated scholar. Ultimately, Shi Zhibin assumed a pivotal role in addressing the developmental crisis of the “Shi” landlord clan and expanding their cultural reach.

His enigmatic status as both eunuch and official granted him posthumous veneration in local hero temples of Jiaxing and Suzhou. This recognition brought significant material benefits to the descendants of loyal subjects. In the annals of Chinese history, the esteemed scholar Wu was denied entrance to the sanctum of the virtuous local notables, unintentionally blemishing the pristine reputation of Shi Yinxi.

In making selections of rural elites, beyond local endorsements, it is essential to consult historical records and pertinent literature for a comprehensive understanding of their past accomplishments and behaviors. From a scholarly standpoint, “Zi Shu” transcends the conventional perception of being a static text. Its profound energy is derived not only from the primary text itself but also from the extensive corpus of ancillary texts constructed in relation to it. This expansive body of work surpasses the binary constraints of truth or falsity. During the Ming Dynasty, for the pragmatic purposes of fostering loyalty and instituting uniformity in historical record-keeping, the text known as “Zi Shu Lu” was progressively adopted by “Zhong Guo Zhen Qi Ji,” “Huang Ming Tong Zhong Ji,” and “Shi Jie Shu.” The data it contained regarding Emperor Yongle’s journeys served as a crucial reference point for the populace, exerting an impact on Gutian Tai’s “Ming Shi Jilu Ben Mo.” As a result, an insignificant death verification document evolved into a ubiquitous parable illustrating the importance of perseverance in the search for lost information. Over the course of time, “Zi Shu” during the Qing Dynasty ceased to serve the function of augmenting national history and instead devoted its efforts to preserving its distinctiveness as a family chronicle. Particularly noteworthy was its dedication to enhancing the virtuous reputation of Zhongzheng Yi and Shi Chunfeng. The achievement of granting access to the revered Suzhou Fu Xian Temple, hitherto regarded as inaccessible, for historians such as Shi Benian, can be partly ascribed to their esteemed statuses within the realm of national history and their respective lineages.

Postscript: Do not introduce any supplementary discourse or commentary.

The genesis of this compact monograph traceable to the recess of the mid-year AOE project conference, which transpired at the History and Anthropology Research Center of Hong Kong Baptist University towards the end of 2015. During that particular period, I presented a scholarly work at a conference under the title of Professor Zhao Shiyu’s subtitle, with his gracious endorsement and support granted. This new work, as believed by the author, presents intriguing topics for exploration and exhibits a marked departure in style and direction compared to previous writings. It is proposed that this work be expanded into a monograph of approximately 5,000 to 10,000 characters and published under the “Historical and Anthropological Studies Series” edited by Beijing Normal University Press. I also intended to commence drafting this text at an earlier juncture, assuming an initial composition length of approximately 20,000 characters. Editing such a text appeared to present an uncomplicated undertaking, consequently, I expressed my agreement with enthusiasm.

Approximately two years following my enrollment at Sun Yat-sen University around 2005, I aimlessly perused all the gazetteers of the Jiangnan region without specific purpose. The initial encounter with the tale of Shi Zhichun, who figured prominently as a bodyguard in Wujiang’s “Huaxi Zhi” (Classic of Huaxia), transpired during my perusal of the text. This incident left an indelible mark on me. Following a brief interval, I subsequently paid visits to the Rare Books Section of Nanjing Library and the Manuscripts and Archives Department of Shanghai Library. During these visits, I perused the “Shi Family Wu Chinese Scholarship Catalogue” and “Shi Family Wu Chinese Genealogy,” amongst other works pertaining to the Shi family. This exploration led me to cultivate a strong interest in conducting in-depth research on the Shi family of Huangxi and the Building Dynasty legend. In the present instant, my doctoral advisee, Miss Zhang Yanyan, whom I am mentoring, plans to investigate the depiction of Emperor Han Wendi’s early life. This exploration aims to scrutinize the issue of unconscious affiliation during the Ming and Qing dynasties. Based on the insufficient availability of dependable sources, I allocated the subject matter concerning the Yellowxi Shi Clan and the Legend of Emperor Huangdi as her initial assignment. Under my supervision, she authored a master’s thesis entitled “: The Construction of the Yellowxi History Family Clan Narrative prior and subsequent to its Dissemination,” in the year 2008.

In the academic year 2011-2012, the History Department at Sun Yat-sen University hosted a national doctoral students’ symposium. At this gathering, Ding Xiuzhun, then a doctoral candidate at Nanjing University, presented his research on “” and the genesis of scholarly engagements with gentry elites and local folktales, specifically focusing on the case study of “.” During the event, Ding Xiuzhun was assigned to the discussion group led by Yan Yan. The “Wuzhong Branch Records of the Wu Clan,” derived from the less-examined section of Sima Qian’s “Shi Ji” (Records of Grand Historian), offered invaluable insights for our study. Following a number of years elapsed, when I was able to return to Nanjing to pay respects to my parents, I consistently visited the Nanjing Library to obtain copies of the comprehensive, over-twenty-volume work in its entirety. Formally and academically: The essay “On the Fate of Zi Lu and Wujiang Huaxi” came into existence. The article titled “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” was co-authored by myself and Zhang Yunyun, and was published in Issue 15 of the scholarly journal “Ming History Research”.

In 2016, I was assigned the role of founding the second history department at Sun Yat-sen University’s Zhuhai campus. However, due to an accumulation of administrative tasks, my research time progressively diminished, making it increasingly challenging to revise and expand my scholarly work. Upon the verge of considering abandonment of my thesis project, I feel compelled to extend my most sincere appreciation to Professors Tang Li and Xu Ming of Shanghai Normal University’s Research Center for Chinese Modern Society. Since the year 2017, they have consistently extended invitations for me to participate in the “Jiangnan Social History International Academic Forum.” Their insistence on my submission of papers was instrumental in the composition of two significant works: “The Legacy of Ming Dynasty Emperor Yongle’s Grain Long and His Eldest Son: An Examination Based on the Documents of Wujiang Huaxi Clan” and “Technology Transmission, Commercial Capital, and the Wealth of Silk: Investigations into the Business Activities of Wujiang Huaxi Clan.” Based on the aforementioned three papers, the manifestation of the manuscript’s draft is progressively clarifying, and the revision process is now more effectively functioning.

Despite the disclosure by Zhao Shuyu and Song Xiujing during formal contract negotiations that exploratory work, characterized as “testing the waters,” could potentially be included in the anthology, the realization of this compact project proved to be a formidable undertaking following the affirmative decision. In the initial stage, owing to neglect during the operation of a PC, historical data underwent garbling, resulting in extensive character distortion and necessitating laborious re-input, thereby materially impeding advancement. The complexities encompassing the manuscript, including fiscal appropriation, religious rites and ceremonies, state rituals, and historical compilation, have extended the limits of my current knowledge to diverse degrees. The publications of the Shi family present intricate scholarly challenges, necessitating unwavering caution and vigilance on my part. I am reluctant to advance even the slightest further. This text, replete with intricate case studies, may not generate sweeping or intermediate conclusions, as some might argue, yet it has substantially enriched academic discourse since its introduction into the field. In addressing non-negotiable scholarly matters, I will draw upon preceding research to exemplify the time-honored tradition of magnifying minor issues and articulate my unequivocal perspectives on the subject matter with utmost clarity. During the course of the research process, I frequently presented my findings to Ms. Song Xujiing due to the presence of numerous interconnections between the various aspects of the study. Simultaneously, I found it necessary to provide justifications for declining her repeated requests for further expedited progress. Prior to early 2020, I had the advantage of working from home at Creating Systems due to the progressive implementation of quarantine regulations resulting from the novel coronavirus pandemic. This situation granted me an extensive period for manuscript revisions.

During the course of revising my manuscript, I unearthed successive iterations of “Preface by Scholar-Gentleman Zhongshan to His Majesty” and “Strange Loyalty,” as well as previously unidentified editions of “Xisheng Journal,” housed in the “West Village Collection.” This discovery substantially expanded my comprehension of the origins and dissemination channels of these seminal scholarly texts. The greater the volume of newly uncovered information, the more I am inclined to reassess the maturity of my initial argument. The revised version of this manuscript represents a substantial shift from prior proposals, which can be characterized as a radical transformation. I am grateful to Professors Li Chao-Kun and Huang Sheng-Xi of Taiwan for facilitating my access to the research accomplishments of Scholars Li Ting-Yun and He Xing-Zhen at the earliest possible moment. During the epidemic period, Professor Zhong-hen Week of the History Department at East China Normal University expeditiously shared open access information with me concerning Shanghai Library. Specifically, he furnished me with a copy of the “Zhongwu Stele Inscription” from the two-year edition of Chongwu’s “Considerations on Filial Piety” (Chongwu, 19XX). Similarly, Professor Jing Gang of the Humanities College at Zhejiang University granted me access to a copy of the “Travel Records of Master Xi’an” within “The Collected Works of Xi’an Master” (Xi’an Shifeng Quanshu, 19YY) regarding the “Ancestral Mansion of Clear and Far.” My graduate students Ruan Baoyu, Zhang Ye, Huang Ting, and Tian Si Jin contributed to the research process by either verifying sources or creating family tree charts. Lastly, the responsible editor, Ms. Yue Lei, meticulously reviewed the historical materials cited in this book to minimize misrepresentations. The performed handshakes carry substantial importance for the finalization of these manuscripts; I extend my most sincere appreciation in acknowledgment.

I extend my deepest appreciation to Professors Liu Zhigui, Zhao Shiyi, Zheng Zhenman, Xia Weizhong, Zhang Yingqiang, Zhang Chen, Satoh Naoaki, Yu Wei, and Xie Rong for their indulgence of my nascent ideas and for offering me precise and constructive criticism. In the specific case of Professor Yun, her esteemed anticipations towards my scholarly investigation on the Ming and Qing Dynasties in the Southern Regions were noteworthy. Her intellectually stimulating inquiries, albeit occasionally challenging to my initial perspective, served as valuable catalysts for the expansion and refinement of my research focus. I am deeply appreciative of Professor Zhao Xiangchuan’s guidance as we visited Yellow Family Stream Village for the purpose of historical site investigations, traversing hallowed ground. I am pleased to extend my sincere appreciation to the young scholars in our department for their attentiveness towards the research I presented at the Alumni Reunion Report of 2020. The publication of this book in its present shape would not have been possible without the assistance and motivation provided by numerous educators.

Formally and academically: I wish to extend my deepest appreciation to my spouse. Over the past five years, I have regularly commuted between Pearl River and Guangzhou cities, devoting minimal time to personal matters at home, resulting in substantial accrued debts for my family. In the most challenging instances, she consistently motivated me to maintain academic honesty and provided unvoiced reinforcement for my scholarly endeavors, without offering any objection. Given that my parents have entered their twilight years, I unfortunately could not provide them with constant companionship. I am, however, deeply appreciative of my sibling’s unwavering dedication and commitment to their care, which enabled me to continue pursuing my passions in a distant southern locale.

May first, two thousand twenty-one, at Jianzhen Flower Garden Residency, Guangzhou.