

Yang Hu (羊祜) is styled Shuzi (叔子); he is a native from Nancheng of Taishan¹. His family had obtained positions of two-thousand-dan² for nine generations before Hu; they are all known for their honesty and virtue. Hu's grandfather, Xu, was the protector³ of Nanyang⁴. Hu's father, Heng, was the protector of Shangdang⁵. Hu was the grandson of Cai Yong⁶ and the younger brother of the same mother of Empress Jingxian⁷.

When Hu's father passed away, Hu mourned for him with greater than the usual propriety even though he was only twelve. He then treated his uncle, Yang Dan (羊耽), with deep reverence and obedience. Hu would visit the bank of the Wen River often. On one such visit, he met with an elderly man who said, "You, child, have a good countenance. You will achieve greatness for the world before you reach sixty." After that the elderly man left and no one knew where he was from. After Hu came of age, his knowledge expanded widely. He grew to seven spans and three fingers tall⁸, had a handsome beard, and was well versed in debating. A general of the province, Xiahou Wei recognized Hu to be someone extraordinary, and married his niece, Xiahou Ba's⁹ daughter, to Hu. When Hu went to work as a clerk for government, he was asked four times by the state to become an assistant and a scholar, but he refused each time. When Guo Yi¹⁰ from Taiyuan¹¹ met Hu in person, he said, "He is the Yanzi¹² of today." When Yang Hu and Wang Shen were both picked by Cao Shuang to be his assistants, Shen tried to persuade Hu to accept. However, Hu replied, "It is not easy to return to the status quo once you have served someone." When Shuang had fallen, Shen was removed from office because of his relationship to Shuang, and he said to Hu, "I now know what you meant." Hu replied, "This is not what I was talking about." This is but one of the examples of Hu's foresight.

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¹ Nancheng was a county, or Xian (县) of Taishan (泰山) province, or Jun (郡), which is located in Qingzhou (青州). Mount Tai, or Taishan, was located in present day Shandong province. It was one of the Five Mountains of China and. Many emperors in China have visited Mount Tai and sacrifice to the Heavens, to show off their exemplary achievements.

² Two Thousand Dan (两千石) is the salary of high-middle officials including the nine ministers, governors of provinces, and mayor of the capital.

³ Protector, or Taishou (太守) is the highest administration of a province. Also civil officers, protectors can also control a limited amount of army so they can fight against bandits and assure the peace of the province.

⁴ Nanyang (南阳) was a province of Jingzhou. It has 14 counties and 24,400 families during the reign of Jin Wudi. Today Nanyang is a city located in Henan province.

⁵ Shangdang (上党) was a province located in Bingzhou. It has 10 counties and 13,000 families during the reign of Wudi. It is located in present day Shanxi province, in a city call Changzhi (长治)

⁶ Cai Yong (蔡邕 133-192) was a famous scholar, calligrapher, poet and zither player in the Later Han period. He served in Han Lingdi (汉灵帝 reign A.D. 167-189) but was exiled when he spoke out against the eunuchs. When Dong Zhou (董卓) was in charge, he forced Cai Yong to serve; when Zhou was killed, Cai Yong was arrested by Wang Yun (王允) and died in prison.

⁷ See appendix for Empress Jingxian's Jin Shu bio

⁸ In today's measurements, Yang Hu would be 1.686 meters tall, or 5 foot 6 inches. A Chinese span (or "foot"), in the Han period, was approximately 23.1 centimeters, while a finger (or "inch") was 1/10 that length.

⁹ Both Xiahou Ba (夏侯霸) and Xiahou Wei (夏侯威) were sons of Xiahou Yuan (夏侯渊), where Ba is the eldest and Wei is the second eldest. Ba surrendered Shu later and Wei's rank reached to governor of Yanzhou.

¹⁰ Guo Yi (郭奕) later became the Imperial Secretary of Wudi and commanded great respect at the court. Many of the officials at that time were his students once.

¹¹ Taiyuan (太原) is a province of Bingzhou. It has 13 counties and 14,000 families. Present-day, Taiyuan is a city located in Shandong province.

¹² Yanzi, or Yan Hui (颜回 521-481 B.C.), was Confucius favorite student. He was known for his humbleness and virtue. Confucius was extremely said by Hui's early death. In later periods, most temple of Confucius would have a statue of Yan Hui on the side.

When Xiahou Ba surrendered to Shu, most of his relatives cut their ties while only Hu reassured his wife and treated her with even more respect. Just when Hu's mother passed away, his elder brother, Fa, also died. He mourned them for over ten years, during which he imposed a harsh lifestyle upon himself and behaved like a scholar.

When Emperor Wen [Sima Zhao] became Grand General¹³, he appointed Hu as his assistant. When Hu refused, he sent out envoys to ask him to take the position of Assistant to the Imperial Middle Secretary¹⁴, and was later promoted to Counselor of Affairs¹⁵ and Gentleman of the Yellow Gate¹⁶. At that time, Duke of Gaoguixiang (高贵乡公) [Cao Fang] developed an interest in literature, thus many officials would contribute poems. When He You¹⁷ was dismissed because he spoke against it, Hu was caught in the middle of the affair but he was knowledgeable enough to act without showing favoritism toward either side. When the Prince of Chenliu (陈留王) [Cao Huan] was enthroned, Hu was given the title of Duke Within the Passes¹⁸, along with the tax revenue of a hundred families. Hu thought the young emperor did not want him as an advisor hence he requested to be put into a clerical position and was demoted to the Supervisor of Secretaries¹⁹. When the five ranks were established, he was named Count of Juping²⁰ with the taxes of six hundred families. Zhong Hui (钟会), as he was being favored, was jealous of Hu's skill and Hu in turn fears Hui. When Hui was killed, Hu was promoted to Gentleman who Assists to the Prime Minister²¹, and was put in charge of secret materials along with Xun Xu²². Later he was promoted to Middle Commander General²³ and in charge of palace guards. He would

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¹³ Grand General, or Dajiangjun (大将军), is the highest rank of all generals. He is the commander of all armies and its rank is sometimes above those of the Three Ministers and sometimes below. Since Eastern Han, Grand General was not usually named and those who has this position often commands great power at court. (ie. He Jin, Jiang Wei, Sima Shi).

¹⁴ Assistants to the Imperial Middle Secretary, or Zhongshu shilang (中书侍郎), was established by Cao Pi during his earlier reign. The official acts as a literary companion of the emperor and would be expected to know a wide variety of literature. Rank wise, they serve the Imperial Middle Secretary (中书令)

¹⁵ Counselor of Affairs , or Jishizhong (给事中), was originated from Qin and officially established by Han to act as the emperor's advisor on various affairs.

¹⁶ Gentleman of the Yellow Gate, or Huangmenlang (黄门郎), was also originated from Qin. The responsibilities are like those the Assistants of the Imperial Middle Secretary and in charge of various subordinates or other advisors of that branch of the government.

¹⁷ He You (和迪) was the one of the imperial secretaries at that time.

¹⁸ Duke Within the Pass, or Guanneihou (关内侯) was an honorary title bestowed upon officials/generals with achievements. While they may earn additional income and have a higher rank, their political power does not increase. The title of duke or marquis usually comes to a certain amount of families taxes' as additional income.

¹⁹ The Supervisor of Secretaries, or Mishujian (秘书监), was first established by Emperor Huan of Han. He acts of a higher secretary of the emperor and often assist in the wording of the imperial edicts.

²⁰ Baron of Juping, or Jupingzi (钜平子) is the 4th level of title, under dukes, marquises, and counts. Juping is a county of Taishan province. It is located in present-day city Tai'an in Shandong province.

²¹ Gentleman who Assists the Prime Minister, or the Xiangguo congshi zhonglang (相国从事中郎), belongs to the government of the Prime Minister instead of the imperial branch. He would be the chief assistant and secretary to the PM in dealing with everyday affairs. Because Sima Zhao at this time was not emperor, Hu was really named to be the assistant to Sima Zhao directly instead of the Wei emperor.

²² Xun Xu (荀勗) served as Imperial Counselor to Wudi and had the favor of the emperor. Even though his rank may never reach those of the Three Ministers he advised the emperor on the appointment of many important court positions, some even above his own. Xun Xu conspired with Jia Chong to have Chong's daughter marry the crown prince, later Jin Huidi (晋惠帝), and Lady Jia's action ultimately led to the Rebellion of the Eight Princes and was part of the reason of the fall of Western Jin.

²³ Middle Commander General, Zhonglingjun (中领军), was an office of Wei and established by Cao Cao in late Han. Hu, in this case, was in charge of the camps of the two guards, vanguard, rear, left, right, and cavalry.

have guard shifts right inside the palace but also in charge of armies outside the palace.

When Emperor Wu was offered the throne, he promoted Hu, on the achievement of assisting the emperor, to General of Middle Army²⁴, with Attendant of Scattering Cavalry²⁵; Hu was also bestowed the title of a Province Duke²⁶ with the taxes of three thousand households. Hu refused the title vehemently thus his rank was only promoted to marquis, he was allowed to have his own subordinates and his wife was also given a formal title. During the early years of Taishi [A.D. 265-274], an imperial edict was issued, “The foundation of a court is to balance different strategies and govern the six ways²⁷ fairly. Hu’s virtue was known to all, his loyalty was pure, his talent includes both civil and military, and he is upright and honest. Although he was given a position at the heart of the empire, yet he was not asked to be in charge of the central operation. Such behavior is not consistent with the delegation of responsibility, which allows the emperor to rule without overwork. Therefore Hu was named Imperial Secretary Right Minister²⁸, [*Translator’s note: At that time Prince of Dongwan (东莞王), Sima You (司马攸), was actually the Right Minister and Hu was the Left Minister. It can be confirmed from the Wudi’s and You’s bio.*] Lieutenant General²⁹, and given a camp of soldiers.” At that time Wang You, Jiang Yun, Pei Xiu were all famous officials from the previous dynasty, thus Hu treated them with high respect and would not place himself above them.

The emperor always had an ambition of conquering Wu, so he named Hu to be the commander of Jingzhou’s military affairs, bestowed him with imperial regent³⁰ while his position of Attendant of Scattering Cavalry and Lieutenant General was kept. Hu then led his army to camp at Nanxia³¹. He established schools and his kindness spread both far and near, winning the heart of the people from Jianghan³². He treated the people from Wu with openness and honesty; all those who surrendered but want to leave were granted permission. At that time when an official had passed away while in office, the successor would rebuild the dwelling believing the old one to be inauspicious. Hu, however, argued that life and death is determined by fate, not by lodging, thus he issued an order banning such practices. Wu’s troop at
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²⁴ General of the Middle Army, or zhongjun lingjun (中军领军), is another name of Middle Commander General (see footnote 22). According to JS, volume 24 (list of officials), Hu was in charge of the camps of the two guards, vanguard, rear, left, right, and cavalry, which is not found in any other person with the same position.

²⁵ Attendant of Scattering Cavalry, or Saqichangshi (散骑常侍), was originally established by Qin. He accompanies the emperor on outings but also has the power to advise the emperor on affairs.

²⁶ Provincial Duke, or Jungong (郡公) are honorary titles that come with the tax revenue of a province.

²⁷ The six ways defines the six different types of works of the society. They are: 1. rulers and nobilities: those who set the goals of society 2. gentlemen and officials: those who carry out the official polices 3. technicians: those who creates from the natural resources 4. merchants: those who have access to treasures from all sides 5. farmers: those who obtains their wealth from the land and 6. women: those who make clothes.

²⁸ Imperial Secretary, or shangshu (尚书), is established in Qin as supportive officials only. In Eastern Han, however, Imperial Secretaries control most of the power of the court. Jin does not have a Prime Minister hence Yang Hu’s position was like the one of the several PMs.

²⁹ Lieutenant General, or Weijiangjun (卫将军) was established by Jin Wendi [Sima Zhao] and was separated into left and right during Wudi’s reign. Its rank is below generals with a direction but above all other general titles.

³⁰ The imperial regent, or jie (节) is a honor bestowed to the most important and most trusted officials at court. With the imperial regent, the official can kill certain level of officials without the consent of the emperor first.

³¹ Nanxia (南夏) is located northern Jingzhou and a county of Nanyang province.

³² Jianghan (江汉) is referring to south Jingzhou area at the banks of Yangtze River. It is part of the Hubei province today, around the city of Jingzhou.

Shicheng³³, with only 700 li from Xiangyang³⁴, was a constant border threat. Hu then used a trick to make Wu retreat from the camp, which allowed him to cut the patrol down to half of its original size; he also obtained over 800 acres of farmable land. When Hu first came, the army did not have grains for more than one hundred days; yet by third year there were ten years of storage. An imperial edict removed the position of Commander of the River's North and established South Gentlemen of the Household³⁵, and given Hu and command of all armies of Jiangxia. When Hu was in the army, he would often dress in robes instead of the armor and there were less than twenty guards in his main camp. Hu enjoyed farming and fishing and would often put those activities above his responsibilities. Once Hu wanted to go out at night, his military clerk, Xu Yin (徐胤), stopped him at the gate with a spear and said, "Sire, the general should govern a land of ten thousand *li*³⁶, how can he go out so easily! Your personal safety is directly linked with the foundation of the empire. The gate will only open tonight if I am dead." Hu then became serious and apologized; he rarely went out ever since.

Hu was later promoted to General of the Chariot Cavalry³⁷, and he was allowed to open up his own office. Hu petitioned to refuse the honor, "Your subject has heard the gracious edict, which promoted your subject to one of the highest ranks. Ever since your subject became an official, over ten years had passed and both interior and exterior responsibilities were bestowed to show your subject had your favor. The ancient wisdom said that even the promotion of the able men should not be haste and favoritism should not last. Your subject is fearful day and night about the undeserved honor. Your subject had heard the wisdom from ancient times, "If someone whose virtue is not recognized by all but obtained a high rank, then talented people would be barred from deserving positions. If someone was rewarded extravagantly without his achievements recognized, then hardworking people would be discouraged." Now your subject is related to the imperial family by marriage and most of the past successes were dependent on luck. Your subject should not be shown excess favoritism but should be treated strictly instead. Now an imperial edict was issued suddenly and unearned honor were bestowed, what did your subject do to deserve such reward and what heart do your subject have to accept it without questioning? When someone disgraces a high rank he does not deserve, his failure would be near and he will not be able to even guard the cottage of their ancestors. The heavenly dignity would be displeased if your subject refuse; however what was said previously would occur upon acquiesce. The ancient sages possess the virtue of gentlemen: they knew their abilities and would not pursue what is not within their grasp. Although your subject is a petty person, what conscience I have left would not allow me to accept what is beyond my limits. Ever since the empire was

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³³ Shicheng (石城) is a county of Xuancheng (宣城) province, located in north Yangzhou.

³⁴ Xiangyang (襄阳) is a province of Jingzhou. It serves as the capital during Liu Biao's time but it had belonged to Wei since Cao Cao's attack in 208.

³⁵ South Gentlemen of the Household, or Nan zhonglangjiang (南中郎将), was first established in Han. It is one of the many military positions that were put in charge of the imperial guards.

³⁶ *li* is Chinese measurement of length. Today, *li* is formally defined at 500 meters.

³⁷ General of the Chariot Cavalry, or Cheji jiangjun (车骑将军), was one of the highest military ranks, just under the Grand Commander of the army, on par with General of the Flying Cavalry.

established, eight years had passed. Although your majesty would put in all the efforts to seek talents even among the secluded and the low ranked, your subject cannot recommend those who are virtuous and reach out to those who are achieved. Therefore your majesty would assume there are few who are superior to your subject but the truth is many simply were not known. However, if there are talents left in the empire among the butchers and the fishers, how can they trust the court when they used untalented people like me and how can your subject not be embarrassed? Such loss is too great! While your subject had stole high positions for a long time, never before had they reached to the top to both civil and military ranks and were placed on par with the chief ministers. Although your subject only has a shallow knowledge, I have heard High Counselor³⁸ Li Xi³⁹ is known for his virtue in office; High Counselor Lu Zhi⁴⁰ is famous for suppressing his personal desires and his skill in dealing with others; High Counselor Li Yin⁴¹'s integrity were recognized by all. They had all served in the court until their hair had turned grey but followed the proper behavior of an official: although they had strong favoritism from the palace, their homes are not different from the commoners. When none of them were given this honor and your subject is going to surpass them, the entire world will be disappointed! Thus your subject is determined to guard my heart and would not seek non-deserving advances. Now there are still many affairs need to be settled. Your subject begs you to retain the honor and allow me to return to my camp.” The petition was rejected.

When Hu returned to his governing city, Wu’s commander of Xiling⁴², Bu Chan⁴³, surrendered with his city. Wu’s general Lu Kang attacked Chan hastily thus an imperial edict was issued to order Hu to help Chan. Hu led an army of fifty thousand out of Jiangling and sent Yang Zhao(杨肇), Inspector⁴⁴ of Jingzhou, to

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³⁸ High Counselor, or Guanglu dafu (光祿大夫), was first established in Han. They have no regular duties besides greeting ambassadors and organizing funerals. Since the time of Wei, this position became a honorable one that is usually bestowed to ministers who grew old. It does not have much power but it has a high rank.

³⁹ Li Xi (李熹) served both Jin Wudi and his son, Huidi (惠帝) as an Imperial Secretary. He was also named to be the teacher of the crown prince during Wudi era.

⁴⁰ Lu Zhi (鲁芝) originally served Cao Zhen (曹真) and participated during Zhen’s defense against Zhuge Liang. After Zhen’s death, he became an advisor to his son, Cao Shuang (曹爽). When Cao Shuang heard Sima Yi had controlled the army within the capital, Zhi advised Shuang to move the emperor to Xuchang (许昌) and call for troops all over the country to fight against Yi. After Shuang was captured, Zhi went to prison because of his affiliation with Shuang. He was about to be executed but his loyalty moved Sima Yi, who pardoned him. During Wudi’s reign, Zhi was known for his frugal lifestyle and was well-respected in court. He passed away on the ninth year of Taishi [A.D. 274] at age of 84.

⁴¹ Li Yin (李胤) originally served as an advisor to Sima Shi. During the campaign against Shu, Yin was named the military commander of Chang'an area. During Wudi’s reign, Yin was named Imperial Secretary and Secondary Instructor of the Crown Prince, as well as Imperial Counselor for the emperor. Yin lived such a frugal life he doesn’t even have money for medicine for his son fell sick. Yin’s highest position was Minister of Interior, which he served until his death in the third year of Taikang [A.D. 282].

⁴² Xiling (西陵) was located toward the west of the Yangtze frontier between Jin and Wu. It is one of the several commanders along the frontier. However, Xiling was known for its importance because it is an area the Lu family have placed heavy emphasize on.

⁴³ Bu Chan (步阐) surrendered after Sun Hao summoned him to court. He believed he will be scolded for not doing his job and afraid of Sun Hao’s tyranny, he surrendered to Yang Hu. After Lu Kang conquered Xiling, he was executed along with his entire family.

⁴⁴ An inspector, or cishi (刺史), is the head of civil administration of a state, or zhou (州). His rank is below those of governor, or mu (牧) as the governor f a state has both civil of military power bu the inspector only has administrative powers.

attack Kang. Zhao failed and Chan was captured by Kang. Officials petitioned, "Hu has more than eighty thousand while the bandits [Lu Kang] only had thirty thousand. Hu camped at Jiangling thus allowed the bandits to prepare for the battle. He then sent Yang Zhao to dangerous ground with no reinforcement and very little supplies, thus the soldiers were upset. His actions is a directly disobedience of the edict, indicating he does not possess the talents of a minister. His office should be removed and he is allowed to stay home as a marquis." An edict was issued to demote Hu to General who Pacified the South⁴⁵ and made Yang Zhao a commoner.

Hu saw how during the Spring and Autumn era Meng Xian induced fear from the people of Jin by managing Wulao⁴⁶ and Yan Rou surrendered Laizi by defending Dong Yang.⁴⁷ Therefore He decided to camp in strategic areas; he built five cities, collected fertile land, and raided the wealth of Wu. Hence all the land west of Shicheng belonged to Jin. Ever since then the stream of surrenders never stopped. He also spread virtue and integrity and use that to comfort those who surrendered, demonstrating he has an ambition to conquer Wu. Every time he went to battle with Wu, he would only fight on the pre-arranged battle date and never set ambushes. Whenever his general had deceptive schemes, he would make them drunk with wine so they cannot elaborate any further. One time someone imprisoned two youth from Wu and Hu sent them back home. Later, when Wu general Xia Xiang (夏详), Shao Yi (邵顥) and others surrendered, the father of the two youth came with their families as well. When Wu general Chen Shang (陈尚) and Pan Jing (潘景) attacked, Hu defeated and killed them and praised that they died with integrity hence gave them a grand burial. When the relatives of Pan Jing and Chen Shang came and asked for the body back, Hu agreed to their request with the appropriate rituals. When Wu general Deng Xiang (邓香) raided Xiakou⁴⁸, Yang Hu ordered to capture him alive and later pardoned him. Hu, in gratitude, surrendered with his subordinates. Whenever Yang Hu went into the border of Wu and harvest grains there, he would keep a detailed account of the amount of grains he took and pay back with silk. When he hunts in the area of Jiangmian⁴⁹ area, he would limit the hunting with the border of Jin. Any animal that fell into the hands of Jin soldiers but were shot first by Wu would be returned. As a result, the people of Wu respected Hu from the heard and address him as Lord Yang, instead of his name.

When Yang Hu fought with Lu Kang and envoys were exchanged, Kang praised

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⁴⁵ General who Pacifies the South, or Pingnan jaingjun (平南将军) is one of the many general ranks with a direction, while the others include General who Conquers, General who Defends, and General Who Guards. They are considered below General of the Cavalries. Hence it is a demotion of one rank.

⁴⁶ Meng Xian (孟献) was a general of the Jin state during the Spring and Autumn period. In year 571 B.C., he suggested to Duke Xian of Jin (晋献公) to built a city at Wulao (武牢) (which is the Hulao Pass during three kingdoms era). As a result, Zheng became fearful of Jin and never allied with Chu, Jin's main opponent.

⁴⁷ Yan Ruo (晏弱), a general of the Qi (齐) state during the Spring and Autumn period, was also the father of Yan Ying (晏婴), the famous prime minister known for his political and diplomatic skills. During the year 567 B.C., Yan Ruo advanced to Dongyang (东阳); from there, he conquered the state of Lai and incorporated the land as part of Qi. His achievement earned him his own land at Yan, which because the surname of his family from that point.

⁴⁸ Xiakou (夏口) was a county of Wuchang (夏口) province in Yangzhou. In the novel, this is where Zhuge Liang went to during the battle of Changban and where Liu Bei camped at right before the battle of Chibi.

⁴⁹ Jiangmian (江沔) area is referring to the land between Yangtze river and Mian River

Hu's integrity cannot be surpassed even by Yue Yi⁵⁰ or Zhuge Kongming. Once Kang fell sick and Hu gifted him with herbs, Kang used them without suspicion. Many advised Kang not to use the herbs but Kang retorted, "How can Yang Hu be someone that poisons another!" At that time people often commented how Hua Yuan and Zi Fan were reborn.⁵¹ Kang often said to his soldiers, "If he acts on virtue and I act on terror, then the battle is lost before it is even fought. Hence I should just guard the border and not pursue petty benefits." When Sun Hao heard the two sides were establishing a relationship, he demanded an explanation from Kang, who said, "Even a city or a village cannot survive without integrity, much less than a country! If your subject do not behave differently, then I would only be show Hu's virtue and bring him no harm."

Hu was loyal and unselfish hence he despises petty and crafty people, induced the hate and jealous of the likes of Xun Xu and Feng Shen⁵². When Hu's nephew Wang Yan⁵³ came to discuss with Yang Hu, his words were elaborated and rhetorical. Hu does not agree with that and Yan left upset. Hu then looked at his guests and said, "Although Wang Yifu [Wang Yan's style] obtained a high rank and high fame, he will ultimately be the one who disrupts the proper rituals." During the battle of aiding Bu Chan, Hu wanted to execute Wang Rong⁵⁴ according to the martial law; hence both Rong and Yan hated Hu and spoke badly about him. People often say, "When the two Wangs were in power, even Lord Yang would appear to have no virtue."

During the early years of Xianning [A.D. 275-280], Hu was promoted to Grand General who Conquers the South⁵⁵ and was given permission to establish his own

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⁵⁰ Yue Yi (乐毅) was a famous general from Yan (燕) during the Warrior States period. He was known for his military achievements, especially when he conquered more than 70 cities of Qi. Yue Yi was also one of the two people Zhuge Liang compared himself when he was in Longzhong.

⁵¹ Hua Yuan (华元) and Sima Zifan (司马子反) were both from the Spring and Autumn era. Yuan was a minister the state of Song and Zifan was a commander from Chu. When Chu attacked Song in 571 B.C. and laid a siege on the capital, the grains were exhausted. Seeing this, Hua Yuan sneaked into Zifan's camp in the middle of the night and laid a knife on Zifan's throat; he said the grains were exhausted in the city and people are eating each other's children yet Song would not surrender. He then requested Chu's army to retreat thirty *li* and sign a treaty with Song. Zifan agreed to this and they laid an oath next to the bed. Next day, Zifan went to King Zhuang of Chu (楚庄王) and told him what happened. King Zhuang agreed to sign a treaty which said, "I would not lie to you and you would not lie to me".

⁵² Feng Chen (冯沈) served under Wudi as his Imperial Counselor. He conspired with Xun Xu and Jia Chong to have Chong's daughter marry the crown prince, which later led to the fall of Western Jin. When the crown prince was proven to be incompetent, there was strong support in the court to have Prince of Qi, Sima You (司马攸) succeed the emperor [You is Wudi's younger brother and the adopted son of Sima Shi, he was once favored by Sima Zhao, who wanted to make Zhou the heir instead of Yan]. Worried You is a much more competent ruler than the crown prince, Chen advised to have You sent to his own land, away from the capital. When You dead, many at the court blamed Chen and Mao for the prince's death but the emperor favors them as usual.

⁵³ Wang Yan(王衍) served during Wudi and Huidi era as an Imperial Secretary. However, like his cousin Wang Rong, Wang Yan never took his responsibilities serious until the end of Western Jin, when Yan was named Grand Commander to fight against one of the barbarian tribes that invaded the country. When many wish to move the capital in fear of the invasion, Yan sold his carriage, demonstrating his determination to stay and hence moved others. After he was captured by the leader of the tribes, Shile (石勒), he tried to save his life by asking Shile to take the position of the emperor. Shile was angry and accused him of the fall of Jin and later sent an assassin to kill him at night.

⁵⁴ Wang Rong (王戎) was Wang Yan's cousin. Although he obtained high position at the court (up to Minister of Interior), he did not like his responsibilities and would often tour in ordinary cloth. Wang Rong was one of the Seven Wise of the Bamboo Forests (the seven people in early Jin who were all know for their talents and fame, but also their nonchalance toward politics and their lack of observance toward traditional rituals.)

⁵⁵ Grand General who Conquers the South, or Zhengnan Da Jiangjun (征南大将军) is in charge of the military of Jingzhou and Yuzhou. He would camp in the Jingzhou area.

office like the three ministers⁵⁶ and able to pick his own officials. At the beginning, Hu believed in order to attack Wu, he has to rely on the upstream advantage of Yangtze River. At that time there were nursery rhymes in Wu said, “Oh Ah Tong, Ah Tong, you can float in river with a knife in your mouth. The beast on the shore is not to be feared, but the dragon in the water is.” After hearing this, Hu said, “This must meant the navy will be the one that score the victory but I should think about how the name ‘Ah Tong’ fit in.” It is just around the same time that Governor of Yizhou, Wang Jun was promoted to Chief Minister of Agriculture⁵⁷. Hu knew Jun would be capable and his nickname is Ah Tong, so he petitioned to have Wang Jun stay in Yizhou and made him the supervisor of Yizhou’s military, with the title General of Dragon Cavalry⁵⁸ added. He secretly ordered Jun to built ships and prepared to sail down the river.

After Yang Hu constructed armors and trained troops to prepare for the upcoming battle, he petitioned to the emperor, “The late emperor followed the will of Heaven. In the west he pacified Shu and in the south he achieved peace with Wu. Therefore the empire can rest and the common people is looking forward to peace. However, Wu went against her words and restarted the battles at the border. Also fate is destined by Heaven and ultimate work has to be done by men. If the rebels are not extinguished, those who serve in the military will never obtain peace. This can also exemplify the glory his late majesty has achieved and obtain the highest state of ruling. In the past, Yao has the battle for Danshui⁵⁹, and Shun fought against the Three Miao⁶⁰. They did it to pacify the universe and to allow their people to set down the weapons. When Shu is pacified, the world is saying Wu has reached her end. Thirteen years has passed and now is the time to finally pacify that land. Some say that Wu will submit before the emperor once they are civilized and it is imperialism to use the military without proper manners. However, today’s circumstances cannot be compared to those of the ancient times. Therefore even the rituals should only be followed as the situation dictates. There might be many strategies but only one decision can be made. To those who believe the enemy have the geographical advantages, difficult terrains alone cannot made a state guard against herself. If the difference between the states are clear then no number of strategies can proven to be useful and no different terrains cam stop the unavoidable. Take Shu for example, her terrains cannot be said as not rough. Her high mountains reaches up to the clouds; her deep valley cannot be reached to the bottom. One can only pass when he ties up his horse and abandon his carriage; the saying “one men guard the pass, ten thousand

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⁵⁶ The three ministers are Minister of Interior, or Da Situ (大司徒), Minister of Military, or Da Sima (大司马), and Minister of Land, or Da Sikong (大司空)

⁵⁷ Minister of Agriculture, or Da Sinong (大司农) is one of Nine Ministers during Han era. Early in Han era he will be the chief financial officer of the country and is in charge of all the revenues and rexpenses, including taxes, salt, iron, and the storage of money and grains. During the Wei-Jin era, Da Sinong’s power is diminished and he is only in charge of the nation’s storage.

⁵⁸ General of Dragon Cavalry, or LongXiang Jiangjun (龙骧将军), is one of the mid-high general ranks. It is below any general rank with a direction but its position was levitated in the Northern Dynasty.

⁵⁹ Emperor Yao (尧帝) is the third of the five legendary emperors in pre-recorded history. He battled against the Southern Barbarians at Danshui, which is located in the present Heinan province.

⁶⁰ Emperor Shun (舜帝) is the fourth of the five legendary emperors in pre-recorded history. He battles against the Miao (there are three tribes of Miao) and chased them out of Chinese territory.

cannot go through" was all over the world. However, when the campaign was launched, there are no barriers from the terrains. Enemy generals were killed and several ten thousand troops were extinguished. The grand military was victorious from Hanzhong to Chengdu and even the birds were afraid to come out. It is not that they do not wish to fight but the difference of the strength is simply too great. When Liu Shan submitted, the rest of the troops disbanded immediately. Now, the rough terrain of Jianghui[Chang Jiang area] cannot surpass those of Jiange. The mountainous terrain are less than those of the Minhan [Hanzhong area]. Sun Hao's tyranny way surpasses Liu Shan's and the difficulties faced by the people of Wu are much more than those of Shu. On the other hand, the army of the great Jin has increased and there are much more supplies in the storage. If Wu is not pacified today, then the two sides will fall into a stalemate. Many more would be conscripted to serve in the military and skirmishes would occur daily. Such situation cannot last hence the Four Seas should be unified at this moment. If your majesty would sent the troops of Liang and Yi travel east by both land and water; the army from Jing and Chu advance to Jiangling, conquer Yuzhou and point to Xiakou; Xu, Yang, Qing, Yan troops can march toward Moling and they would put up a lot of banners to distract the enemy. How can Wu, only one part of the world, have the strength to counter attacks from all sides? When the surprise attack launched against Ba-Han region, the fall of one place cause the entire state to fail. Wu relies on the Long River to secure its border. There are no inside and outside and her authority expands several thousand li in the east west direction. Sun Hao acts on his own will only and is filled with suspicion toward his subjects. His top ministers and generals lack self-confidence and people like Sun Xiu left out of fear. The generals are not trusted at court and the scholars are forced to stay in the farms; there are no strategy to save the country and no heart to pacify the world. Even during the regular times people have a heart to leave the country. When the troops have arrived, there will bound to be people who recognize the fate and join the right side hence the enemy cannot even fight together in a time of crisis. The troops of Wu are fast but they cannot last a long time. Their weapons cannot be compared those of the Middle Kingdom. Even though navy battle is their advantage; once our troops entered their land the Long River cannot be relied by Wu for guiding any longer. If they are forced to guard their cities, then they will be disregarding their strength and rely on their weaknesses. Then the imperial army can march forth with great determination while Wu people are only thinking of keeping their cities. At this point, the victory can be achieved in no time!" The emperor agreed with his advice.

After the defeat of Qin-Liang, Hu petitioned again, "If Wu is pacified then the barbarians will submit to your majesty without fighting, please decide quickly to achieve the great victory." However, there are many at court that disagreed. Hu signed, "Of all the things under the heaven, seven or eight out of ten are against one's will, hence a decision is not made when it should be. If the Heaven is handing over the land and people will not take it, then they will regret it later but that would do no good."

Later, an imperial edict was issued to establish the province of Nancheng by

combining five counties: Wuyang, Mo, Nancheng, Liangfu, Pingyang. Yang Hu was named the Marquis of Nancheng and he was given his own minister like a duke. Hu refused, “In the past when Zhang Liang asked to only accept the ten thousand families from Liu, Gaozu agreed to his desire⁶¹. Your servant already received Juping from the late emperor, can how I embarrass the court by accepting such a high honor?” He refusal is with such determination that the emperor agreed. Whenever Hu was promoted, he would always refuse the reward and have a peaceful mind; hence he was treated like no other court officials. His fame spread widely and he is respected among both court officials and common people. Many have suggested that Hu should be used as one of the top ministers of the court. The emperor has an ambition of uniting the world and he relied on Hu for the affairs in southeast, hence he put decided to delay the promotion. Hu served under two emperors with prestigious positions. Most important decisions were made only after asking him opinion, yet Hu never used this power to grand personal favors. His wise advices are not known because he always burn the drafts while all those petition to be emperor are not found out by ordinary people. Some say Hu is too cautious, He replied, “What are you talking about! How can someone extremely close to the emperor spread rumors when he is by himself? I am only too afraid of an official behaving inappropriately. If I cannot recognize talents to the emperor, can how I not be embarrassed that I cannot recognized the able men. I cannot be someone who takes the generosity of the court and use it to build gratitude for myself.”

Yang Hu’s son-in-law once said to him, “Wouldn’t it be nice to establish your own people in all the camps?” Hu was silent and told his sons later, “He cannot see the entire picture. It is a great crime for a vassal to act selfishly and not think about the country. You should all recognize my intention and keep this in mind.” He wrote to his cousin Xiu, “Once the borders are pacified, I would go back to my hometown, become a hermit, are waiting to be ashes within a coffin. I was once a commoner and now I hold a high rank, how can I not be blamed for having too much prestige? Shu Kuang⁶² should be my teacher.”

Yang Hu also loved to tour mountains and lakes. Every year he would visit Mount Xian⁶³, have wine and write poems them all day without getting tired. Once he said to his subordinates, “This mountain has existed ever since the creation of the universe. Many ancient scholars and talents had came here just like we did today yet their names were all buried in time. I am saddened by this. If I have conscience

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⁶¹ Zhang Liang (张良) is the chief strategies of Han Gaozu (汉高祖), the founding emperor of Han. When Gaozu established his empire, he asked Zhang Liang to pick thirty thousand families from Qi, as a reward to his achievement during the war. Zhang Liang refused adamantly and was only willing to accept the ten thousand family from Liu (留), where he first met Gaozu. Gaozu is moved by his request and agreed, hence Zhang Liang is also known as the Marquis of Liu.

⁶² Shu Kuang (疏广) was the Grand Instructor of Crown Prince, Taizi Taifu (太子太傅) during Han Xuandi era while his nephew was the Secondary Instructor of Crown Prince, or Taizi Shaofu (太子少傅). After teaching the crown prince the Analects and the Book of Filial Piety, Shu Kuang told his nephew, “we have established fame and prestige. We should leave now, before something regrettable happens.” So they returned their seal and went back to their hometown. Once back Shu Kuang would use his savings to have banquets everyone. Some suggested he use the money to buy some land for his future generation, but Shu Kuang replied, “If they are diligent, then extra land or money would take away their ambitions.. If they are lazy, then those land and money would only bring them trouble.”

⁶³ Mount Xian, or Xianshan (峴山) is located near Xiangyang

after my death, I wish my soul would visit this place.” One of his subordinates replied, “Your lordship’s virtue spreads to the Four Seas, your intelligence matches the ancient philosophers, therefore you name will exist with this mountain. People like us, however, would be just like what you said.”

When Hu is about to be rewarded for his victory against the Wu, he petitioned to have the land transferred to his nephew. Hence, the emperor named Cai Xi, the son of Hu’s brother-in-law, Duke Within the Pass, with three hundred families’ taxes.

Later, when Wu invaded Geyang, Xiangxia and robbed its people, the emperor sent an envoy to Yang Hu, scolding him for not pursuing the enemy, along with the intention of re-organizing the state boundaries. Hu challenged the envoy, “there are eight hundred li between Jiangxian and Xiangyang, by the time the news have reached here the rebels were long gone. If the infantry was sent then they won’t even catch up with the rebels. It is not the best idea to use an army when nothing can be achieved. When Wei Wudi [Cao Cao] appointed regional commanders, their positions are similar to those of governors today yet they were instructed that armies were best kept together and should not be separated unless necessary. On a battlefield, there are always two sides of things and ancient wisdom told us it is important to guard cautiously. Now, even if the boundaries are refined, with the rebels possibly appearing anywhere, how much help would that be?” The envoy could not answer.

Yang Hu fell sick and petitioned to go to the court. When he arrived in Luoyang he was just in time for Empress Jingxian’s⁶⁴ funeral. Hu was extremely sad by the death of the empress. Before he went to pay respect to Wudi, an envoy was sent telling him because he is ail, he can ride the imperial handcart⁶⁵ into the palace and he does not have to follow the ritual of meeting an emperor. When he sat down in front of the emperor, he began to present his strategies of pacifying Wu. The emperor, concerned about Yang Hu’s health, sent Imperial Middle Secretary⁶⁶ Zhang Hua to ask Hu’s plan rather than summoning him into the palace all the time. Hu said to Hua, “His majesty has the achievement of the former Wei emperor abdicating to him, yet his fame is not well established. The head of Wu abused his power consistently and can be pacified without raising a spear. If Sun Hao died and Wu had a decent ruler, than the Long River cannot be crossed even a million army and they would be a long-lasting problem!” Hua agreed completed with his thoughts. Hu then said to Hua, “It is you, sir, that can fulfill my ambition.” The emperor wish for Hu to command troops himself during the expedition against Wu, Hu replied, “Your vassal need not to go himself, your majesty should be concerned about what will happen after Wu is pacified. Your vassal dares not accept any fame and honor

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⁶⁴ Empress Jingxian is Hu’s older sister, see footnote #4 for her bio.

⁶⁵ Imperial handcart, or nian (辇), originated as a type of transportation for the nobles. It composes of a seat in the middle with two long sticks at either side. The handcart is carried by 2 or more men. Since the time of Han, only the emperor can ride it. The imperial handcart is usually supported by 8 or 16 people. Also, the law dictates that a vassal must walk within the imperial palace. Therefore allowing Hu to ride the carriage is a great honor.

⁶⁶ Imperial Middle Secretary, or Zhongshuling (中书令), was first established by Han Wudi (汉武帝)[reign 141-87 B.C.] but the name was finalized by Cao Pi. The division Imperial Middle Secretary is in charge of the imperial records and act as assistants to the Imperial Secretaries, or Shangshuling (尚书令).

hence someone else must be able to handle the east affair, which your majesty might want to consider thoroughly.”

When Yang Hu knew his days are numbered, he petitioned to the emperor asking Du Yu⁶⁷ to be his successor. Hu then passed away at age fifty-eight. Emperor Wudi was extremely sad that he even worn mourning cloth and cried for Hu. His death happened on a cold day in winter so the emperor’s tears all froze. When Nanzhou people heard Hu have passed away, they all cried deeply; the market was dissolved and everywhere the sound of mourning can be heard. Even the Wu army at the border mourned for him. Such virtue Hu has! The emperor awarded, for Hu’s funeral, a coffin, a set of court attire, 300,000 in coins, and a hundred *pi*⁶⁸ of cloth. An imperial edict was issued, “Grand General who Conquers the South and Marquis of Nancheng, Yang Hu, had a virtuous life. He planned ahead but had a peaceful mind. He was an important part of the interior court and was about to be given more responsibilities. He was a great support to the imperial affairs with his loyalty and honesty. Within the court, he would partake in the most secretive affairs; out in the provinces, he would govern the people and army there. His talents and personality would allow him to help We until eternity; his sudden death was a great tragedy to all. Thereby We posthumously given the title Imperial Counselor⁶⁹ and Grand Instructor⁷⁰ to Yang Hu and allow him to hold the imperial regent as before.”

Yang Hu lived a frugal life and does not built up his wealth. All the extra money he obtained from his salary was given to the family and used to reward the soldiers. His last wish was not to be buried with the seal of the Marquis of Nancheng. When his cousin Xiu related this wish to the emperor and asked Hu to be buried besides his ancestors, the emperor rejected the petition. Instead, an acre of land ten *li* west of Qucheng⁷¹ was awarded as Hu’s burial ground. Hu’s posthumous title was Cheng. When Hu’s coffin is leaving the capital, the emperor personally saw it off south of the Gate of the Minister of Military⁷². Hu’s nephew, Prince of Qi You petitioned on behave of Hu’s wife of Hu’s will not to be buried as a marquis. An imperial edict was issued, “Hu has refused the honor he rightfully deserved for a

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⁶⁷ Du Yu (杜预) was the Grand General who Guards the South, or Zhennan Dajiangjun (镇南大将军) of Jin. He led the campaign that took Jiangling and conquered Wu.

⁶⁸ *Pi* (匹) was the standard measurement of clothes and silks in ancient China. One *pi* is approximately one meter in length.

⁶⁹ Imperial Counselor, or Shizhong (侍中) was first established in Qin dynasty as assistants to the prime minister. In Han era, imperial counselor become the emperor’s own advisors and is in charge of emperor daily lives, including the imperial seal. Although it may not be a high position, it was an extremely powerful position, esp. toward the late Han era.

⁷⁰ Grand Instructor, or Taifu (太傅) is a extremely honorable position. During the late Han-Wei/Jin era Taifu’s position even exceeds those of the Three Ministers. He is the number one advisor of the emperor and can usually speak with authority no other officials can. While in Qin-Han era the Grand Instructor is more a honorable title, the Grand Instructors of Wei-Jin were also extremely powerful and are usually the number one official at court.

⁷¹ Qucheng (去城) is located near Taishan, which is in present day Shandong province.

⁷² The Gate of Minister of Military, or 大司马门, is one of the two south gates of the imperial palace in Ye (邺). The gate was originally built by Wei Wendi [Cao Pi] and was right outside of the Office of Imperial Secretaries (尚书台) and Court of Imperial Affairs (朝堂). During Western Jin, it is common for the funeral of important ministers to take place in the Court of Imperial Affairs and the coffin leave from the Gate of Minister of Military, where sometimes an emperor would go himself to see it off. The gate is also where the officials would kneel in front when they have a petition for the emperor, hence another name for the gate is Gate of Petitions, or zhangmen (章门).

long time, and his will cannot be ignored. Even after his death Hu adheres strictly to such high standards of virtue. This can be compared to Yi and Shu's fame⁷³ and Jizi's righteousness⁷⁴. His will shall be respected as a demonstration of his noble traits."

Earlier, when Wendi [Sima Zhao] has passed away, Hu said to Fu Xuan⁷⁵, "The ancient ritual demands the son to wear mourning cloth for his father for three years after the death; even the noble ones cannot be made an exception. However, Han Wendi⁷⁶ abolished this practice and destroyed the ancient rituals, which I cannot agree with. Now His Majesty was extremely filial and have the personality of Ceng and Min⁷⁷. Even if he cannot wear mourning cloth for the late emperor he would wish to follow the ancient ritual, thus what is the point of not dressing properly for mourning then? If the tradition of Han-Wei was removed and earlier rituals were re-established, then people would know the important of filial piety and His Majesty's fame would last a hundred generations. Wouldn't that be nice?" Xuan replied, "Han Wendi modified the ancient mourning ritual because he believed the country was poor so proper ritual cannot be financially supported. It would be hard to re-initiate the ancient rituals several hundred years later." Hu then said, "Even if the entire world cannot follow the ritual, how about only have His Majesty wear the mourning cloth?" Xuan then replied, "If His Majesty is mourning for the late emperor but not the world, then people would be led to believe the relationship between a father and son is more important than one between the emperor of his subjects. Therefore the Three Orders⁷⁸ is violated." Hu then stopped.

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⁷³ Yi and Shu are referring to Boyi (伯夷) and Shuqi (叔齐), the two saints lived in the Shang-Zhou period. When Zhou Wuwang (周武王) invaded Shang, they advised against it as Shang is ruler of China. Wuwang dismissed them hence when Shang was conquered, Boyi and Shuqi went into forests and refuse to eat anything from Zhou and they died of hunger later. The two brothers were respected for their utmost loyalty toward Shang and their determination to their will of not submitting to Zhou.

⁷⁴ Jizi (季子) was a prince of Wu in the Spring and Autumn period. He was known for his credibility. A story goes that the ruler of Xu like Jizi's sword and ask him for it. Jizi replied he needs the sword as he will be traveling over China but he would give to him once he returns from the trip. By the time Jizi returned from the trip the ruler had already passed away so Jizi put the sword in front of his tomb. Some say Jizi should have just kept the sword since his friend will not get it anyway, Jizi replied, "I made a promise, how can I go back on my words just because Lord Xu had passed away?"

⁷⁵ Fu Xuan (傅玄) was a minister in Wei-Jin era. Besides holding prominent positions at court, Fu Xuan is also known for his scholarly works, including his participation in the Book of Wei (魏书). His own work, Fuzi (傅子), contains several hundreds of thousands of words commenting different class of philosophies and histories. Fu Xuan was particularly known for the musical style of poems, which 15 volumes of it were saved until Sui era. Today, 60 poems of Fu Xuan were known although Fuzi was lost.

⁷⁶ Han Wendi (汉文帝) is the third emperor of the Han dynasty [reign 180-157 B.C.]. His reign was one of peace and prosperity. Wendi is known for his frugal lifestyles and he also abolished many of the bodily punishments (such as cutting off a foot or the nose for some crime). Along with his son, Jingdi (汉景帝) [reign 157-141 B.C.], this period in China is known as the Prosperity of Wen-Jing.

⁷⁷ Ceng and Min are referring to two people in Eastern Zhou era known for their filial piety. Cengzi (曾子) was a student of Confucius. He composed his conversation with Confucius to form the Book of Filial Piety, or Xiaojing (孝经). Cengzi believe that filial piety forms the foundation of all morals. Min is referring to Min Sun (闵损), another student of Confucius and was praised by Confucius by his filial piety. He was treated very badly by his stepmother and was not given adequate clothing for the winter, unlike his two half-brothers. When his father found out, he was very angry and want to divorce his stepmother. At this time, Min Sun knelt and begged his father, "If you let mother stay, then I will be the only one that is cold. If you divorce her, then all three children would be cold and hungry." His father, moved by Min Sun's sincerely, kept the wife, who was extremely embarrassed and treated Min Sun as her own son.

⁷⁸ The Three Orders form the basis of ancient Chinese morals. They are, in order, "The emperor shall have the obedience of his subjects; the father shall have the obedience of his sons; the husband shall of the obedience of his

Hu's writings, along with his bio for Laozi⁷⁹, were widely read in the world. The people of Xiangyang built a monument and temple for Hu at Mount Xian, where Hu visits often when he was alive; they sacrifice for Hu every spring and autumn. All those who see the monument have cried, hence Du Yu named it "The Tearing Monument". The people of Jingzhou, out of respect for Hu, avoided using his name, even when it is the same pronunciation. As a result they renamed Hu Cao⁸⁰ as Ci Cao.

Even though Hu was allowed to open his own office for years, his humbleness prevented him from actually picking any subordinates. By the time he finally appointed some people, he passed away before they came to office. As a result, his assistants Liu Kuai (刘侩), Zhao Yin (赵寅), Liu Mi (刘弥), Sun Bo (孙勃) wrote to Du Yu, "We had the fortune to be the subordinates of Lord Yang, Grand General who Conquers the South. Hu lived a virtuous and humble life; he set high standards for himself and followed them. His virtue was high but he does not show it off; his rank was prestige but he acted like any other. Ever since he followed the imperial order and came to Nanxia, he rank was first alleviated to those of the Three Minister and then he was given the title of Grand General. Even though he obtained high positions he used any of the privileges came with it. Now everyone looks up to him, all talents wish to follow his steps. Of those who approached his door: those who were corrupt turns frugal, those who were cowards now have ambitions. His righteousness cannot even be topped by Yi and Hui⁸¹. From the time Hu came here, his policies benefited all of Jianghan, his foresights and strategies allowed the country to expand, and his decisions were fair and appropriate. He worked until his death and his ambition was always to serve His Majesty. When he finally appointed us four as his subordinates, he passed away before we even arrived. It is his ultimate goal to use those who are able, his will to search talents even among those who may not come from elite families, and it is his ultimate regret to not see his wish fulfilled. During the ancient times, people's love for Count Zhao spreads to the pear tree⁸² and the tree where Xuanzi visited was preserved⁸³. This shows the love of a person can even extent to plants, so how can his subordinates simply leave because the lord has pass away? Therefore we came to his office anyway and await your judgment."

wife."

⁷⁹ Laozi (老子), was one of china's most famous philosophers during the Spring and Autumn period. His most famous work was The Way of Dao, or Daodejing (道德经), which later become the foundation of Daoism and he was levitated into an immortal status.

⁸⁰ Clerk of Storage, or Hu Cao (户曹) was one of the many type of clerks works under a minister. They are mostly in charge of the records of the storage.

⁸¹ Yi was referring to Boyi (伯夷), see footnote 73. Hui was refeering to Liu Xiaohui (柳下惠), a minister of Lu (鲁) during the Spring and Autumn era. He was famous for his righteousness and fairness and the state's supreme judge. A legend says he met a beautiful woman on a cold night and the woman was freezing. Liu Xiaohui, seeing how cold she was, gathered her in his armies and sit with her for an entire night without any inappropriate thoughts or actions.

⁸² Count Zhao, or Zhaobao (召伯), is Zhou Wuwang's (周武王)younger brother. After Zhou was established, Zhaobao was given the land of Yan as his own state. Folklore says Count Zhao often sat below a pear tree and heard cases so the commoners would be not frightened of him. After his death, the pear tree was preserved by the later generations as a memory to the count.

⁸³ Xuanzi was referring to Han Xuanzi (韩宣子), a minister of Jin (晋) in Spring and Autumn period. Once he went to the state of Yan and saw a magnificent tree hence he wrote a poem for that. That tree was later preserved by the ruler of Yan as a memory of Xuanzi.

Yu, in turn, petitioned the emperor, “Even though Hu was permit to open his own office, he did not select any assistants. Such humbleness was clearly shown. By the time he made appointments, he died before any of them could come to office. There were no heir for Hu at home nor assistants for him at the office, such situations does not fulfill the expectation of the people. The ancient sage says those who respect the dead ones can build up their virtue. In the past, Han Gaozu generously gave out 4000 families to comfort the people of Zhao⁸⁴. Your subject begs His Majesty to consider this.” The emperor did not listen.

Two years after Hu’s death, Wu was pacified. When the officials congratulated the emperor during the feast, the emperor raised his glass and said with tears, “This is the achievement of Grand Instructor Yang!” He then sent an envoy to Hu’s temple, acknowledging Hu’s contribution during the victory. He then followed the tradition of Xiao He⁸⁵ and gave title to his wife. The edict said, “His Majesty sent envoy Du Hong (杜宏) to inform the late Imperial Counselor, Grand Instructor, and Cheng Marquis of Yiping Hu: In the past Wu was disrespectful and took a rebellious title against great risk. Many years have passed and they refuse to submit to His Majesty’s grace. Hu received order to govern Nanxia and deal with this difficulty. He spread the virtue of the Son of Heaven to those beyond the boundary and he advice the emperor on strategies on the inside. His virtue and honesty won him the heart of Jianghan. He built up the wealth of the area and his strategies were complete. Such sadness he pass away without fulfilling his ambition! To fulfill his last wishes, We ordered several commanders to pacify the south on behalf of Heaven. The campaign was successful in no time hence rewards should be given when it is due. If the tradition is followed to award your lordship with more lands, then your humbleness would not be exemplified. Therefore the title of Madam of the County of Wanshou will be bestowed upon your spouse, Lady Xiahou with annual tax revenue of 5000 families. Ten thousand *pi* of silk and ten thousand *hu*⁸⁶ of grains were also given.”

When Hu was five, he asked his nanny to get his golden ring one day. His nanny exclaimed, “You don’t have this thing before!” He then he got it from the mulberry tree in the neighboring Madam Li’s yard. When Madam Li saw it, she exclaimed, “This once belonged to my dead son, how did it appear in your hand?” Then the nanny explained what happened and Madam Li cried. People found this to be strange and there were rumors Li’s son was the previous life of Hu. There also once existed someone who can observe the luck of graves, he claimed Hu’s ancestral grave can allow the later generations to become the ruler of China, but if the grave was diggedthan Hu would not have any sons and Hu did dig up the grave. Another

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⁸⁴ Toward the later part of Han Gaozu’s (汉高祖) reign, he went on a campaign against one of the rebelled generals. When he asked all the states to sent troops, only the state of Zhao sent 4 generals with some soldiers. Gaozu then awarded those 4 generals with the tax revenue of 4000 families as a reward for the loyalty of Zhao.

⁸⁵ Xiao He (萧何) was the Prime Minister under Han Gaozu. He helped Gaozu unified China and set up an empire. Among his many contributions were recommending Han Xin (韩信), the Grand General who defeated Gaozu’s enemy, ensure there were enough supplies for the army during battles, govern the capital when the emperor was away, and establishing laws for the newly found empire. After Xiaohe’s death, Empress Dowager Lu (Gaozu’s wife) given his wife a title because Xiao He’s eldest son dead without an heir.

⁸⁶ *Hu* was Chinese measurement of volume. One *hu* in Wei-Jin era is equivalent to 20.34 liter today.

men told Hu, “If you break your arm then your position would go as high as the Three Ministers.” Hu once fall from the horse and did broke his arm and his rank did reach those of the Three Ministers but he had no son.

The emperor wish to have Hu’s nephew, Ji (暨), to be Hu’s heir. However, Ji refused because his father already passed away so he cannot be the heir of another. The emperor then asked Ji’s young brother, Yi (伊), to be Hu’s heir; Yi also refused. The emperor got angry and dismissed both of them. During the second year of Taikang [A.D. 281], the emperor gave the title Marquis of Yuping to Yi’s younger brother, Pian (篇) and order him to be Hu’s heir. Pian lived a humble life while he was in office. When his own cow gave birth to calves in a public farm, Pian left the calves there when he left. Pian was later promoted to Attendant of Scattering Cavalry but he passed away early.

Appendix: Empress Jingxian's Jin Shu bio

Empress Jingxian (景献皇后), surname Yang, was named huiyu (徽瑜) and a native from Nancheng of Taishan. Her father, Heng, was the governor of Shangdang. Her stepmother, surnamed Cai from Chenliu⁸⁷, was the daughter of Cai Yong, Left Gentlemen of the Household⁸⁸ of Han.

The empress was intelligent and virtuous. When Empress Jinghui [Sima Shi's previous wife] passed away, Jingdi (景帝) married the daughter of General who Defend the North, Wu Zhi, but later dismissed her and made lady Yang his empress. The empress had no son of her own. When Wudi (武帝) was offered the throne, she lived in the Hongxun (弘训) Palace and thus was named Empress Dowager Hongxun. During the ninth year of Taishi [A.D.274], her stepmother, Lady Cai, was posthumously named the Lady of Jiyang⁸⁹ County and given the title Mu⁹⁰. The Empress Dowager passed away during the fourth year of Xianning [A.D. 279] at age sixty-five and was buried in the burial ground of Junping⁹¹.

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⁸⁷ Chenliu (陈留) was a province of Yanzhou (兗州). It has 10 counties and 30,000 families. Chenliu is mostly known because it is where Cao Cao first started his own army. Today, it is a county located in Henan province.

⁸⁸ Left Gentleman of Household, or Zuo Zhonglangjiang (左中郎将), is one of the 6 Gentlemen of Household. They are in charge of the imperial palace guards.

⁸⁹ Jiyang (济阳) is a province of Xuzhou, which is located in present-day Jinan.

⁹⁰ According to the rules of posthumous titles, Mu (穆) means the person spreads virtue and upholds righteousness.

⁹¹ Junping Ling (峻平陵) is the burial ground of Jin Jingdi (Sima Shi). It is located just outside of Luoyang.