

What's in a Name?

On the Sources concerning Sun Wu

Anyone attempting to characterize the actions and ideas of individuals living in preimperial China will encounter the problem that deeds or statements ascribed to one person were sometimes ascribed to other persons as well. Needless to say, history may repeat itself in various ways and historical sources may contain notices about two events that are similar in wording without this necessarily eliciting our suspicion. But what should we make of sources that are identical save merely for the names of their chief characters? What if for every source relating to a certain person a close parallel exists featuring a totally unrelated person?

In this article I examine the sources concerning Sun Wu 孫武, a general who served the state of Wu 吳 during Wu's conquest of the Ch'u 楚 capital in 506 BC. Sun Wu is traditionally regarded as the author of *Sun-tzu ping-fa* 孫子兵法 (*Master Sun's Art of War*), probably the most interesting of the Chinese military treatises. I discuss Sun Wu's appearance in three different stories. He is the central figure of two — one in which he illustrates the idea that punishing persons close to the ruler can heighten military discipline, and one in which he foresees the sequence of the fall of the successor-states of Chin 晉. He also has a minor role in a third story, the tale of how Wu Tzu-hsü 伍子胥, the prime minister of Wu, avenged the murder of his father. In what follows I show that all these accounts, including those recently unearthed from a Han grave, are duplicated by accounts featuring other persons. I discuss the consequences this has for our evaluation of the historicity of Sun Wu and for our understanding of early Chinese historiography. I intend to appraise the sources by means of an elementary literary analysis. But in order to clarify the nature of my argument I wish to refer to an article written by Hsü Fu-kuan 徐復觀 on the purported legalist events in the life of Confucius.¹

Several early texts record that Confucius decided his "first act of punishment" (先誅, or 始誅) as an official when he executed Shao-cheng

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¹ Hsü, "I-ko li-shih ku-shih te hsing-ch'eng chi ch'i yen-chin" 一個歷史故事的形成及其演進, originally published in *Min-chu ping-lun* 民主評論 9.10 (1958) and reprinted with an appendix in his *Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang-shih lun-chi* 中國思想史論集 (Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng, 1974), pp. 118-32.

Mao 少正卯. The startled Tzu-kung 子貢 asked why. The Master justified himself by arguing that the most dangerous persons are not thieves and robbers, but those who deceive others into believing that they are discerning and understanding, while in fact they are the opposite.

In his article, Hsü Fu-kuan points out that a nearly identical story is told in the text of *Han-fei-tzu* 韓非子, but T'ai-kung Wang 太公望 takes the part of Confucius, the duke of Chou 周公 assumes that of Tzu-kung, and K'uang Chüeh 狂齋 replaces Shao-cheng Mao. As the substitutions indicate, the story is transposed to the time of the founding of the Chou 周 dynasty. Like Shao-cheng Mao, K'uang Chüeh was considered an excellent man by the world at large, but T'ai-kung Wang executed him as "his first act of punishment" 首誅, fearing that he would throw state and society into confusion. Just as Shao-cheng Mao is said to have excelled in passing himself off as a good man, K'uang Chüeh is likened to a horse that has the appearance of a steed but does not behave like one. There are differences between the two stories, but their use of the rather special term "first act of punishment," the identity of plot, and their similar justification of the "first act of punishment" all indicate that they are but minor variants of the same story.

D. C. Lau, elaborating on Hsü's ideas, characterizes such stories as "illustrative stories," in which the historical figures themselves are unimportant. To him, the important question is which point is being illustrated.² The "first act of punishment" stories seem to illustrate the point that evil that cloaks itself in the appearance of good is of greater danger to society than the unabashed crimes perpetrated by thieves and robbers.³

If a story such as "the first act of punishment" illustrates a moral or political point, it should be possible to situate it within the world of early Chinese thought. Although our understanding of the ideas of Han and pre-Han China has matured to a point where the labels "Confucian" and "legalist" lack analytical clarity, the moral or political point of an illustrative story is usually so general as to make use of more precise designations impossible. Hsü categorizes the Shao-cheng Mao story as legalist, but Watanabe Takashi 渡邊卓 has argued convincingly that it conforms to the philosophy of *Hsün-tzu* 荀子.⁴ Perhaps we should locate the inspiration for this illustrative story in authoritarian Confucianism instead of legalism.

² Lau, postscript to *The Analects* (Hong Kong: Chinese U. P., 1979), p. 234.

³ Lau views the Confucius story as being about "the punishment and suppression of . . . a charismatic character," but though the idea that Shao-cheng Mao is able to "sway the multitude" is expressed, this is not viewed as a charismatic threat to legitimate authority. Rather the fear is expressed that Shao-cheng Mao will "outshine other evil men," in effect concealing their lawlessness to the world in addition to his own.

⁴ Watanabe, "Shōsei Bō" 少正卯, *Tōhōgaku* 東方學 7 (1953), pp. 15-24.

There are other important aspects of illustrative stories as well. Some concern animals (what we would call fables) and some feature patently fictitious characters (examples from *Chuang-tzu* 莊子 come to mind). The vast majority, however, pose as history. This testifies to the fact that a historical setting was regarded as optimal to enhancing a story's authority. Historical figures like T'ai-kung Wang and Confucius appear often in illustrative stories because they impart the authority of their persons to the philosophical point. However, the stories are at best based on historical facts of a very superficial nature.

Illustrative stories have extremely tight closure, including only the events and utterances necessary to demonstrate their point. There exist narratives of another kind, in which closure occurs only after a temporal sequence, for instance through revenge or the fulfillment of prophecy. This is evidenced by the story of Wu Tzu-hsü, in which Sun Wu plays a minor role. I wish to term such narratives "tales of duration." They focus on the fates of their characters, but are also subject to substitution. An important characteristic of tales of duration is that they attract other stories, embedding them in what becomes ever more elaborate narratives. The later versions of the tale of Wu Tzu-hsü's revenge are examples of this, but Sun Wu's appearance cannot, as I attempt to show, be attributed to a process of embedding only. Sun Wu is in fact a creation of the figure of Wu Tzu-hsü.

We seldom have conclusive evidence that one extant version of a story has been adapted directly on the basis of another. Different versions may show differing degrees of literary sophistication; for example, one version may express the point of a story by use of a comparatively more intricate plot. Below I discuss questions of derivation and elaboration in relation to the three stories about Sun Wu.

SUN WU TRAINS THE PALACE LADIES

In 1972 a large number of texts was found in a Han tomb at Yin-ch'üeh-shan 銀雀山 in Lin-i 臨沂, Shantung province.⁵ Various passages in them parallel passages in the standard transmitted editions of *Sun-tzu ping-fa*, *Wei-liao-tzu* 尉繚子, *Yen-tzu ch'un-ch'iu* 晏子春秋, and *Liu-t'ao* 六韜. A considerable number, however, have no known parallels. The contents range mostly from systematic treatises on the art of war and on principles of

⁵ See Michael Loewe's survey in "Manuscripts Found Recently in China," *TP* 63 (1977), pp. 131-35, and Lo Fu-i's 羅福頤 posthumously published "Lin-i Han-chien so chien ku-chi kai-lüeh" 臨沂漢簡所見古籍概略, *Ku-wen-tzu yen-chiu* 古文字研究 11 (1985), pp. 10-51. The whole of the Yin-ch'üeh-shan corpus is transcribed in Wu Chiu-lung 吳九龍,

government to prognostication, but there are also fragments of texts of a more historical orientation that have to do with the exploits of Sun Wu and Sun Pin 孫臏, a general of Ch'i who was placed by the early Chinese in the same tradition of military studies as Sun Wu. Along with expository texts that begin with the phrase 孫子曰 ("Master Sun says"), the texts of a historical orientation have attracted the most attention.

The names Sun Wu and Sun Pin do not occur in the Yin-ch'üeh-shan corpus, only the expression Sun-tzu 孫子, which is used to refer to both Sun Wu and Sun Pin.⁶ Whereas the historic referent of the expression "Master Sun says" is in doubt, the context of two of the narratives about Master Sun's exploits clearly indicates that Sun Wu is the subject, and in the other four narratives it is Sun Pin. Here I examine only the stories featuring Sun Wu.⁷

One of the Yin-ch'üeh-shan texts concerning Sun Wu describes his fashioning crack troops out of the palace ladies of king Ho-lu 闔廬 of Wu.⁸ The title of this text is unknown, because the top of the first strip, on the back of which the title probably was written, is missing. The text is severely fragmented, but in the *Shih-chi* 史記 memoir devoted to Sun Wu a similar story is told.⁹ This fact makes it possible to piece together most of the fragments of the Yin-ch'üeh-shan text and, to some extent, to fill out the lacunae.

In the Yin-ch'üeh-shan text the king seeks out Sun Wu in his residence, and a conversation ensues about the king's fondness for waging war. Sun Wu states that warfare is not for fun; and, moreover, personal predilection 好 should not motivate one to engage in war, rather it should be objective

Yin-ch'üeh-shan Han-chien shih-wen 銀雀山漢簡釋文 (Peking: Wen-wu, 1985). Only the first volume of a scholarly edition has been published; Yin-ch'üeh-shan Han-mu chu-chien cheng-li hsiao-tsu 銀雀山漢墓竹簡整理小組, eds., *Yin-ch'üeh-shan Han-mu chu-chien* 銀雀山漢墓竹簡 (Peking: Wen-wu, 1985; hereafter YCS). The Yin-ch'üeh-shan texts that concern Sun Wu are transcribed in all editions of *Sun-tzu ping-fa* published since the mid-1970s.

⁶ On the various expressions in early Chinese literature that do not (or do not exclusively) refer to Sun Wu, see my "On Expressions Commonly Held to Refer to Sun Wu, the Putative Author of the *Sunzi Bingfa*," to appear in *Acta Orientalia* 53 (1992). I argue three points. One is that the expression "Sun Wu" 孫吳 ("Sun and Wu") refers to Sun Pin and Wu Ch'i 吳起, rather than to Sun Wu and Wu Ch'i; the second is that the expression "Sun-tzu" ("Master Sun") refers to Sun Pin except in texts transmitted within traditions claiming Sun Wu as a patriarch (the texts examined in the present article being examples); and finally that the only expression (other than "Sun Wu" 孫武 itself) in the early literature that might conceivably refer to Sun Wu is "Wu-tzu" 武子 ("Master Wu") in *Wei-liao-tzu*. The stories examined in the present article, aside from the possible reference in *Wei-liao-tzu*, constitute the entire corpus of sources relating to Sun Wu.

⁷ See YCS, strips nos. 154-61, 190-214.

⁸ The king is also known as "Ho-lü" 闔呂/盍呂.

⁹ *Shih-chi* 史記 (Chung-hua shu-chü edn.; hereafter SC) 65, pp. 2161-62; trans. Samuel B. Griffith, *Sun Tzu: The Art of War* (Oxford: Oxford U. P., 1965), pp. 57-59.

advantage 利. Sun Wu says that as long as the king asks about war in a frivolous manner, then he, an official from abroad 外臣, will not answer. The king excuses himself by saying that he has not heard about the way 未聞道—the way here obviously has to do with waging war in order to gain objective advantage. At this point, the Yin-ch'üeh-shan text has lost at least one strip of text.

The *Shih-chi* version of the story begins rather differently. Sun Wu is said to be received in audience by the king on the merit of his knowledge of the art of war 以兵法見吳王闔廬.¹⁰ The king says to Sun Wu that "I have read all of your "Thirteen Chapters" 十三篇,"¹¹ but he wants to see a test of Sun Wu's ability to train soldiers. Nothing is said about personal predilection or objective advantage.

Shih-chi thus sees the king as having already digested Sun Wu's theoretical treatise on the art of war, only wanting to see whether Sun Wu has commensurate practical abilities; in the Yin-ch'üeh-shan text, however, the king is pictured as someone who understands very little unless it is demonstrated for him.

In the Yin-ch'üeh-shan text Sun Wu says that for the purpose of demonstrating his art of war anyone will do—noble or base, men or women. The king says (as he does in the *Shih-chi* version) that he wants the test to be done with women. Sun Wu then answers that "there are many things that women cannot bear to do" and asks the king to reconsider. The king refuses and Sun Wu finally accepts the challenge, saying that if it has to be, he intends to make soldiers out of the king's palace ladies. This interlude is missing from the *Shih-chi* account, which only says that one hundred and eighty beautiful palace ladies were given permission to leave the palace compound.

Sun Wu divides the palace women into two battalions. Then follows a major difference between the two texts. In the *Shih-chi* version two of the

¹⁰ The 兵法 of this passage is sometimes taken to refer to a text. See, however, the parallel expressions SC 1, p. 44; 4, p. 134; 12, p. 458; 44, p. 1851, and 65, p. 2162, in which the preverb 以 means "on the merit of," "on behalf of" or "in the capacity of," the object of which seems never to be a text. This indicates that the expression in question should be rendered as "art of war," not as the title of a book. The early title of *Sun-tzu ping-fa* seems to have been 十三篇 ("The Thirteen Chapters"). 兵法 in this context refers to the entire tradition of military treatises; see Wu Chiu-lung, "Chien-pen yü ch'uan-pen Sun-tzu ping-fa pi-chiao yen-chiu" 簡本與傳本孫子兵法比較研究 in *Sun-tzu hsin-t'an Chung-wai hsüeh-che lun Sun-tzu* 孫子新探中外學者論孫子 (Peking: Chieh-fang-chün, 1990), p. 179.

¹¹ The Yin-ch'üeh-shan corpus mentions the "Thirteen Chapters" too, but the particular strips are difficult to assign to any text. The YCS editors have assigned the two fragmentary strips in question to the story about Sun Wu's training of the palace ladies. However, it is difficult to see how they fit into the story (the same holds for mentions of the "Thirteen Chapters" in the Shang-sun-chia-chai 上孫家寨 corpus; see below, n. 15).

king's favorite palace ladies 寵姬 are made commanders of the battalions, whereas in the Yin-ch'üeh-shan text Sun Wu's two charioteers are appointed officers, obviously in order to head the two battalions.¹² The function of the king's two favorite palace ladies and Sun Wu's two charioteers is the same. This constitutes a major difference in the cast of the *Shih-chi* and Yin-ch'üeh-shan versions of this story.

In the Yin-ch'üeh-shan text the king seems to think that with the division of the palace ladies into two battalions Sun Wu's task is completed, and Sun Wu has to correct him. Sun Wu then pledges that he will not avoid any hardship involved in carrying out his task. What this implies will become apparent later.

In both the *Shih-chi* and the Yin-ch'üeh-shan texts the "soldiers" are then instructed to look at different parts of the body when they advance or retreat, turn left or turn right. In the *Shih-chi* version this is called a "covenant" 約束. Punishments are stipulated and the covenant is proclaimed three times and explained five times, as is customary. The exercise proper begins, supervised by the two palace ladies in the *Shih-chi* version, and the two charioteers in the Yin-ch'üeh-shan version. Chaos ensues and the "soldiers" start giggling. The proclamation and explanation of the covenant is performed thrice in the Yin-ch'üeh-shan text (only twice in *Shih-chi*), but with no noticeable improvement on the discipline of the palace ladies. Sun Wu then calls upon his two "officers." In the Yin-ch'üeh-shan text he reproaches them by quoting twice from "military treatises":

The military treatises say: "If it has not been ordered and if it has not been made known, then it is the fault of the ruler and the general; if it has been ordered and if it has been explained, then it is the fault of the battalion leaders." The military treatises say: "In rewarding good, one begins with the base; in punishing [evil, one begins with the noble]."¹³

The *Shih-chi* account is basically the same, only no military treatises are mentioned. It states a phrase parallel to the first of the quotations just given.

In the *Shih-chi* version the king tries to intervene in the impending punishment, but to no avail. Sun Wu tells the king that "when a general is in his army, there are those of the lord's orders that he does not obey," and proceeds to execute the king's favorite palace ladies "in order to set an example"

以徇 for the "soldiers."¹⁴ The Yin-ch'üeh-shan text is fragmented, but probably it related how Sun Wu threatened to execute his own charioteers. According to the Yin-ch'üeh-shan text the king begged Sun Wu to pardon someone, but unfortunately Sun Wu's reply is missing. According to the logic of the story, however, Sun Wu's charioteers should be executed in the Yin-ch'üeh-shan version, in parallel with the fate of the king's favorite palace ladies. This must be the hardship that Sun Wu had pledged would not be avoided. After the execution of the officers, the result in both texts is that the soldiers do exactly as they are told; in the Yin-ch'üeh-shan text Sun Wu claims that they are able to assume different battle formations with great precision, whereas in *Shih-chi* he states their readiness to march through fire and water.

In the *Shih-chi* version the king is not happy, however, and refuses to take any interest in his new army; he asks Sun Wu to return to his lodgings. At this point the two narratives diverge again. Sun Wu protests in the *Shih-chi* version that the king only likes to hear about war but is unwilling to practice it. The Yin-ch'üeh-shan text had asserted at the beginning that the king positively reveled in waging war. The *Shih-chi* version continues with the phrase, "thereupon Ho-lu became aware that Sun Wu knew how to wage war and finally engaged him as general." In the Yin-ch'üeh-shan text Sun Wu is instead received in audience, seemingly for the first time, in contrast to *Shih-chi*. He proclaims that "the way has been attained" 道得矣 and calls the principles illustrated by his exercise "the way of the general" 將之道. He concludes that in warfare there is nothing more important than the general's stern assertion of his authority over his officers and soldiers. Unlike *Shih-chi*, there is no mention of Sun Wu's becoming a general in the employ of Wu. This is probably not a coincidence, since that part of the *Shih-chi* account seems to be derived from a story about Wu Tzu-hsü (explained below).¹⁵

¹⁴ See Tuan Yü-ts'ai 段玉裁, annot., *Shuo-wen chieh-tzu chu* 說文解字注 (rpt. Shanghai: Ku-chi ch'u-pan-she, 1981) 2B, pp. 16b-17a, on the meaning of 徇.

¹⁵ In 1978 additional material relating to Sun Wu was discovered in a Han grave. This time texts mainly relating to military law, the merit evaluation of army personnel and battle formations were found in Shang-sun-chia-chai in Tsinghai province, in a late Western Han grave; see Kuo-chia wen-wu-chü ku-wen-hsien yen-chiu-shih 國立文物局古文獻研究室 and Ta-t'ung Shang-sun-chia-chai Han-chien cheng-li yen-chiu hsiao-tsu 大通上孫家寨漢簡整理研究小組, "Ta-t'ung Shang-sun-chia-chai Han-chien shih-wen" 大通上孫家寨漢簡釋文, *WW* (1981.2), pp. 22-26. The texts are all very fragmentary, but it is clear that the expression "Sun-tzu" is used, that Sun-tzu mentions the "Thirteen Chapters," and that he is asked questions about military affairs by someone. Sun-tzu is also mentioned in connection with at least two military ordinances. These quote Sun-tzu, but what Sun-tzu says does not correspond to anything found in known texts (see Li Ling 李零, "Ch'ing-hai Ta-t'ung

¹² The YCS editors hypothesize, solely on the basis of the SC parallel, that in the Yin-ch'üeh-shan text two palace ladies head the two battalions. This is unwarranted.

¹³ YCS 1, strip no. 208.

The version of the story transmitted in *Shih-chi* is basically the same as that unearthed in Yin-ch'üeh-shan in 1972. The two versions seem to be slightly different adaptations of a third, unknown, tradition. Both claim that by ensuring that an order, or law, is understood by all, and by imposing punishments without exceptions for high rank, a disciplined and effective army will be obtained.

In order to present such points as clearly as possible the author of an illustrative story has several options. One is to state the point in explicit terms. The Yin-ch'üeh-shan version does this by its statement that the authority of the general is of paramount importance, although this does not quite exhaust the contents of the story. Obviously, stating the point in explicit terms does not obviate the need for expressing the point by indirect, literary, means, such as exaggeration. This method is used in the story about the training of the palace ladies: their being candidates for Wu's crack regiment and undergoing capital punishment for the act of giggling are obvious exaggerations.¹⁶

Yeh Shih 葉適 (1150-1223) pointed out centuries ago that this story was bizarre and unreliable and that the sources relating to Sun Wu and Ssu-ma Jang-chü 司馬穰苴 (whom I treat below) were fictions 非事實 invented by Warring States disputers 辯士.¹⁷ This may be true, but how does one determine that an account is fictive? If the narrative accentuates historical features in the manner of literary creations, then the historian may have been adding literary touches to a basically trustworthy account. The passage is thus not pure fiction. A strictly factual narration of an incident, moreover, can be used to illustrate a moral point. We should always be

Shang-sun-chia-chai Han-chien hsing-chih hsiao-i" 青海大通上孫家寨漢簡性質小議, *KK* [1983.8], pp. 548-49). There are two fragments that may derive from the story about the palace ladies. One reads: "[they] will go with one through boiling water and against drawn swords," possibly a parallel to the SC passage that says that the "soldiers" will "go even through water and fire" if ordered to do so (strip no. 1; SC 65, p. 2162). Another fragment has been seen as relating to the same story's justification for executing the head palace ladies (or charioteers): "... says, 'Any official, no matter whether he be noble or base, if he is not [suited for his office?]' (strip no. 233). However, as the evidence for attributing the fragments to a version of the story of the training of the palace ladies is extremely circumstantial, there being no clear parallels in evidence, it seems more prudent to consider the two fragments as being parts of other texts.

¹⁶ Mark Edward Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China* (Albany, New York: State U. of New York P., 1990), p. 112, holds that the story testifies to the "femininity" of the art of war. I think this is wrong. Lewis defines femininity as obedience and weakness, but the point of the story is rather that the palace ladies (due to their femininity) are initially unable to submit to discipline, not that they possess an inherent (feminine) capability for obeying orders. Nor is weakness a significant characteristic of the palace ladies as pictured in the story.

¹⁷ Yeh Shih, *Hsi-hsiieh chi-yen hsiü-mu* 習學記言序目 (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1977) 46, pp. 675-76.

careful not to discard historical narratives just because they make moral sense: artful selection and subtle bias can allow a factual account to convey a point, and literary closure applied to the open-ended flow of events does not necessarily distort the true data in them.

In this interplay between fact and fiction, we should not forget the special role of substitutable characters in parallel versions of a story. Several variants of the story of Sun Wu's training of the palace ladies can be found. Let us first examine the *Shih-chi* memoir of Ssu-ma Jang-chü, which occurs immediately before Sun Wu's.¹⁸

Ssu-ma Jang-chü was made general by the king of Ch'i after having been recommended by the statesman Yen Ying 晏嬰 and after having had a discussion with the king on military affairs. He was a lowly descendant of the house of Ch'i and feared that his soldiers would not respect him. He therefore requested that the king appoint one of his favorite officials 寵臣 to oversee the army. Ssu-ma agreed to meet the official at a specified time, an agreement that the official broke. Ssu-ma then made a covenant 約束 with his troops. When the king's favorite official arrived he was reproached by Ssu-ma, who called upon his officer of military law to determine the punishment for latecomers. This turns out to be the death penalty, and the king's official sent a messenger to court to appeal to the king, but "in order to set an example for the three armies" 以徇三軍 the king's favorite official was executed before the messenger sent by the king had come.

When the king's messenger arrived to protest Ssu-ma's decision, he galloped through the camp. Upon seeing him, Ssu-ma said, using the same expression that Sun Wu used, "When a general is in his army, there are those of the lord's orders that he does not obey." Once more he summoned juridical advisers, asking what treatment is to be accorded people who move with haste through a military camp. The punishment was also execution, but as the ruler's messenger is inviolate, his aides were executed instead, again "in order to make set an example for the three armies." Having thus created a disciplined army, Ssu-ma won a spectacular victory over Ch'i's enemies.

The moral here is the same as that concerning the palace ladies: by executing those of high rank, those of low rank can be made obedient. The proverb about the limits imposed upon the lord's authority when the

¹⁸ SC 64, pp. 2157-60. Yeh Shih also saw Sun Wu and Ssu-ma Jang-chü as a pair. The close thematic resemblance between their SC memoirs is discussed by Yasumoto Hiroshi 安本博, "Go Shishō den ni tsuite" 武子胥傳について, *Chūgoku tetsugakushi no tenbō to mosaku* 中國哲學史の展望と摸索 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1976), p. 284. Yasumoto points out an equally strong affinity between the last part of Ssu-ma Jang-chü's biography and a prominent theme in Wu Ch'i's.

general has taken command of his army was probably originally intended to discourage the uninformed intervention of the ruler in the on-the-spot decisions of the general, but it functions in both stories as legitimation for the general's right to execute persons close to the ruler for violations of military discipline.

The theme that ruthless assertion of authority over persons normally immune to punishment will produce a disciplined and effective army is common to the *Shih-chi* stories concerning both Sun Wu and Ssu-ma Jang-chü. Also common to them are several features of the narrative structure—in fact, several crucial words and phrases are duplicated. It seems prudent to me to read these accounts as stories illustrating a point in military theory, rather than as chronicles of events that happened at the Wu and Ch'i courts. I would invest them with little—if any—source value as regards their main protagonists.

The legalist nature of these two stories is apparent. Other versions in *Shang-chün shu* 商君書 and *Han-fei-tzu* illustrate duke Wen of Chin's 晉文公 execution of his trusted follower Tien Chieh 顛頡. According to *Shang-chün shu*, duke Wen convened the feudal lords and the grandees of the various states. Tien Chieh, however, arrived late and at the advice of his officials duke Wen had him executed "in order to set an example" 以徇. The Chin soldiers were struck with fear and said: "Tien Chieh is so favored 有寵, but his back has been broken in order to set an example—what then about us?" Duke Wen then engaged his army in the battle of Ch'eng-p'u 城濮 and

[when ordered to do so] the soldiers of the three armies stopped as if they had their feet cut off and marched like streaming water. None of the soldiers of the three armies dared break the law. By setting this one example, inflicting a heavy punishment on Tien Chieh's back for a slight transgression, the state of Chin became well ordered.¹⁹

In *Han-fei-tzu* roughly the same story is told. Tien Chieh fails to meet on time for a hunt and is executed "in order to set an example for the people and make evident the reliability of the law" 以徇百姓, 以明法之信也.²⁰ In *Tso-chuan* 左傳, Tien Chieh is also executed by duke Wen of Chin "in order

to set an example for the army" 以徇于師, but the situation is different, and no strengthening of the morale of the Chin army is said to have resulted. The *Tso-chuan* account bears no overt marks of moralist inspiration and does not have the form of an illustrative story.²¹

The moral of the stories about duke Wen of Chin in *Shang-chün shu* and *Han-fei-tzu* is the same as that about Sun Wu and Ssu-ma Jang-chü, and one can notice key terms like 徇 and 寵 in all three. From a literary point of view the story about Sun Wu is the most interesting because it illustrates its point by means of two exaggerations. The excessive punishment of persons close to the ruler exists in the other versions of the story,²² but the hyperbolic ineptitude of the palace ladies for the task they are set is unique. Assuming that sophistication of literary devices is a type of development, the Sun Wu story is the most developed version. Its contribution to our knowledge of Sun Wu is close to nil. The only historical information we are able to extract from it is that at the time it was adapted to fit him Sun Wu had a name weighty enough to add persuasiveness to the story and that common notions about him were compatible with the plot of the story, that is, he was a foreign expert in military matters resident in Wu.

In determining the moral of the story as legalist, I see it as dissonant with the ideas expressed in traditional military treatises about how a general should train his troops. In *Sun-tzu ping-fa*, for instance, an army is said to achieve a morale that will gain certain victory if the general makes the soldiers perceive themselves as doomed to death and thus fight for their individual lives.²³ The appeal to self-interest 利 is common to both the story about the training of the palace ladies and the type of thought contained in *Sun-tzu ping-fa*. The palace ladies obey in order not to lose their lives, and the soldiers in *Sun-tzu ping-fa* each fight in order to avoid being killed. But in *Sun-tzu ping-fa* the general does not terrorize his troops; he achieves his goals in an indirect manner, by placing his troops in a situation where they can be counted on to do their utmost. Furthermore, the general should not be draconic in dealing with those under his command; he is to treat them as his own children, inspiring trust while leading them according to plans of which they are not aware:

¹⁹ Kao Heng 高亨, annot., *Shang-chün shu chu-i* 商君書注譯 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1974), 177, p. 352, trans. J. J. L. Duyvendak, *The Book of Lord Shang* (London: Arthur Probstain, 1928), pp. 380–81.

²⁰ Chen Ch'i-yu 陳奇猷, annot., *Han-fei-tzu chi-shih* 韓非子集釋 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1958) 13, p. 750; trans. W. K. Liao, *The Complete Works of Han Fei Tzu* (London: Arthur Probstain, 1959) 2, pp. 114–15.

²¹ Yang Po-chün 楊伯峻, annot., *Ch'un-ch'iu Tso-chuan chu* 春秋左傳注, 2d edn. (Peking: Chung-hua, 1990; hereafter TC) (Hsi 28), p. 455.

²² This feature is repeated in the Ssu-ma Jang-chü story.

²³ See Wu Chiu-lung, annot., *Sun-tzu chiao-shih* 孫子校釋 (Peking: Chün-shih k'o-hsieh, 1990) 11, pp. 188–216; trans. into English by P'an Chia-fen 潘嘉芬 and Liu Jui-hsiang 劉瑞祥, *ibid.*, pp. 287–92.

He treats his troops as infants and thus they are willing to follow him into the deepest streams; he treats his troops as favorite sons and thus they are willing to die together with him.²⁴

In *Sun-tzu ping-fa* soldiers are to be manipulated, but benevolently, as did Wu Ch'i 吳起, who inspired morale in the troops under his command by ostentatiously sharing their hardships, even sucking clean a soldier's carbuncle.²⁵ It is not that the general should indulge his troops, but punishments are effective only when he has won their affection:

If the soldiers are punished before they are loyally attached to you, they will not obey, and if they do not obey they are difficult to employ; if the soldiers are not punished even though already loyally attached to you, they cannot be employed.²⁶

Thus Sun Wu's one-sided reliance on intimidation as a means of disciplining the palace ladies is not typical of the more sophisticated view taken in a text that is generally held to be representative of the entire Chinese tradition of the art of war.²⁷

SUN WU FORESEES THE FUTURE

The other text in the Yin-ch'üeh-shan corpus that mentions Sun Wu under the name of Sun-tzu is entitled "The [king of] Wu asks a question" ("Wu wen" 吳問).²⁸ No parallels to this text featuring Sun Wu are found in the extant literature. It is almost complete; only three quarters of one strip are missing. Sun Wu is asked by a king of Wu (presumably Ho-lu) in which sequence the six generals who in 514 BC divided the state of Chin among themselves will be destroyed and which of the six will persist 六將軍分守晉國之地，孰先亡，孰固成.²⁹ Sun Wu analyzes their potential strength in

²⁴ Wu, *Sun-tzu chiao-shih* 10, pp. 180-81; also trans. *ibid.*, p. 286.

²⁵ SC 65, p. 2166, trans. Chauncey Goodrich, "Ssu-ma Ch'ien's Biography of Wu Ch'i," *MS* 35 (1981-83), p. 200.

²⁶ Wu, *Sun-tzu chiao-shih* 9, p. 164, also trans. *ibid.*, p. 284.

²⁷ For this reason I cannot agree with Chao Ch'eng-wen 趙成文 that the story about the palace ladies illustrates the virtues of the ideal general as enunciated in *Sun-tzu ping-fa*. See "Shih-chi Sun Wu chuan te ssu-hsiang ho wen-hsüeh t'e-se" 史記孫武傳的思想和文學特色, *Shen-yang shih-fan hsüeh-yüan she-hui k'o-hsüeh hsüeh-pao* 沈陽師範學院社會科學學報 (1984.4), pp. 57-63. Chao also holds that the story portrays Sun Wu's character in a realistic manner, a view diametrically opposed to my view in this article (and at odds, I believe, with his own "illustrative" interpretation).

²⁸ YCS 1, strips nos. 154-61.

²⁹ These six generals are usually called the "six grandees" 六卿. The expression 六將 occurs, however, in *Mo-tzu* 墨子; see Sun I-jang 孫貽讓, annot., *Mo-tzu chien-hu* 墨子閒詁

terms of which financial system each employs to rule his part of Chin, his criteria being the size of plots allotted by the state to peasants and the tax rate.

Space does not permit my discussing the role that state settlements of peasants played in preimperial times, but such policies seem to have been designed to strengthen the ruler vis-à-vis groups in society that could block his centrist ambitions. The ruler planned in this way to create an independent financial and military base by establishing a peasantry liable to corvée, taxation, and military conscription, which was subservient to no one but himself.³⁰

In the Yin-ch'üeh-shan text of Sun Wu's foreseeing the future, Sun Wu is of the opinion that those of the six generals who distribute the smallest plots of land and tax at the highest rate will succumb first. This is not (as we might think) because the peasants then will lead miserable lives; Sun Wu says about rulers who follow such a policy that "as they parcel out fields that are small, they will recruit many soldiers, and as they tax half of their produce, the state will become wealthy."³¹ This was, it seems reasonable to suppose, the whole idea behind the establishment of a state peasantry, but Sun Wu finds such a policy wrong. He says that if such measures are taken, "the ruler will become haughty and the ministers immoderate, and they will strive for military merit and often engage in warfare; therefore they will succumb first."³²

Sun Wu's conclusion is rather surprising. He says that the state of Chao 趙 will absorb the other five because it settles peasants on the largest plots of land and does not tax them at all. This makes the state poor and the army small, he argues, and if this is the case a reticent ruler and modest ministers will rule over wealthy subjects, causing the state to be strong.³³ The king of Wu, in enunciating the lesson he has learned from Sun Wu's prognostication, says that "the way of the king" 王者之道 consists in being generous and loving towards the people, this implying large land grants, no taxation, and minimal conscription. How the state of Chao will keep its neighbors at bay with next to no soldiers at its command Sun Wu does not explain.

(Hsin-pien chu-tzu chi-ch'eng edn.) 5, p. 127, and, as we shall see below, in *Huai-nan-tzu* 淮南子 and *Hsin-hsü* 新序.

³⁰ The "Wu wen" text is an important source for understanding the land system employed in Ch'in and pre-Ch'in China; see Watanabe Shinichirō 渡邊信一郎, "Senpakusei ron" 阡陌制論, *TSK* 43.4 (1985), pp. 34-58; and Li Ling, "Lun Ch'in-t'ien ch'ien-mo chih-tu te fu-yüan chi ch'i hsing-ch'eng hsien-so" 論秦田阡陌制度的復原及其形成線索, *Chung-hua wen-shih lun-t'ung* 中華文史論叢 (1987.1), pp. 23-39.

³¹ YCS, strip no. 156.

³² YCS, strips nos. 156-57.

³³ YCS, strips nos. 159-60.

Mencius, a more typical advocate of "the way of the king," argued along more or less these same lines. Mencius believed the benevolent king to "have no match in the whole world" 無敵於天下, that is, that a king who puts into practice his innate capacity for virtue will be invincible.³⁴ A king that sincerely practices benevolence will attract people from other countries, making his own country strong. For Mencius, benevolence in concrete terms meant imposing light corvée duties instead of onerous taxes and distributing parcels of land to the populace along lines similar to those discussed in the Yin-ch'üeh-shan text.³⁵ But while Mencius concentrates on the gain to be had from engaging in predatory economic warfare against neighboring countries, Sun Wu points out the dangers that will arise if the state has a large number of soldiers at its command and disposes of large financial resources. He seems to be saying that this will corrupt the ruler and his ministers, causing them to strive for military merit. In order to achieve this they will incessantly engage the state in warfare, a course of action detrimental to its long-term interests.

There are no chronological obstacles to our assuming that a discussion of this sort took place at the court of Ho-lu, because the latter acceded to the throne in the same year that Chin was divided. Sun Wu predicts that the parts of the state of Chin belonging to the Fan 范, Chung-hang 中行, Chih 智, Han 韓, and Wei 魏 clans will succumb to the Chao 趙, in that order. The parts belonging to the Fan, Chung-hang, and Chih clans did in fact perish first, the last being destroyed in 453 BC by an alliance between Han, Wei, and Chao.³⁶ In 403 BC the latter three were recognized as sovereign states by the Chou court and in 376 BC they had completely obliterated the Chin house.³⁷

Some have stated that the text in question must have been written between 514 BC and 403 BC, their argument being that Sun Wu obviously had no knowledge of the Chou recognition of the "Three Chin."³⁸ However, it is

³⁴ I have discussed "the Confucian art of war" in the postscript to my Danish translation of *Sun-tzu ping-fa, Krigkunsten* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1989).

³⁵ That Mencius' 井田 system and the early centrist land systems, such as that implemented in Ch'in, have a common ancestry has been argued by Kimura Masao 木人村正雄, "Mōshi no seichisetsu" 孟子的井地說, *Yamazaki sensei taikan kinen tōyōshigaku ronshū* 山崎先生退官紀念東洋史學論叢 (Tokyo, 1967), pp. 163-73.

³⁶ SC 14, pp. 673-74; 39, p. 1685; 15, p. 696; 39, p. 1686. See also the account in Liu Wen-tien 劉文典, annot., *Huai-nan hung-tieh chi-chieh* 淮南鴻烈集解 (Hsin-pien chu-tzu chi-ch'eng edn.; hereafter *HNT*) 18, p. 609, which utilizes the expression 大將軍.

³⁷ SC 15, p. 709; 39, p. 1687; 15, p. 716; 39, p. 1687.

³⁸ Yates, "New Light on Ancient Chinese Military Texts," pp. 217-18; Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence*, p. 285. I elaborate below on Li Ling's argument against this interpretation in his "Kuan-yü Yin-ch'üeh-shan chien-pen Sun-tzu te shang-ch'üeh" 關於銀雀山簡本孫子的

hard to see the relevance of this for the dating of the text.³⁹ It is true that Sun Wu makes a prognostication that does not come true: Han and Wei were conquered, not by Chao but by the state of Ch'in 秦 in 230 and 225 BC, respectively, and Chao itself fell to Ch'in in 228 BC.⁴⁰ This the author cannot have experienced. But the fact that the rulers of Han, Wei, and Chao were formally invested as feudal lords in 403 BC is irrelevant to establishing the date of the text. The text does not refer to the rulers of Han, Wei, and Chao as feudal lords, it is true, but there is no reason why it should have, were it written after 403 BC. That the author of the text gets wrong the order of the demise of the last three successors to the Chin only shows that he did not experience Ch'in's conquest of them. The text can very well have been written in the first half of the third century BC, when it does not seem to have appeared inevitable to contemporaries that the state of Ch'in was to achieve such a formidably rapid conquest of the rest of China in a few decades' time. When Chia I 賈誼 (200-168), with the wisdom of hindsight, outlined the history of the Warring States period, he depicted Ch'in's expansion as an almost necessary development given its strategically advantageous location,⁴¹ but such a clear sense of the direction of history is not evidenced among Chinese living in the midst of these tumultuous events, at least not in sources at our disposal.⁴² The author of the Yin-ch'üeh-shan text would not have had to be overly naive about historical matters, because the state of Chao was one of the strongest in central China well into the third century BC, and the prognostication could thus have been authored perhaps as late as the middle of the third century BC.⁴³

It has been argued that the relative strengths of the Han, Wei, and Chao changed in the third century BC — Wei the strongest until its defeat by Ch'i, and Chao growing stronger than Wei only through its conquest of parts of Chung-shan 中山 in 296 BC.⁴⁴ If this was the case the text would seem to have been written after 296 BC, since it presupposes that Chao is stronger than Wei. However, it is difficult for us to assess the relative strength of the different Warring States, let alone the contemporary assessment of their

商確, *Wen-shih* 文史 7 (1979), pp. 26-27.

³⁹ The investment as feudal lords in 403 BC is of relevance to assessing the date of *Tso-chuan*, in which it is predicted that Pi Wan's 畢萬 descendants will become dukes 公侯 of Wei; see *TC* (Min 1), pp. 258-60.

⁴⁰ SC 6, pp. 233-34; 15, pp. 754-56. ⁴¹ SC 6, pp. 276-84; 48, pp. 1962-65.

⁴² I owe this point to Bertil Lundahl of Lund University.

⁴³ For a chronological evaluation of Chao's strength, see Yen Hsia 雁俠, "Hsien Ch'in Chao-kuo Chiang-yü pien-hua" 先秦趙國疆域變化, *Cheng-chou ta-hsüeh hsüeh-pao* 鄭州大學學報 (1991. 1), pp. 77-90.

⁴⁴ Li, "Kuan-yü Yin-ch'üeh-shan chien-pen Sun-tzu," p. 27.

strength, the sources being what they are. What matters is that Chao was (and had been) one of stronger of the Chin states. Until the time of its weakening, the argument that Chao might prevail over the other two Chin states would not necessarily have been considered implausible. The "Wu wen" text might thus have been written in the third century BC.

The dialogue with the king of Wu has a point to make. It is a peculiar and extreme form of the doctrine of the minimal state, a doctrine that bears signs of derivation from the Confucian "way of the king" and disapproval of taxation.

One of the characteristics of such illustrative accounts is — as I have argued above — that the persons appearing in them can be substituted at will. Other versions of the same dialogue, with a different speaker, are extant. This reveals that Sun Wu features in the story in order to make its moral vivid and authoritative. In both *Huai-nan-tzu* 淮南子 and Liu Hsiang's 劉向 *Hsin-hsü* 新序 we find a version of a fragment of the same story, but with Shu-hsiang 叔向, a minister of the state of Chin, in the place of Sun Wu. Shu-hsiang predicts that the Chung-hang and Chih clans will perish first because of their strict and inhumane government.⁴⁵ He is asked by Wen-tzu 文子 of the clan of Chao, who in 546 BC was made minister of Chin, about the order of the six generals' demise in words almost identical to those used in the Sun Wu account in the Yin-ch'üeh-shan text (晉六將軍, 其孰先亡乎).

The Yin-ch'üeh-shan text supposes that the initial condition in the six small parts of Chin is the same, whereas different political measures are adopted in each one, measures that are graded according to two economic parameters. The six parts of Chin are considered in total isolation from their neighbors. This is clearly as unrealistic — but also as scientific in general approach — as the assumption that all had an equal chance of attaining supremacy over the others, that the policy they chose to adopt alone decided their fate.

The version featuring Shu-hsiang, as found in *Huai-nan-tzu* and *Hsin-hsü*, is more concerned with matters of political morality, especially the adverse effects of rigorous and mechanical law, as opposed to the old virtues of perspicacity and loyalty.

The theme that the Chin clans were doomed to fall also appears in *Tso-chuan*. After the Chin laws were cast on a tripod for all to see in 513 BC,

Confucius is said to have predicted its fall.⁴⁶ In a more discriminating vein, Ts'ai Mo 蔡墨 foresaw that the Chung-hang clan that had cast the tripod, and the Fan clan that followed a modification of the laws written on it, would be destroyed. Ts'ai Mo said that the Chao clan would be able to escape disaster if it cultivated virtue, that is, if it did not make the law public and mechanical like the other two clans.⁴⁷

The theme of the eventual fall of Chin and the sequence of the fall of its component parts evidently excited the imagination of authors of illustrative stories, providing an easy way to make contrastive statements on political subjects by attributing different policies to the different clans. Probably the story underwent a process of development, evolving from the total and simultaneous destruction envisaged by Confucius, through the particular destruction of two of the clans foreseen by Shu-hsiang and Ts'ai Mo, to the sequential destruction of five of the Chin clans predicted by Sun Wu. These differences in development do not necessarily imply corresponding differences in the dates of the versions embodying them.

The fact that Sun Wu was regarded as an expert in military matters explains why he could be cast as the prognosticator in the Yin-ch'üeh-shan text about the adverse consequences of pursuing militarist policies. He postulates that economic and military strength motivate the ruler and his ministers to wage war, but this argument is tenuous at best: the "haughtiness and immoderation" that an extractive policy induces in the ruler and his ministers would adversely affect their handling of domestic affairs, rather than foreign policy. I believe that a domestic version of the prognostication lies behind the Yin-ch'üeh-shan text and that this is reflected in the terms used to describe the attitudes of the ruler and his ministers in the different states.

The Yin-ch'üeh-shan text asserts that because Han and Wei are rich and have a large number of citizens under arms, their ruler will become *ch'iao* 喬 and their ministers *she* 奢. In Chao where the opposite conditions obtain, the ruler is said to be *ch'ien* 僉 and the ministers *shou* 收. One should probably interpret 僉 as *chien* 儉 or *lien* 斂, both meaning reticent, but doing so does not add any militaristic overtones to its opposite, 喬. The latter character is presumably to be interpreted as *chiao* 驕, meaning haughty and overbearing, but this word does not imply military aggressiveness. Domestic connotations are even more obvious in the terms used to describe

⁴⁶ See Roger T. Ames, *The Art of Rulership: A Study in Ancient Chinese Political Thought* (Honolulu: U. of Hawaii P., 1983), p. 119, for a discussion of Confucius' criticism.

⁴⁷ *TC* (Chao 29), pp. 1504-5. Cf. *Hsiang* 14, p. 1010, where someone asks which of the Chin ministers will be destroyed first 晉大夫, 其誰先亡. The answer was the Luan 欒. Seven years later the prediction proved true.

⁴⁵ *HNT* 12, p. 416; *Hsin-hsü* (SPTK edn.) 1, pp. 112a-b. In *Hsin-hsü* only the Chung-hang clan is mentioned; the two versions are otherwise basically identical.

the attitudes of the ministers. In Chao they are said to be 收, modest and unassuming, whereas in Han and Wei they are 奢, immoderate and boastful. The four terms taken together strongly suggest that vices typically regarded as causing domestic conditions to deteriorate are, quite inconsequentially, said to excite the Han and Wei rulers and ministers to "strive for military merit and repeatedly engage in warfare" 冀功數戰. It is difficult to imagine how causes of the nature mentioned by Sun Wu could have such effects — repeated victories might cause haughtiness and immoderation, but how can these attitudes lead to military aggressiveness? The text as it stands does not make good sense.

Ultimately, I am suggesting that the prediction made by Sun Wu in the Yin-ch'üeh-shan text was adapted from one whose basic ideas were similar to those of Shu-hsiang's prediction in *Huai-nan-tzu* and *Hsin-hsü*. In this (hypothetical) prediction a high rate of taxation and large-scale mobilization of the populace was implied to have a bad effect on the attitude of the ruler and his ministers towards the populace; their overbearing and immoderate attitudes would lead to the destruction of the body politic. The author of the Yin-ch'üeh-shan text wished to cast Sun Wu in the role of prognosticator of the sequence of the fall of the Chin successor states, and he attempted to adapt for this purpose a version of such a prognostication that concerned exclusively the attitudes of the ruler and his ministers towards the populace. In order to do this he grafted a warning against military imperialism unto a prognostication cautioning the ruling stratum against being overbearing and immoderate towards the populace at large. The fact that king Ho-lu acceded to the throne in the same year that Chin was divided in six added to the persuasiveness of the Yin-ch'üeh-shan version, but its author failed to notice that traces of the original prognostication remained.

SUN WU AND WU TZU-HSÜ

Sun Wu's *Shih-chi* memoir consists of a version of the story about the training of the palace ladies. Outside of that, there are five passages elsewhere in *Shih-chi* where Sun Wu is mentioned. In all passages that are not derived from the story of the palace ladies,⁴⁸ Sun Wu occurs in connection

⁴⁸ Sun Wu is mentioned in the "Monograph on the Musical Pitches," a chapter which is not from the hand of Ssu-ma Ch'ien 司馬遷 himself; see Yü Chia-hsi 余家錫, *Yü Chia-hsi lun-hsüeh tsa-chu* 余家錫論學雜著 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1963) 1, pp. 50-58. The disquisition on military affairs that appears in the beginning of this chapter (SC 25, p. 1241) shows clear signs of being derived from the story about Sun Wu's training of the palace ladies, stating in effect its *fabula docet*, and it cannot be deemed to have any independent source value.

with Wu Tzu-hsü, a refugee from Ch'u who avenged the murder of his father by the king of Ch'u by aiding Wu in its wars against Ch'u.

The closing part of *Shih-chi*'s memoir on Sun Wu reads as follows, broken for convenience into numbered phrases:

1. Then the king understood that Sun-tzu knew how to wage war and eventually made him general.
2. In the west [Wu] crushed mighty Ch'u and invaded Ying 郢 [the Ch'u capital]; in the north [Wu] intimidated Ch'i and Chin; it achieved fame among the feudal lords.
3. Sun-tzu contributed to this.⁴⁹

This part of the memoir has no counterpart in the Yin-ch'üeh-shan text about the palace ladies, which concludes with the statement that the general's assertion of his authority is of paramount importance. Phrase two is paralleled, however, in the *Shih-chi* memoir of Wu Tzu-hsü. There we read that

Ho-lu ordered the crown prince Fu-ch'ai 夫差 to lead troops in an attack against Ch'u; he conquered Fan 番. Ch'u feared that Wu was coming again in great numbers and left Ying, moving to Jo 都. At this time, due to the strategies of Wu Tzu-hsü and Sun Wu, Wu in the west crushed mighty Ch'u, and in the north intimidated Ch'i and Chin, and in the south subdued the people of Yüeh 越.⁵⁰

Passage two of the concluding part of Sun Wu's memoir clearly derives from this passage in Wu Tzu-hsü's memoir. Ssu-ma Ch'ien may have deleted the last part about the people of Yüeh from Sun Wu's memoir because he found it unlikely that Sun Wu had anything to do with the Wu conquest of Yüeh. In the known sources Sun Wu is said to have been general under Ho-lu, whereas Wu's military conflicts with Yüeh culminated under Ho-lu's successor Fu-ch'ai (acceded 495 BC). Wu Tzu-hsü was adviser to king Fu-ch'ai too, but Sun Wu is only mentioned in sources relating to king Ho-lu. Phrases one and three of the *Shih-chi* account must have been added by Ssu-ma Ch'ien in order to link phrase two to the story about the palace ladies and to sum up the role played in history by Sun Wu.

The coda of Wu Tzu-hsü's *Shih-chi* memoir is concerned with an attack that the newly designated crown prince Fu-ch'ai launched against Ch'u

⁴⁹ SC 65, p. 2162.

⁵⁰ SC 66, p. 2177. *Shuo-yüan* 說苑 contains a parallel of the final sentence, in which both Wu Tzu-hsü and Sun Wu are mentioned; Hsiang Tsung-lu 向宗魯, annot., *Shuo-yüan chiao-cheng* 說苑校證 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1937) 9, pp. 227-28.

towards the end of Ho-lu's reign, not the invasion that king Ho-lu led in 506 BC. When grafting this coda on Sun Wu's memoir, Ssu-ma Ch'ien gives the impression that Sun Wu contributed to king Ho-lu's expansion towards the north, which is implausible since the king is not known to have led his army against Ch'i. But the coda of Wu Tzu-hsü's *Shih-chi* memoir merely states that the credit for laying the strategy followed by Wu in her hegemonist expansion was due to Wu Tzu-hsü and Sun Wu, and they could well have elaborated this strategy during the rule of king Ho-lu.⁵¹

In Wu Tzu-hsü's memoir we also hear that "general Sun Wu" advised king Ho-lu against invading Ying, claiming that the people of Wu were too exhausted to engage in such a venture. Six years later king Ho-lu asked how Wu Tzu-hsü and Sun Wu rated the prospects of invading Ying — earlier they had said that such an undertaking would not succeed. (It is somewhat strange that both are said to have argued against this plan earlier — they probably did so in Ssu-ma Ch'ien's own source materials.) They answer that Ch'u has two vassals who are dissatisfied with their lord; if they can be won over to the cause of Wu the conquest is sure to succeed. King Ho-lu does as advised and the capital of Ch'u is taken.⁵²

In all the sources available to us, Sun Wu either occurs in illustrative stories in which he is the main character or in narratives woven around the figure of Wu Tzu-hsü. In the former he is invariably called "Sun-tzu," whereas when mentioned in connection with Wu Tzu-hsü the form "Sun Wu" is always used. It seems that Ssu-ma Ch'ien supplied the information about Master Sun's personal name in the beginning of his Sun Wu memoir from the materials on Wu Tzu-hsü, as he did in the coda of the memoir. The main part of the Sun Wu memoir is, as we have seen, a version of a story taken from a tradition devoted to the art of war that calls its patriarch by the honorific appellation "Sun-tzu."

⁵¹ Outside of SC one does find sources implying that Ho-lu fought against states other than Ch'u. *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* thus contains a passage parallel to the coda of Wu Tzu-hsü's SC memoir, listing king Ho-lu's campaigns to the east, south, and north after telling about his conquest of Ying (to the west). It also says that Ho-lu "in the north intimidated Ch'i and Chin," adding that "his commands were followed in the Central States"; see Hsü Wei-yü 許維通, annot., *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu chi-shih* 呂氏春秋集釋 (rpt. Peking: Chung-kuo shu-tien, 1985) 8, pp. 9b-10a. A passage in *Mo-tzu* likewise holds that king Ho-lu made his influence felt to the north, referring to the states of Lu 魯 and Sung; see Sun, *Mo-tzu chien-hu* 5, pp. 124-25. According to *Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu* 吳越春秋 (SPPY edn.; hereafter *WYCC*) 4, p. 12a, trans. John Lagerwey, "A Translation of the Annals of Wu and Yüeh, Part I, With a Study of Its Sources" (unpub. Ph.D., Harvard U., 1975), p. 105, Ho-lu planned an expedition against Ch'i towards the end of his reign; however, no action seems to be taken while he was on the throne. The SC account is to be preferred, since it distinguishes between campaigns led by the king and those fought for the king by his crown prince.

⁵² SC 66, pp. 2175-76.

The plot of the story concerning Wu Tzu-hsü, as told in *Shih-chi*, is as follows.⁵³ Under the influence of an evil minister, the king of Ch'u retained for himself a court lady whom he had intended his son to marry. Wu Tzu-hsü's father remonstrated against the minister's schemes to alienate the king from his heir and was imprisoned. Wu Tzu-hsü and his brother were called back to Ch'u from abroad, the king of Ch'u having promised that if they returned their father would be released. Wu Tzu-hsü saw through this ruse and did not return. The king thereupon executed his father and brother. Wu Tzu-hsü swore to obtain revenge and fled, first to the state of Sung 宋, then to Cheng 鄭, and finally to Wu. There he helped king Ho-lu to power and advised him so well in matters of government that the weak state of Wu became capable of making inroads on its powerful neighbor Ch'u. Wu Tzu-hsü participated in Wu's campaign against Ch'u and was finally able to revenge the murder of his father — since the king of Ch'u was dead he had to content himself with disinterring the king's corpse and whipping it three hundred times.

This first half of the Wu Tzu-hsü story tells how a son avenged the murder of his father.⁵⁴ The elaborate measures taken to strengthen the position of Wu vis-à-vis Ch'u and Wu's final invasion of the capital of Ch'u serve but one purpose in the narrative: to ensure that Wu Tzu-hsü fulfills his vow to obtain revenge. That this happens in the extremely indirect way it does betrays the fictive aspect of the story. The circuitous manner of the revenge is an example of the literary device of exaggeration.

Tso-chuan contains an embryo of the same story. It does not mention Sun Wu. The commander-in-chief of the expedition against Ch'u is Ho-lu himself, Wu Tzu-hsü is general,⁵⁵ and the person to obtain the highest merit

⁵³ See Lagerwey, "Annals of Wu and Yüeh," pp. 14-17; David Johnson, "The Wu Tzu-hsü Pien-wen and Its Sources: Part I," *HJAS* 40.1 (1980), pp. 119-49; Joseph Roe Allen III, "An Introductory Study of Narrative Structure in the *Shih-chi*," *Chinese Literature* 3 (1981), pp. 31-66. Wu Tzu-hsü's SC biography is translated by Burton Watson in *Records of the Historian: Chapters from the Shih-chi of Ssu-ma Ch'ien* (New York: Columbia U. P., 1967), pp. 16-29.

⁵⁴ See Yasumoto, "Go Shisho den ni tsuite," and Hihara Toshikuni 日原利國, "Fukushu no ronri to rinri" 復讐の論理と倫理, *Nihon Chügaku gakkai ho* 日本中國學會報 26 (1974), pp. 53-56.

⁵⁵ The view that Wu Tzu-hsü played an active role in Wu's military campaigns is reflected in the attribution of several military treatises to him; see Shih Chih-mien 施之勉, "Han-shu I-wen-chih chi-shih" 漢書藝文志集釋, part 17, *Ta-lu tsa-chih* 大陸雜誌 73.5 (1981), pp. 43-44. Fragments of a military treatise in which king Ho-lu questions Wu Tzu-hsü were found in 1983 in Chang-chia-shan 張家山, Hupei; see *WW* 1985.1, pp. 12-13. Although the king's name is in the title, the text is reported to present the art of war attributed to Wu Tzu-hsü. Wu Tzu-hsü's opponents in Yüeh, Fan Li 范蠡 and Ta-fu Chung 大夫種, were also credited with military treatises; see Shih, "Han-shu I-wen-chih chi-shih," part 16, *Ta-lu tsa-chih* 73.4 (1981), pp. 185-86.

on the battleground is the king's younger brother Fu-kai 夫概.⁵⁶ The *Tso-chuan* account hardly leaves room for Sun Wu, at least not if he is to play the role attributed to him in *Shih-chi*.

The narrative about Wu Tzu-hsü is about filial piety, about a son's avenging the murder of his father. In form it is not as neat and self-contained as an illustrative story. The interest of the Wu Tzu-hsü narrative is partly due to its gruesome theme, but also to the considerable span of time needed by Wu Tzu-hsü to avenge the murder of his father, and the extremely circuitous way in which this is done. In contradistinction to the anecdotal illustrative stories, the Wu Tzu-hsü narrative is temporally extended and thus a "tale of duration."

One of the best indicators of an account's being fictive is that the same story is told with different actors. According to the story in *Tso-chuan*, Wu Ch'en 巫臣, a fugitive from the state of Ch'u (like Wu Tzu-hsü), left Ch'u because of disagreements over a court lady that his lord had set eyes on (as did Wu Tzu-hsü). He strove to make Wu strong in order to avenge the killing of members of his family in Ch'u (as did Wu Tzu-hsü) by teaching the people of Wu the use of war chariots.⁵⁷ Wu Ch'en did not settle in Wu but asked to be sent to Wu on a mission and left his son there as master of protocol.⁵⁸ Such differences notwithstanding, the identical structure of these two stories stamp them as "historical fiction,"⁵⁹ vehicles for expressing, in this case, the moral imperative of avenging the murder of one's kin.

Thus far, we can say that Sun Wu only occurs in illustrative stories and in tales of duration. These may be interesting, but it would be foolhardy to trust them to tell the truth expected of a nondidactic historian.

SUN WU IN WU YÜEH CH'UN-CH'IU

Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu 吳越春秋, written by Chao Yeh 趙曄 in the first century AD, makes Wu Tzu-hsü "the central actor in the story of Wu," the

story of Yüeh being about the revenge wrought by the king of that state himself.⁶⁰ In this historical romance Sun Wu is introduced in a version of the palace ladies story. He is described as having absconded from the world and is recommended seven times to king Ho-lu by Wu Tzu-hsü, who alone recognizes his hidden abilities. The story continues on the lines of Sun Wu's *Shih-chi* memoir, with some differences.⁶¹

In *Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu*, Ho-lu is not said to have read the "Thirteen Chapters" prior to seeing Sun Wu, but Sun Wu explains a chapter of an unnamed book each time he is received in audience; it is not said how many times this happens, but it seems safe to assume that the number is thirteen and that the book is the "Thirteen Chapters."

The story also ends somewhat differently in the *Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu* version. Wu Tzu-hsü here intervenes when the down-cast king hesitates to employ Sun Wu, pointing out the indispensability of punishments to the establishment of military discipline and suggesting that Sun Wu is the only one who can help the king realize his ambition of becoming a hegemon. He says to the king:

"You . . . wish to punish cruel Ch'u in order to become hegemon over the whole world and command respect from the feudal lords. If not Sun Wu, who would be able to cross the Huai 淮 and Ssu 泗 Rivers and fight at a distance of a thousand *li*?" This greatly pleased the king and he had the drums beaten to convene the army to attack Ch'u. Sun-tzu was general.⁶²

Sun Wu is mentioned in several contexts in *Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu* where he is not so mentioned in *Shih-chi*.

1. Sun Wu, Wu Tzu-hsü, and Po Hsi 白喜 (another of Wu Tzu-hsü's protégés) begin the attack on Ch'u after the treasure-sword Chan-lu

⁵⁶ See Lagerwey, "Annals of Wu and Yüeh," pp. 19, 25.

⁵⁷ *TC* (Chao 19), p. 1401; (Chao 20), pp. 1407-9; (Chao 30), p. 1509; (Chao 31), p. 1512; (Ting 4), pp. 1542-48; see Lagerwey, "Annals of Wu and Yüeh," pp. 1-7; Johnson, "Wu Tzu-hsü Pien-wen," pp. 120-22. For Wu Tzu-hsü's role in Wu's war against Yüeh, see *TC* (Ai 1), p. 1605; (Ai 11), pp. 1664-65. Burton Watson translates the main entries relating to the battle between Ch'u and Wu in *The Tso Chuan* (New York: Columbia U. P., 1989), pp. 180-90.

⁵⁸ *TC* (Ch'eng 2), pp. 803-5; (Ch'eng 7), pp. 833-35; (Hsiang 26), p. 1122.

⁵⁹ According to *WYCC* 2, p. 12, trans. Lagerwey, "Annals of Wu and Yüeh," p. 38, Wu Ch'en himself was master of protocol in Wu.

⁶⁰ As Donald B. Wagner argues in his forthcoming *Iron and Steel in Ancient China* (Leiden: E. J. Brill).

⁶¹ A minor difference is that in *WYCC* Sun Wu is said to have been a man of the state of Wu, whereas *SC* has him as a native of Ch'i. The Yin-ch'üeh-shan text about the palace ladies also implies that Sun Wu is not a native of Wu, but "an official from abroad." It thus seems that *WYCC* identified Sun Wu with the state of Wu to the degree that it made him a native of that state. This is strange because, as we shall see, *Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu* must be taken to imply that Sun Wu was a refugee from Ch'i. Sun Pin is likewise erroneously characterized as a native of Ch'u, the country to which he fled when denied entry into his native Ch'i; see Kao Yu's 高誘 note in Hsü, *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu chi-shih* 17, p. 30b. In *Yüeh chüeh shu* 越絕書 (SPTK edn.) 2, p. 4b, Sun Wu is said to have been buried outside the Wu capital (present-day Soochow); see also the quotations from the early third-century encyclopedia *Huang-lan* 皇覽, in *Hou Han-shu* 後漢書 (Chung-hua shu-chü edn.) treatise 22, p. 3490.

⁶² *WYCC* 4, pp. 6a-b; also trans. Lagerwey, "Annals of Wu and Yüeh," p. 87.

湛盧 has left king Ho-lu, finding him immoral. (In *Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu* swords act and speak like humans.)

2. Two years later, Wu Tzu-hsü and Sun Wu attack and beleaguer a prince of Ch'u.
3. Wu Tzu-hsü, Sun Wu, and Po Hsi take the wives of beaten Ch'u generals as concubines in order to bring shame upon Ch'u.
4. When Fu-kai usurps the throne back in Wu but is forced to flee to Ch'u and Ho-lu leaves the battlefield to stay in his capital, Wu Tzu-hsü, Sun Wu, and Po Hsi are left in control of the army on the banks of the Huai River.
5. After the Wu army is defeated by the concerted forces of Ch'u, Yüeh, and Ch'in, Sun Wu and Wu Tzu-hsü state that the aims of the war, in particular the desecration of the body of the king of Ch'u, have been achieved, and return with the army to Wu.
6. Lamenting the fate of his king, the Ch'u music master recounts the events of the war, mentioning the battles waged by Wu Tzu-hsü, Po Hsi, and Sun Wu against the Ch'u capital.
7. The whole chapter is concluded by the following passage:

At this time, due to the plans of Wu Tzu-hsü, Po Hsi, and Sun Wu, Wu in the west crushed mighty Ch'u, in the north intimidated Ch'i and Chin, and in the south attacked Yü-yüeh 於越.⁶³

This passage, relating to the campaign led by Fu-ch'ai in the last decade of the reign of king Ho-lu, we have already met twice in *Shih-chi*; here, however, Po Hsi's name is added to Wu Tzu-hsü's and Sun Wu's. The question is whether *Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu* contains any information about Sun Wu that is not derived from the texts examined above. David Johnson, who has made a thorough study of the Wu Tzu-hsü legend, suggests

that somewhere among the sources of the WYCC [*Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu*], there was an oral or more probably written version of the campaigns of Wu against Ch'u which focussed on Wu Tzu-hsü, Po Hsi, and Sun Wu, not just on Wu Tzu-hsü. . . .⁶⁴

This hypothesis is intriguing, but I find it difficult to accept. The *Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu* story about how Sun Wu came to the attention of king Ho-lu and was made a general is very likely an elaboration of the *Shih-chi* memoir

on Sun Wu, where care was taken to integrate the stories of Sun Wu and Wu Tzu-hsü. The extra mentions of Sun Wu in *Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu* are, I suggest, elaborations of the *Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu* tale of Wu Tzu-hsü: when Wu Tzu-hsü was mentioned in this tale, and where it seemed plausible to do so, Sun Wu (and sometimes Po Hsi as well) was added by Chao Yeh. There are no indications that a romance on the scale of Wu Tzu-hsü's ever existed about Sun Wu, let alone Po Hsi—they definitely did not stimulate the same degree of literary imagination.

Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu in general depends on *Shih-chi*, *Tso-chuan*, *Kuo-yü*, and other known texts, and in fact it often agrees verbatim with *Shih-chi* where Sun Wu is concerned. However, as it would be strange indeed if *Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu* turned out to have been culled only from sources that the accidents of history have allowed to be transmitted to this day, the hypothesis that some unknown third source lies behind its account of Sun Wu may well be worth investigating. One might start by asking on what grounds *Shih-chi* and *Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu* have added Sun Wu (and the latter Po Hsi as well) to the story about the Wu conquest of the capital of Ch'u, which, to judge from *Tso-chuan*, was originally about Wu Tzu-hsü alone?

THE EXILED WARRIOR

As phrased by David Johnson, Po Hsi, Wu Tzu-hsü, and Sun Wu compose a "heroic trio" in *Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu*. This trio seems to be united by the feature that each of its members was a refugee seeking to avenge the murder of his next of kin. Wu Tzu-hsü was, as we have seen, a fugitive from the state of Ch'u seeking to avenge the murder of his father. According to *Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu*, Po Hsi fled from Ch'u because the king of Ch'u executed his grandfather under the influence of the same evil minister that Wu Tzu-hsü's father had remonstrated against—following Wu Tzu-hsü's words in *Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu*, the two "have the same grudge,"⁶⁵ and Po Hsi's motive for supporting the state of Wu was clearly the same as Wu Tzu-hsü's. Sun Wu, it turns out, was also a fugitive, not from Ch'u, but from Ch'i. This is mentioned in a late source, the *Hsin T'ang-shu*'s 新唐書 genealogies of T'ang prime ministers.⁶⁶

According to the preface introducing the list of the forebears of Sun Mao-tao 孫茂道, prime minister under the T'ang emperor Kao-tsung, the

⁶³ WYCC 4, pp. 12b-13a; also trans. Lagerwey, "Annals of Wu and Yüeh," p. 107. Yü-yüeh is the state usually known as Yüeh.

⁶⁴ Johnson, "Wu Tzu-hsü Pien-wen," p. 135.

⁶⁵ WYCC 4, p. 3a; trans. Lagerwey, "Annals of Wu and Yüeh," p. 75.

⁶⁶ Patricia B. Ebrey, *The Aristocratic Families of Early Imperial China: A Case Study of the Po-ling Ts'ui Family* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1978), contains a full discussion of this source.

dominant clan of the Ch'un-ch'iu state of Ch'i was called T'ien 田; the preface notes, however, that their name had the variant form Ch'en 陳. T'ien Shu 田書, on account of his military merit, was granted permission by the head of the T'ien clan to call himself Sun 孫, and he was enfeoffed at Le-an 樂安.⁶⁷ There seems to be some basis for this, because the same person is referred to in *Tso-chuan* as both Ch'en Shu 陳書 and Sun Shu 孫書.⁶⁸

In *Hsin T'ang-shu* the grandson of Sun Shu is said to have been Sun Wu and Sun Wu's grandson is said to have been Sun Pin.⁶⁹ In *Shih-chi*, Sun Pin is likewise stated to have been a descendant of Sun Wu.⁷⁰

The information given in the preface to the genealogical table about the ancestors of Sun Shu is, however, hard to reconcile with *Tso-chuan* and *Shih-chi*.⁷¹ The preface says that Sun Wu "fled to Wu, where he became a general, because T'ien and Pao 鮑 and [the other of] the Four Clans conspired to rebel."⁷² This may refer to a conflict in 489 BC, in which, however, the T'ien clan (along with its ally, the Pao clan) emerged victorious and which thus was unlikely to have sought refuge.⁷³ It might also refer to a conflict that took place in 545 BC in which the T'ien clan joined three others to oppose a fifth clan.⁷⁴ If the first conflict is referred to, the time is more than fifteen years after Wu's victory over Ch'u (506 BC), to which the exiled Sun Wu would not have contributed. If the second conflict is referred to, it then conflicts with *Tso-chuan*'s statement that the T'ien clan participant was the father of the person claimed by *Hsin T'ang-shu* to have been Sun Wu's great-great-grandfather. The events would have happened too early for Sun Wu to have needed exile.⁷⁵

⁶⁷ In present-day Hui-min 惠民 county in Shantung province. See Wu Ju-sung 吳如嵩 and Ch'en Ping-ts'ai 陳秉才, "Sun Wu ku-li k'ao-i" 孫武故里考疑, *Sun-tzu Hsin-t'an*, pp. 254-61; and Wang Ping-ch'en 王秉臣, "Sun Wu ku-li k'ao-hsi" 孫武故里考析, *ibid.*, pp. 262-66.

⁶⁸ *TC* (Chao 19), p. 1403; (Ai 11.2), p. 1662.

⁶⁹ *Hsin T'ang-shu* (Chung-hua shu-chü edn.) 73B, p. 2945.

⁷⁰ *SC* 65, p. 2162. Other evidence that Sun Wu and Sun Pin were regarded as being related is a fragmented bamboo strip in the Yin-ch'üeh-shan corpus. This reads: "... clarified it in Wu and Yüeh and advocated it in Ch'i. I say: He who is well versed with the way of the Sun family 孫氏之道 can be certain to accord with Heaven and Earth" (*YCS* 1, strip no. 317). More than just testimony to the fact that Sun Wu and Sun Pin were considered to be related, this also holds that their art of war was regarded as a family tradition. The mention of Yüeh must be a slip of the pen attributable to the fact that Wu and Yüeh are customarily mentioned together. Sun Pin was a general of Ch'i.

⁷¹ The argument in this paragraph is based on Li, "Kuan-yü Yin-ch'üeh-shan chien-pen Sun-tzu," pp. 32-33.

⁷² *Hsin T'ang-shu* 73B, p. 2945.

⁷³ *TC* (Ai 6), p. 1634; see *SC* 32, p. 1506-7.

⁷⁴ *TC* (Hsiang 28), pp. 1145-49.

⁷⁵ Li, "Kuan-yü Yin-ch'üeh-shan chien-pen Sun-tzu," pp. 32-33, abstracts a genealogy of the T'ien clan from *Tso-chuan* and *Shih-chi*.

I think we have to conclude that the part about Sun Shu's descendants is as unreliable as that about his ancestors, and that Sun Wu was at some stage fitted into the genealogy of the Sun clan (so presumably was Sun Pin). But this does not mean that *Hsin T'ang-shu* does not contain information of great interest: it reflects a third tradition like that hypothesized by David Johnson, because, alone of all sources, it explicitly states that Sun Wu was a refugee, as he was made out to have been in *Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu* by being associated with the refugees Wu Tzu-hsü and Po Hsi, and as he is probably implied to have been in *Shih-chi* by being paired with Wu Tzu-hsü.

The relevant part of the genealogy of the Sun clan found in *Hsin T'ang-shu* seems to be of pre-T'ang date. The rulers of the short-lived Wu dynasty (222-280 AD) saw themselves as related to Sun Wu, claiming to be natives of Fu-ch'un 富春, where, according to *Hsin T'ang-shu*, Sun Wu's son (Sun Pin's father) was enfeoffed.⁷⁶ *Hsin T'ang-shu* corroborates this claim, claiming Sun Ch'üan 孫權 to have been the lineal descendant of Eastern Han Sun Ch'i 孫騏, in turn a lineal descendant of Sun Wu.⁷⁷ Forgery of genealogies was the rule throughout Later Han and the Period of Division, and we do not have to accept such claims. We can interpret them instead as saying that at the close of the Han dynasty there circulated stories in which the theme of Sun Wu as a refugee, opaquely reflected in *Shih-chi* and *Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu*, occurred. These stories were adopted in the official explanation of the ancestry of the third century AD Wu emperors and, through transmission by descendants, found their only direct expression in sources known to us in *Hsin T'ang-shu*.

If Sun Wu was a refugee, might he also have used the state of Wu to obtain revenge over somebody in Ch'i, just as Wu Tzu-hsü and Po Hsi used Wu to avenge the murder of their next of kin? Perhaps this explains why Wu Tzu-hsü says in *Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu* that Sun Wu was able to lead the Wu army across the Huai and Ssu Rivers, since this would have brought the Wu army into the lands of Ch'i.⁷⁸ It could be that this also explains why Sun Wu is praised in *Shih-chi* and *Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu* for contributing to Wu's ascendancy over Ch'i.

⁷⁶ *Hsin T'ang-shu* 73B, p. 2947; *San-kuo chih* 三國志 (Chung-hua edn.) 46, p. 1093. See also Hsü Sung's 許嵩 (mid-T'ang) *Chien-k'ang shih-lu* 建康實錄, Chang Ch'en-shih 張忱石, annot. (Peking: Chung-hua, 1986) 1, p. 3, and *Yüan-ho hsing-tsuán* 元和姓纂 (Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chen-pen pieh-chi edn.) 4, p. 17b. Fu-ch'un is in present-day Fu-yang 富陽 county, Chekiang; see Wu and Ch'en, "Sun Wu ku-li k'ao-i," p. 258.

⁷⁷ *Hsin T'ang-shu* 73B, pp. 2946-47.

⁷⁸ Compare Kuo-yü 國語 (Shanghai: Ku-chi, 1988) 19, p. 597, trans. Lagerwey, "Annals of Wu and Yüeh," p. 11, where Wu is to cross the Chiang 江 and Huai Rivers in order to attack Ch'i and Lu.

There is also the question of Sun Wu's name: in some ways it is too good to be true. "Wu" 武 of course means martial, and it is a strange coincidence indeed that the person who was to become regarded as the most able general of all, the patriarch of the school of the art of war, should be given this name when born.⁷⁹ Wasn't he given the personal name Wu because it fitted well with his role as a shrewd general in the revenge stories that he appeared in? The same reasoning may also be applied to Sun Wu's family name since the character 孫 was often borrowed to express the word written with the character 遜, the basic meaning of which is to flee.⁸⁰

Cases where a whole name describes a person are found in *Chuang-tzu* and *Lun-yü* 論語. In *Chuang-tzu* we encounter "Mr. Lame-Hunchback-No-Lips" (Yin-ch'i Chih-li Wu-mai 闕肢支離無脈) and "Mr. Pitcher-Sized-Wen" (Weng-ang Ta-ying 甕竈大癩), and in *Lun-yü* we read about "Tall and Bogged Down" (Ch'ang Chü 長沮) and "Towering and Sinking Down" (Chieh Ni 桀溺).⁸¹ The pseudo-names in *Chuang-tzu* are quite impressive, but tell little about the character of the (obviously fictitious) freaks to which they refer. The names given the hermits encountered by Confucius may conceivably be read as ironical descriptions of their fate in a world where the way was lost. But it is also possible that they are simply mnemonic labels given because the farming hermits were unwilling to volunteer their real names, just as the Ch'u hermit Chieh-yü 接輿 may have been nicknamed "Received Carriage" because he received the Master's carriage.⁸² Such names do not represent evidence of the literary technique of personification, in which a narrative describes the role of a character by his name.

This occurred in the case of the "first act of punishment" stories. Most of the names of the persons who suffered execution in the stories were obviously (as pointed out by D. C. Lau) made up, but only K'uang Chüeh's name fits his role as a deceiver. The character 狂 does not have to be written 誑 in order to mean to deceive,⁸³ and even if it did, adding the signific 言 would hardly be an obstacle towards interpreting it. In the case of 喬 we do

not have to add the same signific, for in *Huai-nan-tzu* K'uang Chüeh's personal name is written 譎, meaning to deceive.⁸⁴ Obviously K'uang Chüeh is called by that name because he is The Deceiver.⁸⁵

Tien Chieh's name also describes the role he plays in the story that we examined earlier. According to the reconstruction of Bernhard Karlgren, 顛頤 is read *tien g'iet* in Archaic Chinese.⁸⁶ A prominent meaning of 顛 is to stumble (with extended meanings of topsy-turvy, and crazy). In fact many characters with this meaning have reconstructed pronunciations close to that of 頤, like 越 (*g'iat*) and 蹶 (*kiwät*). The compound 顛越 means to stumble, but it also means to be reckless.⁸⁷ Obviously 顛頤 means The Reckless. This makes the name Tien Chieh a personification and the earliest story about him a fiction. The *Tso-chuan* account of Tien Chieh's execution is thus a derivation of an illustrative story similar to those about Tien Chieh in *Shang-chün shu* and *Han-fei-tzu* — the train of events has been retained and the moral point dispensed with.⁸⁸

The name Sun Wu is clearly an example of the literary phenomenon of personification, Sun Wu being The Exiled Warrior, and Sun Wu is thus as fictitious as his name is meaningful.⁸⁹

⁷⁹ HNT 18, p. 621. Lau's translation of K'uang Chüeh as "Mad Chüeh" is thus not satisfactory. Watanabe sees personification at play in the name of Shao-cheng Mao. He argues that Shao-cheng 少正 means immoral and that Mao 卯 is a loan for *mao* 冒, which he interprets as *pi* 蔽, to be covered up, to be deluded; "Shōsei Bō," p. 22. I am not convinced by this argument. Watanabe appears to have been the first to see names occurring in allegedly historical sources as personifications.

⁸⁰ K'uang Chüeh's brother Hua-shih 華士 may also be seen as a personification, because 華 may mean superficial or specious; Hua-shih thus may be translated as The Deceptive One.

⁸¹ For this and the following reconstructions, see Karlgren, *Grammata Serica Recensa* (rpt. Stockholm: Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 1972), 301g, 303e, 375k, 375l, 375m, 393r.

⁸² Cf. the *Shang-shu* 尚書 phrase 顛越不恭, to be reckless and disrespectful, going counter to the commands of one's superiors; Karlgren, ed. and trans., "The Book of Documents," *BMFEA* 22 (1950), pp. 22, 24. See also *TC* (Ai 11), p. 1664; *SC* 31, p. 1472. Karlgren translated 顛越 as "fallen," but this does not seem to capture the inversion of normality expressed by this phrase. For 顛蹶, see Tai Wang 戴望, annot., *Kuan-tzu chiao-cheng* 管子校正 (Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang ming-chu edn.) 8, p. 127.

⁸³ *TC* (Ai 28), p. 455. In a comment attributed to the 君子, duke Wen of Chin is said to have understood well the use of punishment: "He punished thrice and the people submitted to him" 三罪而民服; (Hsi 28), p. 472. One of the three executions referred to is that of Tien Chieh, and thus, albeit indirectly, *TC* does allude to the moral of the Tien Chieh story.

⁸⁴ A similar case can be made for the name of Sun Pin. Sun Pin was a refugee, which explains 孫, and he suffered amputation of the kneecaps, which explains 躄. Sun Pin's handicap, his literary characteristic, was inflicted upon him by his fellow student, P'ang Chüan 龐涓, who was jealous of his greater abilities. The tale about The Exiled Cripple was about how Sun Pin, in spite of his handicap, obtained revenge over P'ang Chüan by means of a clever ruse.

⁷⁹ Jaroslav Průšek, "L'art de la guerre de Sun-tzu," published in idem, *Chinese History and Literature* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Pub. Co., 1970), p. 66, also holds that Sun Wu's given name is "trop typique," and he translates Sun Wu as "Sun le Guerrier."

⁸⁰ See *TC* (Chuang 1), p. 155; (Chuang 1), p. 157; (Min 2), p. 263; (Chao 25), p. 1454; (Ai 26), p. 1732; (Ai 27), p. 1735.

⁸¹ Wang Shu-min 王叔岷, annot., *Chuang-tzu chiao-ch'uan* 莊子校詮 (Taipei: Chung-yang yen-chiu-yüan li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu-so, 1988) 5, p. 197; trans. Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Columbia U. P., 1968), p. 74. For *Lun-yü*, see Liu Pao-nan 劉寶楠, annot., *Lun-yü cheng-i* 論語正義 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1990) 21, pp. 718-20; trans. Lau, *Analects*, pp. 183, 185.

⁸² Liu, *Lun-yü cheng-i* 18.5, p. 1718. ⁸³ See, e.g., Ch'en, *Han-fei-tzu chi-shih* 19, p. 1099.

THE ORIGIN OF SUN WU

Early Chinese literature contains hundreds, if not thousands, of illustrative stories. Among early Chinese scholars, the most common approach to such stories was to arrange them according to their moral, for example, the "Ch'u-shuo" 儲說 section of *Han-fei-tzu*. Illustrative stories can be aggregated in various ways, but they can be embedded in tales of duration. The tale about Wu Tzu-hsü has thus, because of the temporality of its plot, been open to insertion of stories of various kinds, mainly varieties of illustrative stories.⁹⁰ As stated by Johnson, "entire episodes that have nothing to do with Wu Tzu-hsü in earlier sources are spliced into the story and made to have a connection with him."⁹¹ In an important study, Ronald C. Egan has shown how the same technique of composition is utilized in *Tso-chuan*.⁹²

The Sun Wu story of the palace ladies has obviously been embedded in this way in the *Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu* tale of Wu Tzu-hsü. If Sun Wu is The Exiled Warrior, the original story about him must, however, have been a tale of duration, telling how he was driven into exile from Ch'i and how he aided the state of Wu in order to requite the wrong committed against him in Ch'i. Superficially, the fact that Sun Wu tends to parallel Wu Tzu-hsü in both *Shih-chi* and *Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu* suggests that the Sun Wu tale has been, not embedded, but superimposed on the Wu Tzu-hsü tale of duration. However, the circumstance that Sun Wu, except in the illustrative story about the palace ladies, does not do anything that Wu Tzu-hsü does not do raises the question whether Sun Wu has any identity at all.

Perhaps a clue to Sun Wu's appearance in the Wu Tzu-hsü tale is to be found in the figure of Po Hsi, the third person of *Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu*'s "heroic trio." Po Hsi is also difficult to account for. After *chüan* 4 of *Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu* both Po Hsi and Sun Wu disappear, but *chüan* 5 tells of chief minister P'i 髡, and both *Tso-chuan* and *Shih-chi* state that P'i was surnamed

⁹⁰ Another example of a tale of duration is the story of duke Wen of Chin, also known as Double Ears 重耳 (duplication of physical traits is a phenomenon often seen in early Chinese hero figures). It is very likely that the story about the execution of The Reckless was embedded in the tale of Double Ears, as were many illustrative stories.

⁹¹ Johnson, "Epic and History in Early China: The Matter of Wu Tzu-hsü," *JAS* 15.2 (1981), p. 259.

⁹² Egan, "Narratives in Tso Chuan," *HJAS* 37.2 (1977), pp. 343, 351. I do not agree with David Johnson ("Epic and History in Early China," p. 265) that such embedding requires "superhuman skills of synthesis." Quite to the contrary, I believe the quasi-formulaic technique of embedding easy to apply. Johnson's concrete description, quoted above, harmonizes perfectly with an "embedding" theory; nonetheless Johnson postulates that longer narratives of an epic character, stories on the lines of Henri Maspero's *romans historiques*, existed prior to the "independent units" (mainly illustrative stories) of Egan's analysis. This is unnecessary and without basis in the sources at our disposal.

Po 伯 and that he was a refugee from Ch'u. One naturally assumes that Po Hsi 白喜 and Po P'i 伯髡 are the same person. But whereas Po Hsi is Wu Tzu-hsü's protégé, Po P'i is Wu Tzu-hsü's bitter enemy. Johnson postulates the existence of two traditions about this figure, one favorable to him in which he was called Po Hsi and one inimical to him in which he was called Po P'i. There seems, however, to be no support for this hypothesis.⁹³

Not only did the intensity of Wu Tzu-hsü convert Po P'i into Wu Tzu-hsü's own double, Wu Tzu-hsü also created a double out of nothing — Sun Wu. Unlike Po P'i, Sun Wu had no existence separate from Wu Tzu-hsü and did not assume the characteristics of Wu Tzu-hsü by force of attraction. Rather, Wu Tzu-hsü was so potent a literary character that he effected his own duplication with the fictitious revenging exile Sun Wu, who is distinguished from Wu Tzu-hsü solely by his status as general and his Ch'i origin: in everything else he echoes Wu Tzu-hsü. Such characteristics may have been invented to explain why Wu Tzu-hsü engaged Wu in wars against Ch'i. Sun Wu's profession and provenance thus arise from the exigencies of the Wu Tzu-hsü tale itself, and this explains why Sun Wu is so hazy a character, someone who fled from Ch'i for unknown reasons. Sun Wu was a shadow of Wu Tzu-hsü, but a potent enough shadow to figure in illustrative stories. Sun Wu acquired authority to pronounce on matters of warfare in illustrative stories by figuring in the tale of Wu Tzu-hsü. In the same way, the attribution to Sun Wu of the military treatise known as *Sun-tzu ping-fa* was the result, at least ultimately, of the fame he had acquired by figuring in the tale of Wu Tzu-hsü.

⁹³ Johnson, "Wu Tzu-hsü Pien-wen," p. 135. Po P'i's given name occurs as Hsi in a Ma-wang-tui text, as well as in *Lun-heng* 論衡 (Chu-tzu chi-ch'eng edn.) 1, p. 1.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HNT	<i>Huai-nan hung-lieh chi-chieh</i> 淮南鴻烈集解
SC	<i>Shih-chi</i> 史記
TC	<i>Tso-chuan</i> 左傳
WYCC	<i>Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu</i> 吳越春秋
YCS	<i>Yin-ch'üeh-shan Han-mu chu-chien</i> 銀雀山漢墓竹簡