

GUARDING AGAINST WAR



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THE IDEA OF PEACE IN THE
CHINESE SYSTEM

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FORN LANGUAGE PRODE

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Publisher's Notes

China is the only large nation to have risen through peaceful means, accomplishing in just decades what it took developed nations centuries to do in the aspect of industrialization. The people of China have made the historic leaps from liberation to prosperity, and thence to a strong nation, creating what is known as the "Chinese Miracle." While there was widespread poverty when the PRC was founded in 1949, diligence over just a few decades has pushed the nation's economy to become the second largest in the world, causing people around the globe to marvel.

In his book *When China Rules the World*, the British academic Martin Jacques keenly pointed out, "It is banal, therefore, to believe that China's influence on the world will be mainly and overwhelmingly economic: on the contrary, its political and cultural effects are likely to beat least as far-reaching." Today, as China is continually making its way to the center of the global stage, its governance, spirit, wisdom, and solutions are gaining more attention from the international community. In the end, China's success is attributed to the success of the Chinese system and governance model, which is why more and

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more scholars around the world are starting to study the features and merits of the model. During the formation of this system, numerous factors have played roles, the most foundational and most important being China's millennia-old cultural legacy. Thus, in order to comprehend the Chinese system, one must understand the nation's fine traditional culture.

The governance and other state systems of any nation do not simply form out of thin air; they have their historical and cultural backgrounds. During the 4th Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee, President Xi Jinping stated in an important address:

China's socialist system and state governance system have a profound historical background. Over several thousand years of history, the Chinese nation has created a splendid civilization, and developed a wealth of ideas on state systems and governance, including:

- the ideal of great harmony believing that "When the Great Way rules, the land under Heaven belongs to the people";*
- the same tradition across the country so that all areas follow similar customs and all people are of the same family;*
- the idea of prioritizing morality over sanctions in governance and guiding people with virtue;*
- the people-centered philosophy holding that the people*

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have primacy over the ruler and the aim of governance is to ensure and improve the people's wellbeing;

- the idea of equality among all people in terms of social status and wealth, and taking*

the wealth of the rich to help the poor;
•the idea of justice and impartiality of the law;
•moral standards advocating filial piety, fraternity, loyalty to the country, good faith, propriety, justice, integrity, and conscience;
•standards for the appointment of officials based on virtue and competence;
•the reformist spirit as exemplified by such adages as:“Although Zhou is an ancient state, its destiny hinges on reform”;
•the principle of good neighborliness and harmony in relations with all other countries;
and
•the belief in the primacy of peace and opposition to bellicosity.

China's adoption of the Chinese socialist system is a result of its 5,000 years of history and culture.

Understanding the Chinese System is divided into volumes with titles based on the 11 ideas President Xi spoke of. On the basis of stories on governance from ancient Chinese historical writings, the books also describe governance in the present day as it relates to these ancient

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principles. By tracing the governance experiences and wisdom of ancient Chinese people, the books show how the Chinese socialist system inherited and carried forward in an innovative way the fine traditional culture, allowing readers to understand not only the historical legacy inherited by the system but also its unique Chinese features.

The strength of China's traditional culture lies in its pursuit of the *dao*(the way), which is the order of life and the entire universe. According to the great philosopher Laozi, pursuing the *dao* differs from the pursuit of knowledge:“In the pursuit of learning one knows more everyday; in the pursuit of the way one does less every day. One does less and less until one does nothing at all, and when one does nothing at all, there is nothing that is undone.”The sages of old empowered themselves through non-action and ignorance to the point that nothing was impossible and nothing was unknown to them, which is quite different from the method through which Westerners pursue knowledge. In the pursuit of knowledge, no matter how much knowledge one obtains, as long as he possesses knowledge in one area, he is destined to lack it in others, which means he will be unable to reach the realm of omniscience. But the ignorance of the sages is like a mirror which, though having no image of its own, allows all images to be seen through reflection. That is why Buddhists often say, “Be silent and thus illuminate others, and illuminate

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others while remaining silent.”The ancients of China believed that everyone could transcend to the realm of the sage emperors Yao and Shun, that is, become sages and worthy (omniscient) by pursuing the *dao*. But in Western culture, only God can be omniscient. Thus, trying to understand the wisdom of ancient China's sages and its worthy people through the Western methodology of pursuing knowledge is quite problematic.

Differences in methodology have led to a divergence in worldviews and theories of

knowledge.

The major feature of the Western worldview and theory of knowledge is dichotomy, as seen between the subjective and the objective, the subject and the object, the self and the other, and humankind and nature. This mode of thought pervades every aspect of Western thought, which is why there is a dichotomy between father and son, husband and wife, employer and employee, brothers, friends, companies, and nations. Such concepts and theories as competition, game theory, and the Thucydides Trap are products of this mindset. Misunderstanding and misjudgment are inevitable when looking from the angle of the Western mindset at the traditional Chinese values of loving fathers and dutiful sons, upstanding husbands and virtuous wives, benevolent rulers and loyal subjects, the love and respect among brothers, integrity in collaboration, mutual benefits in cooperation, rapport

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among nations, and harmony between humankind and nature.

In contrast, the Chinese of long ago formed a worldview of everything in the world being united as one and believed that the benevolent are united with all in the world. Therefore, it was believed that relationships of harmonious unity should exist between father and son, husband and wife, brothers, friends, the ruler and his subjects, and nations, which would result in glory for one leading to glory for all and loss for one implying loss for all. Such a mindset allowed harmony in China to be maintained among the people, between the people and nature, between people and society, and with other nations in the country's long history, making the Chinese civilization the world's only civilization to endure unbroken for so long. This is because Chinese people have almost always held to the direction given by the sages and the worthy: the pursuit of the *dao*. They have maintained the worldview of harmony with nature and the overall mindset that the benevolent are united with all in the world, and they have held fast to the moral concept that all living things are kin. This worldview, mode of thought, and moral concept permeate every aspect of governance and the social system in China. From different perspectives, *Understanding the Chinese System* provides an interpretation of how China's unique cultural traditions are made manifest

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in China's systems of politics, economics, culture, education, law, and diplomacy. It is thus a bridge for readers around the world to better understand China.

Of course, whether the reader is from a Western background or from China, understanding the Chinese system is by no means a simple task, though it is a necessary one because it is highly significant in promoting harmony within Chinese society and peace between nations.

This series is an effort at telling the story of China through Chinese discourse. I believe its publication will produce a positive and far-reaching influence, allowing readers to better understand the historical context of the Chinese socialist system and state governance system. It will also help reinforce confidence in China's path, its theories, its system, and its culture, promote exchanges and mutual learning between Chinese and Western cultures, and boost the influence of the Chinese culture on the global stage.

Foreword

Since the beginning of the 21st century, humanity has undergone major changes while the international landscape has seen subtle transformation. Western countries have begun to express much greater interest in China's direction and methods of development. Though some suspicion is embedded in such interest, the CPC-led endeavors in building Chinese socialism are so successful that the Western countries have to seriously search to answer the question of just what lies behind China's tremendous achievements.

Despite the confusion expressed by the Western countries, the answer to this question is self-evident to the Chinese: The Chinese socialist system, under the leadership of the CPC, is a fundamental system that befits the nation and ensures it will reach the Two Centenary Goals, initiate a new journey in building a modern socialist country in all respects, and on this basis realize the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation. A basic prerequisite to understanding China is understanding its system and the cultural traditions and ethos underlying that system. As President Xi Jinping has repeatedly stressed,

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the Chinese socialist system, which is guided by Marxism, is deeply rooted in the Chinese soil and in the Chinese culture and enjoys the full support of the people. It combines Marxism and the best of our millennia-old cultural traditions and values that our people inherently hold to in everyday life. To understand the Chinese system and the underlying ethos, one must not only proceed from the reality, but also look at our fine cultural traditions and the ancient wisdom that thrives and transforms with the times.

In his essay "Uphold and Improve the Chinese Socialist System and Modernize State Governance," President Xi summarizes the historical background of the Chinese system, and brings together ancient ideas on state systems and governance in 11 aspects, including the advocacy of virtuous governance, the people-centered philosophy, the concept of equality, the standards for appointment to office, the reformist spirit, and the principle behind diplomacy. The essay shows people the cultural traits and ethos underlying the Chinese system, its major advantages and unique appeal, delivering a message of confidence in the culture and system.

Inspired by President Xi's essay, this series of books seeks to explore the Chinese system from the perspective of China's traditional culture. Relating the stories about

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the state system and governance from China's historical writings, these books demonstrate the ancient wisdom and experiences in the hope of helping people apply the wisdom and learn from the past. This will serve to support the current governance endeavors. The compilation of this book series indicates a clear awareness of the problems that are of practical relevance today. Even though the people and events described here are from history, they are analyzed from a modern perspective to give readers a unique inspiration. The series explains the longstanding cultural tradition behind the Chinese system, helping readers understand the fine legacy of traditional culture and innovative elements within the

Chinese socialist system.

Whether the Chinese system is good or bad is no longer a topic of debate, because history has given us the best answer with evidence. But where does its strength lie? How does one extrapolate on the clear merits of the Chinese system in an appropriate, convincing and easy-to-understand way? These are no easy questions to answer. A unique perspective is especially needed in interpreting and explaining China's traditional culture. President Xi once said that China's fine traditional culture is the lifeline of the Chinese nation, and is highly significant for the efforts of building Chinese socialism. It is

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also an important resource for thought, good practices and wisdom on governance. The cultural traits and ethos endowed by the best of the traditional culture makes the Chinese nation what it is. This holds true for the Chinese system too, as the key to understanding it is understanding the fine cultural tradition behind the Chinese system.

China's traditional culture advocates a holistic approach to the *dao*. Everything in the world must comply with the *dao*. It is the highest principle and standard which cannot be defied; if anyone defies it, corresponding retribution will follow. As is said in the Doctrine of the Means, "The *dao* cannot be separated from us for even one moment; that which can be separated from us is not the *dao*." Therefore, the ancients followed the model of the *dao* whether in handling their relationships with the nation or with nature. By following the *dao*, people can come to understand the laws of the universe and make the best use of their inherent goodness so as to serve the country and its people. From this, the ancients formed an extensive system of thought on governance, which involved the way a ruler and ministers should govern (the human aspect) and the way administration should be conducted (the institutional aspect).

Specifically, the human aspect is embodied in such ideas as people-centeredness, the people having primacy

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over the ruler, good neighborliness and harmony. The institutional aspect is manifested in such ideas as prioritizing morality over sanctions, selecting the worthy for office, and the belief in the primacy of peace. In short, the nation must be governed through virtue. These ideas, constitute an essential part of ancient wisdom on governance, are embodied in the Chinese socialist system. President Xi has said, "The essential attribute of our state and governance systems is that they always represent the fundamental interests of the people, safeguard the people's status as masters of the country, reflect the people's common will, and protect the people's legitimate rights and interests. This is precisely why the operation of the systems in our country is so effective and dynamic." His remarks point to the optimal way to carry on and develop China's fine traditional culture and neatly encapsulate the cultural traits and ethos underlying the Chinese system.

It was said in ancient times, "While looking at a matter, the benevolent see benevolence and the wise see wisdom." The Chinese system and the cultural traits and ethos underlying it can and should be expounded from different perspectives. In seeking the answer to the question posed earlier, we should not restrict ourselves to just one answer. Building and

improving the Chinese socialist system is a dynamic process and thus must be viewed in

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the context of changes in the times. I believe the publication of the series will provide readers with a unique angle from which to holistically examine the Chinese system, a broad topic which is worthy of careful consideration.

Liu Yuli
June 2021

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Introduction

Over the past seven decades, China made a historic leap thanks to the collective effort of the people of all its ethnic groups under the sound leadership of the Communist Party of China. It has stood up, grown rich, and become strong. While its rapid development attracts worldwide attention, it has also incurred tension and hostility from some Western countries. Out of self-interest, some politicians and media outlets in the West fabricate and spread lies to denigrate China and its people, playing up "China threat" by reference to the theory of "Thucydides Trap." Their intention is to contain and isolate China. Can China avoid the so-called "Thucydides Trap"? Will it seek hegemony as it grows stronger (as a great power is supposed to according to the Western logic)? Will it upset the existing international order? It takes a good understanding of China to find answers to these questions. In President Xi Jinping's words,

To understand today's China and foresee its future, we must learn about China's past and know something about its culture. The inherent and defining feature of traditional Chinese culture is embedded

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in contemporary Chinese thinking and in the governance strategies of the Chinese government.

The opening remark of *The Art of War*, the "bible" of military science in China, reads like this:

The art of war is of vital importance to the state. It is a matter of life and death, a road either to safety or to ruin. Hence it is a subject of inquiry which can on no account be neglected.

The ancient Chinese were extremely cautious about starting a war. It seemed to them that all things operate in accordance with certain rules and that compliance with these rules yields desirable results while non-compliance incurs disaster. Through observation of both nature and human society, they found that Heaven prioritizes life over death and that since

war and weapons are meant for killing, they bring calamity to all living creatures including mankind itself. Therefore, all schools of Chinese philosophy unanimously agree that wars are dangerous and must be treated with utmost caution. This attitude towards war finds expression in their representative works. According to *The Analects of Confucius*,

There were three cases in life in which Confucius

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considered a man was called upon to exercise the most mature deliberation: in case of worship, of war and of sickness.

Lao Tzu says, in *Dao De Jing*,

Weapons are ill-omened things, which the superior man should not depend on.

A quotation from *Weiliaozi*, another military classic of ancient China, reads,

Weapons are instruments of evil; and wars go against virtue. The last thing to be desired is fighting.

While the ancient Chinese emphasized caution about starting a war, they have never denied the inevitability and necessity of its existence, which, in the same vein, has been based on their understanding of, and compliance with, the way of Nature. It seemed to them that things are born in spring, grow in summer, ripen (and are harvested) in autumn, and are to be stored up in winter. In other words, things grow luxuriant in summer and become lifeless in winter. According to Dong Zhongshu (179-104 BC), the influential Confucian scholar of the Western Han Dynasty,

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Yin and *yang* are the principal forces of the way of Heaven, *yang* corresponding with benevolence and *yin* with the use of penalty. Penalty calls for killing and cruelty while benevolence advocates sparing lives. That is why *yang* resides in high summer, busy nurturing all things, while *yin* resides in winter, a season of voidness when *yin* becomes useless. This also shows Heaven's preference for benevolence over cruelty. ("The Biography of Dong Zhongshu," from *The Book of Han*)

The ancient Chinese got revelation from their perception of the ways of Nature. They stressed benevolent government and despised the use of penalty because Nature takes pleasure in the welfare of all living things. In ancient China, war was regarded as a higher form of penalty. Though the sages despised war, they never fully abandoned it, because in the same way as it goes against the will of Heaven to resort to war indiscreetly, it violates the way of Heaven to fully abandon war. According to the "Penal Code" (Xingfa Zhi 刑法志, a chapter of *The Book of Han*),

The universe is made of five basic elements, none of which can be discarded. In the same way, we cannot abandon weapons completely. Discipline enforcement by flogging should not relax in the household.

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Penalty should not be abolished in running the state. War efforts should not be abandoned where they are necessary. However, we must be aware that these are only secondary means of governance.

The ancient Chinese caution against war has its origin in their profound understanding of the way of Heaven (nature) and in their first-hand experience of the ravages of war. War brings deaths and social disorder, displacing the people and endangers the state. Such experience and understanding have led the ancient Chinese to regard military conquest as the last resort and to try their best to subdue the enemy without fighting. According to *The Art of War*,

To fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting.

Another military science classic in China, *The Six Secret Teachings* (*Liutao* 六韜), voices a similar idea:

He who excels at the conduct of war does not await the deployment of the enemy forces. He who excels at eliminating the risks of war manages them before they appear. He who excels at being victorious

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wins the war in an imperceptible manner. The best conduct of war is defeating the enemy without war.

The ideal of subduing the enemy without fighting is an expression of the traditional Chinese philosophy that valued harmony above all else. The best way to achieve such an ideal, it seems to the ancient Chinese, was to observe the rites and practice benevolent governance. Another military classic of ancient China, *Sima Rangju's Art of War* (*Sima Fa* 司馬法), has this comment:

Uphold the ritual system (*li* 禮), and the state and army will remain stable. Practice benevolent governance (*ren* 仁), and the state and army will gain victory.

What has made *li* 禮 and *ren* 仁 so powerful? Master You (*Youzi* 有子) said, according to *The Analects of Confucius*,

In the usage of ritual, it is harmony that is prized; This is how the sage kings in the past ruled their countries.

It was based on such a recognition that the ancient sage kings upheld ritual in their governance of the state.

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On the functions of 礼, *Zuo Qiuming's Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Zuo Zhuan*) has the following two comments:

礼 ensures the long-term stability of the state, defines order among the people, and benefits posterity.

The sovereign gives instructions, and the ministers loyally carry them out in reverence. The father is loving and is able to offer his teaching, and the son, dutiful and filial, is able to give admonition wherever necessary. The elder brother cares for and treats the younger as his equal, and the younger brother respects and obeys the elder. The husband is reasonable and placid, and the wife is gentle and conducts herself with grace and dignity. The mother-in-law is kind and lenient, and the daughter-in-law mild and courteous. It is 礼 that makes all this possible.

In other words, 礼 brings order, harmony, and amiability to the society.

However, 礼 alone is not enough. A wise ruler has to practice benevolent governance - the concept of ren 仁. Confucius says,

Without a benevolent heart, how can a man stay committed to ritual?

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Benevolence is an essential prerequisite to ritual. It dissolves hostility and promotes peace. When Mencius says "the benevolent is invincible," he does not mean they are warlike and unrivalled in strength, but that a benevolent person treats all others equally and friendly without discrimination and therefore has no hostility or enemy in his mind. Such a person is welcomed wherever he goes. Even those with hostility towards him he tries to tolerate, and seeks to dissolve the hostility and restore amicability. The same is true when it comes to running a state. Ritual and benevolence in state governance forges an enormous strength for the state and the army. This is the ideal style of governance practiced by the wise sovereigns in ancient China. *The Book of Sayings of Confucius and His Disciples* (*Kongzi Jiayu* 孔子家语) records the following comment made by Confucius when he discussed state governance with his disciple Zeng Shen:

It is the way of an enlightened sovereign to check enemy advances long before they reach the border and to secure victory without much cost in expeditions against evil regimes.

Of course, as is said above, the ancient Chinese advocacy of aversion to war and their discretion before starting a war does not mean total abandonment of war. Though

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wars entail killing and hence are despised by both Heaven and man, they have come into existence as part of the ways of Heaven and human society - only they should be used as a last resort. Under what circumstances are wars justified as necessary? And how to gain victory at a lowest possible price if close combat has become unavoidable? Xunzi, a Confucian philosopher during the Warring States Period, gave a convincing answer to these two questions. Regarding the first question, Xunzi holds that the purpose of taking military actions is to stop violence and to eradicate the scourge rather than pursue fame and gain. An army of justice and humanity is welcomed everywhere. It will gain victory and subdue the opponents without bloodshed. This finds echo in the discussions on military affairs in *Qunshu Zhiyao* (*The Compilation of Books and Writings on the Important Governing Principles*)

Benevolence is the fundamental rule, and justice the right approach to state governance ... Therefore, if killing the evil people brings peace to all others, such killing is justifiable; if a war against a country is intended to deliver its people from calamity, such a war is justifiable. A war intended to prevent more wars is justifiable.

In other words, military actions are to be taken only

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when they are intended to uphold justice, benevolence and the interests of the nation and the people. This should be the only justified cause for resorting to military actions.

Then, how to keep the cost of victory minimal? Again, Xunzi says,

Solidarity is the key to military success ... A wise military commander must be one who knows how to get public support.

This essentially echoes Mencius's famous argument:

Geographical advantage is more important than favorable weather, but still more important than geographical advantage is public support.

Public support is essential to military success, which is an infallible rule at all times.

However, it is noteworthy that wars are, after all, an inauspicious matter that involves casualties. Without exception, militarism relying solely on military strength is bound to have dire consequences. The *Sima Rangjus Art of War* warns,

Any state, even though it is a big power, will collapse if it indulges in too much aggression.

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Similarly, *Zuo Qiuming's Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals* says,

Wars are like a fire which, if it is not stopped soon enough, burns the arsonist itself.

Therefore, wars, as a matter of prime importance, must be treated with extreme caution. *The Compilation of Books and Writings on the Important Governing Principles* puts it well:

Warmongers will be annihilated, but he who fails to prepare for war will face danger. Only those who, albeit not warlike, are well prepared for war will win the world.

This is a truth that the Chinese have proved time and again through their experience over the past thousands of years.

Over China's 5,000-year history, a number of rulers made their respective choices when it came to decisions on war. Through a review and analysis of their experiences, this book delves deep into the traditional Chinese wisdom on military affairs, which will help the reader better understand the cultural source of the national defence policy and military strategy of China today.

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Chapter One

War: a Double-Edged Sword

War is a dangerous human behaviour. Though it helps achieve a certain goal, it often incurs a heavy price. In China's history, there have been quite a few rulers whose bellicosity and militarism either led to social upheavals and the decline of their states or their own deaths. Their experiences illustrate the harm and the often-fatal consequences of war and militarism, offering a profound lesson to posterity. Of these rulers, Emperor Qin Shi Huang and Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty were two of the best examples.

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The Misjudgement of Emperor Qin Shi Huang

The Qin Dynasty impresses people as being powerful but short-lived, awe-inspiring but regrettable. It was formally founded in 221 BC and fell in 207 BC. Though its fourteen years' reign is as fleeting as a shooting star that flashed across the sky of China's long history, the Qin Dynasty was a glamorous era that has left an indelible mark on history. As the first imperial dynasty to unify China, it put an end to centuries of fragmentation and feudal wars in the Central Plains since 770 BC. It not only established a highly centralized system of absolute monarchy in which the emperor enjoyed supreme authority, but also standardized the system of weights and measures, currency, and written language in China. These were to have far-reaching influence: they defined the basic features of state governance in China for the next two thousand years. Furthermore, the Qin Dynasty was militarily successful. Relying on its superior military strength, it drove off the Xiongnu (the nomadic people in the north), built the world-famous Great Wall to defend its

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northern borders, and conquered vast regions in South China, bringing vast areas of the

present-day provinces of Fujian, Zhejiang, Guangdong and Guangxi under Chinese rule for the first time. Few would have expected, however, that Qin - such a powerful empire - was to collapse in just over a decade. What has led to its demise? The answer lies with Emperor Qin Shi Huang-the "First Emperor" of the Qin Dynasty. Though he founded the Qin Dynasty, he has, nevertheless, been held accountable for its fall, too.

Emperor Qin Shi Huang is a household word in China. He has made frequent appearances in Chinese literature, films, and TV dramas. His name is Ying Zheng, alias Zhao Zheng since he was born in the State of Zhao as son of Qin Prince Yiren. Prince Yiren had used to be a hostage in the State of Zhao, where everybody turned a cold shoulder to him, when a merchant from the State of Wey, called Lü Buwei, met him and spotted his potential political value. He ingratiated himself with Prince Yiren by giving away a concubine of his, named Zhao Ji, to the latter. In 259 BC, Zhao Ji gave birth to Ying Zheng in Handan, the capital city of Zhao. With Lü Buwei's assistance, Prince Yiren later returned to the State of Qin and became the crown prince, whereupon Ying Zheng and his mother were able to go back to Qin, too. Yiren succeeded to the throne in 250 BC, but died just three years

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later Thereupon, Ying Zheng, then only a 13-year-old, became the King of Qin, beginning a tremendous life, almost a legendary one.

According to *Records of the Grand Historian (Shiji 史记)*, Ying Zheng had "a Roman nose, long and narrow eyes, and protruded breastbones" and spoke with "a voice as ferocious as that of a leopard"; he was "ungrateful, avaricious and cruel" and "would rest content to be below others when he was at the bottom of his luck, but would be despotic and obstinate once he became successful." Such a character meant that once he assumed absolute authority, he was certain to accomplish something extraordinary - at the cost of a heavy price, though. As it turned out, this was exactly the case with Ying Zheng. When he first came to the throne as a teenager, Ying Zheng did not assume power directly, but entrusted state affairs with Lü Buwei, then Prime Minister of Qin, honouring him as "the Grand Uncle" However, as he grew older, he had a growing thirst for power, too, and became less and less content with the status quo. He came to the end of his patience when he learned about his mother's adultery with Lü Buwei and eunuch Lao Ai. In 238 BC, at the age of 22, he took the opportunity of his Coming-of-Age Ceremony (known as *guan li* 冠礼 in ancient China). an occasion on which Lao Ai was present, to capture the latter and put down his rebellion. He ordered Lao Ai's

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execution by tearing his body apart with five chariots, put her mother the Empress Dowager under house arrest, and killed her two illegitimate children. The next year, he removed Prime Minister Lü Buwei from office and forced him to commit suicide by drinking poisoned wine. By this time, he had assumed the reins of government.

When Ying Zheng first mounted the throne, the Warring States Period (475-221 BC) was drawing to its close. After centuries of war, conquests and merges, only less than a score of the originally 140-plus vassal states had survived. Of these, seven states were conspicuously stronger than the rest -the states of Qin, Chu, Qi, Yan, Zhao, Wei, and Han.

Since little buffer space was left between these major powers, the rivalry and tension between them had grown more direct and devastating. Thanks to the sustained efforts and reforms under successive kings since Duke Xiao of Qin, the State of Qin became the strongest of these seven powers, while the other six states declined as a result of either internal strife or excessive war against each other. Against such a historical background, Ying Zheng carried forward the strategy of “attacking near-by neighbors and maintaining friendly relations with more distant states” and installed talented and capable people such as Li Si, Wei Liao, Wang Jian and Meng Tian in key positions. In a step-by-step manner, Qin defeated all the other warring states and

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Baiyue

Baiyue, (literally “Hundred Yue”) was the collective name given by the ancient Chinese to the ethnic groups in the south: Wu Yue, Yang Yue, Dong’ou. Min Yue, Southern Yue, Xi’ou, Luo Yue etc. Most of them lived in today’s Southeast China. Southern China and Northern Vietnam.

unified China in 221 BC – the 26th year of Ying Zheng’s reign. It seemed to Ying Zheng that he had outdone all the former legendary Chinese emperors in terms of military achievement. He adopted the title of *huang di* 皇帝 (emperor), referring to himself as *shi huang di* 始皇帝, which literally means “the First Emperor” (of a unified China). After bringing the Central Plains under his rule, Ying Zheng did not stop his conquest. His fresh targets were the Baiyue ethnic groups in the south and Xiongnu in the north.

Covetous of Baiyue’s land and rare treasures such as rhino horns, ivory, tortoiseshell, jadeite and pearls, Ying Zheng, now known as Emperor Qin Shi Huang, waged a war against Baiyue. According to the “Renjian Xun” in *Huainanzi*, in 219 BC (the 28th year of Ying Zheng’s reign), he appointed the Tu Sui, the Defender-in chief, as the commander for the expedition. Leading a large force

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of 500,000 troops, Tu Sui launched the offensive against the Baiyue people from five directions. The Baiyue side put up a stiff resistance, led by Yi Xu Song, the chief of the West Valley Yue tribe. The areas of South China were characterized by a humid and hot climate and covered in dense jungle where beasts, snakes, and pests abounded. Since the Qin troops were mostly from North China, they found this place terrible. Plagues spread in the Qin camps. To make matters worse, they were under-supplied as a result of bad transport conditions and frequent ambush by the enemy. The Qin army suffered heavy casualties and made little progress. It is said that, for as long as three years, the Qin soldiers felt so insecure that they dared not take off their armour or lay down their weapons.

Having learned about all this, the emperor ordered the excavation of a waterway to link the Xiangjiang River and the Lijiang River – an attempt to facilitate military logistics. This waterway was to be known as the Lingqu Canal. Later, the Qin army killed Yi Xu Song, and the locals were forced to take shelter in the jungles. But they refused to give up and elected a new leader Jie Jun, under whose command the Baiyue army launched a counter-offensive.

They defeated the Qin troops in a night raid and killed the Qin commander Tu Sui. This was a fierce and bloody battle, with hundreds of thousands of casualties.

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The heavy loss paralysed both armies. Emperor Qin Shi Huang had no alternative but to suspend the action. Prisoners were conscripted to reinforce border defence. Both sides were locked in a stand-off for the next three or four years. In 214 BC, the Lingqu Canal was completed and opened to traffic. This greatly improved army logistics. Again, Emperor Qin Shi Huang conscripted a large number of exiled prisoners, criminals, slaves, and merchants to replenish the remnant force of the former expedition. Ren Ao was appointed commander-in-chief of this new expedition force of 300,000 soldiers, deputed by Zhao Tuo. They renewed the attack against Baiyue. This time, the Qin army did not meet any major resistance, and soon seized the whole region south of the Nanling Mountains. The emperor set up three new commanderies – Guilin, Xiang, and Nanhai – to administer the newly-conquered territory, and conscripted criminals to defend the borders.

Even before Qin's success in Baiyue, Ying Zheng had begun to plan an expedition against Xiongnu. What happened? It transpired that the emperor was extremely superstitious. In 215 BC, the 32nd year of his reign, a scholar from the former State of Yan presented him a book which carried a line that read: "Hu will be the one to cause the fall of the Qin Dynasty." Ying Zheng understood the "Hu" (胡) in this line as Xiongnu in the north, because they had often looted Qin's border regions, constituting

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Xiongnu

An ancient nomadic people in the north. It became a real threat around the third century BCE in the areas of the Yinshan Mountain in Inner Mongolia, but was driven out of the Hetao Region (in the upper reaches of the Yellow River) and the Hexi Corridor by Qin forces led by general Meng Tian. Under a new chief named Modu Chanyu in the late 3rd century BCE, the Xiongnu tribes were brought together in a powerful confederacy that stretched beyond the borders of modern-day Mongolia. It frequently raided Han borders, but peace was generally maintained as the latter pursued an appeasement policy. During the reign of Emperor Wu, the Han forces inflicted crushing defeats on the Xiongnu, forcing them to flee north. Before long, internal strife caused Xiongnu to split into five factions, one of which, led by Huhanye Chanyu, surrendered to Han. During the early Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220), the Xiongnu regime split further into two halves: the Northern Xiongnu and the Southern Xiongnu. The Southern Xiongnu declared their vassalship to the Han Empire, while the Northern Xiongnu was forced to migrate further west after Han general Dou Xian's expedition and those who stayed became part of the Xianbei federation. After the Three Kingdoms Period (220-280), the Southern Xiongnu were gradually sinicized.

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a dire threat to Qin. He decided to nip the problem in the bud and rid the empire of this major threat through military actions.

Prime Minister Li Si warned against the plan, saying,

I'm afraid it would be hardly possible to capture and subdue the Xiongnu, who are a migrant people, with no fixed dwellings and no fixed grain depot to defend. If our troops march straight, with light packs, deep into their territory, logistics will be a big problem. But if we carry along the supplies, the burden will hinder our operations. We won't benefit much from the land we seize. And their people, even if they were captured by our troops, would never succumb to our rule. It would be unwise of a ruler to win a war and yet to have to abandon the success. In a word the planned actions against the Xiongnu are undesirable as they would only throw our own people in destitution while delighting the enemy.

To this the emperor turned a deaf ear. He made General Meng Tian the commander-in-chief of a force of 300,000, and ordered him to charge north. Xiongnu suffered crushing defeats and fled, leaving the areas south of the Great Bend of the Yellow River to Qin. However,

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they refused to concede defeat, and constantly fought back and looted Qin's border regions. The next year, Ying Zheng instructed Meng Tian to march across the Yellow River to drive Xiongnu further away. This time, Meng Tian's army took Gaoque, Yangshan, and Beijiashong successively, forcing Xiongnu to retreat for hundreds of miles further north. About this expedition, the *Discourses on Salt and Iron* (*Yan Tie Lun* 盐铁论, records of a debate held at the imperial court in 81 BC on state policy) has the following comment:

Deterred by Qin's military strength, for more than a decade, the Huns dared not make any bold attempts in the south. It was only after General Meng Tian was killed and the uprisings broke out everywhere in the Central Plains that Xiongnu resumed making troubles in the border regions.

To guard against Xiongnu's possible invasion, Emperor Qin Shi Huang later ordered the building of the Great Wall. Although the former states of Yan, Zhao and Qin had already built a few sections of the Great Wall, it was still a mega project to link them together, making it stretch all the way from Lintao in the west to the seaside in the east. The construction work involved grown-up men conscripted nationwide.

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The conquest of all the other Warring States and Baiyue, and the military success over Xiongnu - these achievements were more than enough to make Emperor Qin Shi Huang go down in history. They represented a positive development in China's ancient history because they boosted the integration of different ethnic groups. However, the achievements have come at a heavy price. More than a decade's compulsory military service and corvée labor seriously damaged social economy and disrupted people's life. Large numbers of adult men were conscripted into the army either to fight, to defend the borders, or to open up frontier land. Women were assigned to transport army provisions and join construction work. As a result, few were left to till the land, spin and weave cotton and linen cloth, or take care of the

elderly and the children. Life was made difficult for the ordinary people. Deaths from starvation or illness were numerous.

Under Ying Zheng's reign, the empire enforced a strict penal code, and the people were intimidated by his brutal tyranny. After his death, his successor Hu Hai (known as "the Second Emperor of Qin") inherited his tyrannical style of government. The people were driven beyond the limits of endurance. Chen Sheng, a commoner, was the first to raise the standard of revolt, and uprisings soon broke out all over the country. Among these were forces led by Liu Bang (who later founded the

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Han Dynasty) and Xiang Yu (who later became known as "the Overlord of Western Chu"). They seized one city after another and crushed the government forces. Never would Emperor Qin Shi Huang have anticipated that his empire was to collapse so soon.

In fact, there's a reason for Qin's miserable fall in the end. It should be said that Ying Zheng's achievement or unifying China had fulfilled the common aspiration of the people because it brought peace to the land. If he had stopped the aggressive national defense policy at that point, and promoted benevolent government by reducing the burden on the people, the reign of the Qin Dynasty would probably last longer. What a pity Ying Zheng was too stubborn and too preoccupied with military success to do all this. All his efforts came to nothing eventually, and it is his very self that sowed the seeds of calamity for the Qin Dynasty.

As one saying goes in *Strategies of the Warring States*(*Zhan Guo ce* 战国策), "Past experience, if not forgotten, is a guide for the future." The experience of the shortlived Qin Dynasty reveals that avarice is the source of all evils. As a ruler, in particular one that leads an authoritarian or a capitalist regime, must hold his avarice in check; otherwise, he may wage wars arbitrarily. The ancient Chinese had a phrase for such avarice - *tan bing* 贪兵. Wenzi, a Daoist philosopher during the Spring and Autumn Period,

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remarked,

Coveting the land or possessions of others is called *tan* 贪. Anyone starting a war to satisfy his own avarice is bound to meet a miserable failure.

The two Chinese characters 贪(*tan*) and 贫(*pin*) are highly alike in shape. The latter means "poverty" literally. Wars are bound to bring loss and calamity, since it involves killing and damaging. As a result of wars, countless soldiers lay down their lives on the battlefield, numerous families are broken, vast stretches of farmland become deserted, and untold wealth is exhausted. According to *The Art of War*.

Raising a host of a hundred thousand men and marching them great distances entail heavy loss on the people and a drain on the resources of the state. The daily expenditure will amount to a thousand ounces of silver. There will be commotion at home and abroad, and men will drop down exhausted on the highways. As many as seven hundred thousand

families will be impeded in their labour. Hostile armies may face each other for years, striving for the victory which is decided in a single day... It is the height of inhumanity.

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Therefore, there is nothing to brag about even though you do win a war. In many cases, as a Chinese saying goes, "to kill or wound one thousand enemy soldiers, you yourself may have to suffer a casualty toll of eight hundred." Zhufu Yan, a minister in the Han Dynasty, had the following comments on Emperor Qin Shi Huang's military actions against Xiongnu:

The Qin Dynasty sent a force of 100,000 to attack Xiongnu. Though the Qin army killed many enemies and even captured their chief, the war effort never subdued them completely. It only stoked up deeper hatred between both sides. The benefits they reaped from the war victory were far outweighed by the price they paid.

For example, the Second World War is yet another painful experience of mankind in modern times, being the most devastating and deadliest armed conflict the world has ever seen. The war involved armed forces amounting to 110 million, about two billion people in over 60 countries and regions in the world, causing mass casualties of more than 100 million soldiers and civilians. Its economic loss amounted to four trillion USD, of which 1.1 trillion USD was direct military costs. Though

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the anti-fascist alliance had the final victory, they had paid dearly for it. According to statistics, 35 million Chinese soldiers and civilians were either killed or wounded in the war, in the Soviet Union, the number exceeded 27 million, and in America and the UK 400,000 and 270,000 respectively. On the other hand, the fascist states, the main culprits of the War, suffered great losses likewise. The Nazi Germany lost 13.6 million lives, of which six million died in the Soviet-German War. At home, four million civilians died, and another 14 million were rendered homeless. The Japanese army lost 1.5 million soldiers in China and 1.247 million in the Pacific War. At home, another 300,000 civilians were killed or went missing as a result of the atomic bombings by the Us. In North Africa, Italy suffered 160,000 casualties. For us, these numbers should not be a mere string of symbols; behind them are numerous lives.

Lao Zi says,

Even in victory, there is no beauty, and whoever calls it beautiful is one who delights in slaughter. He who delights in slaughter will not succeed in his ambition to rule the world.

In fact, the often-tragic experiences of those warlike sovereigns or generals in history reveal that tyranny and

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brutality would only hasten their deaths. In the case of the Qin Dynasty, Emperor Qin Shi Huang died at the age of fifty, and his son, in order to gain the upper hand in the succession

dispute, kept the news of Qin Shi Huang's death a secret until his corpse decayed and stank. Bai Qi, a senior general under King Zhaoxiang of Qin, was good at using military forces. He experienced more than seventy battles in his lifetime, never losing a battle. Despite his illustrious career, he was bloodthirsty. In the Battle of Changping he buried alive 400,000 Zhao troops, and ended up committing suicide. In some way, he paid the price for his cruelty. Therefore, it can be said that there is no winner in wars. To bring calamity to the people for the sake of selfish pursuits, and to do things that only harm others without benefiting yourself – isn't it the least sensible thing to do?

Why, then, does war inevitably incur disasters? It is determined by the way of Heaven. According to *The Book of Changes (I Ching)*, "the greatest virtue of Nature is that it nurtures all things." Likewise Lao Zi says, "it is the way of Heaven to nurture all things instead of hampering their growth." Since war involves killing, it is something evil and negative and something to be despised and discouraged by Heaven. Mass killing results in numerous deaths, and the *yin* will prevail over the *yang*. When the *yin-yang* balance is upset, the climate will change and the

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weather will become capricious, with frequent droughts or floods which, in turn, affect agricultural production, leading to crop failure and food shortage - a major source of social unrest.

Therefore, in the same way as adverse natural conditions add to human calamities mankind, through its own wrongdoing, inflicts calamity upon Heaven all the same. As *Dao De Jing* reads,

Where armies are, thorns and brambles grow. A bloody war is followed by a year of dearth.

Furthermore, people's minds feel disposed to return, and the heavenly way meets with its proper return. There is nothing in the world that does not cravenly cling to life and fear death. Even ants drag out an ignoble existence and earthworms are afraid of death, let alone human beings. On the battlefield, swords have no eyes. In order to save their own lives, people kill each other. If you kill someone today, you may be killed by someone else tomorrow; if you are killed, your father and brothers will kill the killer so as to avenge you; when someone is killed, his father and brothers will kill your father and brothers for revenge. These actions repeat themselves in endless cycles. As this cycle repeats, the grievance deepens, the number of deaths increases, and property losses become

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greater, so much so that the national strength is getting weaker and weaker, and it faces the danger of ruining the state and destroying the race. Based on such a deep understanding of the ways of Heaven and human society, the ancient Chinese recognized clearly the harm of war. They stressed restraint and extreme discretion when it comes to a war decision, and advocated peace, harmony and winning the opponent over with virtue. Such a peace-loving philosophy is in the blood of the Chinese nation. Throughout the ages, no wise national

leaders have achieved great governance without being in awe of and prudent about war; and no national leaders who despised war and liked war have not suffered the consequences in the end. Chinese President Xi Jinping says, “it is a law of history that any attempt to invade other countries by military strength is bound to fail.” It is based on a first-hand experience of the calamities of war in its modern history that today’s China firmly sticks to the path of peaceful development. This also demonstrates its compliance with the laws of history.

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The Repentance of Emperor Wu of Han

The Han Dynasty was the second dynasty after the Qin Dynasty that brought China under unified imperial rule. It was founded in 202 BC and came to its end in 220 AD, with a brief interruption in between-the Xin Dynasty (ruling 9-23 AD) founded by Wang Mang the usurper-which divided the Han Dynasty into two periods: the Western Han (202 BC-8AD) and the Eastern Han (25-220AD). This 407-year-old imperial dynasty went through the successive reigns of 29 emperors in total.

The Han Dynasty, particularly its first half-the Western Han, holds a unique position in China's history. In this period, China had a booming economy and superior national strength; its territory expanded and the population grew remarkably. China experienced the first boom in its development since it stepped into the imperial age; it became a major world power on a par with the Roman Empire in the same period. While it generally inherited the political system of the Qin Dynasty, the Han Dynasty introduced reforms to it, and much of the new

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system was to be retained by successive dynasties until the 20th century. More importantly, during this period, China's international exchanges became more frequent, its military strength grew, and the integration of diverse ethnic groups developed remarkably. The areas of the Central Plains had an increasingly strong identity in culture, language, and customs. *Han* 汉 gradually became synonymous with the Chinese nation. Its people were referred to as *hanmin* 汉民; the language they spoke became known as *hanyu* 汉语, and the written characters they used were called *hanzi* 汉字. A sphere of cultural influence, represented by the Confucian culture, began to take shape in East Asia. For the first time in history, the Chinese developed a heightened sense of national identity and pride, with reinforced national cohesion and appeal. One remark in “Bibliography of Chen Tang” in *The Book of Han* best captured the spirit of the time:

Whoever affronts the Great Han will have to pay,
Even though he is thousands of miles away.

In *A History of Asia*, American historian Rhodes Murphy writes,

Till today, the Chinese have customarily referred to themselves as *hanren* 汉人. They feel proud

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to have inherited the typical Chinese culture and tradition first established by the Han Dynasty.

All these achievements could not have been possible without the collective efforts of generations of Han emperors, one of whom is particularly remembered by posterity. He changed the empire's former "non-action" approach to state governance into a more aggressive strategy. He instituted domestic reforms that centralised royal power and boosted national strength, and launched frequent expeditions to remove foreign threats and expand the empire's territory. The Han Dynasty reached the climax of its glory under his reign. However, it was exactly this seemingly successful emperor that issued an imperial edict, in his old age, to condemn himself for his militarist approach to governance. What happened? Let's have a review of the experience of this extraordinary sovereign-Emperor Wu of Han, one that is mentioned in the same breadth with Emperor Qin Shi Huang.

In China, Emperor Wu of Han is a household name and a popular image in films and TV dramas. Named Liu Che, he was the sixth emperor of the Western Han Dynasty, the tenth son of Emperor Jing and a great-grandson of Lin Bang, the founder of the Han Empire. Born in 156 BC, he was a favorite child of Emperor Jing; he was created the Prince of Jiaodong at the age of four,

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and was further made the Crown Prince at seven. When he succeeded to the throne following Emperor Jing's death in 141 BC, he was only 16 years old. Unlike his

Huang-Lao Thought

A school of Daoism that advocates "non-action" in state governance. It stresses compliance with the ways of nature and hence minimal intervention advocating leniency, simplified administration, curbed desire and frugality.

The Edict of Extending the Favors

This refers to an edict issued by Emperor Wu of Han in 127 BC with the purpose of curbing the power of the princes and consolidating the authority of the central government. The edict amended the rule of succession in the principalities, essentially abolishing the former rule of primogeniture. The new rule of succession "extended royal favors" to all of the three eldest sons of the prince by granting each of them the right to inherit a share of the principality's land (along with a new aristocratic title to be conferred by the emperor). In this way, the principality was to be divided up between the successors and became smaller and smaller with each new generation-with diminished influence, of course.

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father and grandfather, who were tolerant, merciful, reserved, patient and discreet, Liu Che was resolute and strong-willed, aggressive and proud, bold and daring, resourceful and far-sighted, and ambitious on the one hand, and conceited, autocratic, overambitious and

insatiable of conquest on the other. In state governance, such a character is bound to translate into bellicosity. As a matter of fact, things did turn out that way in Liu Cle's case.

Bearing in mind the lessons of the Qin's rapid fall, Emperor Wu's predecessors adopted the Huang-Lao thought as the guiding philosophy in state governance. They reduced taxes and levies domestically and took a defensive policy of appeasement in international relations. After seven decades' recuperation, the national economy had recovered and the people enjoyed a comfortable life. This was a golden age of peace and prosperity. However, there were undercurrents beneath the waveless lake surface. This golden age under the reign of Emperor Wen and Emperor Jing was ridden with crises all the same. The princes, relying on their military strength, had become a big threat to the authority of the central government. In breach of faith, Xiongnu in the north constantly raided the border towns. It was against such a background that Emperor Wu formally assumed power (in 135 BC). As the Han empire had by this time grown stronger and richer, this ambitious young sovereign felt

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dissatisfied with the long-standing "non-action" approach to state affairs; he decided it was time to make some changes to the status quo. Upon the advice of minister Zhufu Yan, Emperor Wu issued the Edict of Extending the Favors, introducing a reform to the rule of aristocratic succession which diminished the strength of the princes—the biggest domestic threat to royal authority. On the international front, he adopted a more aggressive defence policy, planning strategic offensives to eradicate the threat of foreign invasion. Xiongnu, as the strongest enemy of the Han empire, became his principal target. Other targets include Korea and Nanyue (which had used to be vassal states to Han but later proclaimed independence) and the Western Regions and the Southwest Barbarians (for their strategic importance). Thenceforth, a glorious age of conquest unveiled itself. The history of this period is so recorded in *The Compilation of Books and Writings on the Important Governing Principles*:

Endowed with the wealth that had accumulated under the preceding Han emperors, Emperor Wu was determined to get rid of the threats from the Xiongnu and Yue peoples. He dispatched Yan Zhu and Zhu Maichen to negotiate with and pacify Dong'ou (a branch of the Yue people in present-day Wenzhou, Zhejiang) and to attack the Nan-Yue and

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Dong-Yue tribes. These actions cost a good deal and brought unrest to the Yangtze Huaihe River regions. He went on to send Tang Meng and Sima Xiangru to open the route to the barbarian regions in Southwest China. The road project extended for hundreds of kilometers, traversing mostly mountainous areas, greatly exhausting the local people. In the northeast, he assigned Peng Wu to set up the Canghai Commandery, which provoked successive rebellions in the Yan-Qi regions. Following the abortive ambush operation at Mayi, Xiongnu stopped accepting the marriage alliance offer, and began to raid the Han border regions more frequently. Constant wars fatigued the people and drained the resources. Bribery became a necessary means of subsistence as it could exempt the family from compulsory corvée labour. Official posts could be bought and penalty could be exempted as long as

money was spent. The system of electing talented and virtuous people to government posts became mal-functioning. The law became more and more rigorous, and profiteering ministers were favored in the court.

In 127 BC, General Wei Qing led a cavalry force of tens of thousands in an expedition into the Xiongnu territory, restored the areas south of the Great Bend of

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The Mayi Ambush

This refers to an abortive ambush operation by the Han Dynasty against the invading Xiongnu forces. Upon minister Wang Hui's advice, in 133 BC, Emperor Wu had his army set a trap for Xiongnu forces at the city of Mayi. The Xiongnu saw through the trick before long and withdrew quickly. The operation marked the end of the Han Dynasty's seven-decade-long "marriage treaty" appeasement policy. From then on, the Han Dynasty went from a defensive stance to an offensive strategy against Xiongnu.

the Yellow River where the Han established the Shuofang Commandery. At the time, the Han was working on the road project from Central China to Southwest China. The project involved tens of thousands of labourers. Transport of army provisions by road was a problem because of the high costs: normally only about 6.4% of the transported supplies could reach the intended destination. To support the newly-founded Canghai and Shuofang Commanderies, the people had to shoulder a heavy burden of corvée labour while government treasury soon drained. Emperor Wu ordered exemption from corvée labour for those households that contributed slaves to the government. Royal attendants, if they donated slaves to the government, were to be granted a salary hike.

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Following Wei Qing's military success against Xiongnu in 124-123 BC, those who rendered meritorious service in the war were awarded huge amounts of gold, though the war cost over 100,000 lives of soldiers and horses, not to say the cost of armours, weapons, and logistics. These soon went over the empire's normal budget, and the treasury could not even cover the soldiers' salary. Some ministers suggested allowing common people to buy official posts, allowing merchants to assume offices on condition of a payment, and exempting the officials from punishment for bribery charges. Furthermore, noble titles and offices were awarded to those who had made meritorious military services, causing confusion to the bureaucratic system.

In 121 BC, Cavalry General Huo Qubing won an overwhelming victory in his second campaign against Xiongnu. The Xiongnu Prince of Hunye surrendered his forces to Han and received handsome awards. The Han Dynasty had to provide for the surrendered Xiongnu troops. When the government treasury was unable to cover the huge expenses, Emperor Wu went so far as to lower his own living standards to save money. While the government was drained of financial resources, the rich merchant households held enormous wealth but were unwilling to offer relief. So the emperor took counsel with his ministers and decided to re-mint the coins (a currency

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reform that was essentially equivalent to an inflation) and crack down on those ambitious, expansionist merchants. He appointed Dongguo Xianyang and Kong Jin as Deputy Chamberlains for the National Treasury who also oversaw the government monopoly on salt and iron. Sang Hongyang, a favorite minister of the emperor, became Palace Attendant (a supplementary title awarded to officials of the central government chosen by the emperor as his confidential advisers). These three ministers were extremely shrewd managers for state financing. Government regulations became more and more rigorous, and many officials in breach of them were ousted from their positions and sentenced to hard labour at construction projects like the Shanglin Imperial Park and the Kunming Pond. The next year (119 BC), Wei Qing and Huo Qubing won another major expedition against Xiongnu. Their reward amounted to 500,000 taels of gold, though the victory had come at a huge cost: deaths of over 100,000 horses, coupled with the prohibitive cost of transporting army supplies and manufacturing weapons. The government found it too hard to make ends meet, and even the soldiers' pay had to be in arrears.

The currency reform led to rampant private coinage which disrupted market order. In order to offset its adverse impact, crack down on speculation and profiteering, and, of course, increase government revenue, Emperor

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Wu introduced a property tax that required all those who profited from commercial activities - merchants, artisans and craftsmen, money-lenders, etc. - to declare their possessions, even though some of them were not officially registered as merchants, and pay a 6% tax. Owners of horse-pulled carts were to pay a tax of 120 coins for each cart, and the rate doubled for merchants. Any boat longer than five *zhang* was taxable at 120 coins. Those found to have underreported their possessions would be sentenced to a one-year garrison at the borders and have their possessions confiscated by the government, while the informers would be rewarded half of the confiscated possessions. As was expected, the wealthier households scrambled to hide away their possessions, except Bu Shi, a rich man in Henan. He repeatedly donated his possessions to assist the government, and as an exceptional favor, Emperor Wu promoted him to *zhonglang* (Palace Attendant), conferred the honorary nobility title of *zuoshuzhang* on him, and rewarded him with ten *qing* (one *qing* equalling to 6.67 hectares) of fertile farmland. Bu's generosity was given nationwide publicity and held as an exemplary deed of patriotism. Despite the emperor's new regulation and commendation for Bu Shi, people remained unwilling to give up their possessions, and accusations of underreporting and tax evasion were common.

Under the supervision of Yang Ke, Emperor Wu's

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minister overseeing the handling of tax evasions, many wealthy households across the country were accused of having underreported their possessions and evading taxes, and government confiscation of their properties amounted to hundreds of millions. Often, in a bigger county, hundreds of *qing* of land were confiscated, and in a smaller county, more

than one hundred. Many middle-class households went bankrupt as a result, and the tax made the people less intent on saving. However, the government became somehow better-off thanks to the monopoly of salt and iron and revenues from the property tax. This refuelled the emperor's ambition. Since Nanyue was still resisting Han conquest through naval battle, Emperor Wu ordered the excavation of the Kunming Pond for naval drills (though the fact was that the pond became a place for pleasure boating, surrounded by extravagant mansions). The next year (112 BC), Nanyue rebelled, and another tribe, the Qiang people in the west, raided the Han borders. Emperor Wu massed a force of 200,000 troops, equipped with war ships, to attack Nanyue, and dispatched a cavalry force to resist the Qiang aggression. He built fortresses and set up the commanderies of Zhangye and Jiuquan in the northwest, and appointed officials to administer agriculture and grain tax in the northern commanderies of Shangjun, Shuofang, Xihe, and Hexi. The border defence troops, totalling

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600,000, were ordered to work part-time in state farms. New roads were built to facilitate the transport of army provisions, some stretching as long as 3,000 *li*. Bu Shi, then Administrator for the Province of Qi, submitted a memorial to the emperor, expressing the wish to fight the Nanyue enemies to the death, for which Emperor Wu issued a royal commendation, promoted Bu Shi to Marquis of Guan-nei, and rewarded him 40 catties of gold and another 10 *qing* of farmland. The commendation was meant to inspire more people to make donations to the state. However, the publicity was met with cold response. Though there were hundreds of Grandees of the Twentieth Order (*liehou* 列侯), few were willing to join the army.

These paragraphs give an account of Emperor Wu's indulgence in militarism and its adverse impact on national economy and social life. According to a calculation based on historical records, during Emperor Wu's 54-year reign (141-87 BC), the Han empire was involved in wars against foreign countries for as long as 46 years. In other words, if the first six years of his reign, a period before he assumed real power, is excluded, Emperor Wu spent almost the whole duration of his reign on wars. The duration and frequency of the wars he waged have been rare over successive dynasties.

Through decades of war, the Han Empire drove the Xiongnu away, eliminating the threat from the north. It

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toppled the Yue tribes and Korean regimes, and turned these two former vassal states into commanderies under the direct control of the central government. The barbarian tribes in the Western Regions and in Southwest China were intimidated into submission. The Han Empire saw its national prestige greatly enhanced, and its territory almost doubled that of the Qin Dynasty.

However, decades of war had its dire consequences. It damaged the national economy, drained the nation's coffers, messed up the bureaucracy, and impoverished the people, causing serious disruptions to social economy and life. "Wuxing Zhi" in *The Book of Han* records instances of cannibalism in a dozen commanderies east of the Han'gu Pass in 114 BC.

According to the *Records of the Grand Historian*, by 107 BC, the prolonged wars and heavy burden of corvée labour had resulted in a vagrant population of two million refugees of whom 400,000 were not even on the official household register. Reduced to destitution, many refugees went into banditry as Emperor Wu adopted a strict system of law enforcement and used cruel officials. According to “Hanji XII” in *A Mirror for the Wise Ruler* (Zizhi Tongjian 资治通鉴), late in the reign of Emperor Wu, bandits wreaked havoc in large flocks, sometimes in their thousands; they raided cities, looted arsenals, released prisoners, and insulted and killed the local governors. Incidents like these became too many

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The Witchcraft Incident

In 91 BC, the son of Prime Minister Gongsun He was said to have imprecated on Emperor Wu, and the emperor assigned Jiang Chong, one of his favorites, to investigate the case. Jiang Chong took the opportunity to fabricate charges against many more people, resulting in the execution of tens of thousands of victims, including Crown Prince Liu Ju. The prince was forced to rebel, but was only to be put down by the emperor soon. He committed suicide in the end; so did his mother Empress Wei. When the truth was revealed later, Emperor Wu put Jiang Chong and all his family to death.

and uncountable.

Late during the reign of Emperor Wu, social conflicts intensified sharply, posing a grave threat to the regime. The Witchcraft Incident and the defeat and defection of General Li Guangli added to the tension. The Han empire by this time was no longer its old glorious self; it had been torn asunder by sustained war efforts and was on the brink of collapse. Fortunately, Emperor Wu, then already 68 years old, woke up to the stark reality. After a thorough introspection, he issued an edict of repentance that criticised himself for his past wrongs. This was a bold move to take for a sovereign. He put an end to his

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militarist, harsh and draconian approach to governance. Wars and territorial expansion generally ceased, and policies were introduced to reduce the burden on the people and promote agriculture. According to “Hanji XIV” in *A Mirror for the Wise Ruler*, at the ceremony of offering sacrifice to Earth at Shilü Mountain in March, 89 BC, Emperor Wu said to the ministers,

Since I ascended the throne, I've done many things wrong, which have caused great hardship and suffering to the people. Alas! It's too late to repent. From now on, we shall avoid doing anything that harms the people or wastes the nation's resources.

In June the same year, he made Tian Qianqiu his new Prime Minister, giving him the aristocratic title of “Marquis of Fumin” (“Fumin” literally meaning “making the people rich”), and appointed Zhao Guo, an agricultural expert, Commander-in-chief of the Granaries. The latter promoted the practice of “ridge-furrow rotation” in crop farming, which greatly increased crop yields. Till his death in 87 BC, the emperor never again waged any war. The

focus of administration had shifted to economic recovery. Such a shift, it can be said, actually prevented the Han empire from falling and set the stage for its rejuvenation under two of Emperor Wu's successors: Emperor

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Zhao and Emperor Xuan. It gave the Western Han Dynasty a new lease of life, prolonging its reign by almost a century. This is why Sima Guang, a historian during the Northern Song Dynasty, commented that Emperor Wu "committed the fault of the preceding Qin Dynasty but managed to avert the same disastrous ending."

A quotation from *Zuo Qiuming's Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals* reads:

Whoever never makes mistakes? However, it is a greatest good to recognize one's own fault and rectify it.

There is nothing to be afraid of when one commits any fault. The real danger lies in the refusal to remedy the mistakes; and still more dangerous is the failure to recognize the mistakes, or worse, committing an offense knowingly. When an ordinary person commits any fault, he causes trouble to his whole family at the worst and the impact is rather limited. In contrast, when a state leader makes a wrong decision, the consequence usually affects hundreds of thousands of people, with extensive damage and far-reaching impact. It would be a real blessing to recognize the mistakes in time, rectify them, and take remedial actions to minimize the losses as early as possible. A wise leader should stand ready to own up to whatever

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mistakes he has made. The experience of Emperor Wu of Han, a capable and ambitious ruler who was hawkish when young but repented in old age, has made a deep impression on posterity and offered us valuable lessons.

Firstly, development would be out of the question without peace and stability. This is a lesson we may draw from how Emperor Wu's accession to the throne and his approach to state governance had changed the Han empire socially. As it turns out, peace and stability are prerequisite conditions for development. Everything will be out of the question without them. China experienced constant upheavals and wars in modern times: invasions by Western powers, civil wars between the rivaling warlords, the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, and the War of Liberation, etc., which inflicted untold hardship upon the Chinese people and became a painful collective memory of the nation. This is why the Chinese are determined to pursue peace. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese people, led by the Communist Party of China, found a development path that suits China's national conditions through painstaking explorations, that is, a path of peaceful development. It does not only reflect the common wish and fundamental interests of the entire Chinese nation, but also represents a strategic choice of the Chinese government based on its inheritance of traditional Chinese culture,

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its keen grasp of the law of history, its analysis and evaluation of the global landscape, and

its perception of the trend of the times.

Over the past seven decades, China has, thanks to the continued efforts of successive generations of the Chinese people, created an unprecedented miracle in human history. It has become the world's second largest economy, lifted 1.4 billion people from a life of chronic shortage and brought them initial prosperity. It accomplished what took developed countries hundreds of years to accomplish. The reason why China has made such achievements is not the charity of others, and not military expansion and colonial exploitation, but the correct leadership of the Communist Party of China, the diligence and wisdom of the Chinese people, and the adherence to the path of peaceful development. Over the past seven decades, China has neither started a single war of aggression nor occupied an inch of any other country's land. In order to dispel any possible misgivings on the part of some members of the international community, China has made various friendly gestures as signs of goodwill. To promote world peace, after its adoption of the policy on reform and opening up, China voluntarily downsized its military forces by more than four million people. It has either signed or acceded to over 20 multilateral treaties on arms control, disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation,

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including the *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons*. Its defense budget has consistently been kept at an appropriate level. According to official statistics,

China's defense expenditure as a percentage of its GDP has dropped from 5.43% in 1979 to 1.26% in 2017, and has never exceeded 2% during the past 30 years. In 1979, defense accounted for 17.73% of total government spending; and by 2017, the proportion had dropped to 5.14%, a decrease of over 12 percentage points.

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From 2012 to 2017, China's defense spending as a share of GDP averaged at 1.3%, as compared with 3.5% for the US, 4.4% for Russia, 2.5% for India, 2.0% for the UK, 2.3% for France, 1.0% for Japan, and 1.2% for Germany (*China's National Defense in the New Era*).

Among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, China spends the smallest proportion of GDP on defense, which demonstrates the sincerity of the Chinese people in their quest for peace.

Furthermore, the Chinese people are resolute in their defense of peace. The painful lessons of China's modern history are still fresh in the collective memory of

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the Chinese nation. While they love and cherish peace, it is more imperative to fight for and safeguard peace. As economic globalization, the information society and cultural diversification develop in an increasingly multi-polar world, peace, development and win-win cooperation remain the irreversible trends of the times. Nonetheless, there are prominent destabilizing factors and uncertainties in international security. The world is not yet a tranquil place. China is now the world's second largest economy and the largest developing country. Though the national security situation remains generally stable, it faces

diverse and complex security threats and challenges. The fight against separatism is becoming more acute. China's homeland security still faces threats. Non-conventional security issues such as natural disasters and major infectious diseases are posing a growing threat. Against such a backdrop, the Chinese government adheres to a national defense policy that is defensive in nature, implements the military strategy of active defense, and sticks to the path of building a strong military with Chinese characteristics. These strategic choices of China have been determined by its socialist system, the strategic decision to follow the path of peaceful development, the independent foreign policy of peace, and the best of Chinese cultural traditions-considering peace and harmony as fundamentals. China's defense and military development in the new era

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offers a strong guarantee for safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests and provides strategic support for China's peaceful development, China's development is peaceful in nature; it does not constitute a threat to any other country. China's armed forces are guardians of peace; their actions are targeted at those threats to China's state sovereignty, security and development interests and those attempts that undermine peace and stability. China is committed to the path of peaceful development. No matter how strong its economy grows, China will never seek hegemony, expansion or sphere of influence. This is a solemn pledge made by the Chinese government to the world. History has borne this out and will continue to do so.

Second, to stay sober-minded, rational and restrained in handling international or interracial relations-this is a necessary political quality and responsibility in a leader of a nation or ethnic group. While Emperor Wu's militarism may be accountable from multiple perspectives, one very important reason has been his inability to control his resentment against Xiongnu and Nanyue and restrain his ambition. In ancient China, wars, as matters of utmost importance for a nation, were treated with extreme discretion by the ruling class. Wise rulers and people of keen insight, in particular, were above and opposed to taking military action out of personal spite or

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for personal satisfaction.

A quotation from *The Art of War* reads,

No ruler should put troops into the field merely to gratify his own spleen; no general should fight a battle simply out of pique. If it is to your advantage, make a forward move; if not, stay where you are. Anger may in time change to gladness; vexation may be succeeded by content. But a kingdom that has once been destroyed can never come again into being; nor can the dead ever be brought back to life.

If a leader fails to keep a cool head and curb his own emotion and desire, he may easily make the wrong decisions, and the consequences, needless to say, will be severe.

Through the ages, there have been many examples of those rulers who start a war out of momentary indignation, resulting in widespread misery or even the fall of their own

regimes. One of them was the Marquis of Xi during the Spring and Autumn Period. At a mere quarrel with the Count of Zheng, he started a war against the latter, only to be defeated. To people with foresight, this foretold the fall of Xi, because the Marquis of Xi had poor judgement about his own virtue and strength, disregarded the amicability with his kinsmen, and started the

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war without double-checking the facts with the Count of Zheng or verifying the latter's fault. He had only himself to blame for the defeat. An army commander, as well as a state leader, may commit the same fault. In ancient warfare, "provocation" used to be a common stratagem. The secret of its time-tested effectiveness lies in the weakness of human nature. Through ridicule, sarcasm, or other abusive language, it irritates or humiliates the opponents until they lose control of their own emotions and make wrong decisions. This finds expression in *The Art of War* thus:

If your opponent is of choleric temper, seek to irritate him.

One example is Yao Xiang, a general of the Later Qin (384-417 AD) of the Sixteen Kingdoms Period. Provoked by the opponent generals Deng Qiang and Fu Huangmei of the Former Qin, he led the troops out of the camp to engage the enemy, only to be defeated and executed.

Why do people lose temper? The structure of the Chinese character *nu* 怒 (anger, indignation) may offer some enlightenment. Its upper part 奴 (to enslave, control, etc.) and lower part 心 (heart, emotion, mood, desire, etc.) combine to suggest that one gets angry when

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one becomes "enslaved" by its own "emotion" or "desire." When a person is obsessed with his own gains or losses, he will fall easy prey to his own temper or desire. People get annoyed when their rights, interests or properties are infringed upon or when they are humiliated. It is the thought of "self" (我) that gives rise to temper and desire.

However, we need take care to distinguish between "the greater self," "the smaller self," "the public self," and "the private self." "The greater self" represents the collective and "the smaller self" represents the individual. "The public self" suggests concern for public interests, and "the private self" cares about private interests. Correspondingly, "indignation" may be that of either the public or the individual, and may refer to anger caused by a concern for either public interests or private interests. A leader is supposed to do without "the smaller self" and "the private self" and embrace "the greater self" and "the public self." Ever since one assumes a leadership role, he is no longer his own individual self, but represents a whole team. Whatever he says or does, he must hold himself accountable to the team. That is why he had better minimize "the smaller self" and "the private self" so as to curb private indignation. Otherwise, the whole team may have to bear the disastrous consequences of his individual, selfish acts; and his own person will face

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punishment for his impulsiveness-opposition from the teammates, impeachment or overthrow. However, indignation that arises out of the concern for public interest is not only justifiable but necessary, because it defends the interests of the group and will win understanding and support from the team members. A case in point is King Wu of Zhou who “flew into a rage and then brought peace to the world (by overthrowing the despotic Shang regime).” In his case, “to bring peace to the world” was the end, and “to start a war out of indignation” was the necessary means to that end. In a word, in traditional Chinese culture, it is compulsory for both the statesmen and the common people to restrain private indignation and hold private desire in check.

The CPC carries forward the best elements of traditional Chinese culture, and contributes to its development. Since its founding, the CPC has represented the interests of the working class, the broadest masses of the people, and the Chinese nation as a whole, and has made the welfare of the Chinese people and the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation its abiding goals. All this requires that the Party should have no special interests of its own, and therefore shall never, out of private indignation or desire, do anything at the cost of the interests of the Chinese people and nation. It has been proved by the fact. Over the past seven decades since the founding of the

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People's Republic of China, the Party and the Chinese government have consistently committed itself to the wellbeing of the Chinese people and to creating a peaceful and stable domestic and international environment for it. To do this, China has consistently stayed calm and acted with reason and restraint in handling international and interracial relations, advocating peaceful solutions. We firmly oppose and strongly condemn the US-led Western interference in China's domestic affairs under whatever pretexts, and will expose their malicious intention. On territorial disputes with neighboring countries, we will stand our ground and will never make any concession wherever our claims are justifiable. Regarding long-standing issues left from the past, we advocate shelving differences and seeking joint exploitation. We make prompt response to and timely clarification on any malicious rhetoric to slander and vilify China, and take action against any attempt to shift blame to China on fabricated basis, play up the “China threat” theory, or hamstring China's progress. Even when it comes to those behaviors that severely infringe upon China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, we bear in mind the big picture and exercise the greatest possible restraint, seeking diplomatic solutions while trying our best to avoid aggravating the tension. It must be noted, however, that our forbearance and restraint is no expression of weakness and cowardice, but

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an expression of kindness and self-cultivation. It demonstrates a strong sense of responsibility to the people of not just China but the rest of the world. It is wrong to assume that China will not and dare not resort to the use of force. To any act that challenges China's principles and harms China's national dignity and interests, we will rise up to defend the country once such act has taxed the patience of the Chinese people and nation to the limit,

and will be resolute in safeguarding China's legitimate rights and interests.

Third, wars are not the best solution to international or interracial disputes, still less the right way to pursue interests. This has been borne out by history. Emperor Wu's war efforts have essentially been a result of the aggravating tension between the Han Chinese regime and the neighboring ethnic minority regimes, though were due to his indignation with Xiongnu and Nanyue. Emperor Wu responded to such tension with wars-the most radical and violent approach, rather than taking a softer and gentle approach as what his elder generations took. Though decades of wars rid the Han Empire of a long-standing threat in the north and expanded its territory, the empire's losses far outweighed its gains. Furthermore, the wars did not truly resolve the tension between the Han Dynasty and the neighboring ethnic minority regimes in the long run. For a long time after their conquest,

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Xiongnu and Nanyue bore a grudge against the Han Dynasty and constantly rose in rebellion. Therefore, armed confrontation is by no means a wise solution to international or interracial conflict, because it cannot root out the problem and may only aggravate the tension.

Wars are in essence a political tool that serves the needs of specific political entities. In *On War*, Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz has this remark:

War is a continuation of political intercourse, a carrying out of the same by other means.

In other words, war is subordinate to politics; it is a political instrument that political entities may employ in order to resolve a certain political conflict or achieve a certain political goal. However, such an instrument tends to be the most extremist, destructive, and bloody approach, and should only be used as a last resort when all other solutions have proved ineffective. Therefore, the best approach to international or interracial disputes should be to avoid the use of force and to minimize the possibility of aggravating the disputes so as to avert the risks of war. This should be a basic political understanding and attitude of a leader of any nation or ethnic group.

Over thousands of years, the philosophy of seeking

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peaceful solutions and mutually-beneficial cooperation has gone deep into the hearts of the Chinese people. This finds expression in many folk adages in the Chinese language. Here are some examples:

- Better to get rid of an enmity than to keep it alive.*
- A new friend means a new way out, while a new enemy means a new obstacle.*
- Cooperation serves the interests of both sides, while conflict can only hurt both.*
- One should be friendly to others.*
- Peace is the most precious.*
- A gentleman is always ready to help others attain their goals.*
- Amiability breeds wealth.*

Notions like these have become universal principles and values of the Chinese nation, with profound influence on how China today handles state governance and international and interracial relations.

Proceeding from China's historical experience, national conditions and realities, after the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, the first generation of the CPC central collective leadership and the central government with Mao Zedong at the core introduced the creative system of regional ethnic autonomy in areas inhabited

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by ethnic minorities and implemented a foreign policy based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. These represent not just an active exploration by the CPC and the Chinese government on building a socialism with Chinese characteristics and improving the governance of China, but also concrete measures to resolve international and interracial conflicts and to promote the harmonious development of international and interracial relations. They embody the traditional Chinese philosophy of "harmony without uniformity" and "harmonious co-existence," and conform to the trend of the times. They are compatible with the common interests and development needs of the people of all countries and all ethnic groups. Practice has borne out their effectiveness. Thanks to the joint efforts of the people of all ethnic groups under the CPC's leadership, the ethnic autonomous regions in China have seen rapid economic growth, steady social advancement, and raised overall living standards. Conflicts between different ethnic groups are properly settled or effectively dissolved through consultation, education, and psychological counselling. Ethnic unity is reinforced, and all ethnic groups live harmoniously together. In its handling of international relations, China has consistently advocated peaceful development and win-win cooperation. It calls for dialog and consultation between the countries concerned on an equal footing in resolving conflicts and

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disputes, and participates in international affairs and global governance in a responsible manner, contributing Chinese wisdom and solutions for mankind's development. Its efforts have won wide recognition and respect from the international community.

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Chapter Two

The "Kingly Way": Subduing the Enemy Without Fighting

Conquest by force is never convincing. Nothing short of moral excellence can compel whole-hearted submission from the opponent. The most desired outcome in war is never simply to defeat and subdue the enemy, but to win over the enemy so that there is no enemy to speak of at all. Since the ancient times, the Chinese have valued peace and harmony above all things, and stressed moral integrity and education. They prefer the pen to the sword, prefer the "kingly," benevolent way of government to hegemonism, and advocate minimal use of penalty and force in state governance. Through a review of the experiences

of Emperor Shun and Emperor Guangwu of Han, this chapter illustrates the virtues of the "kingly way" of politics and expounds on the importance of fostering virtuous civil governance before resorting to the military approach.

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Virtuous Civil Governance: How Emperor Shun Conquered Sanmiao

It might be the ultimate pursuit of every ruler to expand the country's territory, enhance its international prestige, and make his own name go down in history. Then in what ways can all this be achieved? Through use of force? In the first chapter, the experiences of Emperor Qin Shi Huang and Emperor Wu of Han have revealed that war brings immense suffering to the country and its people and that the use of force should only be a last resort. Then what is the best way? According to *The Art of War*,

To fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting at all.

The best way to do this is practice the "kingly way of government" The kingly way emphasizes the role of morality and compels submission by virtue. A ruler that

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practices the kingly way of government, even if he never aspires to becoming a king, will compel submission from the public through his moral conduct and influence, and will become the de facto king. In Chinese culture, where morality and benevolence occupy a central place, the "kingly way" of government has consistently been held as the right way to rule a country and the best approach to achieving political goals.

When it comes to practicing the "kingly way" of government, it is quite necessary to mention a few historical figures whose influence on China's history has been too significant to overlook: Emperor Yao (尧), Emperor Shun (舜), Yu the Great (禹), King Tang of Shang (汤), King Wen of Zhou (周文王), King Wu of Zhou (周武王), and the Duke of Zhou (周公). Their contributions to the origin and development of the Chinese civilization have been enormous, and they have been held as paragons of virtue due to their enlightened and virtuous rule. To the Chinese people, they are model, pioneering sage-kings to practice the kingly way of government. Through his profound political wisdom and virtuous conduct, one of these sage-kings, Emperor Shun, gave a textbook interpretation of the notion "compelling submission without military conquest."

Originally named Yao Chonghua, Shun is also known as Yu-Shun (Shun of Yu) because of his native

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place - Yu. According to "Bibliography of the Five Emperors" in *The Records of the Grand Historian*, Shun had become known far and wide for filial piety at the age of 20; he was chosen to join the administration of Emperor Yao at 30, and began to handle the administrative affairs for Yao at 50. Emperor Yao died when Shun was 58, and Shun observed

a three-year period of mourning before formally taking over the leadership of the tribal league. He was on the throne for 39 years until he died on an inspection tour to South China. Throughout his life, Shun was an embodiment of all virtues.

According to "Shundian" in *The Book of Documents*, Shun had "profound wisdom and political talent, gentle looks, modest and polite conduct." Shun was a descendant of Zhuan Xu, another legendary ancient monarch and a grandson of the Yellow Emperor. However, by the time of Shun's father Gu-Sou ("a blind, old man," literally), Shun's family circumstances had already declined to that of a commoner. Shun was born into a family where love and warmth were absent. His birth mother died when he was young, while his father, slow-witted, had poor judgement about good and evil. Shun's step-mother and half-brother treated him badly. They went so far as to make several attempts to murder him. However, Shun remained deferential to them as usual, and went on behaving with perfect propriety as a son and elder brother

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in the hope of converting them.

While Shun was able to fulfil both filial and fraternal duties at home, he proved a charismatic and well-liked man out in the world. Due to family poverty, Shun had begun to make a living by doing all kinds of labour since he was a child. He had tilled the farmland in Lishan, fished in the Leize Lake, made pottery in Hebin, made utensils in Shouqiu, and done business in Fuxia. However, Shun was different from other labourers. While all others were occupied with making a profit, he was more concerned about how to help others and lead them to good. As a result, amiability prevailed among the local people wherever he worked. People were willing to follow him everywhere he went. His followers were so many that "the population would grow large enough to form a village in one year, a town in two years, and a big metropolis in three years." Shun became so popular that when Emperor Yao asked his administrators to propose a suitable successor, they unanimously recommended Shun. However, Emperor Yao did not make Shun his successor right away, but was to give him some tests in his capability for governing the tribal alliance. In one of these tests, Shun was assigned to receive the tribal leaders and envoys who had come to pay tribute to Emperor Yao. The idea was to ascertain whether Shun would be able to command the respect and submission of all the tribes.

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At that time, the country enjoyed peace and people lived harmoniously with each other under Emperor Yao's rule. People of most tribes lived a simple and honest life; they kept good faith, observed the proprieties and the laws, and were friendly with one another. There were exceptions, however. Four tribes-Huandou, Gonggong, Gun, and Sanmiao - became a nuisance to all other tribes because of their aggressiveness, moral degradation, and refusal to follow Emperor Yao's decrees and teachings. Hence the collective nickname for the chiefs of these four tribes- "the Four Evils." They constituted a big threat to the stability of the tribal alliance. Emperor Yao's very purpose in assigning Shun to receive the tribal chiefs and envoys was to test his ability to deal with these "Four Evils."

Shun approached the test by asking Emperor Yao to send the "Four Evils" into exile in

the remote, barbarian regions. It is noteworthy that Shun opted for exile rather than any other forms of punishment, which expressed Shun's benevolence, magnanimity and caution against the use of corporal punishment such as death sentence. In accordance with the law of the time, the crimes of the "Four Evils" were serious enough for them to be sentenced to any one of the five chief forms of punishment (tattooing the face (墨), cutting off the nose (劓), cutting of the feet (刖), castration (宫) and decapitation (大辟)) .

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But Shun considered these punishments too cruel. He redefined the rules of their application, making punishment proportionate to crime and giving lenient treatment (exile) to those whose crimes were moderate even though considered to have breach the rules of these five chief forms of punishment. This ensured due penalty to the criminal but avoided physical injuries. Shun's solution earned him wide recognition and respect from the tribal chiefs. He passed Emperor Yao's test.

However, after being sentenced to exile, one of the "Four Evils," the Sanmiao tribe, remained impenitent about their past wrongs and went on indulging in all sorts of evildoings. After his accession to the throne, Shun had no alternative but to send a punitive expedition against them. *The Book of Documents* keeps a record of a conversation between Shun (then in his old age) and Yu about the expedition.

Sanmiao

Also called "Youmiao." This refers to an ancient tribe in South China who lived in the areas between the Dongting Lake and the Poyang Lake in the middle and lower Yangtze regions. Due to their constant revolts, Emperor Shun exiled the tribe to Sanwei (in present-day Dunhuang, Gansu Province) in North-west China.

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Yu

Also known as Xia-Yu (Yu of Xia) or Da-Yu (Yu the Great), Yu (whose years of birth and death are unknown) was a leader of the Xiahou clan in ancient China and the founder of the Xia Dynasty. He was descended from Emperor Zhuan Xu (颛顼) and the Yellow Emperor (黄帝) . His father, named Gun, was awarded the nobility title of bo (伯) along with a fiefdom in Chong by Emperor Yao, and was hence referred to as Chongbo Gun (Gun the Count of Chong) or Chongbo (the Count of Chong). During Emperor Yao's reign, China was plagued by frequent floods. Gun was assigned to tame the floods, but had no success despite nine years' effort. Later, Yu took over the assignment of bringing flood under control; he succeeded after thirteen years' work. In recognition of Yu's meritorious service, Shun abdicated in his favor. Thereupon, Yu ascended the throne. He made Yangcheng (to the southeast of the present-day Dengfeng in Henan Province), and named the country Xia.

With a sigh, Shun said to Yu, "Alas, Yu! The Sanmiao tribe still defies our authority. I now entrust you with an expedition against them."

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so Yu summoned the tribal chiefs and declared, "Attention, please! Everyone! The wildly arrogant Sanmiao tribe refuses to take orders from us, They slight the teachings of the former sage kings and defy morality, give the virtuous people the cold shoulder and put the miserly and villainous in important positions, and ignore their people's welfare. Now Heaven is giving them a punishment. Therefore, I am leading you for a punitive expedition against the sinful Sanmiao tribe. Hopefully, every one of you will follow my order to accomplish this great task." However, the campaign dragged on for 30 days, and the Sanmiao tribe remained afloat, refusing to surrender. At this juncture, Yu's close adviser Bo Yi, also a descendant of Emperor Zhuan Xu, offered his suggestion: "Great virtue will move Heaven. Its power can be felt despite the distance. It is the way of Heaven that conceit incurs losses, while modesty brings benefits. When his Majesty Emperor Shun tilled the farmland in Lishan, he used to ask Heaven in tears why he had been hated by his parents. He pinned the blame on himself instead of on his parents, and always treated his father Gu-Sou with utmost respect, until his stubborn and slow-witted father was moved by his piety and became reasonable and nice to him. Utmost sincerity will move the gods, let alone a tribe like Sanmiao." Yu accepted Bo Yi's suggestion and withdrew the troops. The suggestion convinced Emperor

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Shun, too, who considered armed conquest only a last resort. He decided to change the strategy by shifting the focus to fostering civil governance at home in the first place. People were summoned to sing and dance with in front of the palace, wielding shields and feathered stageprops - a gesture of prioritizing culture and education over war preparations. Shun was well aware that mankind would be no better than beasts if they knew nothing more than seeking a comfortable life and received little moral cultivation. Deeply concerned, he instructed Qi, then the *Situ* (minister for education), to popularize the teaching of various ethical standards: filial piety, fraternal affection, loyalty, good faith, propriety, sense of shame, etc. Seventy days after Shun's moral education campaign

BoYi

Bo Yi was a wise minister during the reigns of Yao and Shun. He assisted Shun with the management of the mountains, lakes, forests and animals, and later joined Yu's water-control project. Upon Yu's death, Yu made Bo Yi the heir to the throne. After a three-year mourning period, Bo Yi abdicated in favor of Qi, son of Yu, and led the life of a recluse in the north of Jishan (present-day Dengfeng, Henan Province).

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started, the Sanmiao tribe submitted to Shun of their own volition because they had felt the influence of the virtuous rule under him. So this was a real case of "compelling submission without a conquest." It bears out the truth that real submission is to be secured not by force but by virtue.

This episode is recorded in other classics, too, with some variance though. According to "Shangde" in *Lishi Chunqin* (*Master Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals*), "Wadu" in *Han Fei-tzu*, and *Diwang Shiji* (*Genealogical Annals of the Emperors and Kings*), Yu suggested military

conquest since the Sanmiao tribe refused to take orders from the central government, but Emperor Shun did not agree. He argued that military actions were not the right thing to do if the ruler's virtue was not convincing enough to win over the opponent. He decided to compel Sanmiao's submission through fostering virtuous government; and three years later, the Sanmiao tribe finally submitted. Though the narration differs slightly from that of *The Book of Documents*, they expounded a common rule all wise rulers are supposed to observe in their governance practice.

To do well in state governance, one must foster its own moral integrity in the first place. To compel submission from others, the crux of the matter is whether they are genuinely convinced from the heart. Since the ancient times, the Chinese have attached primary importance to

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the moral cultivation of the individual, particularly that of the ruler, upholding it as the only way to self-perfection and as a prerequisite for the effective governance of the family and the state. *The Great Learning* (*Daxue* 大学) says,

Men in old times, when they wanted to further the cause of enlightenment and civilization in the world, began first by securing good government in their country. When they wanted to secure good government in their country, they began first by putting their house in order. When they wanted to put their house in order, they began first by cultivating their moral character.

...

When men's moral character is cultivated, and only then, will their houses be kept in order. When men's houses are kept in order, and only then, will there be good government in the country. Only when there is good government in all countries, will there be peace and order in the world.

...

From the Emperor down to the lowest of the common people, the one thing that all must do is cultivate their moral character, the foundation for everything. When the foundation is in disorder, that

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which is built on it will not be in order. When that which is essential is neglected, that which is not essential can never be properly attended to.

These paragraphs illustrate the fundamental importance of moral cultivation and its role in bringing order to the household, the state, and the world.

How come that moral cultivation has been so important to the ancient Chinese? Is there any necessary connection between the moral cultivation of an individual and the governance of a state? Talent, wisdom, and resourcefulness—are these not enough to make a good ruler? The answer is “It is inadequate.” There is a Chinese saying, “A virtuous person with talent is a quality product, a virtuous person without talent is a defective product, a person without virtue and talent is a waste product, and a talented person without virtue is a poison.” Moral

integrity is a basic attribute of mankind. It obliges people to observe the norms and standards of social life, and prevents people from behaving in ways that breach social rules and jeopardize the interests of others. "Qu Li I" in *The Book of Rites* (*Li Ji* 礼记) says,

The parrot can speak, and yet is nothing more than a bird; the ape can speak, and yet is nothing more than a beast. Here now is a man who observes

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no rules of propriety; is not his heart that of a beast?

Without moral cultivation, a man will never become established in society, and will only bring harm to other people, or worse still, undermine the stability and order of the society as a whole, due to the absence of a restraint on his behaviours. Without moral integrity, a talented and resourceful person may cause greater harms when he happens to hold a higher position. To make matters worse, "birds of the same feather flock together." When a leader ignores moral standards, his subordinates will probably follow his bad example. King Wen of Zhou had a noble, virtuous character, and his ministers were mostly wise and upright. In contrast, Emperor Qin Shi Huang ignored moral cultivation, and he was surrounded by evil-minded ministers. Leaving the administration of a country in the hands of a few talented but morally degenerate people would be disastrous not only for the nation itself, but also for the world.

Emperor Shun's experience of winning over the Sanmiao tribe offers us a deeper understanding of the factors behind China's tremendous achievements today. As China grows in its comprehensive national strength and international prestige, more and more countries, have forged closer ties of exchange and cooperation with

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China, and experts and scholars worldwide have offered their interpretations of China's development from various perspectives. In fact, for those who have a knowledge of traditional Chinese culture, the secret is fairly simple: the ruling Communist Party of China understands and follows the tradition of fostering moral integrity before running the state. Since its founding, the CPC has always emphasized self-improvement and enforced party discipline as a primary responsibility and a fundamental task. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, in particular since the launch of reform and opening up, the Party has faced an increasingly complex governance environment. In the report at its 14th National Congress in October, 1992, the CPC stressed the need to practice effective self-supervision and rigorous self-governance; "rigorous self-governance" was written in the General Program of the CPC Constitution for the first time. In the report at its 16th National Congress in November, 2002, the CPC reiterated the principle of self-supervision and self-governance and decided to write "practicing effective self-supervision and rigorous self-governance" in the General Program of the CPC Constitution. Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, China has made historic achievements in its reform and opening up and the socialist modernization; it reached a new historical starting point in its development, and the socialism with

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Chinese characteristics entered a new phase of development. Fresh changes had taken place in the CPC's governance environment, and the Party faced more complex and grave challenges. In view of all this, the new generation of the CPC central collective leadership with Xi Jinping at the core made a major policy move to "enforce strict Party self-governance in all respects" within the Party, making it an element of the "Four-pronged" Comprehensive Strategy. This has a significant bearing on the future of the CPC and the Chinese nation and the overall development of socialism with Chinese characteristics. In the amendment to the CPC Constitution at the 19th CPC National Congress, "in all respects" was added to "strict Party self-governance" to give a stronger emphasis, which manifests the CPC's deeper understanding of governance and party building, and more importantly, indicates the beginning of a new situation of Party self-governance.

Strong Party leadership is central to the task of enforcing strict Party self-governance in all respects; being thorough is fundamental; strictness is the key, and discipline is crucial. "In all respects" means management and discipline should be imposed on the whole Party. This encompasses all aspects of Party development, all sectors and all departments, with zero restriction, zero tolerance, and full coverage. The Party members' political activities and conduct within the Party, career, public

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and private life are all subject to regulation. Supervision is to be in place in all respects-ideology, organization, style of work, and institution-and in the whole process of discipline enforcement-education, management, supervision, scrutiny, and accountability. Pulling together in recent years under the strong leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Xi Jinping at the core, the whole Party, from leadership to the ranks, has continuously strengthened self-cultivation and improved conduct through various thematic education programs. Its efforts to tighten discipline, improve Party conduct, fight corruption and punish wrongdoing have strengthened the Party's ability to purify, improve, and reform itself. As a result, both the intraparty political atmosphere and the political ecosystem of the Party have improved markedly. The Party's ability to innovate, power to unite, and energy to fight have all been significantly strengthened; Party solidarity and unity have been reinforced, and its engagement with the people has been greatly improved. According to *Understanding CCP Resilience: Surveying Chinese Public Opinion Through Time*, a survey report published by Harvard University in July, 2020, the Chinese central government enjoyed a satisfaction rate of 93.1% among the Chinese people, a rate rarely seen elsewhere in the world. With a population of 1.4 billion, 56 ethnic groups, and an area of 9.6 million square kilometres, China is still a developing

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country. Governance of such a big country per se is a challenging task; it is still more challenging to make it prosperous and strong. Yet the CPC is braving all kinds of difficulties and is making all this a reality. It has more than 95 million members, involving all walks of life in China. As long as all Party members take care to cultivate their individual moral character,

play an exemplary role to influence and educate their family members, friends, and people around them, and are able to maintain good governance in the families and organizations, their collective efforts will translate into good governance in the whole country. All this will ensure the fulfilment of the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation.

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Emperor Guangwu's Soft Governance Attracted Countries in the Western Regions to Pay Allegiance

The ancient Chinese had their own understandings on how to govern the state. In a nutshell, a sound governance is achieved through self-cultivation and a learning both sound in theory and practice. That is to say, those in power pay attention to their own moral cultivation, and they are committed to the pursuit of sage personality, and transform their internal virtues into external virtues. They exercise ethical governance, practice the kingly way, and make the people under the rule peaceful and benevolent, so that they can bring peace to the country and have it settled on a firm basis. In this case, those who are near are fairly pleased and those who are far away are attracted. It can be seen that, in the eyes of ancient Chinese, the key to the success of state governance depends on people themselves, and on internal factors rather than external factors, that is, it depends on the governor's self-cultivation rather than other aspects. In other words, it depends on internal construction rather than external expansion.

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As it put in "Quanyan Xun, "*Huainanzi*,"The saint guards what he possesses and does not seek what he does not possess. If he asks what he does not have, he loses what he has; if he cultivates what he has, what he wants will come. Therefore, those who use military forces should wait until the enemy can be defeated, and those who govern the country should wait until the enemy can be conquered. Shun cultivated himself at Lishan, and the people in the world followed him; King Wen cultivated himself at Qishan, the custom underwent great changes. Suppose Shun went for the benefit of the world, forgetting the way of self-cultivation, his own life cannot be protected, how could he own an inch of land?"Saints and people with superior morality and wisdom all guard what they have, and they do not pursue what they do not have. If people pursue what they do not have, then what they have will be lost; if people cultivate what they have, they will also get what they want. Therefore, to lead troops to fight, his own troop should be invincible first, and then wait for the enemy to be defeated. To govern a country, people must first be incapable of being invaded, and then wait for the enemy to be invaded. Emperor Shun cultivated his virtues in Lishan, so he could make the people of the world obey and be educated; King Wen of Zhou cultivated his virtues in Qizhou, so he could change the custom of the world. If Emperor Shun only

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cared for the interests of the world and ignores his own moral cultivation, then he will not even be able to protect himself, so how can he get an inch of land! From the story of Emperor Shun, we know that the reason why Emperor Shun can rise from the grassroots and

become the holy king admired forever is that he cultivated himself well and possessed great virtue, wisdom, and talent. If he were like ordinary people, he might have been killed by his parents and brothers a longtime ago. How could he be recommended by the Four Honorable Persons, be respected by Emperor Yao, and hold the power of the world and make his name go down in history?

Therefore, the truly intelligent people should enrich themselves rather than seeking external things, and the intelligent rulers should be committed to the construction of their own country instead of always thinking about suppressing other countries. Confucius once said, "A man should say, I am not concerned that I have no place, but I am concerned how I may fit myself for one. I am not concerned that I am not known, but I seek to be worthy to be known." ("Li Ren, " *The Analects*) People should not always worry about not having a good position, they should worry about whether they are competent when they are in a good position, whether they have the virtues and skills to be competent for this position; people should not worry about their reputation being not

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well known and no one knows them, but to pursue what is enough to make their reputation known, to let people know their own virtues and abilities. The same is true of governing a country. This passage also warns the rulers not to worry that their country does not have a place in the international community, and do not worry that their country cannot become the leader of the international society, but to worry about whether their country has the ability to occupy a space in the international community, and whether it has the ability or conditions for becoming a leader in the international community; they should not worry that their country does not have a good international reputation, other countries do not support and follow them. Instead, they should pursue the style and behavior that can obtain a good international fame and allow other countries to support and follow them.

Now, let us get to know a person who achieved a counterattack in his life. He was a well-known and perfect monarch in Chinese history. We will see how he continued to write the legend of the dynasty, and how he, who did not have a thing to his name, turned himself from a descendant of a declining royal family into a monarch of a prosperous age who brought the whole empire under his domination and made his own fame spread on all sides. This person was Liu Xiu, Emperor Guangwu of Han, who was the founder of the Eastern Han Dynasty.

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As mentioned earlier, the Han Dynasty was a powerful and civilized dynasty in Chinese history that all Chinese people are proud of. However, no matter how powerful a dynasty is, there are times when it will decline. If the inheritance left by the predecessors is not well treasured, it will quickly decline or even be destroyed. Of course, if there is a person of great virtue among the descendants, he can revive the tradition, save the nation from extinction, and restore the nation to its former glory. Emperor Guangwu of Han undoubtedly belonged to the latter. It was because of his appearance that the Han Dynasty was able to recover, and the Han government was able to survive and thrive for nearly two hundred years. What is the story behind this? Let us get closer to this monarch so as to obtain a clear understanding of

his life and appreciate his demeanor.

Liu Xiu, Emperor Guangwu of Han, who styled himself Wenshu, was a native of Caiyang County, Nanyang Prefecture (nowadays the southwest of Zaoyang, Hubei Province) and one of the ninth generation of grandsons of Liu Bang, Emperor Gaozu of Han. Although Liu Xiu was a descendant of the imperial family, he was actually the descendant of the concubine His ancestors were successively demoted because of the Tui'en Ling, or Edict of Extending the Favors, issued by Emperor Wu. Liu Qin was his

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father, by this time his father worked as a petty official as lowly as the magstrre of Jiyang County. Liu Xiu was born in Jiyang County (nowadays the northeast of Lankao County, Kaifeng City, Henan Province) in 5 BC Unfortunately, Liu Qin passed away in 3 AD At this time, Liu Xiu, who was still young, was helpless and unable to support himself, so with his family he went and sought refuge with his uncle LiuLiang who was far away in Caiyang County, and he wasraised by his uncle. What was Liu Xiu like? According to *The History of the Eastern Han*, Liu Xiu had a high nose, a raised forehead which shaped like the sun, a wide mouth, thick and beautiful beard and eyebrows, and he was 1.75meters in height. He was wise and benevolent. As a man full of resource and astuteness he could adapt himself to changing conditions with considerable insight. He was prodigal of benefactions, and he treated people and things with great respect. He was painstaking with his work and keen on doing farm work. Based on Liu Xiu's background, it is common sense that in ancient Chinese society which was characterized by a strict patriarchal hierarchy, there is no possibility for him to be knighted, let alone to ascend to the throne. If there is no special opportunity, he would lead an ordinary life throughout his life span. However, the affairs of the world are inconstant. When he was young, the old dynasty was replaced with a new one, and he was completely reduced to an

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ordinary people, relying on raising cattle and tiling land to make a living. Life can be both a curse as well as a blessing. Something quite unforeseen somehow created a chance for him to come to the throne. But how did it happen?

It turns out that Liu Xiu lived in a time when Wang Mang usurped state power from the Han regime (9-23 AD). Wang Mang proclaimed himself emperor. He implemented reforms by blindly admiring the ancients, and he was unrealistic and short-tempered, obstinate and self-opinionated. He governed the state in a rude manner. People did not benefit from his administration, instead they suffered from the governance. Additionally, he staged wars recklessly and engaged in unjust military ventures. Coupled with years of natural disasters and famines, social contradictions sharply intensified. In the last years of his reign, the field was strewn with the corpses of the starved. The people ate each other, and the people were so unbearable that they rose up in arms one after another, and the powerful from all over the country took advantage of the situation to join them. Liu Xiu and his eldest brother Liu Yan were also among them. At this time Liu Xiu was 28 years old. After the brothers rose up, they had to unite with the Lulin Army because of their weak forces, and supported their brother Liu Xuan to establish a new regime. Afterwards, the brothers were

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hated because of their merits, and his eldest brother was killed. When Liu Xiu broke with his brother, he started anew. Liu Xiu listened to the advice of his subordinates. He based himself in Hebei, while enlisting soldiers and buying up horses, he tried to win the ardent support of the people. Capturing lands and destroying cities, he became more and more powerful. Finally, in 25 AD, he established a new dynasty, he announced that he would continue to use the Han as the title of his reigning dynasty. The first year of the title of his reign was called Jianwu, and he established his capital in Luoyang, which was called Later Han or the Eastern Han in history. At that time, a group of independent warlords stood on the Chinese land. After discussing with the ministers, Liu Xiu decided to adopt the strategy of befriending the West and attacking the East, keeping friendly relations with distant states and attacking those nearby, and operational principles were to attack the area east of Shanhaiguan Pass first and then Long and Shu, from near to far, and crushing the enemy forces one by one. In this way, 12 years later Liu Xiu finally conquered other forces in 36 AD, and he completed the great cause of reunification, and once again returned the country to peace. In this year Liu Xiu was 42 years old.

During the ten years from his thirties to forties Liu Xiu had a long military career which made him exhausted

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Duke Ling of Wey Asking About Battle Array

This story comes from "Duke Ling of Wey," The Analects. Duke Ling of Wey (?-493 BC), whose surname was Ji and first name was Yuan, was the 28th monarch of the state of Wey in the Spring and Autumn Period. He ascended the throne in 535 BC and reigned for 42 years. In 497 BC, Confucius arrived in the state of Wey, and he left because he was not put in an important position and the royal family was about to be in chaos. Later he returned when the rebels were pacified, and he stayed in Wey for five years. During his stay, Duke Ling repeatedly asked Confucius about the way to govern, but he did not put Confucius in an important position. In 493 BC, knowing that he would soon die, Duke Ling intended to send troops to the state of Jin so as to wipe out Kuai Kui the prince. He asked Confucius about battle array. Confucius's political philosophy was that Duke Ling should implement benevolent governance instead of relying on force. Therefore, he professed that he did not learn about military matters. Without achieving what he wished, Confucius left the state of Wey.

and deeply tired of martial arts. He knew that the world had suffered so much from wars and chaos, and the people were beaten out by the disasters, the treasury

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becomes depleted, so much so that people all yearned for peace and rest, trying to recuperate and build up strength. Since he pacified the people of Long and Shu, if it was not a particularly urgent military situation, he no longer mentioned military affairs. The crown prince once asked him about military affairs. He cited the allusion of "Duke Ling of Wey

Asking About Battle Array" from "Duke Ling of Wey, *The Analects*, saying," Formerly Duke Ling of Wey asked Confucius about the formation of troops, but Confucius did not answer, this kind of thing is not something you should ask." As one of the few founding emperors in Chinese history who had received orthodox Confucian education, Liu Xiu had wide learning and a retentive memory, and he had profound knowledge in running the state and correcting the wrongs. After pacifying the world, he gave up the sword for the pen, resorting to a mild and benevolent method in governing the country as he was a man of a gentle nature. He visited his hometown Zhangling in 41 AD. When he had a feast with members in his clan, the female elders of the same clan said to each other when they were drinking wine, "Xiu was not good at social activities when he was young, but he was honest and respectful, and he was frank and gentle in dealing with people, we didn't expect that he can make such an achievement today!" Hearing this, Liu Xiu burst into laughter, "I would like to govern the world

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in a soft way. "Indeed, he suited the action to the word. He cherished men from afar and desisted from raising an army to fight in distant areas.

In the early days of the Eastern Han Dynasty, affected by the discriminatory and oppressive ethnic policies as pursued by the new regime, the easing ethnic relations originally maintained by the Western Han government were severely damaged. The borders were plunged into chaos once again when minority people from the Huns, the Xianbei, the Qiang, the Wuhuan, the Man, and the Yi invaded the frontiers. Liu Xiu knew very well the truth that, when the son of heaven has the Way, it is the four barbarians that should keep guard on the frontier, and he understood the reality that people had become tired of successive distresses as caused by continual wars. In this case, he sheathed the sword and gave the people a respite, being dedicated to dealing with domestic affairs. On foreign relations and ethnic issues, he adopted defensive strategies, trying to soothe and pacify the distant people.

As recorded in the "Biography of Zang Gong," *The Book of the Later Han*, in about 46 AD, there was a severe famine and plague among the Huns, and various tribes fought with each other. Hearing this, Liu Xiu asked Zang Gong's opinion on the matter. Zang Gong replied, "I would like to bring a troop of five thousand cavalries to defeat the enemy and win my honor." Liu Xiu said with

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a smile, "it is difficult to discuss strategy with ever-victorious generals, I'll consider it myself." In 51 AD, Zang Gong and Ma Wu, or Marquis Yang Xu, sent in a memorial which read, "The Huns are greedy for profit, and they do not pay attention to propriety and faith. When they are poor, they bow at our feet and beg for mercy. When they enjoy stability, they invade our borders, looting and burning. People at the border afflict with great suffering, and people in the Central Plains are fearful of their invasion. Pestered by the epidemic, the Huns are having a bad time when their strength cannot match that of a prefecture in the Central Plains. The fate of the people living thousands of miles away is in the hands of Your Majesty. Good luck will not come back, and time and tide wait for no man. How can you bear to abandon

military affairs because of your cultivating virtues? Now you should send generals to the frontiers, and, by offering big rewards, ask Gaogouli, Wuhuan, and Xianbei, to attack the left side of the Huns, and recruit soldiers in the four prefectures to the west side of the Yellow River and people in the tribe of Qiang so as to attack the right side of the Huns. In this way, within a few years, the Huns in the north can be eradicated. We worry that Your Majesty cherish your petty kindness and that your advisers fiddle with their suspicion and hesitation. In consequence the feats that worth a niche in the temple of fame cannot

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be established in the present dynasty." After he finished reading the memorial, Liu Xiu replied, "It is mentioned in the *Huangshigong Ji* that the soft can overcome the hard and the weak can overcome the strong. Softness is a virtue, and hardness is a curse. Those who are weak can get the help of the benevolent, and those who are strong invite hatred. Therefore, a virtuous monarch makes others happy with his own pleasure; an unscrupulous monarch makes himself happy with his own pleasure. Those who make others happy make their own happiness last for a long time, and those who make themselves happy will soon perish. Those who abandon what is near and seek what is far away (planning for wars and abandoning morality without cultivating virtues) end in smoke, and those who seek what is near and keep from what is far away (cultivating virtues and abandoning wars) live in ease and comfort and end well. The governance that enables the people to live and work in peace and contentment produces more loyal ministers, and the governance that makes the people work hard and suffer breeds rebels. Therefore, if you devote to expand the vast land, the internal affairs will lay waste; if you devote yourself to the spread of virtue and benefit, the country will grow strong. To cherish what you have at hand, you will have peace; to covet what belongs to other people, it invites destruction. Tyrannical rule may see effects at the beginning,

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but it is bound to failure in the end. Now, there is no sound governance in the country, disasters continue to occur, the people are panicked, and they cannot protect themselves. Under such circumstances, should we send a punitive expedition against the barbarians? Not to mention that the northern barbarians have always been strong, and the rumor about garrison troops or peasants opening up wasteland and growing food grain has always been unfounded. If it is possible to raise half of the world's forces to eliminate powerful foreign enemies, isn't it my biggest wish? But if the time is not ripe, it is better to let the people recuperate and build up strength." Finally, the generals became aware of Liu Xiu's intention, and no one ever dared to talk about military affairs again.

It can be seen from Liu Xiu's reply that he was really well versed in ancient teachings. With regard to wars, especially proactively launching wars, not only could he treat them rationally and cautiously, but also clearly and deeply understood their havoc on the country, the government, the people, and even the monarch himself. Therefore, even if he knew that the Huns were suffering from famine and he had the opportunity to take advantage of it, he was unwilling to start a war. And this also shows his generosity and benevolence as well as his adherence to his idea of wars. It is mentioned in the *Sima Rangju's Art of War* that the

way of fighting is that we

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should not go against time, or avail ourselves of people's suffering, and this action derives from the love of the people; wars should not be staged when people are in mourning or disasters, this action derives from the love of the people. Because of the love of the people in both states, wars should not be started in winter or summer. At first glance, some might consider these principles ridiculous. The goal of war is to eliminate the enemy and preserve ourselves as much as possible. Of course, the dispatch of troops is based on whether the timing is conducive to achieving this goal. Why shall we have so many misgivings? But if we understand the deep meaning behind it, we will be impressed by the profound wisdom, noble ethics, and broad mind of the ancient Chinese. This is the epitome of the ancient Chinese's concept of a benevolence-oriented war. Regarding external issues, Liu Xiu was not interested in conquering foreign tribes by force, and when these tribes actively pledged attachment, he would just ignore and even politely refuse these requests. In 45 AD, the kings of the sixteen countries in the Western Regions, including Shanshan and Cheshi, all sent their sons to serve in his court, and offered tributes, requesting the re-establishment of protectorates. Considering that the Central Plains had just stabilized and he had no time to attend to foreign affairs, Liu Xiu sent their sons back and gave them a handsome reward. Ban Gu, a

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historian of the Eastern Han Dynasty, commented, "Emperor Guangwu made a general survey of ancient and modern history. According to the situation at the time, he continued to implement the policy of pacification towards the countries of the Western Regions. Compared with Yu the Great who placated the Western barbarian tribes, Duke of Zhou who refused the white pheasant presented by the Yueshang clan, and Emperor Wen of Han who declined the horse that covers a thousand *li* a day, Emperor Guangwu acted in this way out of the same intention, but nothing is more respectable than this behavior."

After coming to the throne, Liu Xiu went to the court administering affairs of state and working from dawn to dusk. He often invited his ministers, officials and generals to discuss the principles as contained in the classics, and he did not rest until late at night. Seeing that his father was diligent in political affairs and never slacking off, the crown prince found a chance to admonish, saying, "Your Majesty has the wisdom of the Great Yu and King Tang, but you lack the blessing like that of the Yellow Emperor and Laozi who cultivated their nature. I hope you can attain your mental tranquility and have a natural ease and peace." Liu Xiu replied, "But I always enjoyed it like this." Although Liu Xiu achieved great cause, he was still cautious and meticulous, fearing that

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he was not competent enough. He handled government affairs carefully and cautiously, assuming a dominant role. He judged the occasion, and he did as much as his resources and strength permit, so that he made no mistakes in decision-making. During the 33 years in his reign, the country had a clear governance, a stable society, and people had a prosperous life.

At the time Confucianism prevailed and moral education developed, presenting a great social atmosphere. Sima Guang, a historian in the Northern Song Dynasty, praised him, saying, "Since the three dynasties the beauty of custom has never been better than that in the Eastern Han Dynasty." Liu Xiu deceased in 57 AD at the age of 62. Before his death, he still worried about the country and the well-being of the people. He did not forget to make himself serve as an example to others and change the old tradition. He exhorted the prince to reduce funeral arrangements after his death. He wrote in his will, "I have done nothing to benefit the people of the world. After my death, you shall follow the rules of Emperor Xiaowen (Emperor Wen of Han), and strive to be frugal and simple." Liu Xiu rose in troubled times, used force to stabilize the country and dominate the world; then he governed the country gently, conquering the unyielding with the yielding and utilized culture and virtue to pacify the people. By doing so he created a prosperous age and revitalized the royal family

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The Martial Virtue of Stopping Fighting

The martial virtue of stopping fighting derives from "The Twelfth Year of Duke Xuan" in *Master Zuo's Spring and Autumn Annals*. The original text in the book reads, "Master Chu (Duke Zhuang of Chu) said, 'The so-called culture is the martial virtue of stopping fighting'." The Chinese character 武 (wu, military affairs) is composed of 止 (zhi, to stop) and 戈 (ge, weapons). In this sense, to stop fighting constitutes the martial virtue in its truest sense.

of Han, thus becoming a sagely monarch. Ban Gu commented, "Emperor Guangwu politely dismissed meritorious statesmen and reinstated civil officials, he put away the bows and arrows and dispersed the horses and cattle. Although his method of governing the country is not on a par with that of the ancient holy kings, it can be regarded as practicing the martial virtue of stopping fighting."

The story of Emperor Guangwu of Han was profound and thought-provoking, and it left a profound enlightenment and useful reference for later generations. In short, we can get at least three points from it:

First, those who win the world by force must rule the world with cultivated virtue.

There is an old Chinese saying, "It is easier to win the country than to hold the country." This can be affirmed

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by the fact that since ancient times the number of people who win the country has been numerous, but those who can successfully hold the country is rare. In that case, is there any way to firmly hold the country? Is it possible to continue to use force with the strong arm? Countless historical facts show that it is infeasible. During the Three Kingdoms period, Lu Jing from the area of Wu took history as a mirror, and he admonished Sun Hao, the last monarch of the Wu regime, saying, "In the past, Qin Shi Huang defeated the six states and proclaimed himself the emperor in the world, finally completing the great cause of reunification by means of power and force. However, he did not improve the governance of the country by learning from Yao, Shun and the Great Yu who were good at governing the country. He did

not increase or decrease the code in consideration of the gains and losses based on the system of the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties. He abandoned the teachings of the former saints, practiced cruel governance, relied on the army to abuse the people, so the people harbored resentment against him, and the heroes rose up in revolt, so that at the reign of the second emperor of the Qin dynasty, the regime was overthrown. Therefore, it is not meant that one can't take over power by force. Rather, it is a big mistake if the rulers still use force to hold the country after taking over power. It is mentioned in *Zuo*

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Zhuan that war is like a raging fire. If it is not stopped in time, people will draw the fire and bring destruction upon themselves. The Qin did not consider stopping the war, so there was the scourge of self-destruction. This is what we say 'War leads to destruction? Emperor Gaozu of Han rose in Sishui and rose to power and position in Pei County. He used benevolence to appease the people from afar, used force to eliminate disasters, and appointed advisers to broadly adopt good strategies, so he could overthrow the Qin Dynasty and defeat King Xiang, and then benefited the world and governed the country by virtues. To combine morality and military force, the country can last for a long time. This is the method of Emperor Gaozu in running the country. Both Qin Shi Huang and Emperor Gaozu relied on weapons and military forces to obtain the country, why did the foundation established by Emperor Gaozu thrive? And why did the foundation established by Qin Shi Huang perish? It is because Qin Shi Huang only knew how to take the world without knowing how to hold the world. Emperor Gaozu knew the principles of taking the world and keeping the world. The essence of the principle of combining virtue and force lies in the fact that when the world is in chaos, we should use force to overawe the world; when the world is peaceful, we should use culture and morality to enlighten the world. Lu Jing's advice was indeed a maxim pregnant

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with wisdom that speaks well for human reason. It is a pity that Sun Hao was extremely extravagant and brutal, and he was unable to come to realize his error, ended up being destroyed by the Western Jin dynasty.

Obviously, after acquiring the world by force, promptly desisting from military activities and encouraging culture and education is not only a necessary measure for the founding monarch to consolidate the foundation of the country, but also a long-term plan for the monarch to preserve the foundations established by predecessors. And the way of defending and holding the world is the same in ancient and modern times. The new China has marched forward regardless of hardships for over 70 years, and now it has entered a new era. Fundamentally speaking, the reason why such a great achievement can be made is that the leader of the new China, the Communist Party of China, knows how to defend and hold the country. In 1949, the Party united and led the Chinese people, through 28 years of painful struggle, to finally win the victory of the new democratic revolution and gain the national power. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the first generation of leadership of the Communist Party of China with Comrade Mao Zedong at the core collectively judged the occasion to make timely strategic adjustments, shifting the focus of

the Party's work from rural areas to urban areas, from

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armed struggle to peaceful construction, and pursuing an independent foreign policy of peace and a military strategy of active defense. Internal, it restored and developed the national economy, consolidated the new regime, and made preliminary explorations of the socialist road. "Although the regime experienced serious twists and turns in the process, the Party made original theoretical achievements and great achievements in socialist construction. This provided valuable experience, theoretical preparation, and material foundation for the creation of socialism with Chinese characteristics in a new historical period." Therefore, when the second generation of the Party's leadership group with Comrade Deng Xiaoping as the core took power, they profoundly summarized the pros and cons of socialist construction in the early days of the founding of the new China and learned from the historical experience of world socialism. The focus shifted to economic development, and the historic decision to implement reform and opening up established the basic line for the primary stage of socialism. Since then, the Party's collective leadership with comrades Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping at the core have put forward different ruling ideas according to the characteristics of the times and specific national conditions, but major policies and foreign policies, the national defense policy and military strategy they pursued have remained consistent.

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They basically continued the setting of the Party's first and second generations of leadership groups, that is, to adhere to the Party's basic line in the primary stage of socialism and unswervingly pursue independence. They stuck to the foreign policy of peace and a defensive national defense policy and a military strategy of active defense. It is precisely because the successive generations of the collective leadership of the Communist Party of China could fully understand, respect, and comply with the laws of regime change, social development and national development, and maintain the continuity and stability of lines, guidelines, and policies of the Party and the state, that the new China has made today's achievements in its development.

Second, those who rule the world with culture and morality should focus on themselves and seek inwardly.

When the ancient Chinese talked about governing the country, they emphasized culture and virtue rather than force, and they advocated harmony rather than fighting against each other. The so-called "rule of culture and morality" means that the ruler of the country adopts a gentle method, pacifying, educating, and persuading people with loose policies, good systems, and noble conduct, so as to achieve logical administration and harmonious people, and inspiring other countries to uphold good-neighborliness. Obviously, such a way of

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governing the country means that the ruler of a country should focus on internal governance and self-cultivation, devote themselves to initiating the useful and do away with the harmful, abolishing what is old and establishing in its place the new order of things. They should

develop economy, improve people's livelihood, and at the same time improve their own ideological awareness, moral quality, and governance ability. This kind of understanding of the ancient Chinese is actually a manifestation of the reflection of inward thinking in Chinese traditional culture. Seeking internally means turning your eyes to the inside of things, focusing on finding causes and solutions within things. Unlike Western culture rooted in marine civilization, which emphasizes seeking from others and the outside world, the Chinese culture is rooted in farming civilization, thus forming the thinking pattern of inner seeking that always emphasizes seeking from self and from within. Confucius once used archery as a metaphor, saying, "Archery is similar to a gentleman's way of life. If you miss the bull's-eye, you should blame yourself instead of blaming for the bad quality of the arrows or external factors such as unfavorable weather conditions." Mencius also said, "If you love others, but others do not approach you, then ask yourself whether your benevolence is sufficient; if you manage others, but others do not obey, then ask yourself whether you are wise enough;

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treat others politely, but others do not respond, then ask yourself whether your attitude is sincere. If your behavior does not receive a response, then turn to yourself to find a reason. When the rulers themselves are correct, the People of the world will naturally submit ("Lilou I" in *The Mencius*)."

As a way of thinking, seeking from within is not only a fundamental way to correct and perfect oneself, but also an effective way to resolve contradictions and avoid conflicts. The Chinese ancients said that "To blame each other, the world is turned upside down; to blame oneself, the world is peaceful." People will encounter all kinds of problems. If you fall into the trap of egocentrism, you always think that you are right and the outside world is wrong, and if you do not reflect on yourself, but only know how to shirk and complain, then not only will the problem remain, but you will also make yourself stand against the outside world. This conduct breeds conflict and creates confrontation. The same is true for countries and nations. In international and inter-ethnic exchanges, conflicts and frictions are unavoidable. If any countries blindly adhere to the unilateralism which emphasizes and prioritizes national interests and ethnocentrism, they cannot correctly understand their own problems. In this way, not only will the interests of other countries and nations be damaged, but they will also fall

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into an inextricable crisis.

History has shown that people grow up in constant internal seeking; countries and nations develop and make progress through constant internal seeking. The Communist Party of China and the new China under its leadership are the best examples. One hundred years ago, the warlords on the Chinese land committed evil, foreign powers acted outrageously and ferociously, riding roughshod over the people, and the country was disintegrated. The people lived a miserable life. The fate of the Chinese nation was on the line. At such a critical moment, the Communist Party of China came into being. No one expected that such an under-appreciated underground organization, which had only a few dozen members at the beginning of its establishment, has developed into a powerful ruling party with more than 95

million members 100 years later, leading Chinese people to create an earth-shattering development miracle in the history of human social development. There is no shortcut to success. Looking back on a century of development of the Communist Party of China, we will find that from the period of the new democratic revolution, to the period of revolution and construction, to the new period of reform and opening up and socialist modernization, it is precisely because generations of Chinese Communists understand and are good at continuous self-reflection,

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summarizing experience and drawing lessons, always focusing on self-construction, taking the achievement of the interests of the Chinese people as the yardstick, and constantly reforming and perfecting ourselves, that we can overcome difficulties one after another and achieve one victory after another. In this process, the Communist Party of China has also accumulated rich and valuable experience in governance. The Party not only gradually gained an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the laws of the governance of the Communist Party, the laws of socialist construction, and the laws of human social development, and successfully guided the practice of the country, but also actively contributed Chinese wisdom and Chinese solutions to solve human problems and improve global governance. It has provided the world with a new kind of ideas and possibilities for development, showing the demeanor and responsibility of a major country. It can be said that it is precisely because of focusing on itself and seeking inwardly that the Communist Party of China has achieved historical changes and led the Chinese people to turn a humiliated and devastated old China into an independent, prosperous and powerful new China.

Third, those who focus on themselves and seek inwardly respect human nature and teach according to the principles.

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Why did the Chinese people form this kind of inner-seeking way of thinking? Among other things, the reasons include China's geographical environment of semi-closed continent, the self-sufficient small-scale peasant economy in ancient China, the Chinese lifestyle of remaining in their proper sphere, and the cultural tradition of self-reliance and self-improvement of the Chinese nation. But the most important reason lies in the affirmation of human nature by ancient Chinese philosophers and the understanding and grasp of the objectivity of the laws of things. In the view of the Confucian philosophers, human nature is bright and can be viewed with optimism. People who are affected by the external environment and inner selfish desires and become evil can be influenced through education and self-cultivation. Everything has its own inherent laws of operation. This kind of laws can be recognized and grasped by human beings. Good results can be obtained by doing things in accordance with the laws. Doing things against the laws will lead to disasters. This concept has had an extremely profound impact on the thinking and behavior of the Chinese people. It not only promotes the formation of the thinking of internal seeking, but also creates a habit of governing the country that has lasted for thousands of years. This habit of governing the country is to emphasize ritual propriety and justice, and pay less

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to laws and penalties. This is also valuable experience gained by the ancient Chinese in respecting and following the laws of human nature and social development in governing the country.

The Chinese people emphasize ritual propriety and righteous enlightenment and pay less attention to legal penalties. This does not mean that they deny the effect of laws and punishments. It is just that they believe that ritual propriety and moral education are the fundamentals that make the country and the people well governed. Confucius said, "If the people be led by laws, and uniformity sought to be given them by punishments, they will try to avoid the punishment, but have no sense of shame. If they be led by virtue, and uniformity sought to be given them by the rules of propriety, they will have the sense of shame, and moreover will become good." ("Wei Zheng," *The Analects*) That is to say, if the law and punishment are emphasized, the people will try their best to exploit legal loopholes to avoid sanctions, and they will not be ashamed of it. If the propriety is emphasized, the people will not only be ashamed of breaking the law and discipline, but will also eliminate their unreasonable desires and correct their improper words and deeds.

After all, the indoctrination of ritual propriety and righteousness cannot be accomplished overnight, and it takes a long time to be effective, so legal punishment is

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also needed as a means of assistance. Since it can only be used after something has happened, it is useful in cases where moral education does not work, and the purpose is still to guide the people to be good, so it is only a secondary and supplementary means for governing a country. According to the records in "Yuanzi Zhengshu," *Qunshu Zhiyao*, Yuan Zhun, who lived in the Wei and Jin dynasties, said, "Benevolence, righteousness, and propriety are the fundamentals of running a country; laws and punishments are the minor details of running a country. Without fundamentals, nothing can be established; without minor details, nothing can be achieved." "Therefore, if we use morality to guide and use ritual to govern, the people will know how to be honest and shameful; if we use government decrees to guide and punishment to rule, the people will only try to avoid harm. This is the order of governance of the country. To implement benevolent governance, and then to govern according to the law; to carry out education, and then to mete out punishments, this is the priority of governance of the country. Far-reaching truths are hard to fathom, and immediate truths are easy to know. Therefore, comity can be slow to teach, and punishment must be urgent. This is the priority of running a country." The idea that righteousness cannot serve to govern the country is based on the fact that people do not know that human nature is

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inherently good, in this case moral education will be lost; if moral education is lost, the governance of the country will lose its foundation. The belief that the criminal laws cannot govern the country arises from the ignorance of falsification in the nature of the people, so

they will lose the power of deterrence; without deterrence, people cannot be prohibited from doing evil. Therefore, if there is criminal law without benevolence and righteousness, over time the people will be neglected, and if the people are neglected, it arouses the anger of the people. If there is benevolence and righteousness but no criminal law, the common people will get slack, and if the common people get slacks, they will commit crimes. Therefore, with benevolence and righteousness as the foundation and criminal law as the auxiliary means, the governance of the country can be realized when the two are combined without any preference. Governing a country with benevolence and righteousness has a weak but lasting effect, and governing a country with punishment has a strong effect, but it will speed up its demise. This is the natural law of governing a country.

The Communist Party of China understands the above principles well. After taking power, the Party, in light of the actual conditions of the country and according to the characteristics of the times, has always attached great importance to developing the rule of law and improving

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morality, and placed the improvement of the nation's awareness of the rule of law and moral consciousness in an important position in governing the country. Since 2001, "the combination of the rule of law and the rule of morality" has been regarded as an important principle that must be adhered to so as to promote the basic strategy of governing the country by law. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the new generation of central leadership of the Communist Party of China with Xi Jinping at the core, under the new historical conditions, has made a series of major decisions and deployments. The Party has made remarkable achievements in strengthening the Party's centralized and unified leadership of the comprehensive rule of law, improving the socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics, and guiding the whole society to respect morality and goodness. The rule of law and moral quality of the entire nation have been significantly improved, and the entire country and society have thus developed in a healthy and orderly manner on the right track of respecting and following the laws of governance.

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Chapter Three

To Crusade Against Injustice and Put Benevolence and Righteousness in Place: The Original Purpose of Military Force

Military force is like fire and water. If we use it well, it brings blessings; if we do not use it well, it invites disasters. The wise rulers of ancient China were cautious about the use of military force. Benevolence and righteousness are the principles for the use of force and the only legitimate reason and basis for the use of force. The use of force must not only be based on benevolence and righteousness, but also in line with benevolence and righteousness. This chapter takes King Wu of Zhou and Duke Huan of Qi as examples to explain to readers the correct use of military force, and to show the form, function, and effect of just war.

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King Wu Crusades Against King Zhou of Shang

Since ancient times, the Chinese people have admired the kingly way, emphasized that peace is the most precious thing, and pursued the ideal state of subjugating people without fighting. Does this mean that the ancient Chinese were completely opposed to war and the use of military force? This was not the case. Although the ancient Chinese yearned for peace and hated war, they did not deny the inevitability and necessity of its existence.

As recorded in "Xingfa Zhi," *The Book of Han*, BanGu, a historian in the Eastern Han Dynasty, clarified the origin of the struggles in human society from the perspective of human nature; he believed that war was a means of punishment set up by the sages with reference to the natural laws of heaven and earth to realize the governance of the world, and it could not be abandoned. He observed, "Human beings, born with the qi of heaven and earth, have the five qualities of benevolence, righteousness, courtesy, wisdom, and faith. They are exquisite and pure, and they are the most intelligent among all

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creatures. Compared with other animals, human hands, feet and teeth are not strong enough to satisfy the desires of the physical senses, the speed of running is not quick enough to avoid danger, they have no feathers like those of animals and birds to keep out the cold and heat, and they must use external things to preserve themselves; but the use of wisdom instead of brute force is what makes man noble. Therefore, if people do not have the heart of benevolence, they cannot form groups; if they cannot form groups, they cannot overcome external things; if they cannot overcome external things, they will not be able to meet their needs. Forming groups without meeting the needs, people's hearts of contention will arise." He also noted, "To manifest benevolence and virtue is the foundation of the kingly way. Benevolence cannot be corrupted by virtue of respect; kindness lasts by virtue of majesty. Therefore, the ritual system is established to advocate respect, and punishment is made to demonstrate strictness. Since sages have the gift of gaining insight into things, they must be able to understand the natural laws of heaven and earth. They formulate the ritual system to carry out moral education, establish laws and set penalties, and follow the example of heaven and earth to implement governance at every turn in accordance with people's conditions. Therefore, the five ritual systems are formulated according to the order of heaven,

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and the five punishments are formulated according to the punishment of heaven. The heaviest punishment is to use the army to wipe out the rioters, the second is to behead people with an axe, the intermediate punishment is to cut the body with a knife and to amputate the hands and feet with a saw, the next is to drill the bones and to chisel the face, and the lightest punishment is to beat the body with a whip or stick. The big punishment is to fight and kill, and to dump the corpse in the wilderness, and the small punishment is to exhibit the corpse in the street market and the imperial court. These are old traditions. In the time of the Yellow Emperor, there was the Battle of Zhuolu, and in the time of Emperor

Zhuan Xu, there was a war against Gonggong. In the time of Tang Yao and Yu Shun, although the world was extremely stable and prosperous, they still exiled Gonggong, Huandou, Sanmiao and Gun. And then the people in the world became obedient. In the Xia Dynasty, Qi wrote the "GanShi" for the crusade against the Youhu clan. In the Shang and the Western Zhou dynasties people also used force to pacify the world. The ancients said, 'There are five natural talents, and the people can use them together. Anyone cannot be discarded. Who can abandon the army?' To govern a family, one cannot give up whipping, to govern a country, one cannot give up punishment, and to govern the world, one cannot give up conquest. It is just

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that there are fundamentals and ends in use, and there are obedience and resistance in implementation." Obviously, the war mentioned by Ban Gu here refers to the countermeasures taken to stop riots, eliminate strife, and maintain the stability of social order. War cannot be abolished, which means that war in the sense of justice cannot be abolished, and its purpose is to emphasize the positive value of war.

Ban Gu's point of view actually reflects the ancient Chinese people's basic attitudes towards war. In the eyes of the ancient Chinese, war, as a big and severe punishment, is a necessary means to suppress violence and avert chaos, to crusade against injustice and maintain justice. It cannot be abolished, nor should it be abolished. However, he also believed that although war can help people eliminate scourges and restore order, after all, it is dangerous and cruel, and it brings disaster to all living beings, including human beings, so he emphasized that it must be used as a last resort. It is mentioned in "Zhengyao Lun," *Qunshu Zhiyao*, "The sages use military force to benefit all things, not to harm all things; to save the peril, not to endanger survival, so they use it as a last resort. However, war is a dangerous thing after all, and the weapon is inauspicious after all, and I don't want people to like it. Therefore, the sages make the rules of war for future generations and send generals on punitive expeditions,

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even if they defeat the enemy and return victorious, people still treat them with the rituals of funerals, to show that there is nothing to be happy about."

The purpose of war is to crusade against injustice and maintain justice, and to suppress violence and avert chaos, and relieve the people from difficulties. People have no alternative but to use it. Now let us take a look at the circumstances where war is used as a last resort through the example of King Wu's crusade against King Zhou of Shang.

King Wu's crusade of King Zhou is a famous event in Chinese history. It mainly tells the story of Ji Fa (King Wu of Zhou), the son of Ji Chang (King Wen of Zhou) who led various lords to attack Emperor Xin (King Zhou of Shang), and finally destroyed the Shang Dynasty and established the Zhou Dynasty. This war has always been regarded in China as a model of a just war in which the most benevolent crusades against the least benevolent. Then what kind of person was King Wu of Zhou? Why did he, as a minister, crusade against his monarch? What did he base his action on? What is his extraordinary ability to win the support of the regional lords and people of the world? What kind of person was King Zhou of Shang? As

the monarch who rules the country, what did he do to cause the collective rebellion of his subjects, in which he was defeated and the regime was destroyed? In

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ancient Chinese society with strict patriarchal hierarchy, why did this war receive a positive evaluation? For these questions everyone will have the answer after getting an insight into this war.

The causes and consequences of this war are given in "Yin Benji," *Records of the Grand Historian*.

After the death of Emperor Yi, his son Xin succeeded to the throne, and he was known as King Zhou. King Zhou was gifted and intelligent, eloquent and glib, quick in action and reaction. He had extraordinary courage and strong ability to receive new things; he was capable of fighting beasts with his bare hands. His intelligence was enough to reject the advice of his ministers, and his words were enough to cover up his faults. He often boasted of his talents to ministers and raised his reputation to the world, thinking that no one could compare to him. He was dissipated, drowning himself in sex and pleasures. He doted on Daji, and only obeyed Daji's words, and he ordered Shi Juan to make lewd and decadent music, as well as vulgar dance for him. In order to satisfy his own selfish desires, he increased taxes, enriched the treasury at Lutai, and filled the granary at Juqiao. He collected curiosities from everywhere to fill the palace. He greatly expanded the garden terraces at Shaqiu, and hunted a large number of wild beasts and birds to place them in the garden. He never revered ghosts and gods.

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He recruited singers and dancers to Shaqiu, using wine to fill the poor and hanging meat to form a forest, allowing men and women to chase and frolic in them as naked as when they were born, drinking and reveling all night long.

Seeing that King Zhou was so licentious, the people harbored resentment against him, and some of the regional lords rebelled. In order to build prestige and strengthen deterrence, King Zhou increased punishment and set up a kind of torture called Pao Luo. The copper pillars were covered with grease and burnt with charcoal underneath, people were forced to walk on them and often fell into the charcoal fire. When King Zhou was on the throne, he appointed Count of Zhou (Ji Chang, King Wen of Zhou), Jiu Hou and E Hou as the Three Dukes. Jiu Hou had a beautiful daughter who was brought into the palace to serve King Zhou, but she did not like licentiousness and debauchery. King Zhou was very angry, so he killed her and sentenced Jiu Hou to felony. E Hou tried his best to dissuade him, as a result King Zhou killed him too. When Chang heard this, he sighed secretly. When Chonghouhu knew about it, he reported on this to King Zhou, and King Zhou imprisoned Chang in Youli. Hong Yao, who was Chang's courtier, searched for beauties, curiosities, and good horses to present to King Zhou, and then King Zhou pardoned Chang. After Chang was released, he dedicated the Luoxi area to King

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Zhou and asked for the abolition of the torture of Pao Luo. King Zhou agreed with him and

gave him bows, arrows, axes, and tomahawks, giving him the power to conquer, and Chang became the leader of the western region. King Zhou appointed Fei Zhong to manage the state affairs. Fei Zhong was good at flattering, and he had an itching palm, so the people of Shang were no longer personally attached; and King Zhou put Wu Lai, who was good at slandering and maligning, in a high position, as a result the regional lords from near and far became more and more alienated.

After Ji Chang returned to his state, he cultivated his virtues in a low-key manner and implemented good governance, so most of the regional lords betrayed King Zhou and attached to Chang. The power of Chang became stronger and stronger, and King Zhou gradually lost his power. Bi Gan, who was King Zhou's uncle, came to persuade him, but King Zhou did not listen. Shang Rong, a sage of the Shang Dynasty, was loved and esteemed by the people, but he was deposed for persuading King Zhou. Later, Chang crusaded the state of Ji (also known as the Qi Kingdom or the Li Kingdom) and destroyed it. Zu Yin, King Zhou's minister, rebuked Zhou after hearing about this, and at the same time he was panic-stricken. He ran to King Zhou, saying, "The heaven is about to curse the fate of Shang. Whether it's a wise man who observes

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human affairs or uses a giant tortoise to divination, there is no good omen. This is not because our former kings do not bless us, but because Your Majesty has been indulging in sensual pleasures so that you have alienated yourself from the people, so the heaven is going to abandon us. Your Majesty, you do not reckon and understand the nature of heaven, and do not follow the common law. You don't try to comprehend Nature and do not follow the conventional law. Now, none of our people do not want Shang to perish as soon as possible. They wonder, 'why hasn't the sage king come yet?' Your Majesty, what are you going to do now?" King Zhou responded, "I was born with the mandate of Heaven, wasn't I?" After Zu Yin returned, he sighed: "King Zhou is now deaf to persuasions." After Ji Chang deceased, his son Ji Fa succeeded him as King Wu of Zhou. King Wu led his army to undertake the eastward expedition and reached Mengjin. As many as 800 regional lords betrayed King Zhou, coming to join forces with King Wu. The regional lords all cried out in one voice, "It's time to crusade against King Zhou!" King Wu said, "You don't know the mandate of Heaven (implying that the time might not be ripe yet)." So, he got the ranks in good order and set out to return.

At this time, King Zhou became more and more promiscuous. Weizi, his elder brother of the same parents, persuaded him many times, but he would not listen.

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So Weizi fled after consulting with Jizi the Grand preceptor (the uncle of King Zhou) and Bi Gan the Junior Preceptor. But Bi Gan said, "As a minister, I have to risk my life to persuade the monarch." So, he strongly admonished King Zhou, who raged, "I heard that the sage's heart has seven orifices." He ordered someone to open Bi Gan's chest and take out his heart to see. Being frightened by this, Jizi pretended to be mad, dressed up as a slave. King Zhou found out and imprisoned him. Gi, who was newly appointed as the Grand Preceptor, and Qiang the Junior Preceptor fled to Zhou with the musical instruments which were used in

sacrificial ceremonies. When King Wu saw that the time came, he led the regional lords to attack King Zhou, who sent troops to resist in Muye. On the first day of the lunar month, King Zhou's army was defeated. King Zhou fled in a hurry and mounted Lutai. Wearing clothes of brocade with jade on them, he set himself on fire. After King Wu arrived, he chopped off King Zhou's head and hung it on a white flag and put it before the public. He executed Daji, released Jizi, repaired Bigan's tomb, and gave commendation to Shang Rong's native village. He made King Zhou's son Wu Geng the Marquis of Yin, ordering him to carry out the rule of benevolence and virtue as had been practiced by his ancestor Pan Geng. The people of Shang were pleased to see this. In this way, King Wu of Zhou

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became the Son of Heaven. Later generations believed that the monarch of the Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties were less virtuous and inferior to the five emperors in ancient times, they denied them the title of emperor and called them kings. The descendants of Yin were granted the title of prince by King Wu, and they belonged to Zhou.

According to this account by Sima Qian, King Zhou of Shang can definitely be said to be a brutal, tyrannical, and extremely debauched monarch. He was gifted with extraordinary talent, and was assisted by loyal and virtuous ministers. He could have reversed the decline of Shang, and revived the national fortune, thus becoming a monarch of rejuvenation like his ancestors Tai Wu, Pan Geng, and Wu Ding. However, because of his opinionatedness, favoritism, wantonness, and his inability to suppress his selfish desires, he cooked his goose. He ended up losing his life and destroying his country, and leaving a foul reputation for a myriad of years. The ending can be said to be self-inflicted and inevitable. Even if King Wu failed to raise an army, there will be others who would rise up; even if King Wu did not succeed, there would be others who will succeed. King Wu seized the opportunity. However, opportunities are always reserved for those who are well prepared. Certainly, that King Wu, as a regional lord, was able to defeat King Zhou, who was the

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son of Heaven, makes sense.

Firstly, to learn from the ancestors, and practice virtuous governance This can be said to be the foundation of King Wu's success in defeating Zhou. In the explanation made above, we learned that governing the country with virtue and morality are the basic principles and concepts of ancient Chinese sages and kings in governing the country, and it is also the most revered way of governing the country in ancient China. The Zhou family has been deeply aware of this principle since the first ancestor, Hou Ji, and they attached great importance to governing the people with virtue. The succeeding leaders, especially Gong Liu, Gugong Danfu, and Ji Li, were also able to follow the tradition of their ancestors and revive the cause of their ancestors. As a result, the Zhou clan became increasingly powerful. By the time of Ji Chang, the world was divided into three parts, and two of them belonged to Zhou. In spite of this, Ji Chang still abided by his duty and served Shang. Confucius praised him in "Taibo," *The Analects*, "The virtue of the family of Zhou may be said to have reached the highest point indeed." After Ji Chang's death, his eldest son Boyi Kao died early, so his second son Ji Fa succeeded to the throne as King Wu of Zhou. After King Wu ascended the throne, with

the assistance of Jiang Ziya and Duke of Zhou, he continued to learn from his ancestors, practiced virtuous

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governance, and restores the system as had been advocated by King Wen of Zhou. In contrast, Wu Ding, the 23rd monarch of Shang, or Emperor Gaozong of Yin, practiced virtue and sound governance, the successive monarchs were either promiscuous or incompetent, so that Shang became more and more declining. When King Zhou of Shang ascended the throne, the Shang Dynasty was on the verge of dying, and if it had not been for loyal and virtuous officials in the court, it would have been destroyed long ago. Under such circumstances, if King Zhou of Shang could deliberate on the great cause of his ancestors, follow the ancient way of former kings, practice morality and righteousness, and respect virtuous people, he could still do his utmost to stem a raging tide and save a desperate situation, and continue the fortunes of Shang. Unfortunately, he led a life of immoderate luxury and sensuality, he punished and demoted worthy ministers, and showed favor towards unworthy people, bringing about his own destruction. He finally ruined the 600-year foundation of the Shang Dynasty. Therefore, it is not difficult to understand why the Zhou family eventually replaced Shang with the right Way against the Wrong Way, the accumulation of virtue against the accumulation of evil, and the rise against decline. In this regard, there is a sentence in "Wenyan Zhuan" *The Book of Changes* that explains the truth very well: A family that

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accumulates goodness will have surplus fortune, and a family that accumulates evil will have extra disasters. The minister kills the monarch, and the son kills his father, this does not happen overnight, and it happens gradually. People do not discern it early enough. As it put in *The Book of Changes*, 'When walking on the frost, we should think of the hard ice.' Here it is smoothness that is referring to. That is to say, for people who have accumulated good deeds for a long time, their blessings will inevitably be passed on to their descendants; for people who have accumulated bad deeds for a long time, disasters will inevitably spread to their descendants. The subject kills his monarch, and the son kills his father. This is not caused by a short period of time, but because the problem has not been solved for a long time, and the disaster has gradually accumulated. This is the result of not being able to deal with the problem early enough when it is time to deal with it. It is noted in *The Book of Changes*, "When you walk on the frost, you must think that the day of freezing is coming." The implication is that when we see a straw in the wind, we should be on the alert. This is undoubtedly logical.

Secondly, to observe the times and judge the occasion, and wait for an opportune moment to act. This can be said to be the key to the success of King Wu's campaign against King Zhou. If a person wants to be

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successful, the accumulation of strength is important, but it is more important to be able to accurately analyze the situation, predict the development trend of things, make correct

decisions, and take appropriate actions. It was precisely because of this that King Wu of Zhou achieved the final victory. Regarding the crusade against King Zhou of Shang, he was calm and composed, rational and prudent. He neither misjudged the situation because of King Zhou's debauchery and tyranny, nor did he become hot-headed because of the support of the regional lords. It was only after it was certain that Shang had fallen apart and lost the support of the people, and that the situation had been beyond salvation, did he decide to send out troops. Facts have proved that his decision was completely correct, so that the world was settled in one battle. As it explained in "Zhouyi-Sui Hexagram" of *Qunshu Zhiyao*, when the time is right, everything in the world will adapt. Whether or not compliance is implemented depends only on whether the timing is appropriate. If the time changes and things do not conform to it, everything will be blocked and landed in a predicament. Therefore, the significance of adapting to the times is grand. The implication is that we must know how to move according to time, act with the situation, do it when the time and situation are suitable, and stop when the time and situation are not suitable, only in this way can we obtain benefits.

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Just because King Wu of Zhou understood and followed this principle, he seized the best opportunity to attack King Zhou of Shang, so he won the final victory. Additionally, he succeeded because he knew how to comply with public opinion. It is mentioned in "Gui Yin," *Master Lü's spring and Autumn Annals*, "The reason why King Tang of Shang and King Wu of Zhou were able to defeat King Jie of Xia and King Zhou of Shang, who were the Sons of Heaven, was that they complied with the wishes of the people." "King Tang of Shang and King Wu of Zhou encountered troubled times. In the face of the suffering people, they showed their benevolence and righteousness and made their achievements. They attained success because they adapted to the current situation and public opinion. Therefore, if people know how to adapt, they can achieve success; if people act arbitrarily, they will invite failure. If people know how to adapt, they will be invincible. Although the country and its population are large, what is the benefit if you don't know how to adapt?"

Thirdly, to pacify the people and punish those who commit crimes, and wage a war with a good reason. This point can be said to be the guarantee of King Wu's success in defeating Zhou. Throughout the ages, no one who started a war has not found a legitimate reason for the action. A legitimate reason can stimulate the morale

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of our own side, obtain more external support, and allow our own side to gain the upper hand in morality and momentum. From an orthodox standpoint, King Wu's campaign on King Zhou was a treasonous act that seriously violated the law and the rites because he was a courtier, and a regicide. This meant that no matter what the outcome was, King Wu of Zhou would be at a disadvantage in public opinion. If he could not get rid of this unfavorable situation, it will affect his morale in lesser cases, and at worst, it may even lead to the failure of the great cause of attacking Zhou. In this case, the name under which King Zhou was attacked was very important. So, what did King Wu of Zhou say? It is recorded in "Shangshu" in *Qunshu Zhiyao*:

King Wu of Zhou raised an army to attack King Zhou of Shang, and the army crossed Mengjin. King Wu said, "Now King Zhou of Shang is disrespectful to heaven and brings disaster to the people. He wallows in wine and women, inflicts tyranny, punishes people by exterminating an entire family, appoints people with hereditary awards, burns faithful and upright men, and dissects pregnant women. Heaven was already enraged, but King Zhou of Shang did not have the slightest repentance. Instead, he was arrogant and rude, did not serve the gods, abandoned his ancestral temple, and did not make sacrifices, saying, 'I have the people, and I have the mandate

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of Heaven!' All the civilian and military officers at court could not stop him from such arrogant and rude words and deeds. As the old saying goes, 'people should rival each other in moral integrity when they are comparable to each other in strength, and they should rival each other in benevolence and righteousness when they are comparable to each other in moral integrity.' Although King Zhou of Shang have hundreds of millions of subjects, they have hundreds of millions of opinions; although I only have three thousand subjects, all of them are of one mind. King Zhou has committed his full share of crimes, and the heaven order me to kill him. If I disobey the heaven, my sins will be equal to his. Because the heaven is merciful to the people, what the people expect, the heaven will obey. We shall not miss this opportunity!"

King Wu of Zhou was stationed on the north bank of the Yellow River, and the regional lords led their armies to join forces with him. King Wu inspected the army and warned them, "I have heard that good people do good deeds all day long, and they are still not satisfied; wicked people do evil deeds all day long, and they are still not satisfied. Now King Zhou tries his best to do things that are unlawful. He abandons the loyal old ministers, gets close to the sinful villains, harms the virtuous and the worthy, kills the ministers who advise and assist him, saying that he has the mandate of Heaven, that there is

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no need to do things that show his respect to the heaven, and that sacrifices are not beneficial. He said that there is no harm in tyranny, and that heaven asks him to govern the people (meaning that since heaven asks him to govern the people, of course he shall get rid of those disobedient wicked people). King Zhou has hundreds of millions of subjects, but they show a note of discord; I only had ten worthy ministers who were good at governing the country, but they were of one mind. Now I decide to go on a crusade against King Zhou of Shang. The people of the world live in alarm all day long, with headaches like splitting. Alas! You shall be of one mind, and make contributions to the great cause, so that the world can best able for generations to come."

King Wu continued, "King Zhou alienated himself from the heaven and incurred hatred from the people. He cut off the feet of those who waded in the water in the early morning in winter, and dug out the hearts of virtuous ministers. He favored treacherous villains, dismissed the ministers, abandoned the regular laws and punishments, and imprisoned and enslaved the righteous. The platform for worshipping heaven and earth has not been renovated, and the ancestral temple where ancestors are worshipped has not been

consecrated. He made objects that have diabolic tricks and wicked craft, and he was intent on pleasing women. The ancients said, 'Those

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who cares us are our kings, and those who torture us are our enemies.' Through abuse of power, Zhou is steeped in iniquity. He is your enemy for many lifetimes. In establishing moral virtue, we seek to grow, and in eliminating evil, we seek to dig up the root. Today I will lead you, generals and soldiers, to annihilate your enemy."

King Wu of Zhou and King Zhou of Shang fought in Muye. King Wu said, "The ancients said, 'The hen does not cackle in the morning, If the hen cackles in the morning, the family will be ruined.'" (This sentence is a metaphor for women in charge of state affairs. When the hen cackles instead of the rooster, the family will be ruined; if the women in the harem interferes in political affairs, the kingdom will perish.) Now, King Zhou only listens to the words of women, and only respects, favors, and appoints those who are guilty and fleeing in all directions. He entrusts them with important positions such as the Grand Master and Serviceman, let them treat the people brutally and break the law in the capitals. Now, I, Ji Fa, can only punish King Zhou by the will of God."

Apparently, it can be seen from these records that King Wu of Zhou attacked King Zhou mainly in the name of heaven. Then What is heaven? As a special term in Chinese traditional culture, it is not equal to the "Gad" in Western Christianity, and it is not a personal god with subjective will ruling the fate of all things in the world,

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but a kind of being that obeys the Dao of the law. As it put in *Dao De Jing* by Laozi, "Man takes his law from the Earth; the Earth takes its law from Heaven; Heaven takes its law from the Dao. The law of the Dao is its being what it is." Why did King Wu of Zhou attack King Zhou of Shang in the name of heaven, and why could he attack King Zhou of Shang in the name of heaven? This is related to the ancient Chinese sages' understanding of the characteristics of heaven and the legitimacy of monarchical rule. The sages believed that heaven is all-inclusive and impartial in its activities, abundant and unceasing in its blessings, and lasting and untiring in its guidance ("Fayì," *Mozì*), that it loves life and hates killing, with all the sharpness of the Way of Heaven, it injures not. (*Dao De Jing*). It is the most just and benevolent existence, as well as the supreme existence with absolute authority; the monarch, as the agent of Heaven on the earth, the power to rule comes from Heaven and is granted by Heaven, and therefore should also follow the example of Heaven, and it has supreme authority. The monarch of the world is generally referred to as "tian zǐ," that is, the son of Heaven, and the mission entrusted to him is to act on behalf of the heaven, to follow the way, to nurture, cherish, and educate the people. In other words, if he cannot fulfill his mission, he will lose his qualifications as the son of Heaven, and the mandate of Heaven will be transferred

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accordingly. In the view of the sages, because Heaven and the people are directly linked, the heart of heaven is the heart of the people, and the will of heaven is the will of the people,

conforming to the heart of the people is also conforming to the Heaven, and deviating from the heart of the people is also deviating from the Heaven. Therefore, the mandate of Heaven is not eternal, and the position of the monarch is not forever fixed. Only those who cultivate morality, do good deeds, be benevolent and love the people, and gain the support of the people of the world, can receive the favor of Heaven and become the Son of Heaven who is worthy of the mandate of Heaven. This actually contains two meanings. The first is to warn the reigning monarch to always remain vigilant and fearful, to fear Heaven, to love the people, and to implement virtuous governance, so as to ensure that the mandate of Heaven remains unchanged and the monarchy is not lost; another meaning is to tell the virtuous people all over the world that if the reigning monarch dares to carry out tyranny and debauchery, then the people can obey the mandate of Heaven and raise troops to fight against him. The world has never been a world of any individual, family, or surname, but a world of the people, and only the virtuous can command it. This is the fast truth, and it is also the law that is embraced by the sage kings and worthy sages of ancient times.

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King Zhou of Shang, as the co-lord of the world, should know to fear, be vigilant, follow the Way of Heaven, conduct virtuous governance; he should look after the masses as if they were injured and love the subjects as if they were his own children. Ill-behaved and perverse, he acted against the tide and the will of the people. He did not think about carrying forward the great cause of his ancestors or benefiting the people. Occupying the position of the Son of Heaven, he disregarded the responsibilities of being a monarch, he did not act as the Son of Heaven should act, so in essence, he has lost his qualifications as the Son of Heaven. On the other hand, King Wu of Zhou, as a courtier, understood the principles of heaven, obeyed ancient precepts, cultivated morality, and practiced benevolence and righteousness. The people all over the world became attached to him, so in essence, he had the qualifications to become the Son of Heaven. King Wu of Zhou launched an army to fight against him. He did this to go with the general trend, the will of the people, and the righteousness of the people. In fact, being afraid of King Zhou's status as a monarch, King Wu of Zhou's will to attack was shaken. It was not until the far-sighted Jiang Taigong bluntly stated that attacking King Zhou was not attacking the monarch, but attacking the traitor to the people, that he removed his doubts, strengthened his conviction, and completed

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the great cause of defeating King Zhou.

Seemingly King Wu's attack on King Zhou was a rebellious act that violated the rites and the law because he was a courtier and a regicide, but in essence, it is an act of justice which punished the evil and promoted the good, and suppressed the evil and pacified the good, as well as complied to the will of the heaven and the people. King Wu of Zhou attacked King Zhou of Shang in the name of heaven, not under an empty banner, but really imitated heaven's character of impartiality, selflessness, benevolence, and fraternity, which can be seen from his handling of post-war matters. He not only invested Wu Geng, the son of King Zhou of Shang, with rank, asking him to govern the adherents of Shang in the old capital, and continued the sacrifices as offered by the Shang people, but also released Jizi and

innocent people who were imprisoned, ordered someone to repair Bigan's tomb, and gave commendation to Shang Rong's native village. He sent people to distribute the money stored in Lutai and the food gathered in Juqiao to relieve the poor people in the world. After returning to his home state, he released the war horses to the south of Huashan Mountain, put the cattle back to the countryside of Taolin, stopped preparing armaments and military provisions, and focusing on culture and education, announcing to the world that he would no longer resort to arms. Jia Yi, a political

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commentator in the Western Han Dynasty, commented, "Tang exiled Xia Jie, and King Wu attacked Zhou, This is known to everyone in the world. As a courtier, Tang exiled his monarch, and as an attendant, King Wu killed his superior. This is the most treacherous thing in the world. However, Shang Tang and King Wu of Zhou were able to hold the world for a long time, this is because they could bring benefits to the people of the world, eliminate evil, and continue to govern the country in accordance with the principles of morality. Therefore, they were praised all over the world and their names passed on to future generations. The people of later generations concealed their evil deeds as ministers who exiled the monarch and killed the superior, and praised their virtues of expelling evil, and highlighted their merits and made them spread for a long time. People all over the world call them holy emperors, their governance is hailed supreme governance, and their method of governing the country is considered appropriate and proper."

It is not difficult to see that King Wu's attack on King Zhou has always been regarded as a model of just war in China. The reason for this is that this war, no matter from its inception to its end, or from its motives to its results, was based on benevolence and justice. In addition, more importantly, the war illustrated the true purpose of war and revealed to the world the true meaning

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of war. In the wars of late generations, although most of the initiators acted under the banners of enforcing justice on behalf of Heaven and of helping people get rid of a scourge, and even of "human rights" and "democracy" which seemed to be just, in fact, those who truly abided by justice and conformed to justice have been few. Most of them acted injustice in the name of justice, disregarded morality in order to gain selfish interests and satisfy selfish desires. They massacred, looted, invaded, and enslaved the defeated party after winning a battle. Such cases abound in history, and this is obviously very different from the purpose, process, and result of the war launched by the holy kings.

From the historical story of King Wu's crusades against King Zhou of Shang, we know that it is not just a restriction or constraint to hold benevolence, righteousness, and morality in war. On the contrary, it is the guarantee of success and the foundation of victory. This is the essence of gaining self-interest through altruism. Those who practice benevolence and righteousness will surely win the support of the people. How can this be unprofitable? As it put in "Zhengyao Lun," *The Governing Principle of Ancient China*, "The key to using military forces is to provide moral education; the key to providing moral education is to win the hearts of the people; the key to winning the hearts of the people is to benefit the

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people; the key to benefiting the people is to treat them with benevolence and govern them with righteousness. Therefore, if the six horses pulling the cart are not in harmony, even a chariot who is as good as Zaofu at driving is unable to reach the destination; if the courtiers and the common people are not personally attached, even Shang Tang and King Wu of Zhou cannot make meritorious deeds. Therefore, the point of using military force is to win the hearts and minds of the people, which means good governance. Good governance means being able to show solicitude for the concern of the people and eradicate the scourges among the people. Therefore, when internal politics is sound, the army will be strong. Throughout history, the failure in the use of troops was not caused on the day of the battle, but because the hearts of the people are at odds, and the daily conduct of the monarch and generals had shown signs of failure in advance. By the same token, military victory is not won on the day when the two armies confront each other, but because the people are attached to each other, and the daily conduct of the monarch and generals has shown signs of victory in advance." It can be seen from this that the secret to winning without fighting and fighting to win is to govern with morality and use soldiers with benevolence and righteousness.

The story of King Wu' crusade against King Zhou

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contains rich and profound truths, It clarifies the importance and necessity of changing according to the time and situation, emphasizes the influence of moral cultivation on regime change, and highlights the status and role of the people. It points out that the support of the people is the key to determining the outcome of the war. It also demonstrates the role of morality in war and defines the standard of justice in war. These provide strong practical inspiration and guiding significance for us to correctly and deeply understand why the Communist Party of China can lead China's new democratic revolution, win victory, seize national power, and to help us recognize the nature of conflicts and wars in the world today, guide the elimination of unjust wars, and promote world peace. These are indeed worth pondering and learning from.

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Duke Huan of Qi Repels the Barbarians

As we all know, the Chinese people have been advocating ritual propriety and righteousness since ancient times, and China has been known as the country of propriety and righteousness. Ritual propriety and righteousness, as the core values of traditional Chinese culture, are the foundation of the Chinese nation's life, the cornerstone of state governance, and the unique spiritual identity and gene of the Chinese nation. In ancient China, the presence or absence of propriety and righteousness was regarded as the boundary between civilization and barbarism, and it was used to distinguish the Huaxia (referring to the predecessor of the Han nationality) and the Siyi (Dongyi, Xirong, Nanman, and Beidi). The Huaxia, being bathed in kingly education, dressing with dignity, advocating

sound customs and filial piety, and living with courtesy and righteousness (*Tanglǔ Shuyi*), is civilized; the Siyi, with hair straggling over their shoulders and body tattooed (*Tanglǔ Shuyi*), was ignorant of morality, propriety, and righteousness, and they were barbaric. It should be noted here that the distinction between the Huaxia

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and the Siyi people does not involve racial discrimination; it was made for the sages, out of the need to govern the country, identify similarities and differences to determine policies. The sages differentiated between the Huaxia and the Siyi, not by region and blood, but by the compliance with ritual propriety. Those who complied with ritual propriety are called the Huaxia, and those who did not are called the Siyi. As Chen An of the Tang dynasty mentioned in the prose "Hua Xin," or "A Mind of the Huaxia," "the Huaxia and the Siyi should be distinguished by the mind, and the mind should be distinguished by aspiration and interest. Those who are born in the Central Plains but depart from ritual propriety and righteousness have a form of the Huaxia and a mind of the Siyi; those who are born in barbarian areas but comply with ritual propriety and righteousness have a form of the Siyi and a mind of the Huaxia.

Influenced by geographical environment and cultural customs, the Huaxia was reserved, gentle and humble, hard-working, self-improving, and peace-loving; the Siyi was rude and arrogant, greedy, fierce, and inhumane ("Jingtong Zhuan," *Book of Jin*), and they worshipped force and liked plundering. Therefore, since the beginning of history, China has been plagued by four barbarians and had to resist passively or actively. During the Qin and Han dynasties, the Huns, or the nomadic people of the

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north, posed a great threat to the regime in the Central Plains. As the supreme rulers of the Central Plains at that time, Qin Shi Huang and Emperor Wu of Han behaved aggressively and truculently self-defense. Violence must be met by violence; war must be eliminated by war. To a large extent this defended national sovereignty and national dignity, and safeguarded national interests. Although there are selfish desires in the campaigns, they objectively relieved the threat of foreign tribes to China, and protected the survival of Chinese civilization to a certain extent. The generation and inheritance of ritual propriety and righteousness have formed a unique national culture in China, and also formed a strong national consciousness and determination to stick to and defend civilization. This prompted the race to unite and resist foreign aggression even when China was torn apart and was faced with unceasing civil wars and foreign invasions, and the Chinese people would not take advantage of danger to reap profits, and abide by morality in wars. Now, let's take a look at a story that happened in the first period of great split and chaos in Chinese history, that is, the Spring and Autumn Period, to see how Duke Huan of Qi, the monarch of Qi, conquered the barbarians, saved China, and achieved hegemony with force and propriety.

Duke Huan of Qi, whose ancestral name was Jiang,

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clan name was Lü, and given name was the 16th monarch of the Qi state in the spring and Autumn Period, the 12th generation of grandson of jiang Ziya who wars also called Lü Shang,

and the first of the five hegemonies in the Spring and Autumn Period. Since King Ping moved eastward, the royal family of the Zhou Dynasty has been declining day by day, the ritual and music system has gradually collapsed, and the regional lords have jostled for power, attacked and merged with each other, competing for hegemony. As a result, the Huaxia was caught in a melee that lasted for hundreds of years.

The Move of King Ping to the East

It is a historical event that King Ping of Zhou moved the capital from Haojing (now Xi'an, Shaanxi) to Luoyi (now Luoyang, Henan). At the time of King You of Zhou, Empress Shen and Prince Yijiu were deposed, and Baosi, the favorite concubine, was appointed as Empress and her son Bofu as prince. In 771 BC, Marquis Shen, the father of Empress Shen, colluded with Quan Rong to attack Haojing, and King You of Zhou set up beacon fires to ask for help. All the regional lords ignored the signal because King You had played trick on them earlier. In consequence, King You died and the Western Zhou Dynasty perished. Afterwards, the regional lords established Yijiu as King Ping of Zhou. Because Haojing had been damaged by geological disasters and was close to Rong and Di, King Ping moved the capital in the second year of his accession, and his regime has been known as Eastern Zhou in history.

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The Ritual and Music System

The ritual and music system constitutes the fundamental political system of the Zhou Dynasty; according to legend it was formulated by Duke of Zhou. The ritual system refers to various ritual ceremonies, which were used to distinguish the closeness and hierarchical order of the patriarchy. It serves as the code system and moral code in the society, and it pays attention to differences in essence. The music system refers to all kinds of music and dance, which are used to harmonize temperament, change customs; and it emphasizes harmony in essence. Rituals and music complement each other and are used together to educate the people, which serve to promote social order and national harmony.

The state of Qi was the fief of Jiang Taigong, who was the founding hero of the Western Zhou Dynasty. It was located in the northern part of Shandong, and it was near the Bohai Sea. Due to its strategic location, it had mountain and sea, fish and salt. When King Cheng

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of Zhou was on the throne, Qi was granted the power to conquer. The monarchs of the past dynasties, especially Duke Zhuang (grandfather of Duke Huan) and Duke Xi (father of Duke Huan), practiced the governance of Taigong. Internally, it had simple rituals, respected for the virtuous and meritorious, promoted the development of industry and commerce; externally, it pursued the alliance of princes, the crusade against those who disrespect the emperor, and the pacification of civil strife, so that it developed rapidly and its prestige grew swiftly. Before Duke Huan came to the throne, Qi had become a small hegemon, a great and powerful state in the East. Duke Huan was a monarch with great ambition and talent. Although his virtues were shallow and not as good as those of the ancient sage kings, he was upright and tolerant. In his early years, he took refuge in the state of Ju. After Duke Xiang

(the half-brother of Duke Huan) and Duke Qianfei (cousin of Duke Huan) were killed in succession, he returned to his home state before his half-brother, and succeeded the throne. Afterwards, he listened to the advice of his minister Bao Shuya, forgiving and forgetting, and appointed Guan Zhong, who had a vengeance against him, with high courtesy, high position, and high salary. He appointed Guan Zhong as the prime minister and entrusted him with political affairs. Under Guan Zhong's vigorous reforms, the state of Qi was prosperous

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and strong, and great governance was achieved. Meanwhile, the solid material foundation and strong military strength aroused Duke Huan's desire for hegemony. Guan Zhong judged the situation and proposed to him the strategy of "respecting the king and repelling the barbarians." "Respecting the king" means honoring the monarchs of Zhou and maintaining the status and dignity of the Zhou royal family; "repelling the barbarians" means repelling foreign barbarians and resisting the intrusion of foreigners such as the Man, the Yi, the Rong, and the Di, on the Huaxia. At that time, the emperor of Zhou was weak and unable to rule the world. The regional lords violated the rituals and challenged the authority of the emperor. In vassal states the courtiers murdered the monarch, sought to usurp the throne, regional lords competed for hegemony, conquered and merged with each other, and the Huaxia was in chaos and the states scattered like sand. The barbarians took the opportunity to invade, and all the countries in the Huaxia were deeply disturbed. Even ancestral temples in many weak and small states were destroyed. The country was disintegrated, the people were displaced, and China was facing an unprecedented crisis of survival. Under this situation, Duke Huan followed Guan Zhong's advice to act under the banner of "respecting the Zhou, repelling the barbarians, forbidding usurpation, and suppressing annexation,"

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he united and led a group of regional lords to honor the emperor of Zhou and to resist foreign aggression, and effectively attacked the invading foreign races and defended the Huaxia. This move also helped him establish prestige among the regional lords, win the support, and become a hegemon. Duke Huan resisted the barbarians and saved the Huaxia, and his achievements were manifested mainly in the following four things, namely, to aid the state of Yan, to rescue the state of Xing, to preserve the state of Wey, and to subdue the state of Chu.

According to *Dongzhou Lieguo Zhi*, or *The Records of the Kingdoms of the Eastern Zhou Dynasty*, in the 23rd year of Duke Huan of Qi (663 BC), Shan Rong invaded the state of Yan on a large scale. Duke Huan of Qi went to the trouble of traveling a long distance and sent troops to rescue the Yan state. Hearing that the Qi army was coming, Shan Rong looted and left. Duke Zhuang of Yan was overjoyed when he saw the aid of the Qi army, and went out of the city to meet the troops. Guan Zhong proposed to Duke Huan, "Shan Rong fled without any setbacks. If our troops retreat, the army will definitely come again. We'd better take advantage of this attack to eliminate the troubles of this region." Duke Huan thought that what Guan Zhong said was reasonable, so he joined forces with the state of Yan to pursue the Shan Rong. The remnant troops of Shan Rong fled to the state of

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Guzhu. The Qi army also chased the enemy to this place. After completely destroying Shan Rong, Duke Huan gave the newly acquired 500-*li* land to Duke Zhuang, who refused. Duke Huan said, "The northern border is distant and remote. If foreign tribes are allowed to occupy it, there will be another rebellion. Please don't refuse. The East has been opened, and I hope you will practice the governance of your predecessors such as Duke Zhao and make contributions to the Zhou family. You shall serve as a long-term northern barrier. In this case I would be honored." When Duke Huan planned to return to his own state, Duke Zhuang was grateful and sent him off all the way. Before he knew it, Duke Zhuang had been sent to the territory of Qi for more than 50 *li*. Duke Huan said, "Since ancient times, if it wasn't for the Son of Heaven, the regional lords should not send off each other beyond the border. I can't be so rude to you." Duke Huan gave all the places that Duke Zhuang traveled to him, Duke Zhuang refused, but Duke Huan insisted, so Duke Zhuang built a city in this place and named it "Yanliu," which means "to keep the virtue of Duke Huan of Qi in Yan." When other regional lords heard that Duke Huan saved Yan and he was not greedy for the land, none of them were not in awe of the prestige of Qi and grateful for the benevolence of Qi.

In 661 BC, the Di people invaded the Xing Kingdom.

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Guan Zhong said to Duke Huan, "The barbarians are like jackals and wolves, and they are cruel and greedy. The states in the Central Plains are closely related and cannot be left alone. Please send troops to rescue Xing." Duke Huan nodded in agreement and sent troops to rescue. However, within two years, the Di people made a comeback in 659 BC, and the Xing Kingdom was in an emergency again. The situation was very serious this time, so Duke Huan joined forces with Song and Cao to rescue Xing. After the coalition forces arrived, the people of the Xing Kingdom came to seek asylum as if seeing their relatives, and they joined forces to repel the Di army. Since the Di army sacked and burned the capital of the Xing state, Duke Huan, together with Song and Cao, helped the state of Xing move the capital to Yiyi, and sent cattle, horses, and scores of other livestock to save Xing from another disaster. The people of Xing flocked to the place like returning home, and they were very grateful to Duke Huan.

While the Di people invaded Xing, they also invaded Wey in 660 BC. Duke Yi of Wey, the monarch of the state of Wey, had been arrogant, and he indulged in the habit of raising cranes, which caused seething popular discontent, so much so that when the Di army attacked, the soldiers were aloof and indifferent, saying, "Let the cranes defend. They enjoy a position of honor; how can

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we fight?" It was too late for Duke Yi to regret it, and he could only lead his troops to fight in person. As a result, he was defeated and killed, and the capital of Wey was also conquered by the Di people. The people of the state of Wey scattered and fled as rapidly as their feet would move, and all those who fell behind were killed. The Di people chased all the way to the Yellow River; fortunately, the monarch of the Song Kingdom sent troops to rescue them, and the Di people retreated. The remnants of Wey State fled to Caoyi, and there were only

more than 700 people left. The Grand Master of the Wey state transferred more than 4,000 people from Gongyi and Tengyi to build temporary residences in Caoyi, and established Shen as the king, who was also called Duke Dai of Wey. Unexpectedly, Duke Dai was ill and died within a few days. The state of Wey then sent people to the state of Qi to welcome Hui (the younger brother of Duke Dai, who was later called Duke Wen of Wey), who had taken refuge earlier, to succeed the throne. When Duke Huan of Qi found out about it, he said to Hui, "You return from my place to guard the ancestral temple. If the equipment is insufficient, it is my fault?" So, he sent good horses, sacrificial clothes, carriages, and beautiful brocade to Hui. In addition, he sent 300 cattle, 300 sheep, 300 pigs, 300 chickens, and 300 dogs, and ordered Wukui to send 300 vehicles to escort him and 3,000 soldiers to guard him.

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Wukui returned to the state of Qi and reported to Duke Huan that Wey had endured great hardships in pioneer work. Under Guan Zhong's suggestion, Duke Huan together with Song and Cao, helped Wey build a new city in Chuqiu. Duke Wen of Wey was moved to tears of gratitude, and he wrote the poem *Mugua* to sing the praise of Duke Huan's kindness. When the regional lords saw what Duke Huan had done, they all praised him for his benevolence and virtue, knowing that it was not for his own selfish interests, so they all came to pledge allegiance.

Since the establishment of King Cheng of Zhou, the state of Chu has been prospering under the painstaking management of the succeeding Chu monarchs. After the decline of the Zhou Dynasty, the state of Chu gradually betrayed its ambitions, and continued to invade the surrounding areas and expand its territory. By the time of Xiong Tong (King Wu of Chu, reigned from 740 BC to 690 BC), the state of Chu had become a small hegemon, a big and powerful country in the south. He coerced the emperor of Zhou to give him the title of honor, without success he honored himself the title of king, setting the precedent for the regional lords to claim the title of king. Afterwards, Xiong Yun (King Cheng of Chu, reigned from 671 BC to 626 BC) succeeded to the throne. He practiced moral cultivation and benefited the people, dealt with political affairs with moral virtue, and harbored

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the ambition to fight for hegemony. At that time, hearing that Duke Huan of Qi respected the king and repelled the barbarians, gaining a great reputation, and that the regional lords were attached to him, he was so furious that he attacked the state of Zheng many times, plotting to seize the Central Plains. Zheng could not bear the disturbance and asked Qi for help. In 656 BC, Duke Huan united Song, Lu, Chen, Wey, Zheng, Cao, and Xu to attack the state of Chu. When the coalition army marched to the border of Chu, King Cheng of Chu sent Qu Wan the Grand Master as an envoy to negotiate. Qu Wan asked, "The state of Qi is in the north, and the state of Chu is in the south. We are far apart and have nothing to do with each other. It can be said that we are not related to one another as like as an apple to an oyster. I didn't expect the monarch of the state of Qi to travel thousands of miles to our country. I was wondering why?" Guan Zhong, on behalf of Duke Huan, replied, "Previously, Duke Shao Kang was ordered by King Cheng to inform our preceding master Taigong, 'You can punish all the five princes and the chiefs of nine prefectures to assist the Zhou family',

thus granting us the power to send a punitive expedition. The sphere of our functions and powers covers the sea in the east, the Yellow River in the west, the Muling in the south, and Wudi in the north. You are obliged to present twitch-grass to the royal house

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as tribute, but now you don't pay tribute, so the sacrificial offerings are incomplete, so that they cannot shrink wine (in ancient times twitch-grass are used to filter the wine to remove the residue in sacrificial activities, which is called shrinking wine), today I come to crusade against you for this reason. Besides, King Zhao of Zhou has not returned from south crusade, and I come to question you for this." Qu Wan replied, "It's my lord's fault that he didn't offer twitch-grass as a tribute. How dare we not supply it in the future? As for King Zhao of Zhou who has not returned from his expedition in the south, you'd better go and ask Hanshui River." After saying that, he left. Seeing that he could not make the state of Chu submit with words, Duke Huan marched his army forward, and stationed in Xing (the land of Chu, present-day Yancheng, Henan) to confront the Chu army. A few months later, under the pressure of the Qi army, King Cheng of Chu sent Qu Wan to make peace. On behalf of the king of Chu, Qu Wan promised that his master would abide by his duties as a regional lord and resume the tribute to the emperor of Zhou. On this condition Duke Huan agreed to retreat. The two sides immediately signed a covenant in Zhaoling, which has been known as the "Covenant of Zhaoling" in history.

From the above four events, it can be seen that Duke Huan of Qi fought against the barbarians to save

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the Huaxia, although he may have intended to dominate the country and his motives were impure, but from another point of view, he had a clear and decisive attitude concerning cardinal questions of right and wrong and major issues and significant matters. He thrust himself forward to face a challenge when the nation was in crisis, showing extraordinary courage and responsibility; although he had his own interests in mind, he followed ritual propriety and righteousness in his actions. He did it not for his own interests, instead he benefited others, showing the demeanor, bearing, and manner of a monarch of a great country. In 651 BC, Duke Huan met with other regional lords in Kuqiu, and the emperor of Zhou sent people to give him sacrificial meat, allowing him not to bow down, in recognition of his merits. But Duke Huan was not arrogant for his strength. He respectfully observed the rites and went down to the hall to pay respects. As a result, he was praised by the regional lords of the world, and Duke Huan's hegemony status was thus officially established.

What did Duke Huan of Qi do after he became the hegemon? According to "Kuangjun Xiaokuang," Guanxi, Duke Huan knew that the regional lords were attached to him, so he asked them to bring a meagre present, and he returned a lavish gift. The regional lords in the world presented thin horses, dogs, and sheep as gifts, and the

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sate of Qi rewarded them with good horses. The regional lords presented him with plain silk and deerskins, and Qi repaid them with brocade and tiger and leopard skins. Envoys from

various states came with empty bags and returned with a full load. Therefore, Duke Huan's approach to the regional lords is to love them equally, to give them benefits, to befriend them with credit, and to show them with force. The princes of the small kingdoms in the world favored the benevolence of Duke Huan, coveted the benefits from Duke Huan, believed in the righteousness of Duke Huan and stood in awe of Duke Huan's military force, so they obeyed Duke Huan and submitted to his authority. Duke Huan saw that all the lords of the small kingdoms in the world were coming to submit to his authority, he did many things of loyalty and righteousness. If he could share griefs for the people, he would share their griefs; if he could plan for them, he would plan for them; if he could send troops for them, he would send troops for them. For example, after the crusade against the states of Tan and Lai, Duke Huan did not appropriate to himself, and the princes praised Duke Huan for his benevolence. The fish and salt of the Qi state were circulated to Donglai, and Duke Huan let the checkpoints and markets only inspect without taxation, and the warehouses for goods storage did not collect any rent, so as to benefit the regional lords, who praised

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Duke Huan for his generosity. For another instance, Duke Huan built the cities of Cai, Yanling, Peixia, and Lingfuqiu to defend against the Rong and Di and prevent them from encroaching on the vassal states, and he built the cities of Wulu, Zhongmu, Ye, Gaiyu, and Sheqiu to defend the land of the Huaxia. Duke Huan's education efforts finally paid off. The people of the distant areas treated him as their parents, and the people of the nearby areas followed him like flowing water. The farther Duke Huan's mighty virtue spread, the more people were attached to him. What was the reason? It was because people cherished Duke Huan's virtue and dreaded his military force. Duke Huan crusaded against the states that were without the principles of truth and right, and assisted the Zhou royal house, and no one in the world could resist him. This was because of his military force. Duke Huan put away his armor and weapons, and crossed the Yellow River in court clothes, to participate in the meetings of sovereigns and form alliances, without fear and vigilance. This was because of his success in civil affairs. As a result, the monarch of a big state was ashamed, and the monarch of a small one submitted to his authority.

The story of Duke Huan of Qi's respecting for the king and repelling the barbarians and daunting the regional lords is widely circulated in China. It brings us two main implications: "the Dao of hegemony," and the

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"Hua-Yi distinction."

Let's first take a look at the first implication, which has two meanings. On the one hand, it means that if someone wants to become a hegemon, there is a certain way. On the other hand, after becoming a hegemon, people must follow certain rules, otherwise they will lose it. Since ancient times, a considerable number of people have believed in the law of the jungle, agreeing that "might makes right," and believed that as long as the power is strong enough, they can obtain the greatest benefits. However, it is not the truth. When Confucius told his disciples about the way of a sage king, he said, "Although you have a country that is vast in territory and large in population, if you don't govern it with Dao, you can't become a

hegemon." ("Wangyan Jie," *Kongzi Jiayu*) Even if a country has a vast territory and a large population, and even if its conditions are excellent in all aspects, if its leaders do not follow the Dao and govern according to a certain method, it will not be able to dominate. Blindly relying on force and not following the Dao, even if you can achieve success temporarily, it will not last long, and it will eventually backfire and the ruler will reap what he has sown. So, what is the Dao? As it put in "Jingjie," *The Book of Rites*, "Rightness and confidence, harmony and benevolence are the instruments of the presiding chieftain and the king. If anyone wishes to govern the people,

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and does not employ these instruments, he will not be successful." That is to say, righteousness, faith, harmony, and benevolence are the tools and methods for hegemony and kingship. Without these tools and methods, even if there is the will to govern the people, even if there is the ambition to dominate and reign, it will not be possible to achieve the goal. Righteousness, faith, harmony, benevolence, how to understand all these things? As elaborated in "Jingjie," *The Book of Rites*, "When (a ruler) issues his notices and gives forth his orders, and the people are pleased, we have what may be called the condition of harmony. When superiors and inferiors love one another, we have the condition of benevolence. When the people get what they desire without seeking for it, we have the condition of confidence. When all things in the operations of heaven and earth that might be injurious are taken out of the way, we have the condition of rightness." In other words, when the people are delighted when policies and orders are issued, this is called harmony; to make the upper and lower classes of the country love each other is called benevolence; what the people want can be obtained without asking is called faith; to help the people eliminate all kinds of natural calamities and man-made misfortunes is called righteousness. It can be seen that only when national leaders pay heed to the above four points can they be considered to have mastered the

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method of governing, and be expected to achieve a great cause.

However, the specific merits achieved depend on the motives of the rulers and the way in which they govern. Mencius said, "He who, using force, makes a pretense to benevolence is the leader of the princes. He who, using virtue, practices benevolence is the sovereign of the kingdom." ("Gong Sun Chou I," *The Mencius*) That is to say, relying on force under the pretense of benevolence and righteousness, one can achieve hegemony and become the leader of the regional lords; relying on morality, benevolence and righteousness, one can achieve the kingly enterprise and become the lord of the world. It can be seen that from the point of view of efficacy, both of them are practicing benevolence and righteousness, but if the motives and the methods are divergent, the results will be poles apart. In the story, Duke Huan of Qi respected the monarch and repelled the barbarians. Although he performed benevolence and righteousness, and contributed to the Huaxia, what he had in mind is fame and fortune, that is, he used benevolence and righteousness to satisfy his own desires, and used force as the backing to make people obey, rather than sincerely seeking benefits for the common people and the well-being of the Huaxia, and not using moral influence to make

people obey. Therefore, he can only achieve hegemony

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but not the kingly enterprise. Although it is a hegemony, it can be achieved only by following the Dao. In addition, what is rare and commendable is that after Duke Huan achieved hegemony, he was still able to follow the Dao, fulfill the responsibilities and obligations of the hegemon with all his heart, solve problems for the emperor and the regional lords, and win the trust of the people, so his status as a hegemon was quite stable and remained until his death.

Concerning the "Hua-Yi distinction," which means that the Huaxia and the four barbarians have natural differences due to differences in living environment, cultural customs, so it is best not to invade or interfere with each other, so as to live in peace. As for the four barbarians, the Chinese rulers have adhered to the principle of "restriction and not autocracy" ("Hengzi Xinlun," *QunshuZhiyao*) since ancient times, and adopted a defensive strategy. If the four barbarians invade, they will be resolutely resisted, but the rulers are opposed to take the initiative to send troops by exploiting the people and draining the treasury. Ban Gu, a historian of the Eastern Han Dynasty, summarized and expounded on the ancient sage king's handling of the relationship between the Huaxia and the four barbarians in "Xiongnu Zhuan II," *The Book of Han*. He remarked, "Ancient sage kings measured the land and established the palace field in the center. The world

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was divided into nine prefectures, and the periphery of the palace field was divided into five regions every 500 *li*. People of various areas paid tribute to the central government in accordance with the ritual system, and formulated policies to distinguish between the outside and the inside, or implemented criminal laws and decrees, or promoted the ritual and music education. This is because the distance is different, so the *Spring and Autumn Annals* takes where the Xia people live as the inside and where the barbarians live as the outside. The people of the barbarians tribes are insatiably avaricious, they are blind to all but their own interests; they have their hair hanging loose, and their clothes are left open. They are different from the people of the Central Plains in clothing, customs, and diet. They cannot communicate with each other. They live in the most frigid regions in the far north. They graze by water and grass, migrate with livestock, and live by hunting. They are separated by valleys and blocked by deserts. This is the geographical environment that naturally isolates the Huaxia from the barbarians. Therefore, the holy kings did not make a covenant and oath with them, nor did they send troops to attack and subjugate them. The land there could not be cultivated to obtain food, and their people could not be submissive and nurtured. So, the sage kings rejected them instead of accepting them, alienated them instead of keeping close

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to them, political education did not apply to their people, and the calendar was not used for their place. When they came to intrude, the sage kings fought and defended them; when they left, the sage kings were on guard; when they yearned for the propriety and righteousness of the Central Plains and came to pay tribute, the sage kings received them

according to the rites. The sage kings won over them and did not take the initiative to cut off the relationship with them, so that justice is not on their side. This is the common method used by the sage kings to deal with the relationship between the Huaxia and the four barbarians.”

It can be seen that the “Hua-Yi distinction” does not mean that the Huaxia intentionally rejected the four barbarians and completely cut off communication with the four barbarians, but that the four barbarians had a relatively low level of civilization and could not abide by the basic norms of social interaction. This posed a serious threat to the security of the Huaxia and the survival of its civilization, so the Huaxia emphasized taking strict precautions against and repelling the four barbarians. For thousands of years, the concept of the “Hua-Yi distinction” has been deeply rooted in the hearts of the people. It is not only an important basis for the rulers of the Central Plains to handle ethnic relations, but also plays an important role in China's struggle against foreign aggression.

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It is this concept that has inspired the national feelings of countless Chinese people, making them sacrifice their lives to protect the Huaxia whenever foreign enemies invade. Circumstances change with the passage of time. Although all ethnic groups in China have been highly integrated and are as close as one family and there is no longer the “Hua-Yi distinction,” the idea still exerts an influence, the main manifestation of this is that in the context of today's increasingly close ties between China and the world and the collision and integration of Eastern and Western cultures, China has always adhered to mutual respect, non-aggression, non-interference, and the principle of peaceful coexistence; and a defensive national defense policy and a military strategy of active defense are pursued. Therefore, the reason why today's China does not fall into the “Thucydides Trap” and why it does not embark on the path of aggression and expansion, despite that a strong power is bound to seek hegemony, is not far to seek.

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Classic Quotes

1. War is like playing with fire. Failure to stop it in time is tantamount to self-immolation. (*The Fourth Year of Duke Yin, Master Zuo's Spring and Autumn Annals*)

2. The victory of the army lies in internal harmony, not in the number of troops. (*The Eleventh Year of Duke Huan, Master Zuo's Spring and Autumn Annals*)

3. If the reason for sending troops is justified, the morale will be high; if the reason is unjustified, the morale will be low. (*The Twenty-eighth Year of Duke Xi, Master Zuo's Spring and Autumn Annals*)

4. The essence of civil culture and virtue lies in the truth that the essence of martial arts is to stop the war. (*The Twelfth Year of Duke Xuan, Master Zuo's Spring and Autumn Annals*)

5. The essence of martial arts is to prevent violence, eliminate war, maintain power, consolidate achievements, pacify the people, harmonize the people, and increase wealth. (*The Twelfth Year of Duke Xuan, Master Zuo's Spring and Autumn Annals*)

6. The military system has been established for long, and its purpose is to right wrongs

and manifest civil culture and virtue. The saints make their countries prosper by means of military affairs, and the villains make their countries decline by means of military affairs. The rise and fall of the country as well as the legitimacy of decisions are all determined by military affairs. (*The Twenty-seventh Year of Duke Xiang, Master Zuo's Spring and Autumn Annals*)

7. Therefore, if remoter people are not submissive, all the influences of civil culture and virtue are to be cultivated to attract them to be so. (*Jishi, The Analects*)

8. The target of a wise ruler's conquest must be countries with Dao falling in to disuse, so he wants to kill their monarchs so as to change the governance, to soothe the people, and not to plunder their property. (*Wangyanjie, Kongzi Jiayu*)

9. The violent and strong do not die their natural death, and the preeminent will surely meet their match. (*Guanzhou, Kongzi Jiayu*)

10. Former ancestors valued virtue and did not use force easily. Weapons should be kept and used only when needed; once used, they shall show their power; if force is displayed casually, it will appear reckless; once force is abused, it will not have a deterrent effect. (*Zhou Benji, Records of the Grand Historian*)

11. Civil culture and virtue are sharp tools for the monarch, and martial arts and deterrence are supplements to civil culture and virtue. When the civil culture and virtue are widely practiced, the deterrent effect is strong; when the virtue is broadly pursued, the deterrent effect reaches far and wide. (*Xingfa zhi, The Book of Han*)

12. Though the emperor conquered the country by violence (riding on the horse), it is impossible to rule the country on the horse. Great emperors, such as Tang and Wu, use both generosity and bureaucrats to rule, which is the strategy for long-term stability. (*Lujia Zhuan, The Book of Han*)

13. Weapons are a curse, and war is a dread thing. To deem big as small, strong as weak, it happens at a bending or lifting of the head. To contend for the upper hand at the expense of human life, when people collapse after one setback, it will be too late to regret it. The Way of the monarch is to adopt a prudential policy. (*Chaocuo Zhuan, The Book of Han*)

14. The ancients made five kinds of weapons, not to infringe each other, but to stop violence and subdue evil-doers. They are used to overcome fierce animals in an era of peace, and to keep guard on the frontiers and deploy troops when the country is at war. (*Wuqiu Shouwang Zhuan, The Book of Han*)

15. Anger deviates from morality, weapons are ominous things, and contention is a mean thing to do. The ancient monarchs vented their anger at the cost of people's blood and life, so a sage king is very careful about this. To seek to do others down and engage in unjust military aggressions, no one does not regret it. (*Zhufu Yan Zhuan, The Book of Han*)

16. The troops that control chaos and punish tyranny are called righteous troops, and those who command the righteous troops can be called kings; when the enemy invades our state, we have no choice but to fight back, this is called responding troops, and responding troops will definitely win; those who wage war out of anger are called wrathful troops, and soldiers who hold grudges will fail; those who covet other countries' land and other people's property are called covetous troops, any troop with greedy soldiers will inevitably be defeated; counting on numerical strength of the country, those who want to flaunt their prowess are called self-conceited troops, and the self-conceited troops are destined to fail. These five things are not only associated with human affairs, but also with the Way of

Heaven. (*Weixiang Zhuan, The Book of Han*)

17. If you feel the pain of your servant, you will be able to save each other; if you are in love with your servant, you will be able to help each other make achievements; if you have the same hatred as your servant, you will be able to help each other; if you have the same hobby as your servant, you will be able to run towards the same goal. If you can do this, you can defeat the enemy even without armor and soldiers, attack the enemy without chariots and crossbows, and defend against the enemy without trenches. (*Faqi, Wutao, Liutao*)

18. Therefore, a general who is good at commanding troops has already planned a strategy to defeat the enemy long before he sets up a battle on the battlefield; a person who is good at eliminating harm has already started to govern before the calamity has germinated, and for those who are good at defeating the enemy, victory is achieved when the enemy does not see any signs of it; the highest level of combat is to win without fighting. Therefore, those who win by fighting the enemy on the battlefield are not good generals; those who defend themselves after defeat are not the wisest generals. (*Junshi, Longtao, Liutao*)

19. Therefore, although a country is strong, bellicosity leads to destruction; although the world may beat peace, if one forgets to prepare for war, it is bound to be in danger. Even if the world has been settled and the whole country is rejoicing, hunting is still used for military exercises every spring and autumn, and the princes of various states have to reorganize their armies in spring and train their armies in autumn, all in order not to forget the preparations for war. (*Sima Fa*)

20. Hence to fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting. (*Attack by Stratagem, The Art of War*)

21. The enlightened ruler lays his plans well ahead; the good general cultivates his resources. Move not unless you see an advantage; use not your troops unless there is something to be gained; fight not unless the position is critical. No ruler should put troops into the field merely to gratify his own spleen; no general should fight a battle simply out of pique. If it is to your advantage, make a forward move; if not, stay where you are. Anger may in time change to gladness; vexation may be succeeded by content. But a kingdom that has once been destroyed can never come again into being; nor can the dead ever be brought back to life. Hence the enlightened ruler is heedful, and the good general full of caution. This is the way to keep a country at peace and an army intact. (*The Attack by Fire, The Art of War*)

22. Raising a host of a hundred thousand men and marching them great distances entails heavy loss on the people and a drain on the resources of the state. The daily expenditure will amount to a thousand ounces of silver. There will be commotion at home and abroad, and men will drop down exhausted on the highways. As many as seven hundred thousand families will be impeded in their labor. Hostile armies may face each other for years, striving for the victory which is decided in a single day. This being so, to remain in ignorance of the enemy's condition simply because one grudges the outlay of a hundred ounces of silver in honors and emoluments, is the height of inhumanity. One who acts thus is no leader of men, no present help to his sovereign, no master of victory. (*The Use of Spies, The Art of War*)

23. He who would assist a lord of men in harmony with the Dao will not assert his

mastery in the kingdom by force of arms. Such a course is sure to meet with its proper return. Wherever a host is stationed, briars and thorns spring up. In the sequence of great armies there are sure to be bad years. (*Dao De Jing*)

24. Those sharp weapons are instruments of evil omen, and not the instruments of the superior man; - he uses them only on the compulsion of necessity. Calm and repose are what he prizes; victory (by force of arms) is to him undesirable. To consider this desirable would be to delight in the slaughter of men; and he who delights in the slaughter of men cannot get his will in the kingdom. On occasions of festivity to be on the left hand is the prized position; on occasions of mourning, the right hand. The second in command of the army has his place on the left; the general commanding in chief has his on the right; his place, that is, is assigned to him as in the rites of mourning. He who has killed multitudes of men should weep for them with the bitterest grief; and the victor in battle has his place (rightly) according to those rites. (*Dao De Jing*)

25. The state with a vast territory and a large population is not enough to be called strong; a strong army with a strong suit of armor and sharp weapons is not enough to win; a city with high walls and deep moats is not enough to be called strong; severe punishment and killing are not enough to be awe-inspiring. To take measures to preserve the political regime, the country may be small, but it must be able to survive; and to take measures to ruin the political regime, no matter how big the country is, it will definitely perish. Therefore, those who are good at defending have nothing to fight against; those who are good at fighting have nothing to do with fighting; taking advantage of the times and complying with the desires of the people, naturally they gain the world. Therefore, those who are good at governing accumulate their virtues; those who are good at using military force increase their anger. (*Xiade, Wenzhi, Qunshu Zhiyao*)

26. In a state of a thousand vehicles, those who practice virtue are kings; in a state of ten thousand vehicles, those who are good at using military force perish. Triumphant troops win first and then fight; a defeated army fight first and then seek victory, and they do this because they are ignorant of the Dao of military affairs. (*Xiade, Wenzhi*)

27. When one by force subdues men, they do not submit to him in heart. They submit, because their strength is not adequate to resist. When one subdues men by virtue, in their heart's core they are pleased, and sincerely submit. (*Gong Sun Chou I, Mengzi*)

28. He who finds the proper course has many to assist him. He who loses the proper course has few to assist him. When this - the being assisted by few - reaches its extreme point, his own relations revolt from the prince. When the being assisted by many reaches its highest point, the whole kingdom becomes obedient to the prince. When one to whom the whole kingdom is prepared to be obedient, attacks those from whom their own relations revolt, what must be the result? Therefore, the true ruler will prefer not to fight; but if he do fight, he must overcome. (*Gong Sun Chou II, Mengzi*)

29. The benevolent man has no enemy under heaven. When the prince the most benevolent was engaged against him who was the most the opposite, how could the blood of the people have flowed till it floated the pestles of the mortars? (*Jin Xin II, Mengzi*)

30. Opportunities of time vouchsafed by Heaven are not equal to advantages of situation afforded by the Earth, and advantages of situation afforded by the Earth are not equal to the union arising from the accord of Men. What the sages prize is human affairs

only. (*Zhanwei, Weiliaozi*)

31.The army is a ferocious weapon, war is an immoral thing, and contention is the end of the matter. The army is used by kings to fight riots and put benevolence and righteousness in place.It is used by countries that are fighting endlessly to build power and invade the enemy, and it is also something that weak countries cannot abolish. (*Bingling, Weiliaozi, Qunshu Zhiyao*)

32.The army takes force as its pillar and morality as its foundation; it uses force as its exterior and morality as its interior; if you can understand the relationship between the two, you will understand the truth of victory and defeat. (*Bingling, Weiliaozi*)

33.What I have heard about the ancient's way is that in all military operations and warfare the essential thing is to unite the people. (*Yibing, Xunzi*)

34. This benevolent man loves others. He loves others, hence he hates whatever injures others. This just man follows principles. He follows principles; hence he hates whatever leads others astray. His armies are for the purpose of stopping tyranny and getting rid of injury, not for contending and taking things from others. (*Yibing, Xunzi*)

35.A truly just war should be used to kill tyrants and save those who are suffering. (*Dangbing, Master Lü's Springand Autumn Annals*)

36.The sage king raises his army to fight, not because he likes it, but because he wants to use it to curb brutality and quell rebellion. (*Xialüe, Sanlue*)

37.There are strategic provisions for the use of troops, and the implementation of righteousness should be the root. When the root is established, the Way prevails, and when the root is damaged, the Way is abandoned. (*Benjing Xun, Huainanzi*)

38.A sage keeps what he has and does not pursue what he has not yet obtained. If he pursues what he has not yet obtained, he may even lose what he has; if he keeps what he has, then what he desires will come naturally. It is true of fighting a war. First we pretend that we cannot win, waiting for the opportunity to defeat the enemy; it is also true of running a country. First we must make a gesture that we do not want to take another country, and then wait for the opportunity when the enemy country can be taken. (*Quanyan Xun, Huainanzi*)

39.Those in high positions must have armaments to guard against unforeseen events and to curb abuses. When the country is stable, it can be attached to political affairs, and it can be put in use when things go wrong. (*Zhengti, Shenjian, Qunshu Zhiyao*)

40.The sage uses his army to benefit all things, not to harm all things; to save the country from peril, not to cause dangers. So, he resorts to troops only when he has to. However, fighting is a dangerous thing and weapons are tools for killing after all, so we do not want people to like to use them. Therefore, the sages formulate the ritual law and pass it on to the future generations. When ordering soldiers to go on expedition, although they defeat the enemy and return, people still treat them with the rituals of funerals, and clearly stipulate that no music is allowed. (*Bingyao, Zhengyao Lun, Qunshu Zhiyao*)