





關公故里

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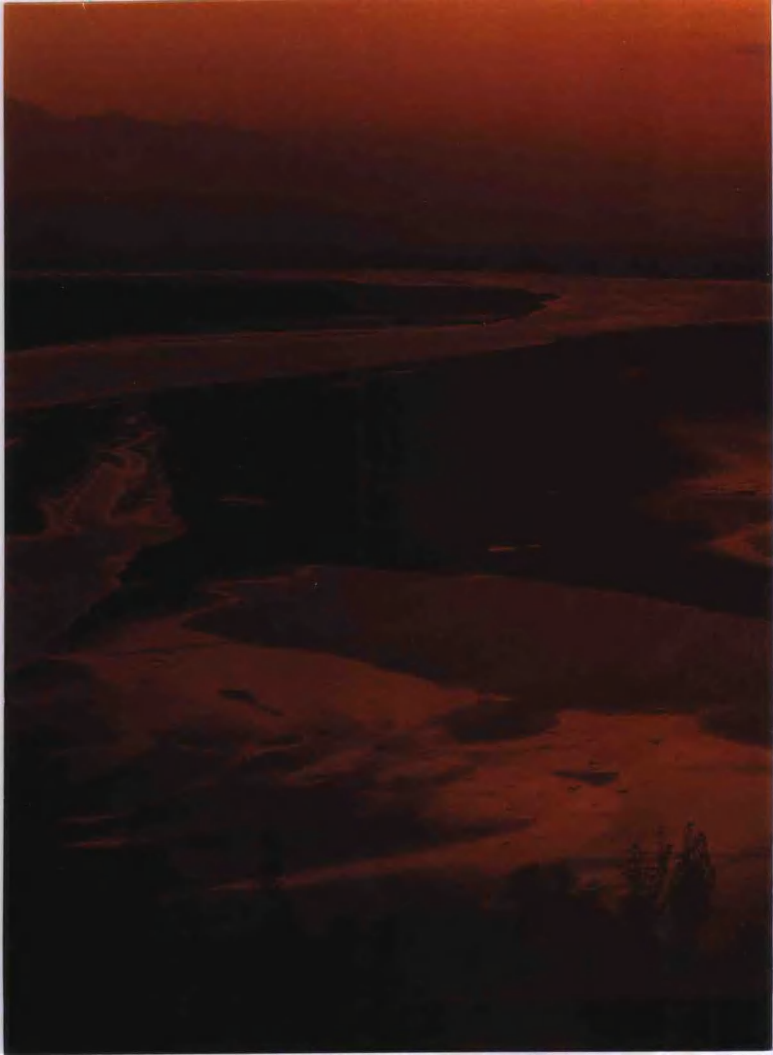
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黄河暮色 李树德摄
Setting sun and the Yellow River



关公文化

—— 中华传统道德文化的一份 重要遗产

张成德 崔元和

中国封建社会后期最受崇拜的偶像

绵延五千余年的中华民族古代文明社会，曾经是一个英才辈出的漫长历史过程。在这已经逝去的悠悠岁月中，那些曾经在中国古代文化发展史和文明发展史上放射出辉煌的历史名人，确实浩如烟海，灿若繁星，难以胜数。然而，在中国古代层出不穷的名人之中，被后世戴上炫目光环并尊之为“圣人”者，却仅有二人，他们就是被民间尊称为“文圣”的孔子和“武圣”的关公。

诞生于公元前五十一年的孔子，在其七十余年的生涯中，用尽毕生的精力和智慧，创立了以“礼”和“仁”为核心的儒家学说。孔子的思想，不仅构成了维系二千余年中国封建等级社会的理论基础，而且也成了中国漫长封建社会伦理道德的基本行为规范和主

要思维原则

关公本名关羽，字云长，出生于公元一六〇年，卒于公元二一九年。关公在其近六十年的这一生中，策马横刀，驰骋疆场，征战群雄，辅佐刘备完成鼎立三分大业，谱写出一曲令人感慨万端的人生壮歌。作为三国名将的关公，可以说在中国古代思想史上毫无建树。可是，关羽那充满英雄传奇的一生，却被后人推举为“忠”、“信”、“义”、“勇”集于一身的道德楷模，并成了中国封建社会后期上至帝王将相，下至士农工商广泛顶礼膜拜的神圣偶像。

《县有文庙，村村有武庙》这是在中国封建社会后期中，社会各界普遍祭拜孔子和关公的真实反映。但是，据有关资料记载，在宋元明清社会中，对「武圣」关公崇拜的虔诚和普及，甚至超过了被人们盛赞为「千古一圣」的孔子。清代中叶，仅京城之内，拜祀关公的庙宇，便多达一六六座，如再加京畿郊县，关庙总数竟在二百座以上，远远超过了京城当时所拥有的孔庙。有人概算，如按每县设一座孔庙，清代全国的孔庙也不过三千余座；而每村建一座武庙，那么清代全国的关公庙宇竟达三十余万座。关公庙数竟是孔子庙数的一百倍。难怪乎，早在明代，王世贞就惊呼：「故前将军汉寿亭侯关公祠庙遍天下，祠庙凡与学宫、浮屠等。」而清代的赵翼，则更加惊叹道：「今且南极岭表，北极寒垣，凡儿童妇女，无不震其（关公）威灵者。香火之盛，将与天地同不朽。」

宋元明清美化、圣化和神化的结果

关公从当时义勇倾三国的蜀汉名将，到「万古祠堂遍九州」的神化，圣化偶像，是中国封建社会进入后期以来，社会各界对关公不断美化、圣化和神化的结果。从宋元至明清的这一历史过程中，上至高居庙堂的帝王将相，下至终生劳作的庶民百姓，从挥文弄墨的文人学士，舞枪弄剑的草莽义士，到勾栏瓦舍中的说书艺人、梨园剧场中的戏子优伶，乃至远避尘世的僧侣道士，几乎都陆续统统汇入了美化、圣化和神化关公的潮流。在这浪高千里的关公崇拜浪潮中，从关公身上发掘出来的和被追加到关公身上



的美德与美誉，远远超过了历史上真实的关公，在中国封建社会中几乎达到了无人可及而又无以复加的地步。于是，生活于三国时代的关公，在宋元明清之际，便渐渐地超凡脱俗，青云直上，由一个充满悲壮色彩的人间英雄，变成了万民礼拜的神圣偶像。

在关公遇难去世后的三国时代，到两晋南北朝这一历史阶段，尽管有关公的故事在民间流传，但在见诸文字的史料中，对关公的记述却都基本上忠实于历史原貌。关公在西晋陈寿所撰《三国志》等史书中，是英雄，是义士，但还不是圣人和神人。关公的封号，也只是在他去世五十一年之后，才由蜀汉后主追赐为「壮缪侯」。这一封号的地位，并不显赫。

隋唐之际，从印度辗转传入中国的佛教逐渐进入兴盛阶段，并与中国本土文化融合，形成了浸透着中国文化的中国佛教。于是，天台宗作为中国佛教的一个教派，捷足先登，率先将关公拉入佛门，封之为守护佛教的「伽蓝神」。不过，就隋唐社会的绝大部分民众而言，关公也还不是圣人和神人。三国故事在唐代已有较为广泛的流传，但在晚唐诗人李商隐《筹笔驿》或说张飞胡，或笑邓艾吃」的诗句中，可以看出当时三国故事的主角，是张飞等人，而非关公。唐人郎君曾咏关公诗，既赞其人「义勇冠今昔」，「一剑万人敌」，又叹其魂「流落荆巫间，徘徊故乡客」，虽然赞颂了关公生前义勇无敌，但又对关公魂滞他乡、欲归不能，给予深深的感叹和同情。关公在此诗中也远不是至圣、至高的神。

进入中国封建社会后期的宋元两代，是关公被美化、圣化和神化的真正开端。在宋代盛行的「说话」艺术和「弄影戏」艺术中，关公开始从当时「说三分」所讲述的众多三国人物中逐渐脱颖而出。宋人张来在《明道杂志》中记载，当时人们在看到「斩关羽」之际，都「辄为之泣下」。宋朝的最高统治者，也加入了圣化和神化关公的「大合唱」。史料记载，那个崇尚道教的宋真宗，曾编造出一个请关公到解州盐池，大战蚩尤而除妖祛灾的荒诞神话。至此，关公又被道教请入了自己的门楣。到宋徽宗手里，竟在短短的二十一年之中，连续四次对关公加封，由「忠惠公」、「崇宁真君」而再封为「武安王」、「义勇武安王」。关公由此而从「侯」及「公」，再由「公」及「王」，声誉和身价为此大振。

元代对关公的美化、圣化和神化，较两宋更为深入，更为扩大。借助在元代兴盛起来的「杂剧」和「平话」，关公的忠、信、义、勇被描写得更加具体、丰富和生动，形象，不能不使人慨然泪下。元代以三国为题材的杂剧有四十多出，其中表现关公的剧目便有十二出之多。元代的《三国志平话》共插图七十幅，有关关公的图画竟多达二十幅。为认同中原文化，笼络中原民众，元朝最高统治者也对关公大加追封。

明清两代，是将关公圣化、神化到极致的时期。生活于元末明初的小说家罗贯中，在他的名著《三国演义》中，不仅吸收、采用了宋元时代美化、圣化和神化关公的大量故事，而且根据自己的政治理想、道德观念以及当时的社会思潮，进行了大胆而大量的艺术想象和艺术虚构，终于把关公塑造成了「忠」、「义」、「信」、「勇」集于一身的完人、圣人和神人。自此，关公「至忠」、「至义」、「至信」、「至勇」的形象，随着《三国演义》小说的广泛传播，在社会上更是家喻户晓，妇孺皆知，受到更为普遍的崇拜。清人毛宗岗曾说，在罗贯中笔下，关公成了「古今名将第一奇人」。鲁迅也说，在《三国演义》中，「惟于关羽，特多好语，义勇之概，时时如见矣」。明清两代的皇帝，对关公的加封，亦是有增无减，一浪更比一浪高。明神宗在万历十年（1582），曾将关公褒封为「协天大帝」。到此，关公被历代封建王朝所加封的世俗官位，达到了无可复加的地步。在中国二千余年的漫长封建社会中，被封为「大帝」者，大约仅有关公一

人。到清末的光绪皇帝那里，加封给关公的封号，是长达二十四字的“仁勇威武显护国保民精诚绥靖翊赞宣德忠于神武关圣大帝”，几乎将中国封建时代所能找到的用于封号的美好字汇，全部堆砌到了关公头上。这样，追封到“文圣”孔子头上的那些耀眼光环，在“武圣”关公面前，就有些黯然失色了。

宋元以来社会发展、演变的必然

天不变，道亦不变，封建的社会等级制度和伦理道德，与世常存，万古不变，这恐怕是中国古代正统儒家们的最高认识和最大理想。然而，人类社会的发展变迁，却从不以此为转移。静中含动，同中生异，流而生变，高岸陵谷，沧海桑田，这才是人类社会发展的规律。宋元明清时代，对于关公美化、圣化和神化的持续浪潮，正是中国封建社会进入后期以来，社会阶级、阶层和集团不断分化与演变，以及思想观念继续发展和变迁，所相互激荡、交织而导致的必然过程和必然结果。

中国封建社会进入后期以来，由于社会矛盾的不断发展变化，封建经济经历了成熟到衰落等种种原因，宋元以后的社会成分和结构，与宋元以前相比，发生了前所未有的变化。由于封建商品经济的日趋发展和成熟，一大批原来从事其他行业的人们，开始投入商业贸易和作坊制造，新兴的商业阶层和手工业阶层产生了，并且日益壮大；由于城市的增多和扩大，市民的人数也日益增加，并在经济、文化等方面形成了新的社会阶层和新的利益集团；由于元朝等少数民族统治阶级实行歧视、排斥汉族民族的政策，堵塞了汉族文人科举仕宦的道路，再加上文人谋生途径的增多，致使相当一部分封建文人摆脱了对封建统治阶级的依附，形成了相对独立的封建知识分子阶层；由于市民的增加和有两阶层的增多，为说书、戏曲的发展提供了前所未有的发展空间，于是以说书、唱戏、卖艺等为生的民间艺人日益增多；由于货币地租等农业政策的实施，就连农民也开始摆脱了对封建地主的人身依附，在经济、文化上也取得了相对自由、独立的地位。由于下层社会成分和结构的日益分化和复杂化，封建统治阶级一方面进一步加强封建集权统治，但在另一方面也出现了内部的分化。这就是由于面对复杂、变化的社会，因政见、利益的冲突，在封建统治阶级内部引起分化，以及汉族为主统治阶级与少数民族为主的统治阶级之间的利益不同所产生的区别。此外，由于宋元以来封建集权和封建剥削的加重，也导致大批农民、工商业者纷纷破产，使他们或者变为流民，或者揭竿而起，成为现实社会的反抗力量。

宋元以来中国封建社会阶级、阶层和利益集团新的分化和演变，急切呼唤着对宋元以前中国封建社会所形成的思想文化观念、伦理道德观念进行改造和重建。这是一个“山雨欲来风满楼”的时代。因为，不仅宋元以前以避世、无为为主要特征的佛教和道教，已经再无法满足这个红尘滚滚的世俗社会的精神文化需要；就是那由孔子创立，再经董仲舒阐释的儒家学说，也因其迂阔陈腐，而令芸芸众生难以认同和效仿。社会阶级、阶层和利益集团在日益分化、变迁，所谓“贫富无定势，田宅无定主”，早期儒家“礼”所维护的封建等级制度和生存压迫，要求人们又无反顾地采取行动，该出手时就出手，儒家彬彬有礼的“礼乐教化”又有何用？

于是，从北宋初年到清朝末叶的这千余年间，各种各样的学说、思想和观念，如走马灯般频频出现。从周敦颐、程颐、程颢，到朱熹、陆九渊、王守仁，从张载、陈亮、叶适，再到王廷相、李贽、黄宗羲、王夫之等人，无一不在绞尽脑汁，为宋元以后的社会，寻找新



的思想方案和精神药方。然而，这些思想家们所阐述的思想和体系，虽然在一定程度上促进了宋元以后中国封建社会后期思想文化的发展，但是，在宋元以后的后期中国封建社会构造一个统一的道德文化规范或原则方面，却又显得苍白无力。这原因主要在于：一方面宋元以来的这些思想家本来就各持己见，且又彼此攻讦，相互批判，难以统一；而在另一方面，这些思想家们的学说又过于繁琐、艰深和晦涩，很难为一般民众所理解、所接受。对于宋元明清这个教育、文化、科学等还很落后，文盲、半文盲的人数占全部人口的绝对大多数的封建社会，对于这个具有统一的思想文化和伦理道德传统的封建社会来说，一个非常紧迫的事情，就是重新塑造或创造一个能为社会各个阶级、阶层和利益集团所共同接受的道德楷模，并将其升华为社会各界共同崇拜和效仿的道德偶像，以此来规范全社会的道德观念和道德行为。这就犹如汉代《罢黜百家，独尊儒术》，将孔子及其学说提升为百代楷模，万世师表那样。于是，一个美化、圣化和神化关公的浪潮，便自宋元社会以来应运而生，拍岸而来。关公这个本具“忠”、“义”、“信”、“勇”品格的三国名将，在被冷落数百年之后，又被宋元以来的社会各界，渐渐拂去落在身上的历史尘埃，并被涂绘上新的价值线条和观念色彩，通过不断的美化、圣化和神化，最后终于上升成为宋元明清社会各界共同礼拜，万民争相效仿的最高道德偶像。

中国古代道德文化的一个发展

由于社会各界对关公的无上崇拜，所以在宋元明清的中国社会中，祭祀和仿效关公的活动，几乎进入了所有的社会活动领域。在这一历史时期，举凡宗教仪式、官府祭奠、社会教育、商业交往、集会结社、文学创作、戏曲演唱、人际交往、风俗民情等领域，都渗入了对关公的崇拜和仿效。在当时社会，祭祀和崇拜关公，成了一种极为广泛的社会文化现象。

关公作为道德楷模和道德偶像被不断提升，关公崇拜作为一种道德文化现象被广泛普及，对于中国封建社会后期凝聚力的形成，以及道德意识、道德行为的规范与提升，曾经产生过一定的积极作用。当宋代社会面临北方少数民族入侵的危难时刻，就多次用关公的“忠”与“勇”来教化臣民。像岳飞那样的忠勇之上，在宋元明清四代社会中，并非少数。而当北方少数民族统治治

阶级人主中原，取得全国政权后，又都对关公的“忠”、“义”思想和行为予以褒扬，这在当时在一定程度上促进了中华各民族在思想、文化上的认同和凝聚。对宋明以来新兴的工商阶层而言，他们则从关公身上，汲取了“信”和“义”的道德原则，提出了“以信为本”和“以义制义”的带有浓重中国传统道德色彩的经营原则，遏制了利欲对道德的吞噬。对于宋元明清时代的文人、士大夫来说，则从关公身上发现了足以使他们效仿的人格和品德，即所谓“无不弃旧从新，乐为之死”，“金银美女，不足以移之”，“高官厚禄，不足以动之”等等。那些搦竿而起的起义者们，则从关公身上汲取到了忠于信义、道义，勇于反抗黑暗的思想信念。此即梁启超所指出的：“绿林豪杰，遍地皆是，日有桃园之拜，处处为梁山之盟。”对于一般庶民百姓，亦能通过对关公的崇拜和敬畏，起到一定的教化作用。这一点，元人都经早已指出：“（关公）所在庙宇，福善祸恶，神威赫然，人咸畏而敬之。”

以关公为象征的道德观念和道德文化的广泛流行，在宋元以来的社会中，也对孔子、董仲舒那套以维护等级社会制度为目标的道德思想体系，以及宋明理学、道学中禁欲主义的唯心道德观念，形成了很大冲击，犹如江湖击岸，在宋元以前旧儒学和宋明以来新儒学的道德大堤上，冲开了不少决口。路见不平便应拔刀相助，世有压迫就可揭竿而起，而不必沉陷于“君君、臣臣、父父、子子”那一套中不可自拔，这就犹如从北宋初年王小波造反到清朝后期“太平天国”建立那一浪高过一浪的农民起义一样；人与人之间，只要理想相同，义气相投，相互忠诚，忠于道义，即可兄弟相称，共举事业，而不必恪守原来官尊民卑的森严等级限制，这就如绝大部分聚义梁山的好汉那样；人与人交往中，也不必再“君子不言利”，求利、求欲的欲望也不可一味否定，只要不以利、以欲害“义”即可，这就犹如明清晋商所津津乐道的既“以义制利”而又“以义生利”那样……在上述意义上，可以说体现在宋元以来关公文化中的道德观念和道德精神，是中国古代道德文化中的一个发展。

凝聚海内外华人的一条精神文化纽带

中国进入近、现代社会之后，对关公的敬重乃至崇拜，并未在海内外华人中大幅度降温。尤其在港、澳、台同胞和旅居海外的华人那里，对于关公的祭祀、崇拜，依然热潮未退，形成了一道独特的文化风景线。台湾岛面积不算太大，但全岛却有大大小小的关公庙近四百座，全岛人口不足四千万人，却拥有关公崇拜者八百多万人之多。旅美华人中有一个崇拜关公的民间组织，在全美各地的分会竟有一百四十多个。当然，在侨居东南亚的华人之中，对于关公的崇拜和祭奉，亦非常普遍。维护和承继中华民族优秀道德传统，促进和增强海内外华人对民族文化的认同，是关公精神和关公文化在当代社会中所具有的新价值和积极作用。这正如于右任先生为关公庙题的一副楹联中所说：“忠义二字团结了中华儿女，《春秋》一书代表着民族精神”。

“当时义勇倾三国，万古祠堂遍九州。阶下苍松高百尺，气冲霄汉未能休。岁月悠悠，逝而不返。关公当年赤面骑赤马，厮杀疆场的雄壮场面，青灯观青史夜读《春秋》的感人情景，忠心守志效蜀汉的浩然气节，都早已化为历史烟尘。但是，关公自身所具有的和被后世所叠加上的那些道德观念和道德精神，却成了中华民族传统道德文化中的一份沉甸甸的遗产。当然，这份遗产既有精华需要借鉴、吸收和转化，同时也肯定有糟粕需要鉴别、清理与剔除。当现代的人们怀着崇敬的心情，迈入那松柏森森的关公庙宇之中时，应当比我们的前人有更为深刻的认识，也应该有更为高远的思考。”

The Culture of Lord Guan—an Important Legacy of Chinese Moral & Cultural Tradition

Zhang Chengde

Cui Yuanhe

The prime idol of late feudal China

The 5,000-year history of ancient China was one of multitudes of heroes and talents. Against the seas of stars of lustrous figures along the progress of ancient Chinese civilization, however, two alone have commanded the honor of appearing with the epithet "supreme" -- Confucius the Supreme Scholar and Lord Guan the Supreme Warrior.

Confucius was born in 551 BC and lived 70 years or so. His life's work and thinking metamorphosed into Confucianism, which centers on the ideas of "kindness" morally and "rites" in terms of social organization. And it was Confucianism that underlay the hierarchical social structure of feudal China of 2,000 year's standing, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the general moral standards and mental orientation of the people.

Lord Guan was actually an honorary title bestowed on Guan Yu, or Guan Yun - Chang. Guan was born in 160 AD and died in 219. In assisting Liu Bei as one of his chief lieutenants in establishing the kingdom of Shu -- one of the three "Superpowers" of the period, in China he passed a career of fierce strives and valiant expeditions that provokes sad reverence. Although, as a military man, he had of course not made any score in the history of ancient Chinese ideologies, the heroic exploits and legendary adventures throughout his life made him a model of moral perfection, embodying fidelity, integrity, and valor, and a national idol of all walks of the late feudal China from kings, courtiers, and generals down to soldiers, craftsmen, farmers, and merchants.

"While there are Confucian temples in all counties, every village has its temple of Lord Guan". The saying gives a true picture of popular cult of Confucius and Lord Guan in the late feudal China. But records shows that, in the Song, Yuan, and Ming Dynasties, the cult of Lord Guan "the Supreme Warrior" even outdid that of Confucius in piety and popularity, who was sometimes hailed as "the Unique Sage of All Time". In mid-Qing Dynasty, there were in the capital alone as many as 116 temples of Lord Guan the number would amount to more than 200 if those in the suburban counties were also included. This surpassed far and away the number of Confucian Temples the capital contained. Calculated roughly, one Confucian Temple in each county meant no more than 3000 throughout the country, and one Temple of Lord Guan in each village would total 300,000 i.e., 100 times more than Confucian Temples. Little wonder that, even in the Ming Dynasty -- previous to Qing, a famous writer Wang Shi - zhen remarked in surprise that "Guan Yu, General and Marquis of Han - shou - ting of an earlier Dynasty, is worshipped everywhere: and his temples are almost as many as schools and Buddhist pagodas." And the Qing writer Zhao Yi also observed: "From south of the Five Ridges, the southernmost end of the land, up to the cold areas north of the Great Wall, children and women are all fearful of his power: such prevailing worship of Lord Guan seems bound to continue with time."

The result of continual embellishment, enshrinement, and deification of the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties

The change of Guan's image from a famous warrior of the State of Shu, who was described as "commanding respect from all the three states for his valor and moral integrity", to a hallowed, enshrined idol "whose temples strewed the land" was the result of continual embellishment, enshrinement, and deification in the later part of the feudal period. From the four successive dynasties Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing, all walks of the society from kings and their courtiers down to poor laborers, including erudite scholars, militant greenwood men, storytelling minstrels, actors, and even monks who lived in seclusion, contributed

their share to the campaign of embellishing, enshrining, and deifying Lord Guan. In those waves of cult of Lord Guan, the virtues and merits read out of and dumped onto the historical figure made him much loftier than his true self. Such embellishment was beyond comparison through the history of feudal China. Thus, the Lord Guan of the Period of Three States had gradually become, from a corporeal tragic hero, a sacred idol that seemed to transcend the worldly and attained the plane of gods.

Actually, the Period of Three States and the subsequent West and East Jin, and the Northern and Southern Dynasties already saw stories about Lord Guan circulating among people, but records show that descriptions of him in that period were by and large true to history. In "History of the Three States" by Chen Shou, a historian of the West Jin Dynasty, Lord Guan was a hero and a worthy warrior, but not yet a haloed figure or god. And as late as 51 years after his death, he was posthumously made marquis of Zhuang - an by the second king of the state of Shu. The title was nothing very extraordinary then.

In the Sui and Tang Dynasties, Buddhism, a religion coming to China from India witnessed a prosperous development. It incorporated elements of Chinese culture and evolved into a pervasive cultural force. Tiantai, a Buddhist sect was the first to drag Lord Guan into Buddhism, worshipping him as god of Sangharana, or god of the monastery. However, for most people of the Sui and Tang dynasties, Lord Guan was neither the Supreme Warrior nor god yet. Although many stories about the Period of Three States had already been in circulation in the Tang Dynasty, they had Zhang Fei and others - - - not Lord Guan - - - as their central characters. This was clearly shown in the lines by the late Tang poet Li Shang - yin: "Some mock at Zhang Fei for his reckless ramp, and others at Deng Ai the natural slammerer laugh." It was true that another Tang poet Tang Shu - yuan eulogized Lord Guan in his poem, but while remarking that "his valor and integrity were matchless throughout history" and that "sword in hand, he could pit his single self against ten thousand," he also lamented that, after his tragic death, "his ghost still roams languidly in alien lands, yearning with nostalgia". Here, if the poet sang praise of Lord Guan's valor and integrity, he also showed sympathy for the ghost that had been and would remain homeless as Lord Guan had been beheaded in a strange place remote from his hometown. The Lord Guan in this poem is far from being sacred or haloed.

The Song and Yuan Dynasties marked the beginning of the process of embellishing and deifying Lord Guan. In such artistic forms as "Shuo - hua" or story - telling, or prize minstrelsy, and shadow plays, which became popular in the Song Dynasty, Guan grew more and more outstanding among the numerous



Three - states characters. A Song author recorded that the audience of such popular art often shed tears at the scene "Lord Guan's Execution". In this choir of deifying Lord Guan, we also hear an royal voice, that of Emperor Zhen Zong of the Song Dynasty. A believer in Taoism, the king invented a story that he had sent for Lord Guan to come to the Salt Lake in Haizhou (Lord Guan's hometown) to combat Ju You and to exorcise other evil spirits. Now Lord Guan was ushered in Taoism. Four times during his short reign of no more than 21 years, Emperor Hui Zong conferred posthumous titles to Lord Guan. He was made "Duke of Fidelity and Kindness", "the Pacific Immortal", "Prince Appeaser", and "the valiant and righteous Prince Appeaser". With the change of his titles, his status and prestige experienced a rapid rise.

In the Yuan Dynasty, Lord Guan was further embellished, enshrined and deified. He became even more influential. Owing to the flourishing of drama and Ping - hua, or prose minstrelsy, the image of Lord Guan as an embodiment of fidelity, integrity, and valor was carved all the more vivid and detailed with greater appeal to the audience. Of the 40 - odd plays dealing with the Three - states stories in the Yuan Dynasty, 12 had Lord Guan as their central character. In *The Story of the Period of Three States*, publication of the Yuan Dynasty, more than 20 of its 70 plays treated Lord Guan as their central figure. The rulers of the Yuan Dynasty also lavished posthumous titles on Lord Guan as a means of winning the Han people's hearts and of their assimilating with Chinese culture.

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, enshrinement and deification of Lord Guan reached its utmost point. It was in the novel *The Story of the Three States* by Luo Guan - Zhong that Lord Guan for the first time appeared as a man of moral perfection, a man who was almost a god. Luo Guan - zhong's life strided the Yuan and Ming Dynasties. In writing the novel, he drew on not only the many Three - states stories that were already widely spread in the Song and Yuan Dynasties, but also on imagination and fabrication in the light of his own political ideas, moral thinking, and the intellectual climate of the time. From then on, as the novel gained more popularity among the people, Lord Guan as an embodiment of fidelity, integrity, and valor had become known to all, men and women, the old and the young, and worship of him came to be a nationally prevailing institution. A Qing critic Mao Zong - gang remarked that Luo guan - zhong had portrayed Lord Guan as "the No. 1 wonder of all military men throughout history". Lu Xun also commented that, in *The Story of the Three States*, Guan Yu alone received a truly favorable portrayal that this valiant, worthy character seemed to be in the flesh. The emperors of the Ming and Qing Dynasties competed with one another in conferring titles to Lord Guan. Emperor Shen Zong of the Ming Dynasty went so far as to grant him the title "the Great Emperor Assisting the Providence". This was the summit of all the secular titles that could possibly be conferred to him; and it was a unique example: no others, warriors or scholars, had ever been made "the Great Emperor" posthumously over the 2, 000 years of the feudal rule in China. During the reign of Emperor Guang Xu in late Qing Dynasty, the title bestowed on Lord Guan was a long - winded phrase of 24 words, which almost exhausted the lexical repertoire of the feudal society to show commendation. Compared with what was lavished upon Lord Guan the Supreme Warrior, those titles given to Confucius the Supreme Scholar would necessarily appear tarnished, as if in eclipse.

The inevitable outcome of social evolution in the Song and Yuan Dynasty and thereafter

Tao was free of change as the heaven was: therefore the feudal hierarchical social structure and its corresponding moral values were also constant. Those were probably the deepest ideas and also the ultimate goal of the orthodox Confucians in ancient China. However, development and changes that a society undergoes are but little affected by human wishes. Tranquillity contains motion inside; and concordance comprises discordance. Where a valley is at present might have been a mountain in the past and what are mulberry fields were probably seas: the world keeps changing in the course of time. Change