Liu Chi (1311–75) and his models: The Image-Building of a Chinese Imperial Adviser

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I

Chinese Culture gives many historical figures two rather conventional images; one might be labelled "official", and the other, "popular". The former refers to the idealized versions of the Confucian orthodoxy expounded in the canonical teachings and other didactic writings. The latter belongs to the non-elite at large, expressed in less tradition-bound literature, stories, novels and plays. These two images are neither static nor polarized; they overlap and interact with each other. In general, the "official image" tends to absorb from the permeating impact of the vulgar versions, whereas the "popular image", though different, still serves the Confucian cause by supporting its values and concepts. Each reflects a distinct façade of Chinese ideology and its prejudice; neither may be relied upon as an objective account.

Liu Chi (1311–75), chief adviser to Chu Yüan-chang, founder of the Ming Dynasty (T'ai-tsu, 1328–98), is an illustrious example of the innumerable eminent personages whose words and deeds became transfigured in the course of transmission. He is adulated and exalted, on the one hand, as an exemplary Confucian adviser assisting in founding a new dynasty, and as an efficacious prognosticator and taoist mystic of occult powers on the other. How did an ordinary political adviser to the empire founder like Liu Chi become transfigured and earn a reputation in history far beyond his capacity? This paper suggests that it was mainly a result of the historians' conscientious imitation of the prescribed exemplary models in the Chinese tradition in their description of their hero. In consequence, Liu Chi was remolded into a composite figure of several distinguished imperial advisers, while his distinct identity was lost among the stereotypes and clichés of his models.

The substance of this paper is distilled from the author's unpublished dissertation: Liu Chi (1311–75): the 'Dual Image' of a Chinese Imperial Adviser, submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Ph. D degree at Princeton University, 1966/7. I am indebted to Professors Frederick Mote and James T. C. Liu for their guidance of this study, and to Professor D. Lancashire of the University of Auckland for reading an earlier draft of this paper.


34
There has been an ingrained tradition of conformity to prescribed models and conventional patterns in Chinese biographical writing. Rather than creating an original character, historian-biographers liked to compress their objects into the prescribed patterns formulated in the model exemplars of the past. Some of the causes lay in the Chinese reverence for antiquity and tradition, but the abiding ones came from the emphasis on the specific mode of instruction in the Confucian tradition. The Confucian curriculum, designed to inculcate ultimate ideals and operation principles in the mind of the pupils, gave scant weight to abstract theory. Instead, it tended to make intensive use of minatory and exemplary figures of the past. These exemplars not only provided models of desirable and undesirable character traits, but also illustrated concrete cases of how individuals reacted to particular circumstances, their dilemmas and choices. In this way, the youth gradually came to grips with a variety of character traits operating in specific situations, and consciously became labelled with his choice hero of China's past.

In imperial China, the historians' main preoccupation was to disseminate and perpetuate the Confucian moral and ethical principles and to provide historical lessons. In fulfilling their didactic mission, historian-biographers created many model figures—minatory or exemplary—out of the eminent personalities of the past and made intensive applications of them. In official histories, for example, I Yin of the Shang became the "great imperial adviser", the Duke of Chou, the "loyal regent", the Kings Wen and Wu, the "virtuous kings", or the King Chou, the "vicious ruler". These historicized models provided the guidance and inspiration for later writers, while the whole emphasis was to recast an individual into the stereotyped patterns and cliché attributes of these prescribed models.

This Confucian tradition of conformity was invariably shared by popular writers, although they were seldom committed to its rigid format and conventional verbiage. Relatively free from orthodox restraints and devoid of didactic mission, popular writers were less vulnerable to the Confucian orthodoxy. Instead of imitating the conventional themes and styles, they were eager to entertain their readers with imaginative fantasy and melodrama. Like their Confucian counterparts, however, they created their model figures and tended to make constant references to them. For instance, in popular novels, Emperor Sui Yang (569—618) became a "bad last ruler"; Chu-ko Liang (181—234), a crafty and mysterious adviser; Ts'ao Ts'ao (155—220), a treacherous and vicious minister; and Kuan Yu (160—219),

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4 For example, Emperor Sui Yang had been recast into the stereotype of "bad last ruler", embodying the cliché attributes of King Chou, while he himself in turn became the model of such minatory figures. Cf. A. F. Wright, Sui Yang-ti: Personality and Stereotype, in The Confucian Persuasion, Stanford 1959, 47—76.
a loyal and gallant swordsman. These fictional heroes set the stage of
drama, while their character traits provided the model for later writers in
their caricature of similar personalities.

In their portrayal of Liu Chi, historians and popular writers alike fell
under the impact of the exemplary models of the past. They reviewed the
essential features of his career, then selected the relevant model, and
embroidered his biography with the stereotyped attributes of these model
exemplars. It is pertinent to examine Liu Chi’s biography, see what aspects
of his career befit the model of exemplary adviser.

II

Liu Chi, a native of Ch’ing-t’ien, Ch’u-ch’ou (modern Chekiang), was
born in 1311, on the eve of the collapse of the Mongol empire. Well-versed
in the classics, Liu gained his chin-shih degree in 1333 and held several minor
official posts in local and provincial administrations. He became well-known
for his forthright and resolute character and for his trenchant criticism of
corrupt officialdom. He was also distinguished for his scholastic versatility,
his competence in the classics, literature, as well as in the sciences: mathe­
matics, astronomy and the art of war. Despite several rebuffs in his early
career, Liu Chi’s caliber eventually attracted the attention of the Mongol
general Shih-mo I-sun (d. 1359), who invited him to join his entourage.
In 1356 Liu served the general, assisting him in the defense of Ch’u-ch’ou
against the raids of bandits. His brilliant performance, however, did not earn
the gratitude of the Mongol authorities, who became jealous of him and
refused to recommend him for reward. In great dismay, Liu retired to his
native village, thus concluding his service with the Mongols.

During his retirement in Ch’ing-t’ien, Liu Chi devoted himself to scholar­
ship and literary pursuits. He composed a series of essays entitled Yü-li­
tzu, in 10 chüan, elucidating, among other subjects, his social and political
philosophy. He expounded his vision of government guided by law and
administered by men of virtue, and unveiled his criticism of the malpractice

3 Emperor Sui Yang appears as a stock villain in Sui Yang-ti yen-shih (A Color­
ful History of Sui Yang-ti) whereas Chu-ko Liang, Ts’ao Ts’ao and Kuan Yü are
popular heroes in San-kuo-chih yen-i (The Romance of the Three Kingdoms). Cf.
Robert RuhLMANN, Traditional Heroes in Chinese Popular Fiction, in The Confucian
Persuasion, 150—55, 173—75.
4 For Liu Chi’s biography, see, among others, Ming-shih (SPPY ed.) 128/1a;
Chiao Hung, Kuo-ch’ao hsien-cheng lu (Wan-li ed.) 9/1a. For a modern study, see


36
and corruption of the Mongol administration. Here too, he gave vent to his aspiration, his yearning for an outlet for his talent, and an opportunity to serve a sage-emperor. He identified his future role in history with the celebrated advisers of the past: I Yin, Lü Shang\(^\text{[11]}\), the Duke of Chou, Chu-ko Liang and others, and cherished to be their equal\(^7\). This role identification, which clearly emerged from his writings, was a determinant in his conscious choice of a career; at the same time, it kindled the imagination of historians and popular writers in their selection of models for his biography.

The political upheavals of the early 1360's turned the tide of Liu Chi's political fortune. During this time various contenders arose amid the collapse of the Mongol empire, wrangling with each other for political ascendancy. Among these soldiers of fortune were such leading figures as Ch'en Yu-liang\(^{[12]}\) (d. 1363), Chang Shih-ch'eng\(^{[13]}\) (d. 1367), Fang Kuo-chen\(^{[14]}\) (d. 1374), Chu Yu-an-chang and others. Liu Chi was dismayed over the chaos of the time, but eventually sided with Chu Yuan-chang who outbid the others in his contest for power. However, he was criticized by his contemporaries for deserting the Mongols to serve a political contender with uncertain prospects. He made a good impression on Chu Yuan-chang who was enthralled by his wisdom and scholastic versatility, and took him into his confidence. Liu Chi's counsel eventually contributed to Chu Yuan-chang's success. In the political realm, he advised Chu to separate himself from his nominal overlord, Han Lin-erh\(^{[15]}\) (d. 1366), the puppet ruler of the "Sung" kingdom (1355—66), and established himself as an independent contender. In the military sphere, he executed several successful campaigns against Chu Yuan-chang's rivals. Upon Liu Chi's advice Chu took the initiative against Ch'en Yu-liang instead of Chang Shih-ch'eng. First at the battle of Great Victory Bay\(^{[16]}\) in 1360 and later at Po-yang Lake (Kiangsi) in 1363, Liu was the chief executant of the stratagem which scored the ultimate victory of Chu Yuan-chang over his arch-rival. Liu's counsel and scheming also led to the capitulation of Chang Shih-ch'eng in 1366. It is said that with such a high admiration for Liu Chi's tactical ingenuity Chu Yuan-chang consulted him on every military undertaking.

After Chu Yuan-chang's rise to power, and proclamation as Ming-emperor in 1368, Liu Chi, rather surprisingly, was not taken into favor in the new administration. He was given insignificant titles such as director of the Astronomy Bureau (1367) and Vice Censor-in-chief (1368). His contributions were


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\(\text{[11]}\) 呂尚 \(\text{[12]}\) 誠意伯劉文成公文集 \(\text{[13]}\) 陳友諒
\(\text{[14]}\) 張士誠 \(\text{[15]}\) 方國珍 \(\text{[16]}\) 韓林兒 \(\text{[17]}\) 大勝港

37
recognized only in matters like designing the new capital at Nanking (1366),
drafting the regulation for the new military system, the Wei-so (Guard System) (1368),
assisting in the compilation of a new calendar, called Wu-shen Ta-l'ung II [18] (4 chüan) (1367),
a treatise on rituals, called Ta-Ming chi-li [19] (50 chüan) (1370), and other more or less technical, scholastic matters.
Though he was honored with the title Earl of Ch'eng-i [20] (sincerity at heart)
and remained as Chu Yüan-chang's adviser, he exercised little political
influence. The reason was that the new emperor had become uneasy with
the intellectuals and his former associates because of their intellectual arrog­
gance and carping criticism. Thus, he began to bear a grudge against them.
On one occasion, however, the emperor did offer him the post of chief minis­
ter, but Liu declined, saying that he was too impatient to sit in judgment on
others and to carry the burden of administration. The truth was that he was
wary of his precarious position at court, not only because of the prospect of
waning imperial favor, but also since his rivals had been coveting oppor­
tunities to slander him. Thus in 1371, pleading ill-health, he begged the
emperor for permission to retire. His request was granted, but this did not
serve as a safeguard during his last years. Four years later, sick in bed,
he was treacherously poisoned by his arch-rival Hu Wei-yung [21] (d. 1380),
with the obvious connivance of the emperor. He was then sixty-five sui.
His meritorious service, however, was not forgotten by posterity, for in less than
two decades after his death, his honor was fully restored. In 1514, he was
invested with the posthumous title Wen-ch'eng [22] (cultural achievement);
in 1531 he was enshrined in the imperial temple, and two years later, the
earl was made a hereditary title.

The outline of Liu Chi's career as presented above aptly fits him into the
category of imperial adviser. Not only did he identify himself with the most
distinguished advisers of the past, but he did perform his service to the Ming
emperor in an advisory capacity. Liu Chi had served two dynasties, but
became important only after he had associated with Chu Yüan-chang, who
founded a new dynasty. In his service with the latter, Liu Chi was not a
regular official in the bureaucracy, nor did he gain any renown as a farsight­
ed or able administrator. Rather, enjoying the confidence of Chu Yüan-chang,
he served as his adviser, proffering him counsel and assisting him to attain
his objectives. When he lost his imperial favor, he was deprived of political
significance, whereupon he begged to retire, acting on the precedent set by
his models. In the light of his career, historians thus found it fitting to employ
the model of exemplary adviser in their portrayal of Liu Chi. What then is
the role of imperial adviser in the Chinese political hierarchy, and how is it
treated in Confucian political theory?

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[21] 胡惟庸 [22] 文成
The role of imperial adviser had been much exalted in Confucian theory of the hierarchical political order which placed overriding emphasis on the relationship between the emperor and his ministers. In Confucian political thought, the emperor, as the Son of Heaven, derives his authority to rule from the Mandate of Heaven. The emperor stood at the apex of the political ladder, and was served by a hierarchy of officials, the ministers. The latter, ideally men of virtue, not only performed administrative duties, but were also duty-bound to lead their lord along the path of virtue. In Confucian theory, he who served the True King ought to be an intellectual prodigy, well-versed in literature, civil and military affairs. Concurrently, he ought to be a man of moral attainment, a chün-tzu, a "superior man", or a sage capable of guiding the monarch to the path of kingship.

The superior man would regard it his highest aspiration and most honorable duty to serve the state. However, he would rather be content with a secluded life and devote himself to self-cultivation if events did not warrant his service. Similarly, he would disdain serving unless the ruler was a virtuous and saintly emperor who deserved the counsel of a sage minister. Therefore, the superior man is a proud, independent soul. When approached properly, he might consent to come. The lord must not expect the wise man to visit him; on the contrary, he should call upon the wise man's lodging. This is the essence of the Confucian ideal of true kingship.

Once his service was concluded or his counsel no longer heeded, the superior man would disentangle himself from his worldly commitment and devote himself to literature and scholarship, transmitting the way of the sages.

The relation between the ruler and his ministers, however, was not scaled in favor of the former, but rested on a footing of equality and reciprocity. Nowhere does Confucianism side with the ruler who is not virtuous, nor with the minister who has failed to serve his lord with all his heart. One must follow the path of the Supreme way in discharging his duties and obligations. Otherwise, one would lose the support of his partner and entail disgrace. When the ruler fails to enlist the support of the wise man, or is stripped of the service of capable ministers, this would be tantamount to having lost the grace of Heaven. Only through the cooperation of the lord and his ministers would peace and prosperity be attained. The ideal relationship between the lord and his ministers is comparable to that of the fish with water, or of a tiger in a mountain. It is to be perfect, natural and harmonious.

While the ideal ministership is applicable to all echelons of the imperial service, historians paid special tribute to those who serve as the emperor's advisers. The imperial adviser might come from a variety of sources and

backgrounds. However, he who entered into the partnership of emperor as adviser was often lauded in stereotyped euphuisms. The adviser is considered indispensible because the emperor alone did not possess the wisdom or ability to administer his domain. His adviser, being a man of virtue and great wisdom, would offer him guidance; when he showed ineptness, his adviser would correct him and guard him from blunders. The imperial adviser, therefore, is often called *Tso-ming ch' en*[^23] (ministers assisting the imperial mandate), while the more laudable ones enjoyed the honorific *Kuo-shih* (teacher of the state).[^9] In Chinese history, during the reign of glorious achievement under a capable ruler, special tribute is often accorded to his advisers.

In the popular tradition, the same concept of relationship between the ruler and ministers holds true, although the treatment is invariably different.[^10] Not bound by orthodox restraints nor committed to didactic purposes, popular writers drew a more candid and intimate picture of their objects. The emperor no longer appears as a sacrosanct, inviolable and transcendent sage-ruler, who becomes a spectacular, charismatic and at times mystery-enshrouded individual. With a more personal and intimate touch, they have brought the emperor's image to a sharper perspective on the basis of their concept of authority. In probing into the inner core of their hero, they have unveiled a more animated, though at times equally exaggerated profile.

This candid and personal approach, though not necessarily historically accurate, is applied to the relation between the emperor and his ministers. In contrast to the Confucian description, popular writers tended to undermine the omnipotence of the ruler, probably with the intention of boosting the suppressed image of his minister. The emperor appears to count more on his ministers for advice and support. They conceived ideas, mapped out plans, while the emperor listened, seemingly enthralled by their wisdom. The ruler's humble manner in requesting the service of the wise man, while being lauded in the Confucian canonical teachings, is further enhanced in popular fiction. The minister, on the other hand, placed his service with the lord more on a personal basis than on the abstract principles of Confucian ethics and moral obligations. Special tribute is paid to the advisers. In popular fiction, they appear as men of exceptional abilities, extraordinarily

[^9]: The term *Tso-ming ch' en* first appears in *San-kuo chih* (SPPY ed.) 4/4a where it is used with reference to the twenty-one ministers who served Liu Pang, later Emperor Han Kao-tsu (206-195 B.C.). The title *Kuo-shih* was first conferred on Liu Hsin (d. 23 A.D.) by Wang Mang (9-21 A.D.) in A.D. 9; cf. *Han-shu* (SPPY ed.) 99B/2a (tr. as state minister in H. H. Dubs, *The History of the Former Han Dynasty*, Baltimore 1955, 363).

[^10]: Ruhlmann (note 5), passim.
intelligent and gifted in supernatural capacities. They conceive their service with their lord as the will of Heaven, and once entering the service of their lord, they execute their missions with wisdom and often with occult powers. The adviser is at once the chief assistant to the lord and a master in his own right, for the emperor, appearing helpless, is dependent on his advice and assistance.

This being the popular version of the imperial adviser, popular writers tended to dramatize and transfigure the words and deeds of illustrious personalities. In their penchant for fantasy and melodrama, they took delight in transforming spectacular achievements into myth. While in the Confucian description, people of caliber become sanctified once they enter into partnership with their lord, in popular writings, extraordinary characters were vulnerable to the corrosion of legend. As with the Confucian exemplars, popular heroes have been made to conform to formalized character traits, and their images share the prescribed stereotypes. It remains to be seen how Liu Chi became a composite portrait of several exemplary imperial advisers of the past.

IV

Two great imperial advisers of the Shang Dynasty, I Yin and Lü Shang, provided the classical model for Liu Chi. I Yin, a semi-mythical figure of ancient China, was hailed as the most distinguished minister in Chinese history. According to popular beliefs, I Yin was originally a farmer who served Prince Ch'eng-t'ang [24] (18th (?) century B.C.) after the latter had humbly sought for his service five times. He became T'ang's chief adviser, assisting him in overthrowing the "tyrant" King Chieh of Hsia, and in founding the Kingdom of Shang. After T'ang's death, I Yin continued to serve the heir-apparent, T'ai-chia [25] (18th (?) century B.C.). When T'ai-chia indulged in vices and proved incapable of ruling, I Yin banished him and assumed authority himself, but restored his lord three years later after he had renounced his misdeeds. The myth thus established the model of exemplary adviser. Here was a learned man content with a secluded life when he was denied the opportunities to serve the state, but who emerged

[24] The sources of I Yin’s biography are rather diffuse. One may find occasional references, for example, in Mencius 3A, Motzu 2B, 2C, Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu 14/2 and Shih-chi (SPPY ed.) 3/2b. For a modern evaluation of these sources, see Chi’ü Wan-li, Shih-chi Yin pen-chí chi chi’i ta chi-ju chung so ts'ai Yin-Shang shih-tai ti shih-shih (Historical narratives concerning the Yin-Shang period as found in Shih-chí Yin pen-chí and other records), Bulletin of the College of Arts (National Taiwan University) 14 (1965), 87—118.

[25]
to assist his lord whole-heartedly when the True King humbly requested his service. Furthermore, he was concerned with the cultivation of virtue rather than with power, but would not heed the call of duty when his lord became incapable of exercising his divine authority. Nor would he have usurped the imperial prerogative, for when his lord proved his worthiness, I Yin surrendered his power of office and went into retirement. He is credited with having left behind a collection of instructions on government called I-hsun [26] (included in the Book of Documents), transmitting the way of the sages.

Next to I Yin, Lü Shang provided another model for Liu Chi. Better known as the Duke of Wang, or Chiang T'ai-kung [27], Lü Shang was the teacher of Wen and Wu (11th & 12th century B. C.), two celebrated rulers of the Chou kingdom. According to tradition, he was the chief adviser to King Wu in defeating King Chou, the "tyrant" of Shang. A versatile writer, he is the alleged author of a treatise on the art of war called Liu-t'ao [28], generally known as T'ai-kung ping-fa [29] (Grand Duke's Art of War), as well as a collection of instructions on government for King Wu, known as Tan-shu [30]. In popular fiction, however, he was far better known as an exotic figure. Under the name of Chiang Tzu-ya [31], he is the most distinguished warrior equipped with supernatural powers in Feng-shen yen-i (The Enfeoffment of the Gods) [32], a Ming historical novel featuring the defeat of King Chou by King Wu of the Chou. In the popular tradition, he is one of the most popular among the Chinese gods. His picture is pasted on the walls of houses, so that if an inauspicious word is spoken it will be harmless to injure the occupants. In this manner he became a pivot of Chinese mythology [\textsuperscript{12}].

\textsuperscript{12} For Lü Shang's biography, see Shih-chi 32/1a. According to Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu tsung-mu t'i-yao (1936 ed.) 99/1a, the present version of Liu-t'ao (in 6 chüan, SPTK ed.) is a doctored edition of the earlier text. The study of the art of war in ancient China known as "Grand Duke's Art of War" is probably based on this work. Chang Liang, chief adviser to Han Kao-tsu, for example, is said to have received instructions of the "Grand Duke's Art of War" from the Taoist Huang-shih-kung (cf. note 24). According to Hung Mai, Jung-chai sui-pi: Hsü-pi [33] (1959 ed.) 9/64-5, fragments of Tan-shu are preserved in the Book of Rites. On the legend about Lü Shang, see among others, Henri Doné, Recherches sur les superstitions en Chine. Shanghai 1930, pt. 2, tome 9, 665–70; E. T. C. Werner, A Dictionary of Chinese Mythology. Shanghai 1932, 59–65; Yang Wen-wei, Chiang T'ai-kung ku-shih (The Story of Chiang T'ai-kung), Min-su (Sun Yat-sen University, Canton), no. 101 (1933); Liu Ts'un-yan, Buddhist and Taoist Influences on Chinese Novel I: the Authorship of Feng-shen yen-i. Wiesbaden 1962, passim.
Invoking I Yin in their evaluation of Liu Chi, the appraisers compared the parallel features of his career to the former, such as his emergence from seclusion to become Chu Yüan-chang’s adviser and his capacity as a writer transmitting the way of the sages. This association not only strengthened Liu Chi’s position in history, but also provided a basis of defense against some of the most criticized aspects of his career. A Ming writer, taking I Yin who deserted the King of Hsia to assist Prince Ch’eng-t’ang in overthrowing the tyrant as precedent, argued that Liu Chi should not be impeached for having served two dynasties. He pointed out that I Yin was loyal at heart, only that his loyalty was not sought, and his entering the service of T’ang caused him considerable spiritual torment. If I Yin bore no disgrace for serving a new king to perpetuate the sage way, then Liu Chi, who served Chu Yüan-chang under similar circumstances, should not be rebuked for abandoning the Mongols. I Yin’s precedent thus came to the defense of Liu Chi, whose integrity had been questioned by his contemporaries for deserting the Mongols to serve Chu Yüan-chang.

Liu Chi is compared to Lü Shang in his capacity as a great adviser who served Chu Yüan-chang in the same manner as Lü Shang served the King of Wu. That he had left a collection of writings for the emulation of posterity also made him match well with Lü Shang who had authored a treatise on military arts as well as a collection of instructions on government.

Descending through the imperial era, several other outstanding imperial advisers served as model exemplars for Liu Chi. They include such celebrated figures as Chang Liang (d. 189 B.C.) of the Han, Chu-ko Liang of the Three Kingdoms period, Fang Hsüan-ling (578–648) and Wei Cheng (580–643) of the T’ang, Yeh-lü Ch’u-ts’ai (1189–1243) and Liu Ping-chung (1216–74) of the Yüan. They were used for comparison with Liu Chi, since they were all model exemplars and their association with Liu Chi would serve to enhance his image, among whom, Chang Liang and Chu-ko Liang provided the main source of inspiration. In a gradual and cumulative process, the stereotyped attributes of these model figures in both official histories and popular fiction were woven into the fabric of Liu Chi’s dual image.

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13 Cf. prefatory remarks of Li Pen (1556) and Ch’en Lieh (1572) in LWCKC 48b, 3b. See also Chung Hsing, Ping Liu Wen-ch’eng kung chi (Wan-li ed.), preface.
14 Yao Kuei, Ch’eng-i po tz’u-t’ang chi, Yao Wen-min kung i-kao (Ts’ung-shu chi-ch’eng ed.) 7/105.
15 Cf. Li Pen’s prefatory remark to LWCKC (note 13).
Before discussing the impact of the model of Chang Liang and Chu-ko Liang, it is pertinent to examine how others contributed to the image-building of Liu Chi, firstly, Fang Hsüan-ling and Wei Cheng of the T'ang, and secondly, Yeh-lü Ch'ü-ts'ai and Liu Ping-chung of the Yuan.

Fang Hsüan-ling, an intellectual prodigy from Shantung, began his career as secretary to the scion of the Li family who finally became Emperor T'ang T'ai-tsung (r. 627-48). Fang accompanied him in many campaigns and was highly praised for his counsel and statesmanship. After the founding of T'ang, he served T'ai-tsung first as counsellor, then as chief minister of state, participated in numerous important governmental matters and earned the confidence of the emperor. Once he retired from court in consequence of some slight rebuke, but the emperor went in person to fetch him back. He was so committed to the imperial cause that he still pleaded with the emperor to abandon the costly war against Korea. His loyalty and dedication were such that he became an idol among later aspirants.

Wei Cheng was distinguished for his scholastic versatility and tactical ingenuity. He had served several political contenders during the chaotic years of the fall of Sui, but finally sided with the Li family who founded the T'ang Dynasty. Under Emperor T'ai-tsung, Wei became his confidant, took part in military campaigns and served the state in various capacities. Not only did he contribute to state policies but also constantly remonstrated with the emperor to be benevolent to his subjects and frugal in expenditure, even at the risk of incurring imperial displeasure. When he died, the emperor personally composed his tomb inscription, and his portrait was hung in the imperial gallery founded by the emperor to honor eminent personages.

In comparing Liu Chi to Fang Hsüan-ling, most historians admitted the parallel of their achievements, except perhaps a Ming writer, who argued that he surpassed Fang in at least one aspect. That is, while Fang's words and deeds could be scrutinized in his military credentials (tu) and proclamations (hsi), he left no writings on state policies or any other pieces worth transmitting. This places Liu Chi on a higher rung of merit than his model. In the case of Wei Cheng, while general opinion agreed on the similarities of their career, a Ch'ing scholar indicated one major difference. He pointed out that Wei was inferior in virtue since he was more of a roving soldier of fortune, whereas Liu Chi was staunchly dedicated to principles. For example, when Wei joined the cause of the political contenders during

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16 For Fang Hsüan-ling's biography, see Hsin T'ang-shu (SPPY ed.) 96/1a; Chiu T'ang-shu (SPPY ed.) 66/1a.
17 For Wei Cheng's biography, see Hsin T'ang-shu 97/1a; Chiu T'ang-shu 71/1a.
18 Cf. Prefactory remark of YANG Shou-ch'en (1572) to LWCKC 31b.
the fall of Sui, he was more concerned with his own prospects than with founding a new dynasty. When he met the future T'ang emperor, he used persuasive power to gain imperial favor; in his heart, he was seemingly unconcerned with the fortune of the dynasty. Liu Chi was different. He remained loyal to the Mongols until they proved unworthy of support, and he joined Chu Yüan-chang only when he had perceived that the new king would restore order and perpetuate the Supreme way. With this juggling of facts, Liu Chi was elevated to a higher plane of virtue.

Yeh-lü Ch'ü-ts'ai was the son of a Khitan (Liao) noble who surrendered to the Mongols in 1214 when Genghis Khan captured Peking where Yeh-lü's father was governor. Impressed by his intellectual capacity, Genghis took him into his entourage and subsequently Yeh-lü accompanied the great khan into Western Asia where a campaign was waged against Persia. Upon the latter's death, Yeh-lü served Ögödei Khan (1185–1241), during which he introduced an elaborate program of reform in the administration and fiscal policy based on Chinese models. Although much of his achievement was invalidated by his death in 1243, his reforms heralded a change of the Mongol policy in the subdued territories, leading to the acculturation policy of the next reign.

Liu Ping-chung continued the work of Yeh-lü Ch'ü-ts'ai during the reign of Khubilai Khan (1215–94). A Ch'an Buddhist in origin, Liu won the favor of the Mongol prince long before he became emperor in 1260. He succeeded in convincing the great Khan of the feasibility of the Chinese political tradition in the administration of the Chinese territories. His advice led to the adoption of the Chinese model for reforms in the Mongol administration whereby the obsolete nomadic practices were replaced by a Sinicized bureaucracy, concomitant with the Confucian values and institutions. With Yeh-lü Ch'ü-ts'ai, Liu Ping-chung ushered in the increasing Sinicization of the Mongols and the political preponderence of the Chinese literati under Mongol rule.

Liu Chi is compared to both Yeh-lü Ch'ü-ts'ai and Liu Ping-chung in the relevance of their career and intellectual capacities. Both Yeh-lü and Liu Ping-chung were adulated as great imperial advisers in the Chinese tradition, but they were also versatile scholars in the sciences: astronomy, mathematics and the military arts. Moreover, both were rich in legends. It would not be accidental, therefore, that Liu Chi should have become intimately associated with Liu Ping-chung in the mind of the populace. For example, in the late

19 P'AN Te-yü, Lün Liu Ch'eng-i, Yang-i-ch'ao chi (1849 ed.) 13/7a.
20 For Yeh-lü's biography, see Yüan-shih (SPPY ed.) 136/1a. On his contribution as Ögödei's adviser, see Igor de RACHEWILTZ, Yeh-lü Ch'ü-ts'ai (1189–1243): Buddhist Idealist and Confucian Statesman in Confucian Personalities, 189–210.
21 For Liu Ping-chung's biography, see Yüan-shih 157/1a. On his contribution as Khubilai's chief adviser, see my article, Liu Ping-chung (1216–74): a Buddhist-Taoist Statesman at the Court of Khubilai Khan, TP LIII (1961) (1–3), 98–146.
Ming historical novel, *Ying-lieh chuan* (Romance of the Ming Dynasty Heroes), Liu Chi is claimed to be the grandson of Liu Ping-chung. This association serves to enhance the myth of Liu Chi. Despite the parallels in their achievements, some Ch'ing writers conceded that Liu Chi deserved higher merit because he surpassed the two in literary matters. They pointed out that neither Yeh-lü nor Liu Ping-chung were highly competent in literature and had left few pieces worthy of transmission. In taking these antique models to task while making the comparison, the admirers of Liu Chi thus succeeded in bolstering the image of a far superior hero.

VI

While the foregoing might have been rather superfluous comparisons, it was Chang Liang and Chu-ko Liang, two great imperial advisers of the Han that left the lasting imprint on Liu Chi. Chang Liang was originally a prince of the Kingdom of Han (424—229 B. C.). When Ch'in Shih huang-ti (r. 246—10 B. C.) annexed his domain, Chang attempted to assassinate the emperor in revenge for his people, but failed. Later, he encountered an old Taoist called Huang-shih-kung (Yellow-stone Elder), also known as I-shan lao-jen, on the Bridge of I. After testing his patience and perseverance by requesting him to fetch his shoes under the Bridge and put them on for him, the Taoist gave him a copy of the "Grand Duke's Art of War" from which he learnt all about statecraft and military stratagem. Chang organized a band of his own during the chaotic years of the collapse of the Ch'in, but soon joined Liu Pang, the prime contender, and became his trusted adviser. When Liu Pang became the Han emperor Kao-tsu (r. 206—195 B. C.), Chang continued to serve him and was invested with the title of Marquis of Liu, hence he was known as Liu-hou. In later years, however, the emperor became suspicious of his advisers, and his favor waned. Thus he begged for per-

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22 *Ying-lieh chuan*, annotated and collated by Chao Ching-shen and Tu Hao-ming. Shanghai 1956, 90. According to the earlier version of this work entitled *Huang-Ming k'ai-yün ying-wu chuan* (1591 ed., Nakaku Bunko), the source of this story is from the collectanea *Chin-hsien hui-yen* compiled by Kao Ming-feng. However, there is no trace of this either in the later version of *Ying-lieh chuan* (also known as *Yün-ho ch'i-tsung*) or the contemporary edition of *Chin-hsien hui-yen* (*Yüan-Ming shan-pen ts'ung-shu*, photolithographic reproduction of Wan-li ed., Shanghai 1937). Probably inspired by *Ying-lieh chuan*, a Ch'ing play entitled *Chien-huang t'u* by Chu Tso-chao, also identifies Liu Chi as the grandson of Liu Ping-chung. See Huang Wen-yang [ed.], *Chü-hai tsung-mu t'i-yao*; Peking 1955, 1305. On the fictional treatment of Liu Chi in *Ying-lieh chuan*, see my forthcoming paper: "Liu Chi (1311—1375) in the *Ying-lieh chuan*: the fictionalization of a scholar-hero", in *Journal of the Oriental Society of Australia* 5 (1), 1968.

23 *Ssu-k'ü ch'üan-shu tsung-mu t'i-yao* 169/2a.
mission to retire, claiming that after having acquired attainments beyond
the reach of a commoner, he was prepared to lay aside worldly affairs and
join the Taoist Ch‘ih-sung-tzu [58] (Master of the Red Pine) to cultivate immor­
tality. His apparent flirtation with Taoism gave way to innumerable legends.
Naturally, Chang Liang provided an inspiring model for Liu Chi, since
Chang lived in an interregnum of comparable political turmoil, and had served
an emperor with like personality. Chu Yuan-chang, in his fondness for Han
Kao-tsu, consciously modelled himself after the Han emperor, and liked to
compare Liu Chi with Chang Liang. Speaking of his trusted adviser, the Ming
emperor often exclaimed, “Ah! This is my Tzu-fang (Tzu-fang [54] being Chang
Liang’s style-name)” [25]. Probably for this reason, when Emperor Hsüan-te
(r. 1426—35) conferred a posthumous honorific title on Liu Chi in 1514, he
chose the name Wen-ch‘eng after Chang Liang [26]. While the admirers of Liu
Chi generally compared his career with Chang Liang’s, they tended to speak
in favor of their hero when evaluating their respective achievements. They
twisted their argument to show that Liu surpassed Chang in at least two
aspects. Firstly, they pointed out that although both lost imperial favor in
their later years, Liu Chi, unlike Chang Liang who retreated to practise
taoist longevity, actively involved himself in state affairs, seemingly unaware
of his precarious position. For this reason, Liu Chi should deserve
higher praise in history [27]. Secondly, they indicated that although both were
advisers to a founding emperor, Chang’s words were only recorded at second
hand, whereas Liu Chi transmitted his experience in a collection of writings.
They suggested that this was probably because Chang was more of a taoist
disciple who felt no need to leave words to posterity, whereas Liu Chi, being
a devoted Confucian who refused to be secretive, was eager to disseminate
his wisdom among future generations [28]. With this display of sheer argument,

[25] On Chu Yuan-chang’s obsession with the image of Han Kao-tsu, see Chao I, Ming-tsu hsing-shih to lang Han-kao (Ming Tai-tsu’s tendency toward frequent imitation of Han Kao-tsu), Nien-erh-shih cha-chi [57] (SPPY ed.) 32/1a; see also Wu Han, Chu Yüan-chang chuan. Peking 1949, 276—7.

they succeeded in placing Liu Chi on a higher level of merit than his model.

Similarly, Chang Liang's Taoist image established in popular fiction embellished the myth of Liu Chi. This began with the transmission of the story of Chang Liang's encounter with the Taoist Huang-shih-kung. Chang, who has the alleged author of *Ling-ch'i ching*[^11], a divination text, is said to have inherited the book from Huang-shih-kung. Likewise, Liu Chi is credited with having provided the annotation and commentary, in which he gave a philosophical diagnosis of the text rather than a subscription to the prevalent magical formulations[^29]. In the above-mentioned *Ying-lieh chuan*, Chang Liang's encounter with Huang-shih-kung was another source of inspiration for Liu Chi. There was a popular story about Liu Chi deriving his knowledge of statecraft and military arts from a divine book he found in the mountain cave in Ch'ing-t'ien during his early years. While this appears in earlier works, in this novel, the divine book is claimed to have been passed on to Chang from Huang-shih-kung[^30]. It was guarded by a white ape who is said to have been entrusted by Chang with the custody of the book which he was instructed to turn over to a man called Liu, i.e., Liu Chi. When Liu received the divine book, he freed the ape who disappeared in a stream of bright light[^31].

In *Ying-lieh chuan*, there is yet another plot linking Liu Chi with Chang Liang. This concerns his request for retirement which was adapted from a similar episode about Chang Liang well publicized in short stories and plays[^32]. According to this, one day Liu Chi accompanied Chu Yüan-chang

[^11]: *Ling-ch'i ching* is still extant. A copy of the Ming Wan-li edition with Liu Chi's commentary is preserved in Naikaku Bunko. The authorship is not ascertained; some attribute it to Chang Liang, others to Liu An[^65] (179–122 B.C.). The annotations are attributed to Yen Yu-ming[^66] of the Tsin, Ho Ch'eng-t'ien[^67] of Liu-Sung, while Liu Chi, along with Ch'en Shih-k'ai[^68] of the Yuan are credited with having provided the elucidation. Liu Chi's preface to this work entitled *Ling-ch'i ching hsi* is included in LWCKC 5/37a. For further remarks of this work, see Su-k'u ch'üan-shu tsung-mu t'ie-yao[^69]. III. Taipei 1962, 521–25.


[^30]: *Ying-lieh chuan* 90. This, however, is not featured in the 1591 edition.

[^31]: *Ying-lieh chuan* 442ff. Chang Liang's request for retirement from public office had been adapted into several short stories and plays. There are two hua-pen stories entitled Chang Tzu-fang mu-tao chi[^79] (Ch'ing-p'ing shan-fang hua-pen, ed. Hung Keng[^80] Peking 1955, 83–91) and Chang Tzu-tau tz'u-ch'ao tso-Han chi[^72] (Pao-wen-t'ang shu-mu)[^80]; two short Sung plays called Mu-tao liu-yao[^80] and San-mu tao liu-yao[^80] (Wu-lin chiu-shih)[^80] and a Yuan drama called Chang Liang tz'u-ch'ao kuei-shan by WANG Chung-wen[^77] (Lü-kuei-pu)[^78]. For details, see T'AN Cheng-pi, Hua-pen yü ku-chü (10)^[^79], Shanghai 1956, 47.

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[^67]: 63

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[^83]: 79
in a visit to the temple of the worthy ministers of previous dynasties. The statues were made of clay and could walk like human beings. The Emperor asked Liu about every one of them, and was critical of almost everybody. For example, he impeached Wu Tzu-hsü (d. ca. 490 B.C.) for humiliating his lord to seek personal vengeance, saying that he should be removed from the temple. When he came to Chang Liang, he rebuked him for his failure to dissuade Han Kao-tsu from enfeoffing Han Hsin (d. 196 B.C.), and of deserting his post when the emperor was in great need of his service. When the clay figurine of Chang Liang heard this, he burst into tears. Hearing Chu Yuan-chang’s remarks, Liu Chi was worried. He began wondering if he might entail the same rebuff on some future day if he clung to office; thus he made up his mind to resign, which he did at last. This plot implicitly malign ed the Ming emperor for his harsh treatment of officials, for which he was considered the match of Han Kao-tsu, if not surpassing him. The similarity of the two emperors in their attitude towards officials and the reaction of the latter thus provided a basis for comparing Liu Chi with Chang Liang. As mentioned earlier, Chang begged to retire after he had sensed the mounting

33 No clay figurines are featured in the 1591 edition.
34 This is an allusion to Wu Tzu-hsü’s vengeance for his father who was executed by King P’ing of Ch’u on false charges. After his father’s death, Wu fled to the Kingdom of Wu, sought assistance from the king and brought the Wu troops subduing the kingdom of Ch’u. Returning to Ch’u, Wu dug up the grave of the king and gave three hundred lashes to the dead body. For his biography, see Shih-chi 66/1a; see also Fritz JÄGER, Die Biographie des Wu Tzu-hsü, OE 8 (1960), pt. 1, 1-16 and R. C. RUOLOPH, The Shih-chi Biography of Wu Tzu-hsü, item 9 (1962), 105-20.
35 This is an allusion to Chang Liang who, together with Han Hsin, was chief adviser to Liu Pang (Han Kao-tsu) in the founding of the Han. After he became emperor, Liu was wary of their potential menace and was anxious to get rid of both. Thus Han Hsin, who was enfeoffed as the Marquis of Hua-yin, was executed on charges of high treason. Chang Liang, aware of his precarious position, pleaded ill health and retired from public office. For Chang’s biography, see note 24; for Han Hsin’s, see Shih-chi 92/1a (tr. in John DE FRANCIS, Biography of the Marquis of Huan-yin, HJAS 10 (1947), 179-215; B. WATSON (note 24), 106-232), Han-shu 34/1a.
36 This episode in Ying-lieh chuan is based on a plot in an earlier short story, the chapter Lao Feng T’ang chih-chien Han Wen-ti [86] of I-ch’en chi [86] in Ch’ing-p’ing shan-t’ang hua-pen, 224-25. This story, while retelling Feng T’ang’s remonstrance with Han Wen-ti (r. 179-57 B.C.) (Han-shu 50/4b), introduces a similar episode about Emperor Sung Chen-tsung (r. 1004-22) in the prologue. It relates how the emperor, during his visit to the temple of ancient ministers, rebuked Han Hsin and Li Chih (594-669) [86] and removed their statues from the temple, replacing them with those of Chao Chung-kuo (137-52 B.C.) of the Han (Han-shu 69/1a) and Li Mou (87) of the T’ang (Hsin T’ang-shu 79/11a). At the same time, the statue of Wu Tzu-hsü and that of Chao Yün (d. 229) [86] were removed to the temple gate as guards. The former was accused of humiliating the dead body of his lord (cf. note 34); the latter, of abusing his lord’s mother (cf. San-k’uo chih 36/8a). Apparently, this episode provides the basis for the story about Liu Chi. Cf. Chao Chingshen, Hsiao-shuo hsien-hua [89], Shanghai 1937, 10-13; T’AN Cheng-pi (note 32), 47 ff.
suspicion of the emperor, saying that he wished to become a disciple of the Taoist Ch’ih-sung-tzu. For similar reasons, Liu Chi also begged the Ming emperor to allow him to retire, on the pretext of failing health, although, unlike Chang Liang, he was unable to live out his days in peace.

Another episode was even more dramatic. Apparently inspired by the precedent of Chang Liang, Liu Chi was sketched to look like a woman in a collection of portraits of the worthy ministers of the Ming. The anecdote that Chang Liang looked like a pretty lady, which originated in his official biography, was publicized in a Ch’ing play called Huang-shih p’o shou-chi t’ao kuan (Lady Yellow-stone offering plans to flee from the pass) composed by Yang Ch’ao-kuan. It tells how he was assisted to escape from the guards by Huang-shih-p’o, wife of the Yellowstone taoist who advised him to disguise himself as a woman, after he had mistakenly killed a Ch’in bodyguard instead of the emperor. It was due to his feminine looks that he was able to assume the disguise without arousing the suspicion of the guards.

In the usual fashion, Liu Chi appears as a man with “curly whiskers and torch-like eyes,” but in this collection of portraits he looks like a woman. Was it not due to the influence of Chang Liang?

VII

Finally, it was Chu-ko Liang, the great adviser of the third century who provided the finishing touch to Liu Chi’s image. Chu-ko was a learned scholar who lived in seclusion during the chaos and collapse of the Han Dynasty. He was persuaded to serve remnants of the Han ruling house when one of its descendants, Liu Pei, later ruler of the Kingdom of Shu (221–63), humbled himself three times to request his service. From 207 on until his death in 231, Chu-ko served the Shu kingdom, first under Liu Pei and later his successor, with ardent loyalty and dedication. With his political skill and tactical ingenuity, Chu-ko joined forces with the Wu kingdom and scored several victories over the Wei. Under his able counsel and leadership, the Shu kingdom consolidated its position in the southwest, successfully repelled incursions by the Wei, pacified the southern barbarians,
and prepared for the unification of China. Though he perished before he could realize his cherished enterprise, Chu-ko enjoyed unsurpassed acclaim for his loyalty and dedication. His exceptional talent and colorful achievement, moreover, gave way to legend. In popular fiction, he was eulogized as an ingenious tactician and a taoist mystic of occult powers rather than as a political counsellor and statesman.40

Naturally a character like Chu-ko Liang provided a ready-made model for people following similar careers. Thus Liu Chi is compared to Chu-ko who was content with obscurity and devotion to self-cultivation during the period of upheaval, but who emerged to serve the state when the sage-king humbly requested his assistance. Liu Chi’s contribution as adviser to Chu Yuan-chang in state and military affairs is placed on a par with that of Chu-ko Liang’s.41 The comparison was generally in the balance, however, a Ming writer advanced an argument deliberately aimed at tipping the scale in favor of Liu Chi. He pointed out that, whereas Chu-ko Liang failed in his northern expeditions to unify China, Liu Chi contributed to the success of Chu Yuan-chang in founding a new dynasty, thus he deserved higher merit in history. This, however, is a rather biased verdict, since Chu-ko’s master was an ill-fated last emperor, not the successful founder of a dynasty. Nonetheless, this twist of argument at the expense of Chu-ko Liang served to boost Liu Chi’s image as a far superior adviser.

It was in Ying-lieh chuan, however, that Liu Chi came to merge with the popular image of Chu-ko Liang as a sagacious schemer and mysterious tactician of occult powers. In the naval encounter at Po-yang Lake where Chu Yang-chang scored a decisive victory over Ch’en Yu-liang, Liu Chi is featured as a taoist mystic who invoked magical spells to implement his military stratagem. When the confrontation took place, Liu devised a plot to set fire to the enemy fleet, but that required the presence of a prevailing wind, which was not then blowing. Asked how he could pursue his plan, Liu said, “Don’t worry, I’ll entice the wind to our side”. Then he ordered his men to erect an altar in the north-western corner of the mouth of the lake. It was to be two

40 For Chu-ko Liang’s biography, see San-kuo chih 35/1a; Chu-ko Liang chi, ed. Tuan Hsi-duang, Peking 1960, appendix; see also Achilles Fang, The Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms (220—65) I, Harvard 1952, passim. For his image in popular fiction, see Tung Mei-kan, San-kuo yen-i shih-lun [169], Shanghai 1956, 144 ff; Ruhlmann (note 5), 162 ff.

41 For comparison of Liu Chi with Chu-ko Liang, see among others, Ch’ien Lieh (1572), LWCKC 3a; Tan Ch’ien, Kuo-ch’üeh [161] (1558 ed.), 522; Liu Shih-i, Hsin-chih Ju [102] (1938 ed.), 34a. Liu Chi’s service with Chu Yuan-chang was also compared to that of Chou Yü [108] (175—210) to Sun Ts’e [134] (175—200) of the Wu kingdom. Chou was the adviser to the rulers of Wu, but he was a poor rival against Chu-ko Liang. See Yeh Ch’eng-chu’s prefatory remark to LWCKC 44b. For Chou Yü’s biography, see San-kuo chih 30/1a.

42 CHUNG Hsing, P’ing Liu Wen-ch’eng Kung-chi, preface.
hundred and forty feet high, conforming to the twenty-four ch'ī[99], twelve wei[100] in diameter, conforming to the twelve moons, with one hundred and eight legs, conforming to the thirty-six t'ien-kang[105] and seventy-two ti-sha[106]. On each floor of the altar would be placed incense sticks and sacrifices. On the day of offensive, Liu robed himself in a taoist costume, mounted the altar, chanted hymns, waved his sword and invoked a magical spell. Before long, a turbulent storm arose. Taking this advantage, Chu's men projected catapult missiles onto Ch'en Yu-liang's fleet, which was annihilated in a sea of fire[44].

Apparently, this caricature of Liu Chi was modelled on that of Chu-ko Liang in the San-kuo-chih yen-i (Romance of the Three Kingdoms). The plot is based on Chapter 49 entitled "On the Seven Stars Altar Chu-ko sacrifices to the winds; at the Three Rivers Chou Yu liberates fire"[114]. Here it describes how Chu-ko Liang conjured an east wind with his taoistic magic spells to propel his incendiary boat against Ts'ao Ts'ao's armada at Ch'ih-pi ("Red Cliff", in modern Hupei). In Ying-chieh chuan, the battle scene at Po-yang Lake and the characters involved were remolded according to those taking place at Ch'ih-pi in San-kuo-chih yen-i. There Liu Chi became an avatar of Chu-ko, whereas Ch'en Yu-liang replaced Ts'ao Ts'ao as the defeated villain. The episode was given even more colorful touch when adapted to the stage. Known as Tang-Liang[115] (Warding off Ch'en Yu-liang) or Chan-shih t'ai

43 Ying-chieh chuan 209ff. The prototype of the taoist sacrificial altar can be found in Ling-pao ling-chiao, chih-tu chin-shu[107], in Tao-ts'ang[108] (1924—26 ed.), ts' e 208—63. The authorship is attributed to Lin Wei-lu (Ling-pao)[109], a taoist priest who died in 1302. Apparently, this provided a model for the description in Ying-chieh chuan, which also borrowed other elements from contemporary novels. For example, the name of the sword which Liu Chi used in the ceremony, "Seven-stars sword" (ch'i-hsing chien)[110], was from San-kuo-chih yen-i. The description of t'ien-kang and ti-sha was adopted from Shui-hu chuan. Cf. Liu Ts'un-yan (note 12), 156. Some of the terms used for the altar need to be explained. Ch'i is a fortnightly period which constitutes the basic unit of the length of the year of which there are twenty-four parts, called Erh-shih ssu ch'i[111]. Cf. Dai Kan-Wa jiten (1955 ed.) 6/847; Joseph Needham, Science and Civilization in China III, Cambridge 1965, 404—5. Wei is a unit of measurement of eight feet. Cf. Dai Kan-Wa jiten 3/89. The thirty-six t'ien-kang refers to the thirty-six stars of the Great Bear which revolve around the pivotal star; the seventy-two ti-sha are seventy-two stars of evil influence; cf. E.T.C. Werner, 506, 596, (note 12).

44 Ying-chieh chuan, sections 38—39. The naval battle at Po-yang lake is documented in Ming-shih 123/2a; T'ung Ch'eng-hsü, P'ting Han-lu[112] (1938 ed.), Ch'ien Ch'ien-i, Kuo-chu chin-hsium shih-lieh[113] (1916 ed.) IV. Comparing the historical records, the fictional elements of Liu Chi become more revealing.

(Terrace of Soldiers) in the Peking opera, it entertained the audience as a piece of action-packed, highly dramatic intrigue. Through the theatrical performance, Liu Chi’s taoistic image of Chu-ko Liang — robed in a black gown embroidered with eight trigrams, hymns chanting and sword waving, overwhelming his enemy with ease — became further ingrained in the mind of the popular audience.

Liu Chi is also paired with Chu-ko Liang in the doctrine of the secret societies in the Ch‘ing Dynasty. In the surviving document of the Heaven and Earth, or Hung Society (T‘ien-ti hui), a seditious organization aiming at the overthrow of the Manchus and the restoration of the Ming, Liu Chi is juxtaposed with Chu-ko Liang, and was hailed as a champion of the Society and apotheosized for his tactical ingenuity and political perspicacity. He is said to have left a scheme for the Society and prophesied the doom of the Manchus. In the design of the Mu-yang Castle, the imaginary capital of the Hung Society, there was a pagoda named after Liu Chi, called Po-wen pagoda, laid side by side with that of Chu-ko Liang.

Liu Chi’s popular image of Chu-ko Liang was further enhanced in a Ch‘ing play called Yao-shang chi (The Story of a Jade Goblet) or Wan-nien shang (Ten-thousand-years-old Goblet), where the anecdote about Liu Chi receiving the divine book in the mountain cave was fused with the story of...

46 About this play, see Ch‘ing-ch‘u ch‘u-mu, ch‘u-i’an, ed. T‘ao Ch‘un-ch‘i (116), Peking 1962, 231; Kung Te-po, Hsi-ch‘u ya li-shih (117), Taipei 1962, 359–62. As observed by Ch‘ao Ch‘ing-shen (note 36, 208 ff), the author of this play also adapted Chapter 50 of San-kuo-chih yen-i: “Chu-ko Liang foresees the Hua-yung episode; Kuan Yün-ch‘ang [Yü] releases Ts‘ao Ts‘ao” (118) (Romance . . . , 219–26). Here he describes how Chu Yüan-chang’s officer K‘ang Mou-ts‘ai (119) freed his former master, the defeated Ch‘en Yu-liang, in a similar setting in which Kuan Yü released Ts‘ao Ts‘ao at Hua-yung in San-kuo-chih yen-i. A distinguished military officer of the Shu-Han kingdom, Kuan Yü is a well-known figure in the Romance, and has been apotheosized as a god of war. For his biography, see San-kuo chih 36/1a. About his legend, see E. T. C. Werner (note 12), 227–30; Ruhmlann (note 5), 166 ff.

47 The source of Chu-ko Liang’s image in San-kuo-chih yen-i can be traced to San-kuo-chih p‘ing-hua (121), the story-teller’s prompt-book upon which the yen-i is based. See Tung Mei-k‘an (note 40), 144 ff. For an account of the image of adviser in theatrical performance, see Cheng Chen-to, Ch‘ing y‘u ch‘ou (122), in Tuan-ch‘ien chi (123), Shanghai 1936, 150 ff.

Chu-ko Liang. Earlier it mentioned that in Ying-lieh chuan, this story has been retold in conjunction with that of Chang Liang, wherein the divine book he received from Huang-shih-kung is said to have been passed on to Liu Chi. In this play, besides the divine book, Liu is said to have come across a precious sword, and a jade goblet in the mountain cave. The divine book was written in an archaic tadpole script which he could hardly read. However, he found an instruction at the end of the scroll which stated that if he did not understand the text, he should call upon the "sleeping dragon" (wo-jung) [128], i.e., Chu-ko Liang. Thus he set out to look for the "sleeping dragon". When he reached a hill slope, he ran into two fishermen who instructed him to put on a taoist gown, whereupon he was led into the presence of a young "scholar". The young lad asked him to change his garment and close his eyes, then took him off on a flying tour. When Liu opened his eyes, he found himself in a mountain cave in Ch'eng-tu, Szechwan, where he was taken to the immortal residence of Chu-ko Liang and became his disciple. Under Chu-ko's instruction, so the drama unfolds, Liu Chi learnt all about astronomy and the military arts, with which he was well-equipped to serve Chu Yüan-chang. Like the earlier attempt to associate Liu Chi with Chang Liang and the Taoist Huang-shih-kung, here was a similar attempt to link Liu Chi with Chu-ko Liang by utilizing the extant stories.

VIII

The foregoing exposition indicates the long and tortuous process by which Liu Chi's image was developed and established. Similarly, it illustrates how historians and popular writers tenaciously clung to the prescribed models in embellishing the image of their hero. In both the official and popular traditions, Liu Chi was remolded into a composite portrait of several historical imperial advisers and his standing in history was thus affirmed by his association with these exemplary models.

In his official image, Liu Chi was ranked among the most distinguished imperial advisers of China's past: I Yin, Lü Shang, Chang Liang, Chu-ko Liang, Fang Hsüan-ling, Wei Cheng, Yeh-lü Ch'ü-ts'ai and Liu Ping-chung. In the first place, these models serve to indicate Liu Chi's role in history. Furthermore, historians invoked the precedent of I Yin who had served both the Hsia and Shang to defend Liu Chi against the criticism that he had served both the Hsia and Shang to defend Liu Chi against the criticism that he had...
deserted the Mongols to serve the Ming. Moreover, in utilizing these models, those who appraised his life tended to twist their arguments to disparage the achievements of these model exemplars in favor of Liu Chi. In so doing, they have succeeded in creating a far superior hero who became entrenched in the Confucian tradition as a great imperial adviser.

Similarly, in popular fiction, these model exemplars have been utilized to bolster Liu Chi’s image as a scholar-hero. Among these models, it was Chang Liang and Chu-ko Liang that provided the main source of inspiration. Not only did he appear as capable and as articulate as Chang Liang in leadership and political maneuvering, but also as intelligent, cunning in military tactics, and as conversant with the occult powers as Chu-ko Liang. It was the combined image of these two that projected Liu Chi into a taoist mystical and prophetic figure in the mind of the average Chinese.

This dual image of Liu Chi thus recast him into one of the greatest imperial advisers in Chinese history. In the Confucian tradition, he stood next to I Yin and Lü Shang of the Shang. In the popular tradition, he was placed on a par with Chu-ko Liang in intelligence and statesmanship, as well as in his knowledge of the occult sciences, while surpassing him as a prophet. How did Liu Chi achieve this status, if not through the tenacity of historians and popular writers in adopting prescribed models and stereotyped conventions? This, however, is not the true picture of Liu Chi, but an idealized version of the man projected by two distinct traditions in Chinese historical and popular literature. Liu Chi's case thus illustrates the susceptibility of historical figures to vulgarization; significantly, it points to the need for debunking the false images for a more objective appraisal of Chinese personalities.

Liu Chi is also attributed to have composed a prophecy book called Shao-ping ko (Baked Cake Ballad), the earliest printed version appeared in 1912 (British Museum). This is later included in a collection of prophecy books entitled Chung-kuo erh-ch’ien-nien chih yü-yen, Shanghai 1937, which has been reprinted several times. Here Liu Chi is said to have prophesied the events of China five hundred years after his death. In this case, he surpassed Chu-ko Liang as a prophet. For a brief note about this work, see C. K. Yang, Religion in Chinese Society. California 1960, 236–39.