

Modification to "Investigation of the History of Wu Xun" [1] and a letter to Hu Qiaomu [2] (19-07-1951)

One

The eulogizers of Wu Xun once criticized people for "lacking a historical materialist perspective" and "mistakenly" using "today's standards" to "measure historical figures"; they said that Wu Xun was "limited by specific historical conditions" and it was impossible for him to have revolutionary thoughts and actions. Even after people pointed out the specific historical environment in which Wu Xun lived, which was the era of peasant revolution after the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and the Northern Nian Army, some of those who eulogized Wu Xun were still not entirely convinced. Their reason was that those revolutionary soldiers did not originate from Wu Xun's hometown. Although they fought battles in Wu Xun's hometown, they were always outsiders, which didn't catch Wu Xun's attention, so it was understandable.

Our investigation found the revolutionary army in Wu Xun's hometown. They were not the Taiping Army or the Nian Army, but rather a local peasant revolutionary army in Wu Xun's hometown that had connections with the Nian Army. This fact enables us to provide "specific historical conditions" and some "historical figures" as the basis for everyone's judgment. With these facts, it is not difficult for us to answer: who exactly "lacks a historical materialist perspective"? Is it those who criticize Wu Xun and scorn him, or is it those who promote Wu Xun and eulogize him?

Two

Wu Xun and Song Jingshi were staunch opponents, while Wu Xun and Yang Mingqian [3] or Yang Shufang [4] were "two peas in a pod." It's quite reasonable. Wu Xun and Yang Mingqian were both rewarded by the Qing Dynasty. Wu Xun was bestowed with the commendation of "kindness and charity" and was posthumously granted a biography in the National Historical Museum. After Yang Mingqian's death, he was conferred the title of "Luanyi Guard," and a special shrine was established with annual ceremonies. His descendants also received the title of "hereditary cloud cavalry lieutenant." They were truly faithful lackeys who served the reactionary rulers, assisting the Qing Dynasty and executing the policy of both suppression and pacification towards the revolutionary people.

Three

The promoters of Wu Xun are happy to eulogize Wu Xun's "filial piety" and "friendship," and we have conducted an investigation on this matter. Contrary to this eulogy, Wu Xun was not a filial or friendly person. In order to avoid legitimate work and become a thug, Wu Xun had long fallen out with his family. In order to sell properties, he had quarreled with his brother. Seventy-nine-year-old Guo Jiwu said, "His mother and brother didn't benefit from him at all. When his mother died, it was just like losing a dog." Some say that when his mother died, his brother asked him to return home for the funeral, but he refused to go without "mourning money." This might be true when Wu Xun was obsessed with greed. It is said that Wu Xun sold the incoming grain to feed other households' livestock but refused to give a single bite to his mother and brother. He was such a heartless and unscrupulous person.

Four

Wu Maolin was Wu Xun's distant nephew who spent his life helping Wu Xun beg for alms to fund education, but he was forced to death by Yang Shufang. Wu Lulin was Wu Qian's grandson and Wu Kexin's son, who was adopted by Wu Xun in his old age as a grandson. He was accused by the Yang

family of "resisting the payment of school rent," beaten severely by the county official, released, and died the next day. As we mentioned earlier, Wu Xun neglected his family in his youth and middle age. In his old age, perhaps due to dissatisfaction with Yang Shufang's strict control and also because of public opinion's dissatisfaction with him, he requested the Yang family to allocate more than forty mu of land in the name of Wu's family ancestral field to be cultivated by Wu Lulin's father, Wu Kexin, and agreed to pay ten strings of rent money each year to the school to satisfy the conditions of the Yang family. This incident was recorded in the official documents (see "The Origins of Education"), stating it was over forty mu, while Wu Jinxing told us it was over forty mu. However, the Yang family later forcibly reclaimed it, denied it was an ancestral field, confirmed it was a school field, and sent Wu Lulin to collect heavy rent. As Wu Lulin couldn't afford it, a dispute arose, and he was beaten to death alive, and the land was confiscated. This is the case of "two lives" in the Wu family. The masses sympathized with the Wu family in this matter. When Wu Jinxing mentioned these things to us, both he and we felt sad. Wu Jinxing said with deep sorrow, "We have a feud with the Yang family!"

#### Five

After the fourteenth year of Guangxu's reign, the additional property Wu Xun acquired in Tangyi was his private property and was not donated to the school. Xu Jinchuan was one of the people managing this part of Wu Xun's private property. After Wu Xun's death, Xu Jinchuan's eldest son, Xu Gongjue, was imprisoned by the Yang family on charges of "resisting the payment of school rent." Based on this, it can be inferred that any private property Wu Xun did not hand over during his lifetime, once known by the landlords, was taken away by them in the name of school fields after Wu Xun's death. Wu Maolin likely also had property of this nature. It is doubtful whether all the property accumulated by Wu Xun before the fourteenth year of Guangxu's reign was donated to Liulin School. It is very likely that some of it was not handed over and was managed by Wu Maolin. Wu Maolin was probably involved in this matter, but we did not find concrete evidence. What kind of person was Xu Jinchuan? There is a passage in Jin Ejiu's memorial mentioned in "The Origin of Education": "The villages of Zhaolangzhai and Wang Erdaizhai, etc., had a good calligraphy club (the original text is such, presumably an error - the author), Wu Xun donated more than two hundred taels of silver, excluding all the annual donations. Xu Jinchuan and others wanted to erect a monument for Wu Xun, but Wu Xun refused. Every year, during the Qishao festival, regardless of the reason, Wu Xun must personally visit the community and inspect the annual records of the good books. He also took some volumes of good books with him and distributed them everywhere." This "calligraphy club" seems to be an organization of the Hui men, with Xu Jinchuan as the leader. Wu Xun became the leader of this organization because he donated a lot of money. From this, it can be seen that Xu Jinchuan was very influential in the local area.

#### Six

Yang Shufang's involvement in Wu Xun's ancestral field incident is of great significance. Wu Xun's name is inscribed on the stele erected in the temple of Jinguo Temple in his hometown, which was built by the joint efforts of Yang Shufang and others. We went to Wu Xun's hometown to conduct interviews and were told by a resident, "That temple is not Wu Xun's, but the Yang family's. It is called 'Yang's temple.' The stele was erected by Yang Shufang and others, with Wu Xun's name inscribed on it. This stele only records the deeds of the Yang family. As for the rest, it is all nonsense!" This passage is both simple and clear.

#### Seven

The hand-copying of "The Origins of Education" was a painstaking task, and the copying was done by the author. There are errors in copying, but not many. We hope that those who are interested can go to the newspaper office to read the original articles.

[1] "Investigation of the History of Wu Xun" is an article written by the author.

[2] "Letter to Hu Qiaomu" is a letter written by the author to Hu Qiaomu.

[3] Yang Mingqian was a famous county magistrate in the late Qing Dynasty.

[4] Yang Shufang is a descendant of the Yang family in Wu Xun's hometown.