

MARTIAL QI IN CHINA: COURAGE AND SPIRIT IN THOUGHT AND MILITARY PRACTICE ¹

By Ralph D. Sawyer

Once warfare became the subject of study, its objectives (as distinct from motivation) began to be consciously formulated. Early Western thinkers envisioned war being undertaken to exact revenge and rectify affronts; castigate and punish the unrighteous; seize territory, acquire resources, and enslave populations; preemptively vanquish enemies and quash threats; or simply exercise and acquire power. In China, the great Wu Qi early on discerned five causes for warfare: “In general, the reason troops are raised are five: to contend for fame; to contend for profit; from accumulated hatreds; from internal disorder; and from famine.”²

As the scope and carnage escalated, the function of combat came to be understood as neutralizing forces and destroying materials, synonymous with killing soldiers and ravaging property. However, the last century witnessed a dramatic reformulation of the combat mission to concentrate upon annihilating the enemy’s center of gravity. Thereafter, amid new conceptualizations of “effects based warfare” it has been but a minor step to reaffirming that the true objective is simply extinguishing the enemy’s will and imposing one’s intentions.

¹ Copyright by Ralph D. Sawyer, 2008. Insofar as most readers are unfamiliar with the traditional Chinese military writings even though they continue to be widely employed in contemporary PRC military science, extensive portions are summarized and translated in the historical section of this analysis. (A portion of this paper relating to traditional theory was originally presented at the 1999 Chinese Military History Group Workshop under the title “Conception and Role of Qi in Chinese Military Thought, Antiquity through the Ming.”)

² “Planning for the State,” the Wuzi. (The complete passage will be found on p. 208 of Sawyer, the Seven Military Classics of Ancient China [Boulder: Westview Press, 1993].)

Historically, Chinese military thought has encompassed this “will to fight,” whether characterized as resolve, determination, or morale, under the semi-technical term of *qi* (*ch’i*), the army’s “spirit.” However, the concept of *qi* -- variously translated as *pneuma*, breath, or spirit, but essentially the vital psycho-physical foundation or energy of life, whether metaphysical or flowing and embodied, both in man and the universe -- has been an integral component of Chinese thought for more than two millennia.³ *Qi* has long been understood as manifesting itself in many forms as well as coursing through the meridians in the body that form the basis of acupuncture. Moreover, according to later philosophical formulations, it is *qi* that solidifies to form the many animate and inanimate objects populating the world.

Although the obscurity of character’s origins quickly prompted imaginative theories that envisioned it symbolizing vapors or clouds, it is commonly believed that *qi* originally depicted fragrant vapors rising from steaming rice and therefore connotes the idea of nourishment or nourishing in its primary sense. (The modern character is written with a component that means “rice.”) The character seems to have appeared in the Spring and Autumn period (722-481) but not become frequent in historical and philosophical texts until the middle Warring States (403-221).⁴

³ The concept’s full range of meaning and its application in medicine, martial arts, cosmology, philosophy, and the interpretation of natural phenomena would require volumes to chronicle. In some spheres it is envisioned as purely metaphysical and ethereal, in others concrete and discernible. While recognizing a physical basis, martial thought tends toward the former, clearly differing from the way *qi* is characterized in, for example, Song dynasty Neo-Confucianism.

⁴ Despite several popular works having appeared in recent years in both Chinese and Japanese, Genji Kuroda’s *Ki no Kenkyu* (Tokyo Bijutsu, 1977) remains one of two seminal works on *qi*, the other being Onozawa Seiichi, Fukunaga Mitsuji, and Yamanori Yu’s *Ki no Shiso* (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppansha, 1978). The concept still lacks a serious monograph in English, although it is touched upon in a number of places in Needham’s *Science and Civilisation in China*. (Genji well notes the term’s ubiquitousness.)

Philosophical Conceptions

Because of its crucial role in both society and the army, Chinese thinkers from Confucius onward pondered the nature of courage, eventually concluding that it could be disruptive as well as productive depending upon whether or not it accords with the values and greater objectives of society. Unbridled by regulation and unconstrained by righteousness, convention, or timing, it would lead only to disaster. Among the sayings attributed to Confucius, the most important would be:⁵

"A courageous officer who lacks righteousness will be disordered. A courageous ordinary fellow who lacks righteousness will commit thievery." (*Analects* 17: 21)

"The benevolent will certainly be courageous, but the courageous are not necessarily benevolent." (*Analects* 14:4)

"A love of courage without a love of learning results in the perversity of chaos." (*Analects* 17:7)

"Courage without ritual leads to chaos; one who loves courage but detests poverty will tend to chaos." (*Analects* 8:2, 8:10)

This socially defined, moralistic character was further extrapolated in a passage preserved in the *Li Ji*, a canonical Confucian text on rites and ritual dating to perhaps the third century BCE.⁶

What is valued in the courageous and daring is their ability to establish righteousness. When the world is free of troublesome affairs, the courageous, daring, and strong are employed in the rites and righteousness; when the world is troubled, they are employed to achieve victory in warfare.

When they are employed to gain victory they have no enemies; when employed in the rites and righteousness, harmonious governing proceeds

⁵ It is well known that the *Analects*, traditionally attributed solely to Confucius, is an eclectic text that consists of original pronouncements augmented by numerous accretions of uncertain date. (For a discussion and reconstruction of the original text, see E. Bruce Brooks and A. Taeko Brooks, *The Original Analects: Sayings of Confucius and his Successors* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1998]. However, James Legge's classic translation remains eminently readable.)

⁶ "Bingyi," somewhat abridged.

unimpeded. When there are no external enemies and government proceeds conduively, it is referred to as "flourishing virtue." For this reason the sage kings esteemed courage, daring, and strength. When the courageous, daring, and strong are not employed in the rites and righteousness nor the strong employed in the rites, righteousness, and victory in battle, but instead engage in combat, it is referred to as causing chaos among the people."

The *Lushi Chunqiu*, noting that courage which is not informed by righteousness is one of the four elements that will cause chaos in the realm, similarly concluded that "what is valued in the courageous is their implementation of righteousness."⁷ However, perhaps the clearest formulation appears in attempts to contrast the idealized expression of courage with that ordinarily seen. The *Family Sayings of Confucius (Kongzi Jiayu)* succinctly asserts that "the perfected man regards the mind directing the ears and eyes to establish righteousness as courage; the common man regards the ears and eyes directing the mind to act as courage."

A relatively peripheral debate arose as to whether courage was manifest or defined by actions taken in the absence or in the presence of fear, whether the truly courageous are completely unafraid. Among the Confucians there was a tendency to believe that men of surpassing character are untroubled and therefore not fearful with Xunzi asserting that "courage is not an appropriate term for situations in which the actor neither knows nor experiences fear." The *Analects* itself states that "the courageous are not fearful" and that "the perfected man is neither worried nor fearful."⁸ Even the famed Legalist Han Feizi noted that behavior or actions that are free of doubt are termed courageous.⁹ However, a countercurrent believed that courage was not present when

⁷ "Middle Winter," subsection titled "The Appropriateness of Things."

⁸ *Analects* 9:29 and 14:28 respectively.

⁹ "Explaining Lao," his commentary on passages from the *Dao De Jing*.

there is no alternative, that "to approach battle and be unable not to obey orders cannot be referred to as courage."¹⁰ Thus, when caught up in Sunzi's surge of strategic power, fear and courage are reduced to battlefield action and become non-issues.

However, the best-known passage on courage appears in a work that preserves the teachings of the infuriatingly pedantic Confucian adherent called Mencius (371-289). Prompted by a query about another philosopher, Gaozi, who was noted for having attained an "unperturbed mind," Mencius briefly characterized the nature of courage (essentially defined for the purpose of the discussion as not allowing external events to affect the mind) by first describing two different approaches to its cultivation.

Mencius first notes that "Beigong Yu nurtured his courage by not flinching from bodily afflictions nor averting his eyes. He felt that the slightest touch from others was the same as being publicly beaten in the market place. What he was unwilling to endure from a rustically garbed fellow he would not suffer from the ruler of the greatest state of 10,000 chariots. He viewed stabbing a ruler of 10,000 chariots just like stabbing an ordinary fellow. Having no respect for the feudal lords, he responded to every bad word."

In contrast, "To nurture his courage Meng Shishe said he 'regarded victory just the same as defeat and that assessing an enemy before advancing, pondering victory and only thereafter engaging an enemy in battle, would be to fear the enemy's army.' Since he couldn't be certain of victory, he felt he could only be fearless."

At this point the vital concept of *qi* is introduced and contrasted with the will or

¹⁰ Lushi Chunqiu, "Esteeming Credibility." (The text cites a statement supposedly uttered by the great Spring and Autumn period political advisor Guan Zhong, otherwise known as Guanzi.)

intention.¹¹ Mencius notes that for Gaozi “the will commands the *qi* while *qi* pervades the body. Wherever the will is directed, *qi* follows.” Mencius never defines *qi*'s nature, but from his comments it can be understood as the vital spirit of life, the metaphysical essence that powers the body. Accordingly, he asserts that “When *qi* predominates, it moves the will; when the will predominates, it moves the *qi*. Stumbling or running away are activities of *qi*, but they in turn affect the mind.”

Thereupon Mencius astonishingly magnifies this psycho-physical entity with a few simple statements that would resound throughout the ages as well as continue to be quoted in modern theoretical journals: “I excel at nurturing my ‘overflowing *qi*’ (*haoran zhi qi*). It is produced by accumulating righteousness, not from (acts of) righteousness offhandedly performed. If one's behavior is unsettled in the mind then it will be deprecated.¹² As for *qi*, it matches with righteousness and the Dao, without it there is only deprivation. As for this overflowing *qi*, it is exceedingly great, exceedingly firm. If it is directly nurtured without harm, then it will overflow the realm between Heaven and Earth.”

Speculation upon the nature of courage in China commenced with this dialogue. Mencius was not the first to contemplate it but these passages provide the best-known explanation and are the first philosophical ones to envision courage in terms of *qi*. The two exemplars cited had substantially different approaches to cultivating their courage. Beigong Yu stressed the behavioral aspects generally associated with courage within a social context; rather than actions and effects in the world, Meng Shihshe was

¹¹ The relationship between will or intention (*zhi*) and *qi* as conceived by the martial writers may be glimpsed from a subsection titled “Armies whose Will (*Zhi*) Is Solid Will Invariably Be Victorious” (“Junshi Zhi Jian Bi Sheng”) in Juan 152 of the Tang dynasty Tongdian.

¹² “Deprecated” and “deprived” in the next sentence are both translations for a character whose fundamental meaning is starvation. (For a classic translation see James Legge, *The Works of Mencius*.)

concerned with the internal component of being fearless in the face of danger. However, both were dedicated to practicing the sort of rigorous self-cultivation that would become a defining mark of later, systematized moral and martial efforts.

Mencius' straw dog, the well-known philosopher Gao, while being aware of the distinction between intention and *qi*, was primarily concerned with not being affected by external stimuli. In contrast, Mencius focused upon what might be called moral courage -- that is, action in the service of the greater good rather than decisive behavior in a combative context -- and even believed that by cultivating it the sage would (magically or metaphysically) participate in the universe's moral workings.

Early China saw several attempts to differentiate commonly witnessed forms of courage. One of the simplest, such as this characterization from the early Han dynasty compilation known as the *Shuoyuan*, focused upon the obvious risks that had to be confronted in major occupations:

To ascend heights and approach danger but not bat an eye nor feel weakness in the feet, this is the courage of an artisan. To enter the depths and hack at dragons or cradle turtles and carry them out, this is the courage of a fisherman. To enter the depths of the mountains and strike a tiger or panther or capture bears and carry them out, this is the courage of a hunter. To not find it difficult to chop off heads, slice open stomachs, expose the bones, and leave his own blood amiss the flowing carnage, this is the courage of the martial officer.

A subordinate official who dwells in the vastness of the palace, flushes with anger, argues righteously, and thereby provokes the ruler's anger, who is unmoved even though the great reward of riding in a chariot awaits nor is afraid despite the awesomeness of execution lying behind him, manifests what is referred to as courage.¹³

Somewhat earlier Xunzi (fl. 298-238) had provided a comparative analysis, albeit one similarly based upon a morally prejudiced scale, of the types and manifestations of

¹³ Note that parts of this formulation appear in other Warring States works such as the famous Zhuangzi.

courage seen among men and the animals. In essence he concluded that true courage must be righteously motivated rather than the product of a desire for profit, pleasure, or the satisfaction of personal needs:¹⁴

The pig wants food, doesn't recognize good or evil, has no fear, will not run from death, and will fight as long as he sees food and drink.

The thief wants material goods, will not yield, and is fiercely greedy, with his courage being seen in his daring to steal.

The common man regards death lightly and, not having developed self-control, is by nature violent.

The "perfected man" (*junzi*) is oriented to righteousness and unconcerned about profits; he values his death but is willing to die for righteousness which he places higher.

For Xunzi it is only the perfected man who displays true courage: "The (exemplar of the) highest courage: If there is order in the realm he commits himself to it and puts his thoughts into action; if it is an age of disorder he does not follow a chaotic ruler nor the customs of a depraved age. If he dwells among the humane he will not be in poverty; if he dwells among the not humane he will not be wealthy. If he is recognized he suffers and rejoices with the age; if not, he is not afraid to stand alone."

However, two other levels are apparent among men: "The (exemplar of the) middle level of courage is respectful in his practice of the rites and controlled in thought; trustworthy and slights material possessions; and dares to recommend and advance the worthy, to identify and dismiss the unworthy. The (exemplar of the) lowest form of courage regards himself lightly and emphasizes material goods. He is at ease in misfortune, uses verbal methods to escape difficulty, and is oblivious to matters such as

¹⁴ Xunzi, "Rongru" ("Honor and Disgrace").

right and wrong so long as he can be victorious.”¹⁵

Obviously the first two levels of courage conform to the ideals of Confucianism, with the second describing the so-called common or vulgar Confucian. This sort of distinction emphasizes an unremitting kind of courage that emphasizes moral behavior in a troubled age, including a willingness to die for the Dao (Way) if necessary, as distinguished from the momentary sort found in battle. In contrast, the lowest form of courage marks those unconcerned with righteousness and the Dao, men who will extricate themselves from every difficulty by whatever means possible and therefore approach thieves and brigands in their moral turpitude.

Historically, one of the chief problems has always been the tendency of rulers (and the common people) to esteem courage and admire martial behavior even as self-interested bureaucrats tried to repress martial values and deprecate aggressive military action as a solution to national difficulties. As a result China witnessed the rise of the famous bravos or bravados sometimes known as “knight-errants” who exemplified the concept of not accepting the slightest depredation from any man and often had underworld connections.¹⁶ This resulted in constant fights and numerous deaths, as well as the nurturing of anti-social ruffians who would readily band together to oppose the local government or could, in greater numbers, provide the core for forces such as the Yellow Turbans and Red Eyebrows that nearly overthrew the central government itself.

In its most extreme form it became the courage of the assassin who would

¹⁵ Xunzi, “Xing E” (“Human Nature Is Evil”).

¹⁶ The classic discussion of the knight-errant is James Liu’s *The Chinese Knight-errant* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1967) and the *Shi Ji* includes a chapter that profiles several. (For a translation see Burton Watson, “The Biographies of the Wandering Knights” in his *Records of the Grand Historian of China: The Age of Emperor Wu* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1961].)

willingly endure pain, sorrow, and personal hardship to avenge himself or act on behalf of others in a greater cause. Lionized in a chapter of the *Shi Ji*, China's first comprehensive history, assassins continued to fascinate Chinese audiences throughout the ages with their dedication and the very possibility that one man might have great impact by overcoming the normal fear of awesomeness to slay the powerful.¹⁷ (Voluntarily suffering wounds or punishment in order to establish the veracity of a cover story or legend, the basis of one of the thirty-six stratagems known as the "ploy of suffering flesh," would be equally admired throughout Chinese history.)

The infamous fourth century BCE Qin Legalist Shang Yang or Lord Shang, who stressed that all values should be defined by the state, emphasized that no achievements other than in agriculture and the military should be recognized and rewarded. Noting that only a few states were well ordered, he concluded that when it came to warfare "some esteem military strength, others esteem weakness." Deciphered, his seemingly odd pronouncement is readily explainable: "When the people truly want to engage in combat and (moreover) they are unable to avoid it, it is termed esteeming strength. When the people do not want to engage in combat and are able to avoid it is termed is esteeming weakness."¹⁸

Subsequently, the third century BCE political philosopher Han Feizi observed that "when the ruler esteems bright and pure behavior and fails to prohibit crimes, the people will value courage and the minor officials will be unable to overcome them."¹⁹ When bravos transgress the prohibitions by fighting yet the ruler acts ceremoniously

¹⁷ For a partial translation see Burton Watson, "The Biographies of the Assassin-retainers" in *Records of the Grand Historian: Qin Dynasty* (Hong Kong: University Press, 1993).

¹⁸ Shangjun Shu, "Hua Ce."

¹⁹ Han Feizi, "Five Vermin."

towards them, it brings about chaos."²⁰ He further concluded that honoring bravos who invariably react to every affront with their swords and display their courage in family conflicts while failing to similarly esteem valor in combat makes it impossible to elicit courage on the battlefield.²¹ Therefore, all expressions of courage should be limited to military combat, in the army, on behalf of the state.

A bizarre story in the *Lushi Chunqiu* illustrates how a commitment to personal expressions of courage could go fatally astray:²²

One of the men in the state of Qi who loved courage dwelled in the eastern suburbs, another in the western suburbs. One day they unexpectedly met upon the road and asked each other whether they would like to have a drink. After a few glasses one inquired whether they should have some meat to eat as well and the other replied to the effect that since they were both meat, why didn't they just hack some off, a little soy sauce being the only thing needed. They then drew their swords and started hacking off each other's flesh until they died.

The text comments that "courage like this is not as good as being without courage."

The unbridled expression of courage was not restricted to society at large but also occurred on the battlefield as evidenced by this incident in which an infantryman acted as a warrior rather than a disciplined soldier:²³

Before the armies clashed when Wu Qi engaged Qin in battle, one man, unable to overcome his courage, went forth to slay two of the enemy and return with their heads. Wu Qi immediately ordered him beheaded. An army commander remonstrated with him that he was a skilled warrior and should not be executed but Wu Qi replied, "There's no question that he is a skilled warrior, but it is not what I ordered." He had him executed.

Han Feizi was equally concerned that the beliefs of the people were often at variance with those required for social order. For example, he bemoaned how

²⁰ Han Feizi, "Five Vermin."

²¹ Han Feizi, "Xian Xue" ("Esteeming Study").

²² "Zhongdong: Danwu" ("Mid-winter: The Appropriateness of Things").

²³ Wei Liaozi, "Martial Plans."

Confucian teachings encouraged people to be scholars and recluses while disdaining government service, thereby popularizing values that could only contribute to weakening the army. An interesting comment in a chapter called “Five Vermins” states that “even though within the borders everyone talks about military affairs and has the books of Sunzi and Wuzi stored away in their houses, the military becomes increasingly weak. As a result those who speak about combat are many but those who wear armor few.”

Primarily because of differences in priorities and obligations, Confucian teachings also provoked clashes with the state’s behavioral requirements. For example, Confucius strongly advocated the ideal of filial piety whose (socially inimical) effect may be seen in a passage from the *Analects* itself: “Duke Ye said to Confucius, ‘Our village has a straightforward person. His father stole a sheep and his son gave evidence to the authorities.’ Confucius said, ‘In our village the straightforward differ. Fathers act to conceal their sons and sons to conceal their fathers. Straightforwardness lies in this.’²⁴

This sort of clash could have important battlefield consequences because filial obligations or sentiment could be interpreted as requiring the shirking of martial involvement. An incident recorded in the *Hanshi Waizhuan*, a book consisting of anecdotes correlated with the famous *Book of Odes*, relates that a high official in Lu, ironically Confucius’ home state, who had been noted for his “love of courage” three times fled from combat because his mother was still alive. However, he redeemed himself after she had died by thrice attacking the enemy, slaying an opponent, and returning with their heads. Then, despite the ruler ordering him to desist, unable to live with the disgrace of his earlier behavior he deliberately rushed into the enemy’s troops

²⁴ Analects, 13:18.

and perished, though only after killing some seventy more.²⁵

The *Lingshu*, one of the medical writings compiled in the Han dynasty, tangentially discussed the perceived physiological basis of courage in a purported dialogue:²⁶

Yellow Emperor: “The human ability to endure pain is not simply a question of fear and courage. When a courageous officer who is unable to endure pain sees danger he advances, but when he sees pain he stops. When a cowardly officer unable to endure pain hears of danger he is afraid, but when he meets pain he doesn't flinch. When the courageous officer who is able to endure pain sees danger he is unafraid and when he encounters pain he doesn't move. When the cowardly officer who cannot endure pain sees danger or pain his eyes roll, his face is distressed, he is so afraid that he cannot speak, he loses his *qi*, has a terrified expression on his face, and changes color, one moment dead, another alive. I have witnessed this but do not know how it comes about. I would like to hear about it.”

Shayou: “The ability to endure pain is determined by the thickness of the skin, the substantiality of the flesh, and slowness or rapidity of the pulse. It is not considered to be a question of fear or courage.”

Yellow Emperor: “I would like to hear about the sources of courage and fear.”

Shayou: “In the courageous officer the eyes are deep and solid, the eyebrows high, and he looks straight ahead. The tracks of the *sanjiao* (triple burner) are horizontal; his heart is correct and upright; his liver is large and sturdy; his gall is full and expansive on all sides. When he is angry his *qi* flourishes powerfully and his chest expands. The liver rises and the gall is full. His eyes open wide and stare out,²⁷ his hair stands up and he turns pale. This is where the courage of the warrior originates.”

Yellow Emperor: “I would like to know about the cowardly officer.”

Shayou: “In a cowardly officer the eyes are large but not set deep, *yin* and *yang* are no longer in communion with each other.²⁸ The *sanjiao* tracks are vertical,

²⁵ A translation of the entire incident may be found in James R. Hightower, *Han Shih Wai Chuan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952). pp. 334-335. Commentators assert that even though he initially acted out of filial piety, he still fundamentally failed to satisfy its obligations in leaving no posterity. These stories, intended to extol one or another virtue but invariably epitomizing a clash in values, would always be interpreted differently by the Confucian and Legalist schools. Many are undoubtedly purely didactic tales, inherently unrealistic as in this case because the penalty for fleeing from the enemy, by definition an act of cowardice, was almost invariably death.

²⁶ 8.5-8.6.

²⁷ His eyes seem as if about to burst open.

²⁸ His blood and *qi* are not in harmony.

the chest bones are short and small, the liver is lax, the gall is not large and is lax, the intestines and stomach are straight, and the area below the ribs is empty. Even when he is very angry his *qi* is not able to fill his chest. Even if the liver and lungs are raised, the *qi* declines again and descends and the person cannot be angry for long. This is where cowardice originates.”

According to this traditional medical interpretation anger is a necessary prerequisite for spirit and effectiveness in battle. Moreover, rather than being linked to a person's ability to endure pain, the foundation is understood to be the ability of the *qi* to fully expand within the body and be maintained in anger. For people predestined by their physiques and internal physiology to constriction, to not being able to have their visceral essences -- particularly those of the liver and gall -- propagated throughout the body, courage would therefore remain elusive. Accordingly, both courage and pain turn out to be a matter of physical disposition rather than emotional development, training, or temperament, a belief contrary to the methods of the military theorists.

Martial Contemplations and Applications

Courage, being of focal concern in battle because fear and anxiety don't just undermine the ability to execute orders but can also cause precipitous actions, was much discussed in the various military works where the chief project was its creation and exploitation. An entire psychology of military spirit evolved in the Warring States among the martial experts who generally believed that when adequately motivated, including by prospects for profit and the threat of punishment, men would find the courage to act in even the most dangerous circumstances. Their formulations not only established the foundation for a psychology of courage, but also defined the dynamics and essential contents of all subsequent discussion in the numerous military writings

that followed.²⁹

An ancient Chinese view, articulated in several texts, was that conflict is inherent to man, that combat and warfare are inevitable. Sun Bin said, “Now being endowed with teeth and mounting horns, having claws in front and spurs in back, coming together when happy, fighting when angry, this is the Dao of Heaven, it cannot be stopped.”³⁰ Even Confucius recognized a natural tendency for the young and strong to fight due to the strength of their blood and *qi*, a deficit that would be overcome as men pass through the various stages of life bent upon self-cultivation.³¹ Xunzi added: “Men are born with desires. When their desires are not satisfied, they cannot but seek to fulfill them. When they seek without measure or bound, they cannot but be in conflict.”

Moreover, it was commonly agreed that, “Although calm may prevail under Heaven, those who forget warfare will certainly be endangered.”³² Even Confucius, who was extolled by later literati for having deprecated military affairs (even though he simply stated that he had not studied deployment methods), noted that “to fail to teach

²⁹ Unlike most of the core concepts and operational principles advanced in the classic military writings dating to the Warring States -- the seven encompassed by six of the Seven Military Classics and Sun Bin's *Bingfa* -- such as strategic power, the unorthodox, and deception, the concept of *qi* and its dynamics underwent little reformulation or significant alteration in such later works as the *Taibai Yinjing*, *Wujing Zongyao*, *Caolu Jinglue*, *Yunqiu Gangmu*, or *Bingfa Baiyan*. (The *Bingfa Baiyan* does not have a focal chapter on either *qi* or courage among its hundred while only one dedicated section on “Controlling Qi” appears among the 152 in the *Caolu Jinglue* [Essential Strategies from a Grass Hut], with even that one mainly a summary of key passages from the *Wei Liaozi* and *Wuzi*. In contrast, the *Baizhan Qilue* or *Hundred Unorthodox Strategies* discusses problems related to *qi* in many of its 100 chapters, but never innovates, only explicates and rephrases.) However, although the problem of nurturing and stimulating *qi* recedes into the background after the Warring States period, in fact it remained important but resolved by simply accepting the classic materials as relevant and still authoritative. (Complete translations of the classic military writings with extensive introductions and annotations may be found in our *Seven Military Classics of Ancient China* [Boulder: Westview Press, 1993]; Sun Bin's *Bingfa* is similarly available as our *Sun Bin Military Methods* [Westview, 1995]. The *Seven Military Classics* [*Wujing Qishu*], as defined in the Song dynasty, include *Sunzi Bingfa*, *Sima Fa*, *Wuzi*, *Taigong Liutao*, *Wei Liaozi*, *Huangshi Gong Sanlue*, and *Tang Taizong Li Weigong Wendui*.)

³⁰ *Military Methods*, “Preparation of Strategic Power.” (For further discussion of the Chinese concept of warfare's innateness, see Ralph D. Sawyer, “Chinese Warfare: The Paradox of the Unlearned Lesson,” Triangle Institute for Security Studies Conference on History and War, March 22, 1996, available online in *American Diplomacy Magazine*, Autumn 1999.)

³¹ *Analects*, 16:7. This early use of *qi* may be anachronistic.

³² *Sima Fa*, “Benevolence the Foundation.” The famous corollary was “Even though a state may be vast, those who love warfare will inevitably perish.” The two formed the topics for the chapters “Enthralled with Warfare” and “Forgetting Warfare” in the *Hundred Unorthodox Strategies* and continue to be cited in PRC theoretical journals.

warfare to the people is referred to as abandoning them.”³³ In this light it would seem that eliciting violent behavior at the appropriate moment would not prove difficult, yet motivating men for combat, compelling them to perform courageously, would prove problematic for commanders throughout Chinese history.

More aggressively, from Lord Shang onward it was thought that achieving the status of a great state required being victorious in warfare. However, to conquer others the people must not only be well ordered and unified, but courageous: “Those whose people are courageous will be victorious in warfare, those whose people are not courageous will be defeated in warfare. One who is able to unify the people in combat has courageous people, but one who is not able to unify the people in combat has people who are not courageous.”³⁴

The military theorists believed that “Warfare is a question of the strategic balance of power, combat is a matter of courage.”³⁵ “When courageous, people will fight; when fearful, they will flee. When (a state) is victorious in battle it is because it fought with courageous (troops); when they flee from combat, it is because they engaged in battle with the fearful.”³⁶ Unfortunately, courage is an elusive virtue, prone to evaporating at crucial moments: “Fear and courage are not constant, they come and go suddenly but no one knows their workings.”³⁷

Rulers were known to have risen and fallen largely because they understood the dynamics of *qi* and could therefore manipulate it: “Only the sagacious can see their origins, thus both the Shang and Zhou were able to flourish, but Kings Jie and Zhou

³³ Analects, 13:30.

³⁴ Shangjun Shu, “Hua Ce.”

³⁵ “Determining Rank,” Sima Fa.

³⁶ Lushi Chunqiu, “Zhongqiu Ji” (“Records of Mid-autumn”).

³⁷ Lushi Chunqiu, “Zhongqiu Ji” (“Records of Mid-autumn”).

perished. Skill and clumsiness differ constantly in achieving courage, in increasing the people's *qi* or snatching away the people's *qi*, in being able to fight with masses or being unable to fight with masses."³⁸ "The Three Armies are *qi*; their *qi* easily moves and is difficult to control."³⁹ Accordingly, initiating an engagement depends upon "whether the troops have the spirit to be victorious or not."⁴⁰ However, no commander could conduct a campaign on such an uncertain basis, so measures had to be formulated and employed to stimulate courage or at least elicit the proper performance.⁴¹

The Dynamic Factor of *Qi*

Depending upon its veracity, a *Zuo Zhuan* entry chronicling a 683 BC Spring and Autumn battle that continues to prompt martial discussions may preserve the concept's first military enunciation:⁴²

The state of Qi attacked the state of Lu. Duke Zhuang was about to commit Lu's army to battle when Cao Gui requested permission to join him. The duke had him ride in his chariot and went to engage Qi in battle at Changshao. The duke was just about to have the drums sound the advance when Cao Gui exclaimed "Not yet." After Qi had sounded their drums three times Cao then said "Now." They (beat the drums), engaged in combat, and severely defeated Qi's army.

³⁸ Lushi Chunqiu, "Zhongqiu Ji" ("Records of Mid-autumn"), subsection titled "Decisive Victory."

³⁹ Bingfa Baiyan, "Jen."

⁴⁰ "Strict Positions," Sima Fa.

⁴¹ Warring States analysts, having observed significant differences in battlefield performance by fighters from the individual states, tended to conclude that terrain or culture created these characteristics. (For one description, see "Evaluating the Enemy" in the *Wuzi*.) Courage was also sometimes felt to be innate, a matter of human nature. However, the early Tang dynasty disputed this view with a very interesting argument, concluding: "Courage and fear result from plans, strength and weakness from strategic power. When plans are competent and strategic power complete, then the fearful become courageous. When plans are clumsy and strategic power lost, then the courageous become fearful. When the fearful are employed through punishments they become courageous; when the courageous are employed with rewards they will die. The ability to shift human nature and change the minds of men lies in rewards and punishments. In what sense does courage or fear reside in men?"

⁴² *Zuo Zhuan*, Duke Zhuang, 10th year, somewhat abridged. Being a terse dialogue, it or the core content could have been passed down through the centuries but is more likely to be a middle Warring States fabrication that reflects *qi* concepts then becoming prevalent. In his lecture "Some Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War" dated to December 1936, Mao Zedong cited this famous episode to explain how his strategy of the strategic defensive would enervate the enemy and allow the weak to overcome the strong.

After their victory, the duke inquired why Cao had delayed the drums. Cao replied: "Combat is a matter of courageous *qi*. A single drumming arouses the soldiers' *qi*, with a second it abates, and with a third it is exhausted. They were exhausted while we were vigorous, so we conquered them."

Thereafter, the next informative passage appears amid dramatic evidence of the shift from antique values to ruthless engagement at the famous Battle of Hong River in 638 BC that unfolded when the increasingly powerful state of Chu attacked the now fading state of Song.⁴³ Significantly outnumbered, Song's forces had little hope unless they could implement unorthodox measures or exploit a momentary advantage. Nevertheless, despite the repeated harangues of his advisors, Duke Xiang refused to abandon his highly ostensible practice of Virtue just to wrest a quick victory and therefore adamantly refused to sound the attack while their enemies were still struggling to cross the river or when they tried to deploy into formation after ascending the bank. When they finally attacked, Song's army was summarily defeated, the chief officers all perished, and the duke himself was wounded in the thigh. Heavily criticized, he retorted: "A true ruler does not wound someone twice nor capture those showing gray hair. Ancient armies never exploited ravines and defiles, so even though we are merely the remnants of a ruined state, I will not drum an attack on disordered forces."⁴⁴

This prompted Zi You to respond: "My lord still does not understand warfare. Whenever a fierce enemy is in a defile or has not deployed in formation, Heaven is sustaining us. So even if they are in a ravine, shouldn't we still beat the drums for an attack? Even then we would fear not being victorious. Moreover, all these stalwarts are

⁴³ Zuo Zhuan, Duke Xi, 22nd year. The authenticity of this famous incident is generally accepted but it may have been concocted in the middle of the Warring States period (when warfare's lethality had unimaginably escalated) in order to illustrate the impracticability of righteousness.

⁴⁴ The Song referred to themselves as the "remnants of a ruined state" because their ancestors, the Shang ruling clan, had been settled there after being vanquished by the Zhou a half millennium earlier.

our enemies. Even if they are old and mature, if we can capture them alive we should seize them. What does gray hair matter? *You should make clear the nature of shame and teach warfare.*⁴⁵ If you flinch at inflicting a second wound, it would be preferable not to wound anyone; if you have compassion for the gray haired, then it would be better to submit.”⁴⁶

Zi Yu then proceeded to explain the dynamics of conflict in terms of *qi*: “The Three Armies are employed for advantage, gongs and drums raise the soldier’s *qi* through their sounds. When the sound of the drums has stimulated their *qi*, signaling an attack on the disordered is appropriate.”

In an *Art of War* passage well known from the middle Warring States period onward -- in fact, the only one in the text in which the term appears -- Sunzi similarly observed the tendency of *qi* to surge and abate and advised targeting these fluctuations:⁴⁷

The *qi* of the Three Armies can be snatched away, the commanding general’s mind can be seized. For this reason in the morning their *qi* is ardent; during the day their *qi* becomes indolent; at dusk their *qi* is exhausted. Thus one who excels at employing the army avoids their ardent *qi* and strikes when it is indolent or exhausted. This is the way to manipulate *qi*.

However, even though the *Art of War* envisioned combat success being assured by actively manipulating the enemy and radically depressing their will, spirit, and

⁴⁵ The key phrase *ming chi jiao zhan* -- “illuminate the (cause of) shame and teach warfare” -- long ago entered the language as an admonitory fixed phrase (*chengyu*) and continues to be cited in current articles. Being known to provide a strong stimulus to action, shame was consciously employed to motivate soldiers for battle, the fear of disgrace reinforcing the threat of punishment. However, it was the Confucians who initiated contemplation of the role of shame in stimulating socially desirable behavior in men. (The subject requires a lengthy discussion in itself; it is sufficient to note that shame was considered a prime motivator, especially the shame or disgrace of failing to perform adequately on the battlefield)

⁴⁶ A counter-current that emphasized restraint in warfare, largely embodied in the Sima Fa would, however, persist throughout Chinese history. (See especially “Benevolence the Foundation.”)

⁴⁷ “Military Combat,” the *Art of War*. Although the passage radically shifts the vision, it well coheres with the chapter’s entire thrust.

capacity to fight, ignorant generals subsequently misinterpreted Sunzi's assertion as precluding an attack prior to late afternoon. This may be seen from comments in which Li Jing emphasized *qi*'s critical role while freeing it from simplistic time and sequence constraints:⁴⁸

The Taizong said: "Sunzi spoke about strategies by which the *qi* of the Three Armies may be snatched away: 'In the morning their *qi* is ardent; during the day their *qi* becomes indolent; and at dusk their *qi* is exhausted. One who excels at employing the army avoids their ardent *qi*, and strikes when it is indolent or exhausted.' How is this?"

Li Jing said: "If those who have life and a natural endowment of blood die without a second thought when the drums are sounded for battle, it is *qi* which causes it. Thus the methods for employing the army require first investigating our own officers and troops, stimulating our *qi* for victory, and only then attacking the enemy. Among Wu Qi's four vital points, the vital point of *qi* is foremost.⁴⁹ There is no other Dao. If one can cause his men to want to fight, then no one will be able to oppose their ardor.

What Sunzi meant by the *qi* being ardent in the morning is not limited to those hours alone. He used the beginning and end of the day as an analogy. In general, if the drum has been sounded three times but the enemy's *qi* has neither declined nor become depleted, how can you cause it to invariably become indolent or exhausted? Probably those who study the text merely recite the empty words and are misled by the enemy. If one could enlighten them with the principles for snatching away the *qi*, the army could be entrusted to them."

A tactical discussion preserved in the *Jin Shu* approximately a thousand years after the original three drummings incident similarly found Emperor Jing of Jin, then acting as his own battlefield commander, justifying the unleashing of an assault upon rebel forces by the enemy's failure to initiate a coordinated action among their

⁴⁸ Questions and Replies between Tang Taizong and Li Weigong, Book III (page 354 of our Seven Military Classics of Ancient China). Li Jing was one of the first great Tang dynasty commanders. However, the authenticity of the book's dialogues, as well as its authorship and actual compilation date, are a matter of considerable doubt.

⁴⁹ Wu Qi identified four "Vital points" (*ji*): *qi*, terrain, affairs, and strength. About the first he said: "When the masses of the Three Armies, the million soldiers of the force, are strategically deployed in appropriate formations according to varying degrees of strength by one man, this is termed the vital point of *qi*." ("The Tao of the General," the *Wuzi*. For the complete passage, see Seven Military Classics, pp. 216-17.)

segmented troops despite having three times drummed the attack.⁵⁰ Roughly another millennia later the *Hundred Unorthodox Strategies* appended the same *Zuo Zhuan* account in substantiation of the following discussion of *qi*'s dynamics on the battlefield:⁵¹

The means by which the commanding general wages warfare is his soldiers; the means by which the soldiers engage in combat is their *qi*. The means by which *qi* proves victorious is the beating of the war drums.

Since the drums are capable of inciting the *qi* of the officers and troops, they should not be incessantly employed. If employed too many times, the soldiers' *qi* will easily decline. Similarly, they cannot be employed when too far away from the enemy. If too far, the soldier's strength will easily be exhausted. You must estimate when the enemy will be within sixty or seventy paces and then beat the drums to signal the officers and troops to advance into combat. If the enemy's *qi* abates while yours surges, their defeat will be certain. A tactical principle from the *Wei Liaozi* states: "When their *qi* is substantial they will fight; when their *qi* has been snatched away they will run off."

This brief analysis actually opens and closes by essentially splitting a seminal assertion from the late Warring States *Wei Liaozi*: "Now the means by which the general fights is the people; the means by which the people fight is their *qi*. When their *qi* is substantial they will fight; when their *qi* has been snatched away they will run off."⁵²

Although not a dedicated martial text, the early Han dynasty *Lushi Chunqiu* contains several seminal observations upon the nature of courage among its focal military chapters. Courage is similarly believed to be physically dependent upon the presence or absence of *qi*: "Now the people are not always courageous or always

⁵⁰ See "Di Ji, 2" in the *Jin Shu*. (The incident is also recorded in the *Wei Shu* portion of the *Sanguo Zhi*, juan 28, but without the "three drummings" explanation.) The Tang dynasty *Tongdian* includes a subchapter titled "Defeat the Enemy after They Have Drummed Three Times and their Qi Abates" ("Yindi Sangu Qishuai Baizhi") consisting of just two entries, the famous *Zuo* passage and the *Jin Shu* incident. Moreover, the *Wujing Zongyao* includes a brief section entitled "Qi Shuai Ke Ji" or "Those Whose Qi Has Declined Can Be Attacked" which similarly begins with this same *Zuo* incident before appending a few other historical examples.

⁵¹ "Spirit in Warfare," the *Hundred Unorthodox Strategies*. (For a complete translation and further expansion, see Sawyer, *Unorthodox Strategies*, pp. 199-201.)

⁵² "Combat Awesomeness," the *Wei Liaozi* (*Seven Military Classics*, p. 147).

afraid. When they have *qi* then they are replete, when replete they are courageous. When they lack *qi* they are vacuous, when vacuous they become fearful. Fear and courage, vacuity and substance, their origins are extremely subtle and must be known.”⁵³

The *Sima Fa*, a military classic from the early Warring States period that may preserve earlier Zhou materials, similarly envisioned *qi* as crucial to combat but perceptively linked it to the soldier’s mental and emotional focus:⁵⁴

In general, in battle one endures through strength and gains victory through *qi*. One can endure with a solid defense, but will achieve victory through being endangered. When the heart's foundation is solid, a new surge of *qi* will bring victory. With armor one is secure, with weapons one attains victory.

Within this context, the *Wuzi* dramatically imagized the resolution and determination that can engender surpassing courage:⁵⁵

I have heard that men have strengths and weaknesses, that their *qi* flourishes and ebbs. Now if there is a murderous villain hidden in the woods, even though a thousand men pursue him they all look around like owls, and glance about like wolves. Why ? They are afraid that violence will erupt and harm them personally. Thus one man oblivious to life and death can frighten a thousand.

The late Warring States *Wei Liaozi* then transplanted this image to the populous marketplace to similarly explain the effects of commitment, concurrently debunking the prevalent concept of courage:⁵⁶

If a warrior wields a sword to strike people in the marketplace, among ten thousand people there will not be anyone who doesn’t avoid him. If I say it’s not that only one man is courageous, but that the ten thousand are unlike him, what is the reason? Being committed to dying and being committed to seeking life are not comparable.

⁵³ Lushi Chunqiu, “Decisive Victory.”

⁵⁴ “Strict Positions.”

⁵⁵ “Stimulating the Officers,” the *Wuzi*.

⁵⁶ “Discussion of Regulations,” *Wei Liaozi*.

Exploiting this sort of zealousness underlay the deliberate creation of elite units composed of warriors who would have the courage of tigers and be able to shatter the enemy just as Wu Qi reportedly vanquished Qin.⁵⁷ Men who had committed minor offenses in the court or failed in battle were also thought to be highly motivated and therefore were to be given opportunity to redeem themselves in special units expected to show great courage.⁵⁸

Contemplating the difficulty of compelling ordinary men to engage in combat prompted the classic military writers to identify a number of emotional factors that they believed would prompt them to fight aggressively, if not actually make them courageous. When strongly motivated by anger, rewards, or other emotional components, men were known to fight courageously; when not, to be reluctant or even fearful. The *Sima Fa* noted that “men will die for love, out of anger, out of fear of awesomeness, for righteousness, and for profit.”⁵⁹ Love was particularly cited as a strong motivator by political thinkers such as Han Feizi who frequently used the analogy of a mother’s love for her child causing her to take unimaginably heroic action, to battle tigers or bears to save it.⁶⁰

Even though Sunzi recognized the concept of *qi*, he was among the first to attribute fervent battlefield performance to anger by simply stating, “What motivates men to slay the enemy is anger.”⁶¹ His observation was subsequently cited in concluding the tactical discussion for the topic of “Anger” in the *Hundred Unorthodox Strategies (Baizhan Qifa)*, a late Song dynasty tactical work which selectively compiles

⁵⁷ See, for example, Wuzi, “Evaluating the Enemy.”

⁵⁸ See “Planning for the State” in the Wuzi.

⁵⁹ “Strict Positions.”

⁶⁰ “Jie Lao.”

⁶¹ “Waging War.”

the hundred essential principles of Chinese military science and illustrates them all with historical battles: “Whenever you engage an enemy in battle, you must incite your officers and troops, making them angry before going into combat. A tactical principle from the *Art of War* states “What enables men to kill the enemy is anger.”⁶²

Righteousness was identified as another important motivator and fundamental prerequisite to engaging in warfare: “When the army is righteous the enemy will be orphaned and alone. When the enemy is orphaned and alone, their upper and lower ranks will be vacuous and their people will disperse and fall aside. When they are orphaned and alone, their fathers and elder brothers will be resentful toward each other, the worthy will be set aside, and chaos will rise in the interior.”⁶³ In “Strict Positions” the *Sima Fa* states, “When they are constrained by the Dao, they will die for the upright.”

However, two factors known to subvert every military enterprise were doubt (or hesitation) and fear, with the latter being the more powerful. Wu Qi reportedly said, “The greatest harms that befall the army stem from hesitation while the disasters that strike the Three Armies are born in doubt.”⁶⁴ The *Sima Fa* observed, “When men have minds filled with fear all they see is their fear.”⁶⁵ Ideally, doubt and fear should be expelled, being replaced by anger, courage, and a commitment to victory because, “when men have their minds set on victory all they see is the enemy.”⁶⁶ The difficulty lies in achieving it.

Surprisingly, given its contagiously debilitating power, fear was envisioned not

⁶² For a complete translation and commentary, see Ralph D. Sawyer, *One Hundred Unorthodox Strategies: Battle and Tactics of Chinese Warfare* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), pp.196-98.

⁶³ Lushi Chunqiu, “Zhongqiu Ji,” subsection on “Decisive Victory.”

⁶⁴ Wuzi, “Controlling the Army.” A virtually identical statement appears in “The Army’s Strategic Power” in the Six Secret Teachings. (Hesitation and doubt are also the topics of “Gao Duan” in the Caolu Jinglue.)

⁶⁵ Sima Fa, “Strict Positions.”

⁶⁶ Sima Fa, “Strict Positions.”

only as the antidote but also the solution to its incapacitating effects. Among the military writings, the *Wei Liaozi* succinctly characterized the dynamics by saying: "The people do not have two things that they fear equally. If they fear us then they will despise the enemy; if they fear the enemy then they will despise us. The one who is despised will be defeated; the one who establishes his awesomeness will be victorious."⁶⁷

The *Hundred Unorthodox Strategies* further expanded this insight in its "Awesomeness in Warfare" discussion:

Whenever engaging an enemy in battle, if the officers and troops courageously advance rather than risking retreat it is because they fear their commanders instead of the enemy. But if they risk retreat rather than advance, they fear the enemy instead of their commanders. When generals can force their officers and troops to rush into water and tread on fire without flinching, it is their awesomeness and severity that caused it. A tactical principle from the *Book of Documents* states: "When awesomeness exceeds love, affairs will be successful."

This counter-balancing fear was induced in the troops primarily by punishments augmented by the awesomeness of the officers. (Fear of one's own officers, as in nineteenth and twentieth century German and Japanese military forces, was not only thoroughgoing but actually advocated by the military classics.) Although some vacillation characterized discussions of the relative weight and importance of rewards versus punishments, the military writers and Chinese armies in general normally opted for draconian, rigorously enforced punishments and somewhat fewer rewards despite numerous observations that people will die for great incentives. The fear of certain, often extreme punishment supplemented by enforced bonding and mutual responsibility at all levels was believed to compel the requisite battlefield performance, one that

⁶⁷ "Tactical Balance of Power in Attacks."

appeared courageous even if the internal component was missing.⁶⁸

Nevertheless, even awesomeness could become too extreme, as the *Sima Fa* noted:

When the army excessively concentrates upon its awesomeness the people will cower, but if it diminishes its awesomeness the people will not be victorious. When superiors cause the people to be unable to be righteous; the hundred surnames to be unable to achieve proper organization; the artisans to be unable to profit from their work; and oxen and horses to be unable to fulfill their functions while the officers insult the people it is termed "excessive awesomeness" and the people will cower.

When superiors do not respect Virtue but employ the deceptive and evil; when they do not honor the Tao but employ the courageous and strong; when they do not value those who obey commands, but instead esteem those who contravene them; when they do not value good actions, but esteem violent behavior, so that the people insult the minor officials, this is termed "diminished awesomeness." If the conditions of diminished awesomeness prevail the people will not be victorious.

Clearly in characterizing the broad sweep of governmental practices and measures these definitions transcend the focal military realm for which thinkers such as Sunzi advanced a number of fundamental principles. Although further discussion would exceed the scope of this article, the rampant ill effects of private expressions of courage under "diminished awesomeness" should particularly be noted.

One crucial premise of the traditional psychology of courage was that the civil and martial realms are incompatible, the courage or *qi* of the soldier distinct from that required in officials laboring under their responsibilities. The clearest expression appears in the *Sima Fa*:

⁶⁸ Examples of the regulations, punishments, and mutual entanglements that probably prevailed in the Qin may be found in the last chapters of the *Wei Liaozi*. Note that the *Hundred Unorthodox Strategies*, under the topic of "Fear in Warfare," concludes: "Whenever engaging an enemy in battle, if there are any within the army who are fearful and afraid, who do not advance when the drums are sounded but retreat before hearing the sound of the gongs, you must pick them out and execute them in order to provide a warning to the mass of troops."

In antiquity the form and spirit governing civil affairs would not be found in the military realm; those appropriate to the military realm would not be found in the civil sphere. Thus virtue and righteousness did not transgress inappropriate realms.

If the form and spirit (appropriate to the) military realm enter the civil sphere the Virtue of the people will decline. When the form and spirit (appropriate to the) civil sphere enter the military realm, then the Virtue of the people will weaken. In the civil sphere words are cultivated and speech languid. In court one is respectful and courteous, and cultivates himself to serve others. Unsummoned, he does not step forth; unquestioned, he does not speak. It is difficult to advance but easy to withdraw.

It was accordingly concluded that soldiers in armor or uniform should not be required to bow before court officials or otherwise perform rituals that might detract from their immersion in a different set of critical values.

Even though the realms were distinct, stimulating the courage and commitment of the troops was not simply a matter of battlefield focus, but understood to be fundamentally enabled by governmental and military measures. In order to gain the fighter's allegiance and willing participation in battle the people's welfare had to be adequate.⁶⁹

In order to stimulate the soldiers, the people's material welfare must be ample. The ranks of nobility, the degree of relationship in death and mourning, and the activities by which the people live must be made evident. One must govern the people in accord with their means to life and make distinctions clear in accord with the people's activities. The fruits of the field and their salaries, the feasting of relatives through the rites of eating and drinking, the mutual encouragement in the village ceremonies, mutual assistance in death and the rites of mourning, and sending off and greeting the troops, these are what stimulate the people.

Extensive training including in formations and through the practice of martial dances before embarking on a military campaign was deemed crucial to building small

⁶⁹ Wei Liaozi, "Combat Awesomeness." In "Strict Positions" the Sima Fa notes that "When men are pleased in their hearts they will exhaust their strength."

unit cohesiveness, instilling requisite values, imposing order and discipline, and creating confidence in the leadership and the army's fighting ability. The *Sima Fa* notes: "In general, according to the Dao of warfare positions should be strictly defined; administrative measures should be severe; strength should be nimble; *qi* should be constrained; and the minds (of the officers and troops) should be unified."⁷⁰

Building cohesiveness unifies the troops; when unified, their behavior will be consistent and their fears generally mitigated.⁷¹ The *Wei Liaozi* added, "The unified will be victorious, those beset by dissension will be defeated."⁷² Thus Sunzi stated, "When the men have been unified, the courageous will not be able to advance alone, the fearful will not be able to retreat alone. This is the method for employing large numbers."⁷³

However, cohesiveness was seen as resulting from combining strict discipline with beneficence to gain the allegiance of the troops, the balance of the two invariably being problematic.⁷⁴ Although a separate issue, it should be noted that some generals (such as the great commander Wu Qi) were known to have been solicitous and led by

⁷⁰ "Strict Positions."

⁷¹ The need for order, discipline, and training to weld the troops into an effective weapon was not confined to the martial writings. For example, the Lushi Chunqiu observed "Although the army may be large and the foot soldiers numerous, it is not of any advantage to achieving victory. If the army is large and the infantry numerous but you are not able to fight with your masses, it would be better to be fewer because the good fortune that can be created with masses is great, but the disaster equally great. It may be compared to fishing in a deep abyss: the fish can be large but the injury or harm that can be suffered is also large." Note that the *Sima Fa* (in "Strict Positions") states, "It is not forming a battle array that is difficult, it is reaching the point that the men can be ordered into formation that is hard. It is not attaining the ability to order them into formation that is difficult; it is reaching the point of being able to employ them that is hard."

⁷² "Army Orders, I." This theme is repeated in the *Caolu Jinglue* chapter "Gui He" ("Esteeming Harmony") and "Yizhong" ("Unifying the Troops").

⁷³ "Military Combat."

⁷⁴ Thus, in "Configurations of Terrain" Sunzi points out that regarding the troops as young children will result in them venturing into the deepest valleys and regarding them as beloved children will result in them being willing to die with the commander, but that they may be ungovernable.

example while others relied solely upon the fear of punishment.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, under the topic “Love in Warfare” the *Hundred Unorthodox Strategies* concluded:

Whenever engaging an enemy in combat, if the officers and troops would rather advance unto death than retreat and live, it is always because the commander’s solicitude and beneficence have brought it about. When the Three Armies know that their superiors love them as sincerely as their sons, they will love their commanders as fervently as their fathers and penetrate deadly terrain without begrudging their deaths in order to repay their commander’s virtue. A tactical principle from the *Art of War* states: “When one regards the people as beloved children, they will be willing to die with you.”

In his concept of *tong Dao* (“unification in the Dao”) Sunzi particularly emphasized the need for unification, for the people to be in accord with the ruler and the mission, by including it among the five key criteria for evaluating states and assessing anyone who lacked it as highly vulnerable.⁷⁶ Within the broader context of warfare he further noted that “(simulated) chaos is given birth from control, the (illusion of) fear is given birth from courage, and (feigned) weakness is given birth from strength. Order and disorder are question of numbers; *courage and fear are question of the strategic configuration of power*; strength and weakness are a question of deployment.”⁷⁷ Because of the difficulty of ensuring that men would perform heroically -- or at least adequately -- he further asserted that “One who excels at warfare seeks victory through the strategic configuration of power, not from reliance upon men.” (Participants in World War Two and thereafter have spoken about how, swept up in the massiveness of the effort and the overwhelming strength of their armaments, they managed to fight onward despite being in extreme danger.)

⁷⁵ Apart from Wu Qi’s biography in the *Shi Ji*, the fullest description of Wu Qi’s leadership is found in the Wei Liaozi’s “Martial Plans.”

⁷⁶ See “Initial Estimations,” the first chapter in the *Art of War*. (The concept of *tong dao* will be discussed in the second part of this paper on PRC practices.)

⁷⁷ “Strategic Military Power,” *Art of War*.

Conspicuously honoring heroic battlefield performance was an ancient practice in China, perhaps the first one intended to stimulate combat effort and gain widespread acceptance of the ruler's values. From numerous archaeologically recovered inscribed bronze cauldrons it is clear that as early as the middle of the Shang dynasty (1600-1046) the king publicly acknowledged military achievement and generously rewarded it. In addition to verbal accolades, the Zhou (1046-221) then expanded the conspicuous symbols of martial prowess to weapons, including battle axes and bows and arrows, though it would not be until the Warring States when they finally evolved that swords would be added. With the expansion and codification of battlefield regulations under the Qin, military and public ranks were also advanced in systematic fashion for combat valor, the simplest correlation for low level troops being one rank for one head.

Any other grants that might have accompanied these purely military symbols, including lands and monetary rewards, while important stimuli in themselves, were far less influential than public recognition. Military thinkers in the Warring States period came to realize that the esteem of fellow combatants was a prime motivator and Wu Qi even deemed rewards and punishments unreliable, whereas men would courageously strive for acclaim.⁷⁸ He therefore advocated the practice of feasting in which those who had distinguished themselves would be assigned the most honored places and served conspicuously better foods.⁷⁹ Coupled with his highly solicitous style of unassuming leadership, his practice of these rituals differentiated him from other commanders and reportedly underlay his great battlefield success. (Despite some variance in state character, most militaries of the time were similarly organized and promulgated largely

⁷⁸ See Wuzi, "Stimulating the Officers." The importance of fame as a motivator is similarly discussed in the Bingfa Baiyan.

⁷⁹ See Wuzi, "Stimulating the Officers." Also mentioned among other incentives in Sun Bin Military Methods, "Killing Officers," and discussed in considerable detail in "Li Shi" in the Taibai Yinjing where the objective is stated as "inciting the warriors' qi."

identical regulations.)

Modulating the Army's *Qi*

All the military writers agreed that “men do not take pleasure in death” and fear dying; that “combat is what the people hate so that one who is able to cause the people to take pleasure in combat will become the king of the realm.”⁸⁰ Moreover, as Wu Qi observed, *qi* ebbs and flourishes while the army's success depends upon it reaching a zenith just at the moment of battle.⁸¹ Men who are well-trained, rested, properly fed, clothed, and equipped will fight vigorously if their spirits are roused. “It is the Dao of warfare that when they are well instructed men will regard death lightly.”⁸² However, if physical or material conditions have blunted their *qi*, there is any imbalance in the relationship between officers and troops, they have grown superstitious and fearful, or they have lost their motivation, they will be defeated. The *Sima Fa* described such an army:⁸³

If they do not follow orders, do not trust (their officers), are not harmonious, are lax, doubtful, weary, afraid, avoid responsibility, cower, are troubled, unrestrained, deflated, or dilatory, it is termed a disastrous campaign. When they suffer from extreme arrogance, abject terror, moaning and grumbling, constant fear, or regret over actions being taken, they are termed “destroyed and broken.”

In accord with the concept of efficient battle management prevalent in Chinese military thought (though generally not actual practice), the astute general should harbor his strength, nurture his soldier's *qi*, and create gaps and deficiencies in the enemy. Anciently, the army's confidence was further augmented by prominently seeking

⁸⁰ Shangjun Shu, “Hua Ce.”

⁸¹ “Stimulating the Officers,” the Wuzi.

⁸² Sima Fa, “Strict Positions.”

⁸³ “Determining Rank.” The concept of an “old” army, one that was broken and unresponsive, was also common.

sanctification for the campaign in the ruler's ancestral temple, assuring the troops of the uprightness of their cause, and inspiring certainty, thereby excluding the threat of doubt. However, the impact of omens and untoward events still had to be diffused, the introduction of negative stimuli thwarted, and rumors and sayings squelched before they could undermine the confidence necessary for courageous performance.⁸⁴

Once the concept of an army's *qi* had been articulated, fathoming the enemy's *qi* became significant. Thus whenever commanders from the Warring States onward sought to acquire military intelligence, the enemy's *qi* ranked among the few crucial objectives.⁸⁵ Moreover, the stage of passive cognition was quickly transcended as soon as it was realized the enemy's *qi* could, and therefore should, be manipulated through aggressive measures. However, being intangible, it had to be indirectly perceived, deciphered from certain signs such as mutterings among the troops, a pronounced belief in baleful omens, general malaise, or widespread dissension in the ranks, as well as correlated with physical condition and recent battlefield behavior. Given the gravity of psychological preparation, a lack of commitment in an enemy would also be behaviorally indicated. For example, the *Wei Liaozi* noted that "One who occupies

⁸⁴ Even though recourse had been had to the spirits ever since the Shang, Sunzi and subsequent writers stressed the need to prohibit omens and defuse their negative impact. Charged with maintaining the courage and confidence of their troops, battlefield commanders naturally tried to mitigate the effects of baleful signs. (See, for example, "Determining Rank" in the Sima Fa, the chapters entitled "Letters" and "The Human" in the Unorthodox Strategies, and "Jiaoyan Dingzhong in the Caolu Jinglue.) However, from the Tang dynasty onward significant portions of many military writings included extensive prognosticatory materials. (For samples of qi divination see Sawyer, "Martial Prognostication" in Nicola Di Cosmo, ed., *Military Culture in Imperial China* [Cambridge: Harvard, 2009]; for further discussion on the contradictory existence of prognostication and its rejection, see Sawyer, "Paradoxical Coexistence of Prognostication and Warfare," *Sino-platonic Papers*, No. 157 (August 2005).

⁸⁵ With some astounding exceptions whereby negligent generals doomed their forces to defeat, Chinese commanders generally understood the importance of military intelligence and therefore employed extensive measures, including reconnaissance and spies, to learn about the enemy's strength and position, as well as the commander's name. The more astute also tried to ascertain the enemy's physical condition, especially whether they were fatigued or rested, adequately fed or famished, and therefore mounted active probing measures. (The nature and scope of intelligence practices, including spycraft, in pre-Qing China is extensively examined in our *Tao of Spycraft: Intelligence Theory and Practice in Traditional China* [Boulder: Westview Press, 1998]).

ravines lacks the mind to do battle. One who lightly provokes a battle lacks fullness of *qi*. One who is belligerent in battle lacks soldiers capable of victory.”⁸⁶

Generals were therefore advised to structure their tactics and maneuver their armies so as to avoid enemy forces when the latter’s spirits were strong and exploit any opportunity presented by their diminishment (forced or otherwise), attacking when they no longer had any inclination to fight such as when they were standing down from field deployments, about to return to camp, or preparing meals.⁸⁷ Since (according to Sunzi) prolonged warfare can only lead to enervation,⁸⁸ careful planning to guarantee the swift execution of campaign strategy is paramount.

Accordingly, the traditional military writings generally advocate seizing the initiative⁸⁹ and manipulating the enemy until they become physically and emotionally exhausted, their *qi* or “will to fight” so severely diminished that their defeat becomes inevitable.⁹⁰ The following passage from the *Wei Liaozi*, one among many, may be cited as an example: “Victory is achieved through the Dao, awesomeness, and strength. Holding careful military discussions and evaluating the enemy, causing the enemy’s *qi* to be lost and his forces to scatter so that even if his dispositions are complete he will not be able to employ them, this is victory through the Dao.”⁹¹ Psychological measures were also deemed so important that they proliferated throughout the late Spring and

⁸⁶ “Tactical Balance of Power in Attacks,” *Wei Liaozi*. The *Wuzi*, *Liutao*, and other classic military works all enumerate factors that allow the enemy to be attacked, mostly derivatives of enervation and dispirit.

⁸⁷ Several examples are described in the *Wuzi* while Sun Bin spoke about enemies that can be attacked because their *qi* has severely diminished from prolonged warfare in “The General’s Losses” and *Male and Female Cities* in the *Military Methods*.

⁸⁸ “Waging War,” the *Art of War*.

⁸⁹ Such as in “Initiative” in the *Unorthodox Strategies*. The *Wei Liaozi* states: “Those from whom the initiative has been taken have no *qi*.” (“Tactical Balance of Power in Warfare.”)

⁹⁰ For example, see “Those Whose *Qi* Has Declined Can be Attacked” in the *Wujing Zongyao*, as well as “Those Who Are Fearful Can be Attacked.” Similar materials are found in the military sections of the *Tongdian*, including “A Campaign Army whose Troops are Dispirited and Afraid will be Defeated” and “An Enemy Who Lacks Solidified Will Can be Seized,” a derivative of which appears in the *Wujing Zongyao*; *Caolu Jinglue*, “*Bo Di*”; and *Bingfa Baiyan*, “*Yan*” and “*Ai*.”

⁹¹ “Combat Awesomeness.”

Autumn and Warring States periods, resulting in well articulated theoretical programs that were often successfully implemented.⁹²

Certain situations were seen as conducive to stimulating the soldiers' *qi* and eliciting the army's greatest efforts, while others (such as moving through the site of historical defeats) as simply depressing the men and debilitating their *qi* and therefore to be scrupulously avoided. Within these parameters the commander could focus upon stimulating the spirit and resolve of the troops in their constantly changing situations and upon entering into combat. The core insight found throughout such passages and numerous other martial texts not cited here such as the *Huqian Jing*, *Wujing Zongyao*, *Wubei Zhi*, and *Bingfa Baiyan* is the need to avoid stimulating the army's *qi* too early, thereby causing it to fruitlessly peak and then diminish.

Early on, in "The Dao of Warfare," the *Sima Fa* summarized the sequence: "After you have aroused the people's *qi* and enacted governmental measures, encompass them with a benign countenance and lead them with your speeches. Upbraid them in accord with their fears." Nevertheless, despite 2500 years of martial theorizing in China, the most systematic method for stimulating the requisite *qi* level just prior to engaging in combat remains Sun Bin's chapter "Expanding Qi." The first part of this recently recovered text prescribes active measures that astutely apply the period's martial psychology:⁹³

⁹² Beyond the scope of this paper (but well noted by contemporary PRC theorists), these measures are extensively discussed in Sawyer, *The Tao of Spycraft*.

⁹³ A translation of the entire chapter, with extensive comments, may be found in Sawyer, *Military Methods*, pp. 138-45. Another fragment from the chapter suggests one technique: "The short coat and coarse clothes which encourage a warrior's determination are the means to hone their *qi*."

When you form the army and assemble the masses, concentrate upon stimulating their *qi*.⁹⁴ When you again decamp and reassemble the army, concentrate upon ordering the soldiers and sharpening their *qi*. When you approach the border and draw near the enemy concentrate upon honing their *qi*. When the day for battle has been set concentrate upon making their *qi* decisive. When the day for battle is at hand, concentrate upon expanding their *qi*.

Although motivating the army at their initial mobilization and the final harangue just before engaging the enemy were probably the most important, ancient rulers reportedly employed slightly different approaches to these stages:⁹⁵

Emperor Shun made the official announcement of their mission within the state capital because he wanted the people to first embrace his orders. The rulers of the Xia Dynasty administered their oaths amidst the army for they wanted the people to first complete their thoughts. The Shang rulers swore their oaths outside the gate to the encampment for they wanted the people to first fix their intentions and await the conflict. King Wu of the Zhou waited until the weapons were about to clash and then swore his oath in order to stimulate the people's will.

The *Sima Fa* outlined what it believed had been the appropriate ritual approach for denouncing a miscreant and thereby rousing the people to action:⁹⁶

If any of the feudal lords had disobeyed orders; disordered the constant; turned their backs on Virtue; or contravened the seasons of Heaven, endangering meritorious rulers, then they would publicize it among all the feudal lords, making it evident that he had committed an offense. They then announced it to August Heaven, and to the sun, moon, planets, and constellations. They prayed to the Gods of Earth, the spirits of the Four Seasons, mountains, rivers, and at the Great Altar of state. Then they offered sacrifice to the Former Kings.

Only thereafter would the prime minister charge the army before the feudal lords saying "a certain state has acted contrary to the Dao. You will participate in the rectification campaign on such a year, month, and day.

⁹⁴ Such as through public oath making and emotionally charged denouncements of the enemy's offenses that are intended to justify the campaign. (For one vision of such practices in Chinese antiquity, see the *Sima Fa* chapter entitled "Obligations of the Son of Heaven," pp. 129-33 of the *Seven Military Classics*.) The effects of such oaths are also discussed in "Shi Shi" in the *Caolu Jinglue*.

⁹⁵ *Sima Fa*, "Benevolence the Foundation."

⁹⁶ *Sima Fa*, "Strict Positions."

On that date the army will reach the offending state and assemble with the Son of Heaven to apply the punishment of rectification."

An example of a pre-campaign harangue included in the *Shang Shu* or *Shang Documents*, although composed many centuries later, may preserve vestigial materials.⁹⁷ As reconstructed by late Spring and Autumn writers, the king's instructions prior to launching the campaign that vanquished the tyrannical last ruler of the Xia are surprisingly threatening rather than motivating and uplifting, no doubt to cower and cajole the reluctant people into participating:

Come you multitudes of people, all of you listen to my words. It is not I, the little child, who dares practice what can be termed rebellion. Xia is guilty of numerous offenses, so Heaven has ordered that he be destroyed.

Now you multitudes are saying, "Instead of having compassion on us, our lord makes us abandon the work of harvest to cut off and rectify Xia." I have indeed heard the words of you multitudes, but the chief of the Xia has committed offenses. Because I fear Shang Di, I dare not but punish him.

Now there are those among you who say, "What do Xia's offenses have to do with us?" The king of the Xia has utterly exhausted the strength of his masses, everywhere wearing them down in their towns. His masses have all become lazy and will not cooperate with him. They are saying, "When will this sun expire? We will all perish with you." Xia's virtue being so, I must now go there.

I pray you will assist me, the one man, to bring about Heaven's punishment. I will greatly reward you. Do not let there be any disbelief among you for I will not eat my words. If you do not obey the words of my pronouncement, *I will completely exterminate your families*, there will be no pardon.

Despite generally being an occasion for rewards and rejoicing, victory could also prove somewhat problematic in causing overconfidence and laxity. The *Sima Fa* therefore cautioned: "If you are victorious in battle, share the achievement and praise with the troops. If you are about to re-engage in battle, make their rewards exceptionally

⁹⁷"Tang Shi" ("Tang's Oath").

generous and punishments heavier.”⁹⁸ Conversely, defeats present a particularly difficult situation because severe punishments cannot be imposed on the whole army. According to the *Sima Fa*, one solution would be for the commander to shoulder the responsibility himself while exploiting the shame of defeat to rouse the troops:

In cases of great defeat do not punish anyone, for both the upper and lower ranks will assume the disgrace falls upon them. If the upper ranks reproach themselves they will certainly regret their errors, while if the lower ranks feel the same they will certainly try to avoid repeating the offense.

The *Hundred Unorthodox Strategies* subsequently advised a similarly ameliorative approach:⁹⁹

Whenever your army has been thwarted and defeated in battle, you must investigate the morale of your officers and troops. If their spirit is strong, incite them and reengage in combat. However, if their spirit has waned you must nurture it for a while, waiting for the moment when they can again be employed before using them. A tactical principle from the *Art of War* states: “If you carefully nurture them and do not fatigue them, their spirit will be united and their strength will be at a maximum.”

Situations might then arise where the men, despite the threat of punishments and prospect of rewards, are still so debilitated by their fears that they army has essentially crumbled as a fighting force and will be useless unless their courage can be re-aroused. The solution was seen to be first encouraging them to think about living rather than allowing them to wallow in despair: “If they are too terrified of the enemy do not threaten them with execution and severe punishments, but display a magnanimous countenance. Speak to them about what they have to live for, supervise them in their duties.”

⁹⁸ “Strict Positions.” The chapters on “Ease” and “Victory” in the *Hundred Unorthodox Strategies* similarly warn of the dangers.

⁹⁹ “Nurturing Spirit in Warfare.”

Even in the late Song dynasty the *Hundred Unorthodox Strategies* still reiterated that advice, attesting to its efficacy as well as the continuity of Chinese martial thought:¹⁰⁰

If everyone within the army is afraid, you cannot punish them with execution. You must display a congenial countenance, show that there is nothing to fear, and persuade them with talk about profit and loss. Once they realize they will not die, the minds of the masses will be eased by themselves. A tactical principle from the *Sima Fa* states: "Seize and execute deserters in order to stop fear. If they are too terrified, do not threaten them with execution, but display a magnanimous countenance, speak to them about what they have to live for."

The *Sima Fa* even outlined a number of concrete measures to nurture the army's courage and cope with their fear:¹⁰¹

Soldiers who stand in their formations should advance and then crouch down; those who fire from a squatting position should advance and then kneel. If they are frightened, make the formations dense; if they are in danger, have them assume a sitting position. If the enemy is seen at a distance they will not fear them; if, when they are close, they do not look at them they will not scatter.

When the commanding general dismounts from his chariot, the generals of the left and right should also dismount, those wearing armor all sit, and the oath sworn, after which the army should be slowly advanced.¹⁰² All the officers from the generals down to the infantry squad leaders should wear armor. Calculate the deployment of the light and heavy forces. Rouse the horses to action, have the infantrymen and armored soldiers set up a clamor. If they are afraid similarly collapse them into tighter units.

Those who are kneeling should squat down, those who are squatting should lie down. Have them crawl forward on their knees, then put them at ease. Have them get up, shout, and advance to the drums, then signal a halt with the bells. With gagged mouths and minimal dry rations swear the oath. Have the troops withdraw, crawling back on their knees. Seize and

¹⁰⁰ "Fear in Warfare."

¹⁰¹ "Strict Positions."

¹⁰² Among the military writers, Wu Qi particularly emphasized the need for measure and control but even earlier the Sima Fa stated: "Campaign armies takes measure as their prime concern so that the people's strength will be adequate. Then, even when the blades clash, the infantry will not run and the chariots will not gallop. When pursuing a fleeing enemy the troops will not break formation, thereby avoiding chaos. The solidarity of a campaign army derives from military discipline that maintains order in formation; does not exhaust the strength of men or horses; and whether moving slowly or rapidly does not exceed the measure of the commands."

summarily execute any deserters to stop the others from looking about to desert. Shout in order to lead them.

The commander's personal involvement was particularly emphasized because exemplary leaders were known to inspire loyalty, confidence, and great effort: "Those who engage in combat must take leading in person as their foundation in order to incite the masses and officers, just as the mind controls the four limbs. If their minds are not incited, the officers will not die for honor. When the officers will not die for honor, the masses will not do battle."¹⁰³ Someone who could remain composed in the face of great danger would calm and inspire the troops, just as Zhuge Liang did in his enactment of the famous empty city ploy when he nonchalantly left the fortifications gates open to imply an ambush had been prepared and thereby deterred an attack by vastly superior forces.¹⁰⁴

Astute commanders confronted by despondent troops also resorted to a variety of extemporaneous measures, some heinous and exceedingly bizarre, to stimulate the anger, courage, and resolve of their fighters. Some of the most famous unfolded during the Warring States period at the fortified town of Ju in the state of Qi where the last remnants of Qi's forces had been compressed by Yan's invading forces. After a multi-year stalemate the commander Tian Dan inveigled the enemy into mutilating their prisoners by cutting off their noses and also into exposing the bodies of the deceased ancestors. These acts so enraged the flagging defenders that they broke out of their

¹⁰³ Wei Liaozi, "Combat Awesomeness."

¹⁰⁴ The "empty city" incident, which provides the historical illustration for "The Vacuous in Warfare" in the Hundred Unorthodox Strategies, is one of the famous "thirty-six strategies." (For a historical analysis see Sawyer, *Tao of Deception*, pages 362-371.) Although traditional Chinese martial thinkers tended to emphasize wisdom as the primary trait of commanders and generals, they could not be without courage. However, excessive courage, particularly when coupled with anger or vanity, was deemed a fatal, readily exploited flaw. (For example, see "Nine Changes" in the *Art of War*, "The General's Defeats" and "The General's Losses" in Sun Bin's *Military Methods* or the section on "Commanders" in Sawyer, *Tao of Spycraft*.) For Sunzi, "the general encompasses wisdom, credibility, benevolence, courage, and strictness."

siege through an unorthodox nighttime thrust whose success had been facilitated by pretending to be interested in surrendering, thereby causing them to become negligent and lax.¹⁰⁵

Paradoxically, men facing certain death and bereft of hope have been known to fight with suddenly surpassing courage, ferocity, and power (especially in comparison with fearful soldiers reluctantly pressed into battle) just as the legendary three hundred Spartans. Cognizant of this phenomenon, Sunzi concluded that apparently hopeless circumstances might be aggressively exploited to make men oblivious to death and elicit the ultimate effort. (Although undiscussed, achieving this requires treading a fine line between fostering death-defying commitment and provoking such despair that they completely lose their will to live, as more frequently happened in hopeless situations.)

According to the *Art of War*:¹⁰⁶

Cast them into positions from which there is nowhere to go and they will die without retreating. If there is no escape from death, the officers and soldiers will fully exhaust their strength.

When the soldiers and officers have penetrated deeply into enemy territory, they will cling together.¹⁰⁷ When there is no alternative, they will fight. Cast them into hopeless situations and they will be preserved; have them penetrate fatal terrain and they will live. Only after the masses have penetrated dangerous terrain will they be able to craft victory out of defeat.

For this reason, even though the soldiers are not instructed, they are prepared; without seeking it, their cooperation is obtained; without

¹⁰⁵ For a fuller discussion and complete reprisal of the incident see Sawyer, *Fire and Water: The Art of Incendiary and Aquatic Warfare in China*, pp. 115-120. The determination and resilience of the 7,000 or so fighters at Ju long served as an inspiration for KMT forces on Taiwan, the motto "Don't Forget the Events at Ju" (Wuwang zai Ju) even being prominently inscribed on mountains outside Taipei. (The use of false prospects for peace treaties or surrenders, a fundamental method in the repertoire of Chinese deception, appears as early as the *Art of War* and was successfully employed many times throughout Chinese history.)

¹⁰⁶ "Nine Terrains," somewhat condensed. Although the term *qi* is not employed in these passages, the measures advocated are all directed toward overcoming the problem of dispirited troops, to manipulating their *qi* state.

¹⁰⁷ Also see "The Guest" in the *Unorthodox Strategies*. The *Tongdian* preserves a lengthy collection of passages of uncertain date known as "Nine Configurations" that purport to be a dialogue between Sunzi and the King of Wu in which the tactics for various types of terrain seen in the *Art of War* are discussed, including the psychological state of the troops. Naturally measures for stimulating the troops are included. (For a translation see "Nine Configurations" in Sawyer, *the Art of War*, pp. 238-44.)

covenants they are close together; without issuing orders they are reliable. Prohibit omens, eliminate doubt so that they will die without other thoughts. Thus it is the nature of the army to defend when encircled; to fight fervently when unavoidable; and to follow orders when compelled by circumstances.

The Song dynasty *Hundred Unorthodox Strategies* includes three entries that expand this realization: “Danger in Warfare,” “Fighting to the Death,” and “Seeking Life.” The first addresses the psychology of men suddenly on dangerous terrain and concludes by citing a well-known saying from the *Art of War*:

Whenever engaging an enemy in battle, if you should suddenly penetrate terrain where you are in danger of perishing, you should arouse your generals and officers, encouraging them to commit themselves to fight to the death, for you cannot seek to live and hope to be victorious. A tactical principle from the *Art of War* states: “When the officers and soldiers have penetrated deeply they will not be afraid.”

“Fighting to the Death” enumerates a number of concrete measures designed to compel the men to “sever and abandon all thoughts of life” that were repeatedly implemented throughout Chinese history:

Whenever the enemy is strong and vigorous while your officers and troops are doubtful, confused, and unwilling to obey orders, you must thrust them onto fatal terrain. Issue orders to the Three Armies showing that there is no intent to preserve yourselves. Slaughter the oxen and burn your wagons in order to provide a final feast for your generals, officers, and troops. Incinerate your fodder and cast aside your provisions, fill in the wells and smash your cooking utensils, severing and abandoning all thoughts of life, for then you will be victorious. A tactical principle from the *Wu-tzu* states: “When death is certain, they will live.”

Accordingly, the brief text of “Seeking Life” advises that when all preliminary measures have been properly executed, “if you have realized the terrain’s advantages, your officers and troops are already deployed, the laws and orders have been well circulated, and your unorthodox troops already established, you should abandon

yourself to fate and engage in combat, for then you will be victorious. A tactical principle from the *Wuzi* states: “Those who cling to life will perish.”

Conversely, because of the possibility of fierce opposition and a possible resurgence of spirit, whenever fatal terrain is encountered or an enemy surrounded every effort should be made to avoid prompting the development of a “fatal terrain” mentality. Thus, in a precursor to later articulations Sunzi stated: “Do not obstruct an army retreating homeward. If you besiege an army you must leave an outlet. Do not press an exhausted invader.”¹⁰⁸ However, because armies immobilized on vulnerable terrain or in disorganized retreat were extremely vulnerable and commanders were enjoined (including by Sunzi) never to fail to exploit any opportunity to severely damage the enemy, astute judgment had to be exercised.

II

PRC Concepts and Formulations

The overwhelming destruction witnessed on the modern battlefield, essentially a concrete realization of Sunzi’s strategic power, coupled with the current shift to net centric warfare has prompted theoreticians worldwide to deem men and spirit irrelevant, if not obsolete. After pondering the highly visible effects of the two “shock and awe” campaigns inflicted upon Iraq, one or two PRC writers have ventured to assert that materials and power are not just primary, but will fully dictate the outcome of modern

¹⁰⁸ “Military Combat.” Du Yu’s Tang dynasty *Tongdian* includes a section entitled “Do not Attack Fatal Terrain” (“Sidi Wugong”) which is subsequently incorporated in abridged form by the *Wujing Zongyao*. (It should be noted that these pronouncements and some early Western observations of Chinese warfare have led to the absurd and totally incorrect conclusion that such practices not only characterized Chinese military history but continue to do so !)

engagements.¹⁰⁹ However, because Chinese martial thinkers from antiquity through Mao Zedong have always stressed men and courage, the two comprise heritage concepts difficult to contravene. Therefore, although struggling mightily to reconcile the two perspectives, contemporary PLA theoreticians generally adhere to the traditional, less controversial viewpoint.

Even though morale remains a fundamental issue, it no longer is a required topic for thematic discussion. Concerns with courage and *qi* have been displaced by professionalization, training, preparation of the reserves, logistics, the expanding battlefield, cyber warfare, and such buzzword topics as informatization and digitization. Articles that previously would have stressed spirit and morale now speak of unifying the army and populace, of nurturing the people's self-belief. The theme of worker self-sacrifice, long expressed by stories of heroic performance in tedious work, has similarly disappeared in its old form, too disdained and outmoded to have continued veracity or appeal in the modern world.

However, neither courage nor confidence in its importance have really been abandoned, just their widespread articulation, much as in Western professional military literature. (Whether deemed a non-issue because men have willingly gone to battle in the last decade or simply left to active training measures to develop, key journals such as *Military Review*, *Proceedings*, *Parameters*, and *Marine Corps Gazette* rarely discuss the nature, role, and nurturing of courage.) China still has heroes and within the context of a focal reorientation theoreticians have been consciously discussing the need to extol

¹⁰⁹ For example, Zhao Wanxu in his "Ye Tan Zhanzheng Shengfu de Jueding Yinsu" ("On Decisive Factors in the Outcome of War"), *Junshi Kexue* (JSKX) 2003:2, 134-140. "Shock and awe" have been a discussion topic for more than a decade. (For an example, see Teng Jiangqun, "Zhenjulun de Yulai, Shizhi ji Yunyong" ("Origin, Essence and Application of 'Shock and Awe'"), *Junshi Kexue* 2003:3, 144-150.

them, whether chosen from historical times, modern armed struggles, or non-military events including the recent Sichuan earthquake.¹¹⁰

Beginning in the middle 1980s, reportedly at the behest of Ma Zedong, military psychology became a focal topic, resulting in a reorientation and the publication of several basic texts.¹¹¹ Thereafter, about 1998 a new thrust reportedly initiated by Jiang Zemin resulted in political work and military psychology being combined, producing what might be termed a pseudo-psychology, a concatenation of Marxist doctrine, martial concepts, and actual psychological principles in which courage and *qi* have essentially ceased to be targeted for manipulation in the ancient manner. The intent is that the troops will fight decisively, sacrifice themselves for the cause, and be resilient. Great stress is placed upon all actions being directed by the party and defined by political objectives rather than the nature and context of the battle itself.

Despite the production of psychological handbooks, the emphasis thus falls more on performance and measures for achieving it within an institutional context than on the dynamics of the psychological and emotional factors normally identified as courage. Noncommissioned officers continue to be entrusted with enforcing discipline and ensuring battlefield performance but they have been essentially relegated to the background. Discussions about their responsibilities in developing courage seldom appear except in training manuals that rarely circulate externally. Surprisingly, essays on the need for draconian punishments, reputed to be common in the PLA, are similarly absent.

¹¹⁰ The conspicuous presence of the nine year old boy who had helped rescue his classmates from the ruins of their school and become a hero at the 2008 Beijing Olympics opening ceremony is an example of manipulating a heroic symbol for stimulative purposes.

¹¹¹ For example, Junshi Xinlixue, Junshi Xinlixue Gailun, and Junshi Xinlixue Jiaocheng.

The focus of this re-conceptualization, part of the ongoing process of formulating China's new military science, is an aggregate known as "combat spirit" (*zhandou jingshen*). Over the past few years a number of theoretical articles in prominent PRC professional military publications including *Junshi Kexue* (*China Military Science*) and *Guofang* (*National Defense*) have focused on combat spirit and the implications for psychological and digitized warfare.¹¹² In addition, a dedicated section incorporating seven papers from a conference held in June 2005 on "Strengthening Combat Spirit and Raising the Capability for Victory" was immediately published in the fourth (July/August) issue of *Junshi Kexue* released toward the end of the year.¹¹³

¹¹² Among the most important are Wang Zhen, "Tali Hongyang Tingdang Zhihui, Fuwu Renmin, Yingyong Shanzhan de Youliang Chuantong" ("Carry on the Glorious Traditions of Following Leadership by the Party, Serving the People and Fighting Heroically and Skillfully"), JSKX 2008:1, 68-73; Zhao Wanxu, "Ye Tan Zhanzheng Shengfu de Jueding Yinsu" ("On Decisive Factors in the Outcome of War"), JSKX 2003:2, 134-140; Han Qufeng, "Makesi Zhuyi Zhanlue Xinlizhan Lilun Yanjiu" ("A Study of the Theory of Marxist Strategic Psychological Warfare"), JSKX 2004:4, 34-41; Wang Baoshan and Li Peng, "Jianlun Zhanlue Xinlizhan de Jiben Tedian" ("On the Basic Features of Strategic Psychological Warfare"), JSKX 2004:4, 42-47; and Peng Huaidong, "Lun Zhandou Jingshen: ('On Combat Spirit'), JSKX 2003:4, 53-60.

¹¹³ Although the section is titled "Zhandou Jingshen Lilun Yanjiu" ["Research into Theories of Combat Spirit"], the appended English translation is "Theoretical Study of Combat Spirits." The conference's theme -- "Qianghua Zhandou Jingshen, Tigao Daying Nengli" is officially subtitled "Enhancing Combat Spirits and Improving Capabilities to Win." (Whenever titles and references are noted, the English versions, if any, provided in the various journals will appear in parentheses with occasional corrections or alternates to these rough translations appearing in brackets at first mention.) The seven are Junshi Kexueyuan Junshi Lishi Yanjiusuo, "Tali Hongyang Renmin Jundui Ganda Bisheng de Zhandou Jingshen" ("Carry Forward the Dare-to-fight and Dare-to-win Combat Spirit of the People[s] Army") JSKX 2005:4, 65-74; Luo Jianming and Xu Anmin, "Qianghua Budui Zhandou Jingshen de Bianzheng Sikao" ("Dialectical Thinking on Enhancing Army Combat Spirits"), JSKX 2005:4, 75-79; Ma Gensheng and Wang Yi, "Luelun Xinxihua Zhanzheng Dui Zhandou Jingshen te Xin Yaoqiu" ("On the New Requirements of Information Warfare on Combat Spirits"), JSKX 2005:4, 80-83; Shen Guoquan and Zhu Fangqin, "Shixi Xinxihua Tiaojianxia Junshi Zhihui Rencai de Zhandou Jingshen" ("An Analysis of Combat Spirits of Military Talents under Information Conditions"), JSKX 2005:4, 84-89; Liu Fang and Yuan Xiao, "Feilixing Yinsu: Zhandou Jingshen Peiyu Xin de Shengchangdian" ("Irrational Factors: New Growing Points for Cultivating Combat Spirits"), JSKX 2005:4, 90-96; Li Xicheng, "Zhandou Jingshen de Hanyi ji Neirong Goucheng Qiantan" ("Comments on Implications and Contents of Combat Spirits"), JSKX 2005:4, 97-102, 150; Li Kunming and Chen Xiaoming, "Qianghua Zhandou Jingshen, Tigao Daying Nengli' Yantaohui Zongshu" ("Summary of the Symposium on 'Enhancing Combat Spirits and Improving Capabilities to Win'"), JSKX 2005:4, 151-156. These and the several listed in the previous footnote, supplemented by articles from *Guofang* (*National Defense*), form the basis for this analysis. (Hereafter they will be referred by Chinese title alone, and *Junshi Kexue* will be abbreviated as JSKX. It should be noted that because JSKX is a large format journal and a single page of text is equivalent to about four pages of English content, these articles are more substantial than page counts alone might suggest.)

Emphasizing the topic's importance, several books on courage and its realization as combat spirit have also appeared.¹¹⁴

Contemporary Chinese military science continues to incorporate many core concepts from the traditional writings including strategic power, deception, manipulation, the unorthodox, and victory without combat in a concerted quest to formulate doctrine and operational practices with "unique Chinese characteristics," yet the terms and very nature of any discussion of courage have changed dramatically.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless an undercurrent exists that recognizes the validity of ancient insights, generally expressed in essays by analysts who are troubled by the wholesale adoption of Western psychological concepts and prefer indigenous formulations for pondering motivation. Moreover, in accord with the emphasis upon learning from tradition and integrating past heroic achievements, purely historical articles are also sometimes published (especially by those tasked with uncovering useful materials in traditional Chinese experience and theory) that exploit the antique but crucial concepts of courage, *qi*, and heroic commitment.¹¹⁶

Apart from focal articles, the questions of combat spirit are also frequently pondered in general considerations of contemporary training, preparation, professionalism, and psychological warfare. Recent years have seen increased

¹¹⁴ For example, *Zhandou Jingshe Lun* [Discussion of Combat Spirit], published in Beijing in 2004 by Peng Huaidong who appears to be one of the leading specialists.

¹¹⁵ For a brief discussion see Sawyer, "Chinese Strategic Power": Myths, Intent, and Projections," *JMSS* Winter 2006/2007, and for an extensive case study of the history and integration of the unorthodox in contemporary doctrine, see Sawyer, *The Tao of Deception: Unorthodox Warfare in Historic and Modern China* (New York: Basic, 2007).

¹¹⁶ Three recent examples are Chang Manquan, "Zhongguo Gudai Peiyu Jundui Zhandou Jingshen de Fanglue ji qi Qishi" ("Strategies and Inspirations of Cultivating Combat Spirits in Ancient Chinese Armies"), *JSKX* 2006:1, 100-108; Zhang Lancheng, "Lun Wei Liaozi de Junshi Sixiang ji qi Zhuyao Tese" ["Discussion of Wei Liaozi's Military Thought and its Important Special Characteristics"], *Junshi Lishi* 2007:6, 23-27; and Wu Baolin and Zhu Zhongliang, "Yingxiang Zhongguo Gudai Shangwu Jingshen Bianhua Yinsu de Fenxi" ("An Analysis of the Changing Factors that Affect[ed] Ancient Chinese Martial Spirit"), *JSKX* 2008:3, 120-124.

theoretical recognition accorded to the question of combat psychology and in addition to internally circulating PLA titles, the revised edition of the massive, semi-authoritative military encyclopedia *Zhongguo Junshi Baike Quanshu* has added a major section on “Junshi Xinlixue” (“Military Psychology”) that includes some 159 entries applying current psychological concepts to the military’s unique requirements. Organized under seven basic themes, the various elements of military psychology are identified, divided, subdivided, and then reintegrated in pseudoscientific ways that at times tend to dramatically diverge from accepted Marxist doctrine, but are invariably reigned in to cohere with established pronouncements and immutable principles.¹¹⁷ Insofar as it will henceforth provide the fundamentals for any discussion of combat spirit and martial psychology, a touchstone that establishes guidelines and principles that PLA officers would be foolish to contravene, it merits careful study in itself.¹¹⁸

Combat Spirit

The dynamic tension between men (or spirit) and material elements (or power) is generally resolved in the PRC by assigning primacy to the human component in accord with Marxist dictums, but recognizing that it is conditioned by, and reacts to, external material factors, with the degree of integration sometimes being said to constitute a third

¹¹⁷ The seven categories are the Psychology of the Soldier, Psychology of Combat, Psychological Warfare, Psychology of Military Training and Education, Psychology of Military Command, Political Work in the Army’s Thought, and Defense Psychology.

¹¹⁸ The value of the encyclopedia and degree to which it reflects actual military thought, despite great reliance upon it by Western analysts, is questionable, if only because it aims at comprehensiveness and includes all sorts of materials derived from the West, both accurate and inaccurate. Nevertheless, because the entries and essays encompass the official view and are readily available, they frequently furnish the content for the obligatory articles being penned by serving officers for various journals and localized PLA publications. (The encyclopedia’s articles on combat spirit and similar topics, while more comprehensive than any single article, lack the stridency and focus of essays in the various journals.)

discernible element.¹¹⁹ The very key to the army's success, occasionally even called the "soul" (!) of its fighting strength, has been, and continues to be, morale, just as Mao originally stated: "The contest of strength is not only a contest of military and economic power, but also a contest of human power and morale. Military and economic power is necessarily wielded by people."¹²⁰ Moreover, it is believed to function as a decisive multiplier in warfare, enabling highly motivated troops to prevail even when outnumbered, under-equipped, or otherwise fighting in disadvantageous circumstances.¹²¹

Although dictums from the great progenitors on the importance of courage are still cited,¹²² in recent years all discussions of courage, morale, and other emotional factors inherent to battlefield performance have been reoriented to speak almost exclusively about this new concept of *zhandou jingshen* or "combat spirit." Apart from historically oriented articles, Warring States theories and concepts are only occasionally

¹¹⁹ "Qianghua Budui Zhandou Jingshen de Bianzheng Sikao," JSKX 2005:4, pp. 75-76; "Tali Hongyang Renmin Jundui Ganda Bisheng de Zhandou Jingshen," JSKX 2005:4, 65-67. Traditional Marxist doctrine has always identified two key factors -- men and weapons -- but (according to PRC interpretation) always stressed that men are the key factor (as might be expected from doctrines formulated in the mid-19th century when weapons were not so overwhelming in their impact). Some articles have therefore stressed the need to embody the Marxist viewpoint on warfare. (For example, "Tali Hongyang Tingdang Zhihui, Fuwu Renmin, Yingyong Shanzhan de Youliang Chuantong," JSKX 2008:1, 68-73.) The danger of deflating spirit when overly relying on weapons is also sometimes noted. (For example, "Tali Hongyang Renmin Jundui Ganda Bisheng de Zhandou Jingshen," JSKX 2005:4, page 74. There are disparaging references in this and other articles to U.S. attempts to "fight without casualties" and claims that the illusion of relying solely on weapons is punctuated by the failure of decapitation and shock and awe efforts in Iraq (even as they note, with a combination of pride and disdain, that Americans prevailed in Iraq by employing the methods of the People's Liberation Army which are of course the traditional methods of Chinese military thought.)

¹²⁰ On Protracted War" (May 1938), Selected Military Writings of Mao Tse-tung, (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1966), pp. 217-8. (Mao continued to espouse this view even in the face of atomic weapons.) The eight operational principles enunciated in "Strategy for the Second Year of the War of Liberation" (dated to Sept. 1, 1947) include avoiding combat in which victory will not result and "giving full play to our fine style of fighting -- courage in battle, no fear of sacrifice, no fear of fatigue, and continuous fighting." (Selected Military Writings of Mao Tse-tung, p. 323.) This view is explicitly stated in numerous articles including Xiao Weixiong, "Qianghua 'Sange Jiaoyu' Peiyu Minbing Zhandou Jingshen," Guofang 2006:12, p. 47; "Qianghua Zhandou Jingshen, Tigao Daying Nengli' Yantaohui Zongshu," JSKX 2005:4, 151-156; "Tali Hongyang Renmin Jundui Ganda Bisheng de Zhandou Jingshen," JSKX 2005:4, 65-7; and, emphasizing Marxist views, "Makesi Zhuyi Zhanlue Xinlizhan Lilun Yanjiu," JSKX 2004:4, page 40.

¹²¹ See "Lun Zhandou Jingshen," JSKX 2003:4, p. 59; "Feilixing Yinsu: Zhandou Jingshen Peiyu Xin de Shengchangdian," JSKX 2005:4, 90-91; "Zhandou Jingshen de Hanyi ji Neirong Goucheng Qiantan," JSKX 2005:4, 98-99.

¹²² For example, in his "Lun Zhandou Jingshen" (p. 55) Peng Huaidong cites Mao that courage (*yonggan*), "not fearing death," is the fundamental factor.

cited, though modern equivalents such as *junxin shiqi* (military mind / officer's spirit) for the antique term *xin qi* (mind *qi*) are frequently noted. References are sometimes even seen to Mencius' *haoran zhi qi*, though usually as "overflowing (*haoran*) upright (*zheng*) *qi*" which is conceived as embodied by people fighting for their country while being unaffected by riches, poverty, or awesome military power.¹²³

The various factors proposed as core constituents of combat spirit are envisioned by this newly formulated science of combat psychology in varying, highly detailed, and often convoluted relationships that can only be outlined here.¹²⁴ Although courage and the army's *qi* are no longer objects for direct manipulation in the traditional manner, the newly identified factors are in turn targeted for nurturing and intensifying, but always within a highly constrained political context. However, debilitating the enemy's *qi* in its guise as combat spirit remains critical, having become the focus of psychological warfare.

In addition to its inescapable material basis, combat spirit is seen as comprised by both rational and irrational factors. The former encompasses the army's character, doctrine, training (in contemporary modes of warfare), political education, warfare objectives, tradition, historical consciousness, and an emphasis on professionalism or obeying commands and regulations. The irrational primarily consists of emotions such as anger and revenge, revolutionary spirit, (righteous) motivation, and temperament. It is sometimes further characterized as being composed of warrior *qi*, the fighting will,

¹²³ "Tali Hongyang Renmin Jundui Ganda Bisheng de Zhandou Jingshen," JSKX 2005: 4, pp. 67-68.

¹²⁴ While there are certain formulas and a generally consistent approach to these new discussions, the factors identified and the terms that might be employed by any single analyst vary considerably, with authors sometimes speaking of "warrior *qi*," at other times the "will to do battle." Furthermore, the turgid banter currently being generated often employs what might be considered "sanctioned" terminology with rather different intent, resulting in somewhat divergent concepts despite the apparent orthodoxy of the discussion.

physical courage, belief in certain victory, resoluteness, optimism, self-confidence, physical capacity (including the ability to function while enduring pain), and especially patriotism, which is viewed as the core.¹²⁵

The recognition of combat spirit underpins all concrete measures to foster and enhance it, while its cultivation depends upon combining the irrational factors with the rational elements that should shape and inform the former.¹²⁶ Various formulas are seen, but generally it is assumed that there is a basic need for the people to esteem, if not embrace, martial spirit, to value and emulate the heroic behavior that made the PRC possible.¹²⁷ No doubt echoing Sunzi's "hundred victories in a hundred engagements," the ideal is sometimes expressed as "victory in every engagement, the defeat of every enemy."¹²⁸

In a break with externally imposed, blanket training, a few analysts have proposed that in view of this irrational basis the core emotional factors subsumed by combat spirit should consciously be made the object of self-cultivation. Moreover, because combat spirit is a synthetic creation, political education must provide the orientation, content, and ideals necessary to solidify the will and ensure the capability to fight under all conditions, to elicit total commitment and decisiveness in battle.¹²⁹ Its development relies upon knowledge, wisdom, and introspection; its perfection requires unremitting individual effort and thus inescapably reflects the lengthy martial arts

¹²⁵ "Qianghua Budui Zhandou Jingshen de Bianzheng Sikao," JSKX 2005:4, p. 75; "Feilixing Yinsu: Zhandou Jingshen Peiyu Xin de Shengchangdian," JSKX 2005:4, 90-96; and "Tali Hongyang Renmin Jundui Ganda Bisheng de Zhandou Jingshen," JSKX 2005:4, 65-7. "Revolutionary spirit" is sometimes classified as a rational factor.

¹²⁶ "Zhandou Jingshen de Hanyi ji Neirong Goucheng Qiantan," JSKX 2005:4, pp. 100-102.

¹²⁷ "Qianghua Budui Zhandou Jingshen de Bianzheng Sikao," JSKX 2005:4, 75-79, and "Tali Hongyang Renmin Jundui Ganda Bisheng de Zhandou Jingshen," JSKX 2005:4, pp. 73-74.

¹²⁸ See, for example, "Lun Zhandou Jingshen," JSKX 2003:4, p. 53. (The ideal is usually expressed as a double or exclusionary negative -- "there will be no cases of not being victorious in combat.")

¹²⁹ See, among many, "Qianghua Budui Zhandou Jingshen de Bianzheng Sikao," JSKX 2005:4, p. 76.

tradition of *duanlian* or intensively working upon oneself to forge new capabilities.¹³⁰

Combat spirit is characterized as being affected by external stimuli and in turn affecting others because it is socially derived and can be elicited as part of group activity, the latter being the very essence of military effort. Whenever fervent combat spirit materializes it can contagiously expel any fears plaguing the troops as well as cower the enemy because it exists in a reciprocal relationship with the enemy's combat spirit.¹³¹ Moreover, as Mao and Marxism frequently assert, it is viewed as productively stimulated through combat itself because the battlefield requires courage, resilience, revolutionary self-sacrifice, unity, and cohesive group action.¹³² Lacking the dangers and horrors of warfare, peacetime efforts must necessarily be redoubled, virtually constant, and conducted under the most realistic conditions possible.¹³³

Because they lacked material resources, the PLA early on necessarily emphasized the notion that courage, self-sacrifice, resolve, and especially courage or spirit are the crucial components in any combat situation. Thus, in discussing the "inevitability" of Japan's forthcoming defeat, Mao asserted that China is "quantitatively superior in territory, population and troops, and also superior in the morale of her people and army and their patriotic hatred of the enemy."¹³⁴ It continues to be axiomatic that surpassing combat spirit coupled with the courage to fight for certain victory will supplement any technological or material deficiency and enable the inferior to defeat the superior.

¹³⁰ It is frequently asserted that wisdom, unorthodox warfare, and cleverness will not only allow the PLA to prevail in impossible circumstances, but will also inspire the confidence to fight fervently.

¹³¹ "Zhandou Jingshen de Hanyi ji Neirong Goucheng Qiantan," JSKX 2005:4, pp. 98-99.

¹³² "Tali Hungyang Tingdang Zhihui, Fuwu Renmin, Yingyung Shanzhan de Youliang Chuantong," JSKX 2008:1, p. 72, and "Tali Hongyang Renmin Jundui Ganda Bisheng de Zhandou Jingshen," JSKX 2005:4, p. 66.

¹³³ See, for example, "Zhandou Jingshen de Hanyi ji Neirong Goucheng Qiantan," JSKX 2005:4, pp. 101-102, 150.

¹³⁴ Selected Military Writings of Mao Tse-tung (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1966), p. 237.

This belief, which can lead to arrogance, military adventurism, and strategic miscalculation,¹³⁵ is commonly seen as having been historically attested in three conflicts in which the only assets were ill trained, under equipped men who willingly expended themselves in fervent human wave assaults: the war against Japan, revolutionary battle with the Guomindang (Kuo-min-tang, KMT), and resistance against “American imperialism” in Korea.¹³⁶ These conflicts are, of course, highly propagandized or myopically interpreted: American and KMT contributions in World War II are never mentioned, and the entire conflict with UN troops in Korea is usually just reduced to a clash between PRC and “aggressor” US forces.¹³⁷ Moreover, it is generally averred that superior wisdom, strong leadership, and unorthodox tactics shaped these victories.

Political Work

Political work, long the foundation of Marxist control measures, remains crucial to shaping the military enterprise and instilling the proper values and motivation in both the people and the troops.¹³⁸ Intended to educate the people in the Party’s doctrine and objectives, political work essentially strives to achieve what Sunzi termed “unification in

¹³⁵ It might be noted that leaders as well as troops have historically tended to underestimate the enemy’s courage while assuming that their own superior resolve and fighting spirit will ensure prevailing, however disadvantageous the circumstances. (For a recent discussion see Douglas Ford, “Strategic Culture, Intelligence Assessment, and the Conduct of the Pacific War: The British-Indian and Imperial Japanese Armies in Comparison, 1941-1945,” *War in History* 2007:1, pp. 63-95.)

¹³⁶ Interestingly, the Sino-Indian conflict and the Vietnam debacle which is, however, assessed as a strategic victory despite their rather summary battlefield defeat, are never mentioned.

¹³⁷ For example, see “Tali Hongyang Renmin Jundui Ganda Bisheng de Zhandou Jingshen,” *JSKX* 2005:4, pp. 65-67. The various battle compendiums and Chinese military encyclopedias, especially the *Zhongguo Junshi Baike Chuanshu*, generally express this point of view, transmuting the contribution of KMT forces -- when they are even mentioned -- into achievements by “Chinese forces” under particular generals. Korean conflict reprisals are much more perfunctory than previously, but can be escalated to generate greater fervor depending upon the requirements of the political context at the time of writing.

¹³⁸ Wen Mingqiang, “Jiaqiang Junshi Douzheng Zhengzhi Gongzuo Zhunbei de Jike Sikao,” *Guofang* 2007:9, pp. 47-48; “Qianghua Zhandou Jingshen, Tigao Daying Nengli’ Yantaohui Zongshu,” *JSKX* 2005:4, pp. 151-156; “Tali Hongyang Renmin Jundui Ganda Bisheng de Zhandou Jingshen,” *JSKX* 2005:4, p. 73.

the Dao": "The Dao causes the people to be fully in accord with the ruler. Thus they will die with him, they will live with him and not fear danger."¹³⁹ The current context seems to be oriented to increasing the intellectual sophistication of the dialogue even as they operationally revert to the use of political officers who provide unremitting indoctrination throughout the soldiers' training.

However, the PRC's earlier, large scale efforts to essentially militarize the populace have largely been foregone because of the conscious shift to a digitized, professional force, but the preparation of reserve components and imbuing all citizens with their probable military obligations in the event of conflict has not been entirely abandoned. Political officials have also disappeared from the factories and now defunct communes, but continue in army units. Programs that would be anathema in North America or Europe begin at the primary school level and continue through high school.

A second fundamental tenet stresses the need to create functional units and nurture the bonds necessary for people to forget their self-interest and perform courageously in order to ensure the survival of their comrades and the unit.¹⁴⁰ Basic military practice as well, the emphasis has shifted from the mutual guarantee system that relied upon extreme draconian punishments prevalent in antiquity to a combination of incentives and disincentives framed within a context of surpassing cohesiveness. Much of the burden no doubt falls upon the non-commissioned officers, but another antique concept -- the power of shame as expressed in the sometimes cited Spring and Autumn pronouncement "illuminate shame and teach warfare"-- is also deliberately exploited in political warfare work to provoke anger, nurture combat spirit, and stimulate

¹³⁹ "Initial Estimations."

¹⁴⁰ See, for example, "Tali Hongyang Renmin Jundui Ganda Bisheng de Zhandou Jingshen," JSKX 2005:4, p. 72.

the resolve necessary to group together and act courageously. Although Manchu rule surprisingly escapes discussion (apart from the initial ignomy of conquest), articles heavily pervaded by the arrogance of suppressed superiority constantly appear that exploit the self-perception of China as a victim and remind people of shameful historical incidents and atrocities in which China suffered severely, particularly at the hands of the West.¹⁴¹ Accordingly, considerable attention is paid to the psychology of motivation, typically in terms of emphasizing the righteous nature of revolutionary warfare, fighting for a just cause, and being courageous in battling the repressive nations of the world.¹⁴²

Political work must also ensure that combat spirit is informed by wisdom, constrained by discipline and regulations, and only resorted to in the service of appropriate objectives, never blindly unleashed. The tension between socially productive manifestations of courage and the inimical antisocial behavior of bravos, brigands, and bad actors consciously articulated in antiquity thus remains relevant in contemporary China. Virtually every article that contemplates the need to esteem martial values and nurture courageous spirit at least mentions, if not decries, the resurgent tendency to individual, unconstrained or misdirected expressions of courage. Some even focus upon this problem in view of the rising crime rate and the growing disdain for laws and order, almost invariably advocating a solution that consists almost

¹⁴¹ An interesting article in *Guofang* discusses how other countries exploit "national shame" and exploit the remembrance of earlier sacrifices in national cemeteries, martyr's tombs, and war monuments to imbue the populace with appropriate feelings and patriotic fervor. (See Ch'en Chen and Li P'eng, "Waiguo Guochi Jiaoyu Yiple," *Guofang* 2007:5, pp. 32-33.) Shame is one of the elements of *guofang daode qinggan jiaoyu*, emotional education in defense morality.

¹⁴² Naturally there is never any specific discussion that "fighting against" is essentially negative even though the PLA largely fought against the established powers, though with the purported purpose of effecting creating a new state rather than merely mounting a revolution.

solely of increased educational and political work to ensure that the people know and adhere to the regulations.¹⁴³

Heritage and Heroes

Patriotism is viewed as the most powerful emotional factor in combat spirit and thus the crucial irrational element that must be nurtured if the people are to sacrifice themselves for the state.¹⁴⁴ Contemporary orthodox thinkers further believe that combat spirit has a strong historical character which, when nurtured over time through political work, results in fearing neither hardship nor death. Apart from commanding attention and being interesting in themselves, historical heroes have always been deemed essential for stimulating courage and providing models for emulation. However, recent articles have stressed not only their role in engendering patriotism, but also society's broader need for heroic figures.¹⁴⁵ While emphasizing the tradition of revolutionary heroism and esteeming martial consciousness, discussions in *Junshi Kexue* and *Guofang* thus speak in terms of systematically magnifying and raising (*hong yang*) the courageous actions of the past, of lionizing heroes and extolling China's martial heritage under the "new historical conditions."¹⁴⁶

Although the focus tends to fall upon the "special characteristics and achievements of the Chinese revolutionary movement," defeat of Japan, and the

¹⁴³ See, for example, "Hu Zhifei Zhengbing Buzheng zhi Feng Tanwei," *Guofang* 2008:8, pp. 54-56; "Lun Zhandou Jingshen," *JSKX* 2003:4, 53-60; "Tali Hongyang Renmin Jundui Ganda Bisheng de Zhandou Jingshen," *JSKX* 2005:4, pp. 65-7; "Zhandou Jingshen de Hanyi ji Neirong Goucheng Qiantan," *JSKX* 2005:4, p.102.

¹⁴⁴ Xiao Weixiong, "Qianghua 'Sange Jiaoyu' Peiyu Minbing Zhandou Jingshen," *Guofang* 2006:12, p. 47. This is a constant theme in most of the articles discussed herein but see especially "Zhandou Jingshen de Hanyi ji Neirong Guocheng Qiantan," *JSKX* 2005:4, pp. 100-102.

¹⁴⁵ Wang Qiandu, "Shouxi Wojun de Yingxiong Mofan," *Guofang* 2005:10, pp. 77-78.

¹⁴⁶ For example see "Tali Hungyang Tingdang Zhihui, Fuwu Renmin, Yingyung Shanzhan de Youliang Chuantong." The "spirit of revolutionary heroism" is viewed as encompassing unwavering idealistic confidence, heroic courage, risk taking (such as "jumping into boiling water and treading on fire"), and fearless self-sacrifice.

Korean conflict, all the noteworthy accomplishments of ancestral figures stretching back to the cultural progenitors who resolutely battled evil and perversity (such as the Yellow Emperor) as recorded in traditional historical writings are seen as potential stimuli for pride and confidence.¹⁴⁷ After some decades of trying to repress martial fervor among the people, because of its stimulus value it's been deemed important to flourish this heritage, to make people aware of China's glorious martial tradition.

Not unexpectedly for a country whose history is not just dominated by warfare but marked by carnage on an unimaginable scale, this vibrant martial tradition has long been pervasive.¹⁴⁸ Millions repeatedly perished in extended conflicts, entire towns were slaughtered, and incendiary and aquatic attacks were employed to decimate cities such as Kaifeng, then populated by perhaps 400,000 doomed souls.¹⁴⁹ As a result martial themes, heroism, strength, and interest in tactics and strategy remain ubiquitous, finding expression in every form of contemporary media including newspapers, comic books, operas, television serializations, movies (such as *Hero* and *Red Cliffs*), games, and the internet. Numerous biographies are published annually, books explore historical battles, and vast compendiums of strategy and military history (such as the two volume *Zhandian* or *Battle Dictionary*) preserve the actions and achievements of the past, greatly simplifying the task of stimulation.

In addition, the PRC has long remade ordinary citizens into heroes and deliberately exploited those who emerge on the battlefield for its own purpose, often by

¹⁴⁷ "Qianghua Budui Zhandou Jingshen de Bianzheng Sikao," JSKX 2005:4, 75-79; "Lun Zhandou Jingshen," JSKX 2003:4, pp. 57-58; Tang Guanghong, "Luxing Jundui Lishi Shiming Tuijin Zhandou Jingshen de Jicheng yu Chuangxin" ("Implement Army Historic Mission and Promote Inheritance and Creation of Combat Spirits"), JSKX 2006:1, pp. 22-27. (Although the literati generally disparaged courage, the dynastic histories are replete with extraordinary martial figures. In addition, a famous text known as the *Lienu Chuan* has provided portraits of heroic women for emulation, though primarily defined by concepts of Confucian virtue and loyalty to the family.)

¹⁴⁸ For a brief discussion see Sawyer, "Chinese Strategic Power."

¹⁴⁹ For historical discussion and examples, see Sawyer, *Fire and Water* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004).

ignoring detrimental implications and inimical aspects. Highly extolled figures in the 1950s and 1960s often came from the non-military realm, “common people” who had made extraordinary efforts (within Party parameters) to benefit society and frequently perished in their struggles. But apart from a few suddenly thrust onto the national stage (such as the 9 year-old Sichuan hero) they have temporarily disappeared, having become tired and outdated in a high velocity materialistic society and displaced by traditional martial heroes being revived for military purposes.

Not just the type of heroes but also the media for their portrayal has shifted significantly. Depictions in turgid propaganda tracts (and localized political talks) from New China’s early days such as *Red Flag* and even *China Reconstructs*, formerly tedious obligatory reading for Party members, have been replaced by historical sketches in serious academic journals including *Junshi Shilin (Military History Miscellany)*, *Junshi Lishi (Military History)*, and *Guofang*; more dramatic and popularly oriented publications ranging from local PLA newspapers and journals to the nationally circulated *Junshi Wenzhai (Military Digest)* which is a vehicle for stirring stories intended to “stimulate the heart” and “awaken wisdom”; and PLA websites, where discussions of traditional heroes are often found intermixed with debates about the perversities of China’s enemies, the means to overcome them, and how they will wither before China’s resolve.¹⁵⁰

Whether originally obscure or highly prominent, the antique heroes currently being revisited in local PLA publications and appearing in the staid pages of the internationally circulated *Guofang (National Defense)* were not simply courageous

¹⁵⁰ These self-pumping or confidence building sessions sometimes become too angry, exuberant, or revealing of tactics and operational secrets, and have to be removed. (*Guofang* [2006:12, pp. 73-4] even reached back to the Han to do a stimulative biography of the great steppe fighter Li Guang.)

soldiers but invariably surpassing generals and highly motivated patriots who tenaciously fought foreign invaders, either in imperial service or in command of spontaneously raised loyalist forces.¹⁵¹ Frequently beset by opposition and criticized by appeasers, a few were even sacrificed by cowardly emperors obsessed with their own pleasure and survival.¹⁵² However, peasants such as Liu Bang and Zhu Yuanzhang who overthrew established governments to found the Han and Ming dynasties respectively continue to be ignored because of the implications of their actions against established authority.¹⁵³

Yue Fei stands foremost among the famous patriots of old, his heroism and loyalty having long been known to every schoolchild from tales, television cartoons, comic books, and deliberate classroom instruction. Party organs never tire of reprising his story and extolling the virtues manifest by his life, particularly his courage in the effete Song court and on the battlefield, and *Guofang* reviewed his career for its audience of serving officers in its July, 2006 edition.¹⁵⁴ The Republic of China (Taiwan) named a frigate after him in the 1990s and for centuries he has been identified as the progenitor of the Xingyi form of martial arts, though without real substantiation.

A great fighter and natural leader whose mother had the four characters *jing zhong bao guo* (“repay the state with unswerving loyalty”) tattooed on his back when he

¹⁵¹ The generals recently extolled in the pages of *Guofang* include Wu Qi, Sun Bin, Hu Dan, Ma Yuan, Sima Dan, and Meng Tian, all of whom had to battle not just enemy forces but also government intransigence and stupidity.

¹⁵² Because their beliefs and behavior echoed Sunzi's assertion of the necessary independence of the commander in the field, they inherently imply that authority may be challenged, contrary to the emphasis upon Party control. However, this aspect has apparently been deliberately overlooked in view of their courage and self-sacrifice for China.

¹⁵³ Zhu should have been acceptable because he fought the Mongols to establish the Ming, but of course suffers from the defect of having attained royal power.

¹⁵⁴ Jiang Wenhua, “Kang Jin Mingjiang Yueh Fei: Jingzhong Baoguo, Guangzhao Riyue,” *Guofang* 2006:7, 83-85. Yue Fei is so famous that even the English language version of Wikipedia devotes a lengthy entry to him and he is routinely mentioned in PLA articles that discuss the use of heroes such as “Zhandou Jingshen de Hanyi ji Neirong Goucheng Qiantan.” (The accounts of currently popular heroes that appear here are abstracted from recent PLA publications, not original historical materials such as the dynastic histories, and therefore sometimes differ significantly from commonly circulating or more “objective” accounts. The nature of such discrepancies is well worth investigating.)

first joined the military, Yue participated in the Chinese resistance against the Jurchen of the Jin dynasty right after they extinguished the Liao in 1125 and forced the Song southward by conquering Kaifeng in 1127. An astute student of the classic military writings, he stressed adaptability and immediate response in exercising command and bequeathed a number of frequently quoted pronouncements including, “Employing the army lies in first determining strategy. Strategy is the crux of victory and defeat. Thus the Dao of the general is not to be concerned about (the army’s) lack of courage but to be troubled about its lack of strategy.”

Mao Zedong admired Yue’s adaptability even though it proved inadequate in the face of pusillanimous officials and a weak, self-serving emperor. In 1138 a peace agreement was concluded that he vehemently opposed, predicting that it would certainly be violated. In 1140 the Jin did in fact mount an invasion that finally prompted a concerted Song response; however, it was eventually subverted by appeasers who feared Yue’s growing success and vilified him as a potential threat. After another disadvantageous treaty was signed, Yue Fei was executed at Jin’s behest in 1141 on false charges, precipitating a strong but futile response among the people.

Yueh Fei initiated a line of patriots who were highly conscious of the courage and self-sacrifice of their predecessors and deliberately sought to emulate them. Two have recently been accorded renewed attention, the well-known Wen Tianxiang (1236-1283) of the Southern Song and the relatively inconspicuous Zhang Huangyan who had the misfortune to live at the end of the Ming.¹⁵⁵

Wen Tianxiang, whose image may still be found in a side gallery of most Confucian temples, was born shortly after the Mongols extinguished the Jin dynasty that

¹⁵⁵ All three have entries in the *Zhongguo Junshi Baike Chuanshu* (Comprehensive Chinese Military Encyclopedia.)

had sundered China into two for more than a century and begun their onslaught on the Song remnants compressed below the Yangzi River.¹⁵⁶ Despite being a high government civil -- rather than martial -- official, Wen vociferously opposed appeasing the Mongols, argued fervently for not just mounting a resolute defense but actively taking aggressive action, and even exhausted his family's wealth to fund a private army of nearly 20,000.¹⁵⁷ Despite training them well, they were eventually vanquished and he was ironically appointed as a peace negotiator by the Song, allowing the Mongols to simply imprison him.

Wen managed to escape, rejoin patriotic Song forces, and battle the Mongols until 1276 when his troops were summarily defeated and he was captured after failing at a suicide attempt. Despite three years of persuasion and torture he neither acknowledged the Yuan's legitimacy nor acceded to their demands, remaining obdurate even when the Mongols achieved final victory in 1279 and surprisingly sought to appoint him to a high military position. Exasperated, they finally executed him for his adamant refusal to surrender or even recognize their government.

In addition to his fervent but futile military efforts, Wen is well known for a number of poems that celebrate patriotism, including the "Zheng Qi Ge" or "Song of Upright Qi." His most frequently quoted couplet, one cited by several national heroes and well-known throughout subsequent history, may be translated: "From antiquity, who among humans has not died? Let my sincere heart illuminate the bamboo records."

¹⁵⁶ Guofang recently extolled him as a great example of patriotic courage and self-sacrifice. See Wu Yi, "Rensheng zi Ku Shei Wusi, Liuqu Danxin Zhao Hanqing -- Nan Song KangYuan Yingxiong Wen Tianxiang," GF 2007:9, pp. 79-80. (His biography may be found in the Song Shi, juan 418.)

¹⁵⁷ Despite Chinese government efforts to disburse or quell them to avoid "antagonizing" the enemy. A number of righteous armies spontaneously arose to oppose foreign invaders in the Song and other periods and under inspired and tactically knowledgeable leadership a few even achieved astonishing success. (Contrary to the "new views" of revisionist Western historians who argue otherwise, cowardly Song appeasers and weak emperors subverted these courageous fighters more than once.)

At the end of his struggle Zhang Huangyan, a great but relatively obscure patriot who resolutely fought the Manchus for nearly twenty years at the Ming's demise, was poignantly aware that he had been reliving Wen Tianxiang's life.¹⁵⁸ He also drew inspiration from Yue Fei and another local hero, Yu Qian, wanted to be buried near them, and similarly bequeathed vibrant inspirational lines that are still quoted today.¹⁵⁹ As the Manchus consolidated their control of the south in 1645, Zhang joined with others in the mountains who had formed righteous brigades and opposed the onrushing enemy. From his remote base he conducted guerilla raids and even risked more direct attacks before being forced back into the mountains.

In 1659 he mounted a conjoined campaign with Zheng Chenggong (or Koxinga, discussed below) that boldly penetrated Manchu defenses on the lower Yangzi River before they foolishly divided their forces and pursued separate objectives. Zhang successfully retook numerous districts but was eventually doomed when Zheng was defeated and abandoned further aggressive efforts, allowing the Manchus to concentrate their forces on him alone. Only through great personal battlefield prowess was he able to escape with a few troops and initiate what might be considered a precursor to Mao's famous Long March, a tortuous journey of some 2,000 *li* back to Zhedong. Pressed to surrender by the Qing, he wrote in reply that he would rather "leave behind upright *qi* in the interstice of Heaven and Earth." Finally captured in 1664 after nearly nineteen years of resistance even as others fled or simply became recluses, he similarly refused to acknowledge defeat despite being offered high military office and was eventually executed.

¹⁵⁸ Guofang discussed his exemplary life in its first issue of 2008: Mao Yuanyu, "Yeliu Zhengqi Zai Qian Kun -- Mingmo Gudan Yingxiong Zhang Huangyan," 74-75.

¹⁵⁹ Yu Qian was the subject of a similar article in the October 2007 issue of Guofang.

The current quest for attractive heroes that might be emulated has resulted in a few unlikely figures also being canonized. Although almost any great historical fighter might be selected, the tendency has been to lionize those well cloaked in the mantle of patriotism, such as Yue, Wen, and Zhang. Thus Zhang Fei, one of the darkly looming figures of traditional Chinese martial culture known primarily for his tempestuous ferocity has recently been ignored, just as the strategist and early national security advisor known as the Tai Gong despite him being nominally associated with the *Liutao*, a still highly regarded strategic work.¹⁶⁰

An attempt has recently been made to rehabilitate Guanyu (also known as Guan Gong), the great Three Kingdoms warrior revered for his loyalty as much as his martial prowess. Eventually apotheosized as the God of War, Guanyu continues to be honored with numerous temples of his own while his image resides in Confucian, Taoist, and sometimes even Buddhist temples. His decisiveness and resolute commitment have long been esteemed, but his loss of Jingzhou has always detracted from his reputation.

Entrusted to defend this pivotal area against Eastern Wu by Liu Bei, founder of the kingdom of Shu in the southwest, and Liu's famous strategist Zhuge Liang, Guanyu ultimately succumbed not to might, but to flattery and deception. Moreover, despite having just vanquished vastly superior Northern forces, he was easily defeated, seriously besmirching his reputation. In an obvious effort to redeem him even while cursorily acknowledging his lack of perspicacity, a brief article recently argued that blame for the defeat should be shared by, if not solely attributed to, Liu Bei and Zhuge

¹⁶⁰ For a complete translation of the *Liutao* or Six Secret Teachings see Sawyer, *Seven Military Classics of Ancient China*.

Liang because they failed to support Guanyu's highly exposed, inherently untenable position.¹⁶¹

Even more surprising has been a comparatively lengthy piece perhaps prompted by the immense popularity of a television serialization of his life some years ago that praised Zheng Chenggong (Koxinga), more a coastal military leader, brigand, and pirate than orthodox fighter, for his vigorous anti-Qing (Manchu) activities and recovery of Taiwan.¹⁶² Based in the southeast, he first became prominent around 1646, eventually grew his forces to more than 250,000 men and 2,300 vessels before suffering setbacks and encountering typhoons that twice devastated his fleet, compelling him to shift his base of operations seaward, out of the immediate reach of Qing forces.

In 1662 he attacked Taiwan, then partially occupied by the Dutch, with 350 ships and 20,000 men. Despite the difficulties of an amphibious assault, Zheng quickly achieved victory through bold strikes, severing the enemy's water supplies, twice defeating their supporting fleet, and finally overcoming the second of their two fortresses after disease had weakened the defenders. Once in control he rapidly moved to establish a rudimentary Ming style administration and implement important reforms but died somewhat mysteriously within six months.

Zheng's importance as a heroic figure within contemporary PLA thought derives from two aspects. First, he vigorously and successfully fought against invading Manchu

¹⁶¹ "Jingzhou zhi Shi, Dandan Shi Guan Yu Yiren zhi Guo Ma?" ["Was the Loss of Jingzhou Solely Guan Yu's Error?"], *Junshi Shihlin* 2008:6, 48-49. For a reprisal of the incident see "Arrogance" in the *Hundred Unorthodox Strategies*. (Although Zhuge Liang's achievements are extolled in a *Guofang* article in the May issue of 2007, his errors are also reprised in the November issue of *Junshi Shilin*, pp. 50-52, of 2007.)

¹⁶² Mao Yuanyou, "Qianqiu Daye Qu Hehu, Yidai Yingxiong Ci Xingge – Shoufu Taiwan de Minzu Yingxiong Zheng Chenggong," *Guofang* 2008:2, 78-79. Zheng was also the subject of a lengthy historical article by Zhang Xianqing in the March 2008 issue of *Xueshu Yuekan*, pp. 131-142. (For a brief but comprehensive account of Zheng's life see *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 7: The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644*, Frederick Mote and Denis Twitchett, ed. [Cambridge: University Press, 1988], 710-725.)

forces, engaging them in some eighty battles even though the Ming cause had become hopeless and his father had defected. In encouraging the emperor to continue resisting he reportedly cited Yue Fei's pronouncement, "When the civil officials do not love money and military officers do not begrudge death, the realm will be at peace." Second, he recovered Taiwan from foreign occupation, an avowed objective still unachieved by the PRC despite the many political and geo-strategic implications, including Taiwan's pivotal potential for constraining PRC naval mobility and projecting power seaward if recovered.

This second aspect is somewhat ironic because at the time, from the official "Chinese" government viewpoint -- that is, the Qing's because the Manchus had completed their subjugation of the mainland -- he was a rebel and a pawn of the now vanquished Ming instead of a commander acting in an official capacity. Rather than any integration in the greater Chinese realm (as currently implied), his actions temporarily ensured Taiwan's independence. Moreover, his unusual mixed parentage -- his mother having been Japanese -- and the family's early involvement in the highly militarized commercial and pirate activity carried out by coastal Chinese groups in conjunction with Japanese marauders that had plagued the Ming for more than a century would seem to have made him too controversial and potentially dangerous to qualify as a PLA icon. However, these factors are rarely mentioned in portraits of Zheng as a true national hero worthy of emulation.¹⁶³

¹⁶³ Despite the patriotic appeal of patriots and martyrs such as Zheng Chenggong, the PRC has reportedly adopted a policy of discouraging the production of additional anti-Qing television dramatizations that romanticize the futile efforts of small bands of dedicated Ming loyalists. The oligarchs clearly fear that the lesson learned will be rather contrary to their intent, that they will encourage people to oppose a regime that was imposed by force and founded on the foreign beliefs of Marxism and Leninism. Moreover, the government is now vulnerable to being charged with having betrayed the revolution and voices have already begun calling for a second revolution. The government's position is, of course, even more precarious in the highly suppressed regions of Tibet and Xinjiang where dissidents who have "not yet embraced the Party's enlightened rule" remain active.

Despite its recent tarnishing, the Long March also continues to be cited (albeit less frequently) in publications like *Junshi Shilin* and *Junshi Lishi* for the courage and resilience of the participants under extreme conditions of deprivation, their unwavering commitment to the revolutionary cause, and their willingness to sacrifice themselves. From another perspective, revolutionary courage (or its contemporary form, combat spirit) empowers the leadership to accept whatever casualties might be necessary to prevail as well as to slay the enemy.¹⁶⁴ However, contrary to antiquity, the idea that a commander had to be willing to sustain enormous losses to achieve his objective is no longer praised, perhaps to avoid undermining the enthusiasm of the troops.

Nevertheless, this basic willingness is now frequently contrasted with a perceived US fear of sustaining casualties, one that not only supposedly prevailed at the outset of the Iraqi campaigns, but also reputedly characterized the US approach in Korea.¹⁶⁵ Envisioned as an arena for a clash of *qi*, Korea is in fact frequently described in terms of “spirit colliding with metal,” the former characterizing the Chinese mode of warfare, the latter American forces.¹⁶⁶ This not only provides a prompt for quips about the hollowness of American *qi*, it’s “lack of iron,” but also bombastic pronouncements about the course of future conflicts with the US that wax especially virulent on PLA websites.

In a few instances contemporary writers have recently admired the expression of martial spirit across the sweep of Western culture, beginning with the Greeks and especially Sparta.¹⁶⁷ It’s not just the death defying commitment of the famous 300 that

¹⁶⁴ “Zhandou Jingshen de Hanyi ji Neirong Goucheng Qiantan,” JSKX 2005:4, p. 98. Concern with the courage to slay the enemy reflects the sort of thinking seen in the Qi Haotian’s approach to warfare.

¹⁶⁵ For example, see “Tali Hongyang Renmin Jundui Ganda Bisheng de Zhandou Jingshen,” JSKX 2005:4, p. 70.

¹⁶⁶ For example, see “Lun Zhandou Jingshen,” JSKX 2003:4, pp. 57-58, and “Tali Hongyang Renmin Jundui Ganda Bisheng de Zhandou Jingshen,” JSKX 2005:4, p. 67. Chairman Mao also spoke about the superiority of Chinese will and spirit in Korea.

¹⁶⁷ Liu Junyu and Wu Yulin, “Yongshi zhi Xiang’ Sibata – Gu Xila Junshi Tiyu de Lanshang,” Guofang 2008:6, pp. 72-74.

has attracted attention, but the Spartans' fundamental approach to warfare; their fearless methods of deployment irrespective of odds; esteem for martial values; the participation of both men and women in the defense effort; and the idea of vigor being the substance of society.¹⁶⁸ Another essay discussed the evolution of the mounted medieval knights, including their professional military training, indomitable spirit, courage in individual combat, and values of loyalty,¹⁶⁹ and a few have even praised Joan of Arc.

Finally, despite lingering hatred for Japanese actions in World War II, in order to encourage the people to sacrifice themselves for the state one article recently even admired the suicidal commitment of Japanese *kamikaze* pilots at the end of the conflict.¹⁷⁰ (Other articles have openly praised Japan's *bushido* spirit and fervor of Japanese troops, but being fraught with difficulty this approach has been little employed.)¹⁷¹ Unlike many expository exhortations, the authors outline the three modes of assault -- planes, miniature submarines, and small boats -- and provide fairly detailed figures for the destruction actually inflicted.

However, their focus is clearly upon the psychological impact of this quest to preserve the sacred homeland from invasion and extinction, particularly the fear and chaos they believe it achieved among American forces just when victory in the Pacific had seemed possible. Surprisingly in the light of heinous germ warfare tactics carried

¹⁶⁸ Surprisingly, the authors never compare Sparta to Qin, a state that similarly emphasized martial values but through different methods. Nor do they raise the greater subject of the divergent approaches of Athens and Sparta to eliciting courage, the former believing that citizen soldiers were best motivated to defend their homes, much in contrast to Sparta's draconian lifestyle and total immersion in martial values.

¹⁶⁹ Sun Chao and Wu Yulin, "Buqu de Qishi -- Zhongshiji Ouzhou Junshi Tiyu Gailan," *Guofang* 2008:7, pp. 77-79.

¹⁷⁰ Chen Yu and Lin Chichi, "Mantan Rijun Zisheshi Gongji Xingdong," *Junshi Shilin* 2007:11, pp. 46-49.

¹⁷¹ One article on bushido with a decidedly negative cast recently appeared in *Junshi Kexue* as part of a symposium on strategic cultures: Jiang Xinfeng, "Wushidao -- Bianyi de Riben Zhanlue Wenhua Jiyin" (Bushido -- Mutated Genes of Japanese Strategic Culture"), *JSKX* 2008:2, pp. 26-32.

out against China in World War II, they appreciatively outline the unorthodox bacterial warfare measures that were reportedly being formulated, including the use of “beautiful Japanese women” as one of three delivery methods. It is claimed that these unfortunates, who would have “voluntarily” chosen to sacrifice themselves, would become carriers of lethal diseases that could then be transmitted through prostitution or the willing seduction of American troops.

New Battlefield

Instead of simply fighting toe to toe, modern warfare is characterized as demanding the courage to act in a variety of situations ranging from the battlefield combat through launching nuclear strikes and enduring lengthy operations against an unseen enemy. The requirements of cyber warfare, digitized combat, and “localized warfare under high tech conditions” are said to entail greater psychological stress and demand more resilient combat spirit than historic conflicts.¹⁷² Although this may seem contrary to common understanding, especially for those who have experienced the chaos and horrors of recent battlefields where every sort of weapon might be employed to slay the enemy, it has become a fundamental tenet of current doctrine. However, there is a certain artificiality to this discussion, as if the authors are trying to convince themselves that courage is needed when it is more a question of endurance or resilience, though the latter is also emphasized despite being a far less stimulating topic.

Being irregular, constantly new, and unexpected, information warfare is perceived as a clash of both spirit and intelligence, inherently psychological, and

¹⁷² “Tali Hongyang Renmin Jundui Ganda Bisheng de Zhandou Jingshen” JSKX 2005:4, p. 72.

excessively taxing, requiring ingenuity, surpassing individual performance, self-reliance, and resilience as key components of the requisite spirit.¹⁷³ Under these conditions courageous *qi* and wisdom must be combined to effect new transformations and extemporaneously formulate new orthodoxies; strategic objectives must be clearly enunciated; party guidelines and doctrine imbued; and the fighters' ideals invariably unwavering.¹⁷⁴ Conversely, the danger of becoming immersed in the act itself and losing proper focus and orientation, allowing a surge of spirit to dictate foolhardy measures -- essentially the modern equivalent of Wu Qi's unbridled expression of courage -- must be avoided.¹⁷⁵

Because of the unexpected expansion of warfare across time and into multiple domains including politics, economics, foreign affairs, religion, and virtually every aspect of ordinary life, new forms of martially oriented political education and defensive measures designed to preserve and nurture the spirit required to survive the enemy's onslaughts must also be implemented. To secure victory in the three main realms of current and future warfare -- public opinion, psychological warfare, and legal warfare -- both the civil and martial must be employed, being integrated through ceaseless training to achieve the necessary level of courageous resilience.¹⁷⁶

Psychological Warfare

Always an important component of traditional Chinese military conflict and

¹⁷³ See, for example, "Luelun Xinxihua Zhanzheng Dui Zhandou Jingshen te Xin Yaoqiu," JSKX 2005:4, pp. 80-83; "Lun Zhandou Jingshen," JSKX 2003:4, 56-58; "Qianghua Zhandou Jingshen, Tigao Daying Nengli' Yantaohui Zongshu," JSKX 2005:4, pp. 151-156.

¹⁷⁴ "Shixi Xinxihua Tiaojianxia Junshi Zhihui Rencai de Zhandou Jingshen," JSKX 2005:4, pp. 86-88.

¹⁷⁵ "Shixi Xinxihua Tiaojianxia Junshi Zhihui Rencai de Zhandou Jingshen," JSKX 2005:4, pp. 88-89.

¹⁷⁶ Wen Minqiang, "Jiaqiang Junshi Douzheng Zhengzhi Gongzuo Zhunbei de Jike Sikao," Guofang 2007:9, pp. 47-48.

theory, psychological warfare has achieved new prominence because of the success of American measures in enervating Iraqi will and morale prior to unleashing the overwhelming assaults that initiated both conflicts and is being perceived as a basically unprecedented, new form of international political conflict.¹⁷⁷ Employed in the service of political objectives, psychological warfare is taken to be applicable in all dimensions and to every realm and embraces the enemy's entire populace, just as previously described in *Unrestricted Warfare*.¹⁷⁸ Conversely, measures to defend against similar attacks must be emplaced.

Insofar as it is constant and unremitting, psychological warfare must be practiced in times of peace just as vigorously as wartime and then relentlessly continued post conquest. In the pre-combat stage the enemy's political plans and military strategy are to be exposed and undermined, China's policies and standpoint advanced through educational and media efforts.¹⁷⁹ Psychological measures should deceive and mystify the enemy, cause misperceptions, manipulate and enervate them, subvert their confidence and render them incapable of formulating responsive strategies, thereby coercing them into abandoning their plans and aggressive intent, even subjugating them without combat.¹⁸⁰ Meanwhile, instilling a strong combat spirit, the courage to commit to

¹⁷⁷ Iraq is cited as an example of how the United States was able to use psychological warfare to depress, distract, vitiate, and otherwise incapacitate the enemy. (See "Shixi Xinxihua Tiaojianxia Junshi Zhihui Rencai de Zhandou Jingshen," JSKX 2005:4, p. 86.)

¹⁷⁸ For a brief discussion see Sawyer, "Chinese Strategic Power: Myths, Intent, and Projections," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, Winter 2006/2007.

¹⁷⁹ "Lun Zhandou Jingshen," JSKX 2003:4, p. 57.

¹⁸⁰ "Makesi Zhuyi Zhanlue Xinlizhan Lilun Yanjiu," JSKX 2004:4, pp. 34-41. (The paper reflects the findings at a conference on this subject held in 2004.) An article in *Junshi Shilin* recently cited a number of measures from both Chinese and Western history, including some traditionally said to have been implemented by the Yellow Emperor to confuse the enemy. (See Guo Kui and Ge Xiaoyu, *Junhao Shengsheng, Luan Di Xinchu*," *Junshi Shilin* 2007:4, pp. 46-49.)

certain victory and fight to the death, among PLA forces is believed to contribute to deflating the enemy's confidence and enervating their spirit.¹⁸¹

During armed clashes the main objectives should be sustaining the army's positive spirit while causing opponents to be fearful and tremble (such as through systematic measures of subversion); to lose faith in their abilities, leaders, and equipment; and generally become despondent, thereby destroying their will and achieving the ultimate objective.¹⁸² After combat, psychological warfare measures should be implemented to consolidate the results, eliminate inimical influences, repress the people's will, and (presumably on the assumption that they have not been occupied) compel the enemy to change their policies in order to prevent future recurrences.¹⁸³

Challenges of Peace and Materialism

The increasingly "degenerate" behavior spawned by China's new affluence and the unconstrained desires of a generation immersed in hedonism, most of whom are single children, has been accompanied by widespread disdain for the military and Communist dullards even as the latter are cultivated for their useful political connections. The reluctance of the military age populace apart from peasants in backward areas (who are no longer deemed capable of achieving the necessary performance level for a mechanized and digitized force) to serve has particularly been condemned in a number of articles.¹⁸⁴ Most writers also stress the need to combat the

¹⁸¹ "Makesi Zhuyi Zhanlue Xinlizhan Lilun Yanjiu," JSKX 2004:4, p. 40; "Tali Hongyang Renmin Jundui Ganda Bisheng de Zhandou Jingshen," JSKX 2005:4, 56-57; and "Zhandou Jingshen de Hanyi ji Neirong Goucheng Qiantan," JSKX 2005:4, pp. 101-102.

¹⁸² Various subversive and cyber warfare measures such as outlined in Sawyer, "Chinese Strategic Power: Myths, Intent, and Projections," will be employed to undermine the enemy in the pre and early warfare stages.

¹⁸³ "Jianlun Zhanlue Xinlizhan de Jiben Tedian," JSKX 2004:4, p. 47.

¹⁸⁴ See, for example, Xiao Weixiong, "Qianghua 'Sange Jiaoyu' Peiyu Minbing Zhandou Jingshen," Guofang 2006:12, p. 47.

pernicious effects of materialism, democracy, and other inimical Western influences through public relations and political work that will make people conscious of the need for patriotism and self-sacrifice.¹⁸⁵

Articles stressing the dangers of peace generally observe (or even bemoan) the apparent loss of the traditional Chinese siege mentality, decry the fact that people are becoming complacent, and condemn their laxity. Efforts are being made to preserve the sentiment of victimization, to immerse the troops in a party orthodoxy that reinforces and thereby exploits the view that for the last two centuries China has not only have been the victim of technologically advanced, imperialistic civilizations, but also that many of these same forces remain in play as the major Western powers strive to deny China its historically justified, “rightful” place in the world.

Although extremely debatable because of their pervasiveness in the popular media and culture and the extreme volatility of the people which is daily visible witnessed in their readiness to fight, resort to poison and explosives in personal affronts, and mount large spontaneous demonstrations, contemporary PRC writers have been claiming that martial spirit and values are losing relevance and being neglected. Moreover, the key lesson of not forgetting war in times of peace, well articulated in the *Sima Fa* 2500 years ago, is repeatedly emphasized because, according to Marxist and early Chinese doctrine, conflict is inevitable.¹⁸⁶ To reinforce this realization historical examples from Chinese history, including Yue’s resurgence to vanquish Wu after having

¹⁸⁵ For an example of the current diatribe on the numerous evils that cause “spiritual dissipation, evil thinking, and foul practices” see “Tali Hongyang Renmin Jundui Ganda Bisheng de Zhandou Jingshen,” JSKX 2005:4, pp. 72-73.

¹⁸⁶ “Lun Zhandou Jingshen: (‘On Combat Spirit’), JSKX 2003:4, pp. 54-56.

been virtually exterminated, are frequently pondered.¹⁸⁷

Essays in this vein quote widely from classic Marxist tracts, Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Jiang Zemin, and even Hu Jintao.¹⁸⁸ The emphasis, as in articles about information based warfare, is upon grinding and forging the people's spirit so that rather than fearing war they will be able to confront sudden conflict and have the spirit to endure unexpected events in all realms, material as well ethereal.¹⁸⁹ Particularly in peacetime it is necessary to cultivate the attitude of neither fearing hardship nor death, understood to be the core for realizing the revolutionary spirit and essential to China's defense.¹⁹⁰

Lack of confidence in their leaders, strategy, and equipment in the face of Western challenges, particularly among high school students taking the requisite military training, is to be particularly addressed.¹⁹¹ The remedy proposed is the nationwide implementation of the defense education program outlined in a recent issue of *National Defense* that includes all the usual elements: raising the fervency of people's patriotism, augmenting their socialist consciousness, instilling self-confidence and self-respect, broadening knowledge of the relevant concepts and laws, and educating the people in China's military heritage and history, from antiquity through the present day.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁷ For an example see Xie Surong and Wu Wennuan, "Yueshi Heping Shiqi Yueyao Jiaqiang guofang Jiaoyu," GF 2008:5, pp. 57-59.

¹⁸⁸ Appropriate military pronouncements have to be created for Hu who has no military background such as (from the recent 17th CPC National Congress), "Being heroically courageous and excelling at warfare is the outstanding special characteristic of the People's Army and the fundamental requirement in being able to obey orders in a professional manner for the PLA."

¹⁸⁹ Wen Mingqiang, "Jiaqiang Junshi Douzheng Zhengzhi Gongzuo Zhunbei de Jike Sikao," Guofang 2007:9, pp. 47-48. Wen stresses that in peacetime the will should be sharpened just like grinding a knife on a whetstone and combat spirit strengthened through realistic exercises.

¹⁹⁰ Junshi Kexueyuan Junshi Lishi Yanjiusuo, "Tali Hongyang Renmin Jundui Ganda Bisheng de Zhandou Jingshen" ("Carry Forward the Dare-to-fight and Dare-to-win Combat Spirit of the People[s] Army") JSKX 2005:4, pp. 65-74.

¹⁹¹ For example, see Wei Fang and Li Qu, "Putong Gaoxiao Guofangsheng Zixinxin Peiyang Wentu de Diaocha yu Sikao," GF 2007:10, pp. 53-55. (Their article actually speaks about the yong qi, "courageous spirit," rather than just combat spirit, and echoes the old mutual bonding system so that the cadres will be mutually concerned with each other's welfare.)

¹⁹² "Quanmin Guofang Jiaoyu Dagang," Guofang 2007:1, pp. 47-51.

Even Confucius' assertion that "failing to teach the people warfare is referred to as abandoning them" is frequently cited, integrating the most ancient past with the present.