State Surveillance of the Chinese Domestic Population: A Preliminary Report

by

(b)(6)

Long Term Strategy Group

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study is a preliminary attempt at better understanding the cultural, sociological, and historical background of modern Chinese intelligence services.

Although publicly available information on contemporary "special service" operations remains relatively meager, extensive scholarship has been produced on many of the special service organizations that preceded and inspired intelligence services currently working for the People's Republic of China.

Understanding the ideological foundations and traditional methodology of Chinese special service operations confers a fuller and more nuanced picture of intelligence-gathering on both domestic and external targets by Chinese state and non-state actors.

This study focuses on state surveillance of domestic populations during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and the middle Nationalist period under Chiang Kaishek (1927-1937), before the Pacific War. While these two eras are separated by over 250 years of historical and cultural developments, their special service records are closely connected for the following reasons:

- Both were landmark periods for the development of special services culture and practices, when Chinese intelligence organizations were at their most sophisticated.

- Many Nationalist-era leaders and intellectuals, including Chiang Kaishek, looked to the Ming intelligence service as a model – sometimes positive, sometimes negative – for contemporary special service operations.

- The Ming and Nationalist services emphasized recruiting from isolated groups and breeding familiarity and loyalty among those chosen for the special service.

- Special service organizations from both eras emphasized investigating officials and military officers, not common people.

- Factional infighting among competing special service interests was prevalent in both the Ming and Nationalist eras.

Overall, this study hopes to illuminate the extensive roots of Chinese intelligence culture that predate and provided the foundation for the construction of contemporary mainland and Taiwanese special service organizations. Consequently, this preliminary report will eventually be combined with further work, connecting the intelligence services of these two eras to other special service groups organized by their contemporaries.

Future work will analyze the Chinese Communist Party's service organization under Kang Sheng, Mao's chief of intelligence, the previous incarnation of the special service apparatus currently administered by the People's Republic of China.

I. INTRODUCTION

This study is a preliminary attempt at better understanding the cultural, sociological, and historical background of modern Chinese intelligence services. Although publicly available information on contemporary special service operations remains relatively meager, extensive scholarship has been produced on many of the special service organizations (*tewu zuzhi*, 特务组织) that preceded and inspired intelligence services currently working for the People's Republic of China and Taiwan. By better understanding the ideological foundation and traditional methodology of Chinese special operations, we can develop a fuller and more nuanced picture of intelligence gathering on both domestic and external targets by Chinese states and other significant actors.

More specifically, this study focuses on state surveillance of domestic populations during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and the mid-Nationalist period under Chiang Kaishek (1927-1937), before the Pacific War. While these two eras are separated by the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) and the early Nationalist governments of Sun Yatsen (1911-1925) and Yuan Shikai (1912-1916), they are closely connected.

According to traditional historiography, the special service "matured during the Ming Dynasty, then, in modern times, especially after 1938, Chinese special service operations reached their historical pinnacle."[1] The Ming and Chiang eras, then, represent landmark periods for the development of special services culture and practices, when Chinese intelligence organizations were at their most sophisticated. Surrounded by periods of "outside" domination – under the Mongols, Manchus, Japanese, and Western powers – the special services under the Ming and Chiang eras can also be seen as embodying the Han or *zhonghua* ("Chinese") tradition of intelligence culture. Additionally, by investigating both traditional dynastic intelligence networks and later attempts to build a modern special service, we can witness the changes and continuities that lead to contemporary practices.

The special service organizations of these two periods are also commonly compared. Many Nationalist-era leaders and intellectuals looked to the Ming intelligence service as a model, either positively or negatively, for contemporary special operations. Chiang himself supposedly recalled that "in historical texts there is mention of the Eastern Depot and Western Depot of the Ming dynasty," lamenting that there were "no real records for us to look into about any of these activities."[2] Additionally, when Ding Yi's landmark 1950 book *Mingdai Tewu Zhengzhi* (Ming Era Special Service Politics) was reprinted on the mainland in 2006, the editor suggested that

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[1] Li Xuxing 李继星 *Zhongguo Tewu Gaiguan* 中国特务概观[Overview of Chinese Special Service] (Dunhuang Wenyi Chubanshe, 1996), 9.

[2] Frederic Wakeman Jr. *Spymaster: Dai Li and the Chinese Secret Service* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 78.

Ding's "original intention was to use historical research to allude to the contemporary suppression of democratic movements under the Nationalist Party's dark rule."[3]

Significantly, this study hopes to illuminate the extensive roots of Chinese intelligence culture that predate and provided the foundation for the construction of contemporary mainland and Taiwanese special service organizations. While Taiwan is the direct inheritor of the legacy of Chiang Kaishek's intelligence operations, the special service organizations of the Chinese Communist Party were created during that same period alongside and often in reaction to their Nationalist counterparts. Consequently, this preliminary study will eventually be combined with further work, connecting the intelligence services of these two eras to special service operations organized by the Qing government, early Nationalist leaders, Northern warlords, Japanese colonial authorities, and especially the Communist Party's service organization under Kang Sheng, Mao's chief of intelligence.

[3] Ding Yi 丁易 *Mingdai Tewu Zhengzhi* 明代特务政治 [Ming Era Special Service Politics] (Zhonghua Shuju, 2006), i.

II. THE SPECIAL SERVICE DURING THE MING DYNASTY

SPECIAL OPERATIONS BEFORE THE MING

While the Ming dynastic rulers were far from being the first Chinese leaders to order surveillance activities, special operations before the Ming were of a different character. In earlier times, control over various branches of state authority was less likely to be in the hands of officials or administrations dedicated to distinct tasks. Instead, these powers were more likely to be held by a single lord who directed all political, military, police, and special operations within his domain.

Additionally, the special service was not a distinct profession. Special operatives were generally existing political or military personnel who where given intelligence or assassination missions on occasion. Likewise, these operatives were not distinguished by their methodology, since they primarily used conventional political and military methods. These methods included practices from the long tradition of Chinese spy craft and subterfuge, but not to an extent that set them apart from other political and military personnel of the time.

Pre-Ming special operations were also generally focused on external threats, since regional lords or dynastic rulers would often send agents to gather intelligence on neighboring areas. As such, there were not large networks of special operatives in place, spreading out from a central hub, constantly gathering evidence on the ground. Instead, there were various central and local groups that were involved in special operations but not dedicated to it as a primary task. These groups were sent out to pursue intelligence work or assassination at the will of their leaders. In times of peace these operations were generally political in nature, while in times of war they were generally military.[4]

MING CENTRALIZATION AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE *JINYIWEI*

According to Ding Yi, "of all the dynasties, the Ming were the most thorough at implementing a centralization of authority."[5] Previously, officials and other elites enjoyed significant leeway in exercising power, but the Hongwu Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang, founder of the Ming Dynasty, made centralization – specifically, the absolute authority of the throne – his top priority. Consequently, these same elites now presented a sizable amount of passive resistance and vocal opposition to this expansion of central power at the expense of their own.

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[4] *Tewu Gaiguan*, 6-8.

[5] *Mingdai Tewu*, 1.

Zhu Yuanzhang's attempt to centralize political authority in the face of this resistance, then, led him to initially order a few trusted servants to investigate various officials. Though these agents were very careful in documenting everything they could about the activities of their targets, they had no power to suppress, punish, or try any misdeeds or disobedience they uncovered. Nevertheless, the success of these initial investigators provided the impetus for the formation of professional special service organizations that would be invested with the authority to monitor, arrest, and punish dissenters.

The Hongwu Emperor established the *jinyiwei* (锦衣卫, "Brocade-Clad Guard"), the first of several Ming service organizations, in 1382. While the *jinyiwei* were "the personal guard unit of the emperor, they also held the responsibility of performing reconnaissance on officials in the capitol," a natural extension of their mission to protect the sovereign.[6] As befits their special status, "these officers were not attached to the five chief military commissioners or to the regular imperial guards, as they were specially assigned to spy for His Majesty, to silence political opponents of the emperor, and to stop vicious rumors."[7]

The longest lived of the special service organizations, the *jinyiwei* operated throughout most of the Ming era, existing for 260 of the dynasty's 276 years. In 1388, Zhu Yuanzhang was "compelled by the people's outrage to close down the *jinyi* prison, order all instruments of torture be destroyed by fire, and make the Ministry of Punishments try all criminals" formerly detained without trial by the *jinyiwei*. Though the *jinyiwei* were not reestablished by Zhu Yuanzhang or his immediate successor Zhu Yunwen, Yunwen's uncle Zhu Di, the Yongle Emperor, reestablished the special service in the early years of his reign.[8] Since Zhu Di usurped the throne from his nephew, the new emperor found a professional special service necessary for monitoring resistance to his rule.

THE EASTERN DEPOT: EUNUCHS AND THE SPECIAL SERVICE

During the late imperial period, there were two major ways to earn a position in government. The first way was to pass several levels of examinations in the Confucian classics and composition, earning an appointment as an official. The second way was to be castrated and hope to win a post as a eunuch in the imperial service. Under Zhu Yuanzhang, the first Ming emperor, officials were the ones responsible for administering government affairs and eunuchs were expressly forbidden from that area, restricted to serving in the imperial household. Zhu Yuanzhang was wary of eunuchs – who were, in his time, largely illiterate and untrained in statecraft – for fear that they would attempt to exercise undue influence.

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[6] *Mingdai Tewu*, 4.

[7] Shih-shan Henry Tsai. *The Eunuchs of the Ming Dynasty* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), 98.

[8] *Tewu Gaiguan*, 70.

However, when the Yongle Emperor Zhu Di usurped the throne from his nephew Zhu Yunwen, "he had to rely on the help of the eunuchs because the court ministers had remained loyal to his nephew. After his successful coup d'état, Emperor Yongle rewarded the eunuchs by giving them high rank and showing them special favor, even putting some of them in charge of military affairs."[9] A large-scale program of eunuch education was also started, leading to a subsequent increase in eunuch literacy and an expanded role in government.

Placing a limit on the number of eunuchs was sometimes difficult. With expanded possibilities for eunuch service, a growing number of desperate young men committed self-castration or unauthorized castration, without first getting the approval of the emperor. These men hoped to improve their lot by gaining employment in the capital, but, in the early Ming period, were generally turned away for acting against their filial responsibilities and sent to serve in the military far away from the imperial city. Additionally, many elite families sought eunuchs to serve in their own extended households. Often, the emperor would give eunuchs to noble families as gifts, but some houses castrated young boys on their own. This also incurred punishment, though only consistently in the early decades of the Ming.[10]

By the Yongle period, the close trust that previously existed between the emperor and the *jingyiwei* had diminished. Zhu Di, who had formerly been a prince of Yan (燕, the region that is now Hebei), moved the capitol from Nanjing to Beijing (formerly named Yanjing, "the capital of Yan") in 1420. There, he continued to show great trust in his eunuchs, founding a new eunuch-led service organization, the Eastern Depot (*dongchang*, 东厂), whose headquarters was outside the city, near the Gate of Eastern Peace (*dong'an men*, 东安门). Zhu Di tasked the Eastern Depot with investigating all officials and other potential dissenters in the new capitol but also with investigating the *jingyiwei*.

For most of the Eastern Depot's history, it was intimately connected with the Ceremonial Directorate (*silijian*, 司礼监), the head office of the eunuch-dominated Inner Court. There was a chief eunuch who led the Ceremonial Directorate, the *sili zhangyin taijian* (司礼掌印太监), and "under him were four to five, sometimes eight to nine, *sili bingbi taijian* (司礼秉笔太监), or managing grand eunuchs of the Ceremonial Directorate, who took turns daily in running the agency." Often times, "the most trusted *bingbi* was also made a concurrent director of the Eastern Depot, the Inner Court spy agency," meaning that the most powerful eunuchs could often dominate the Inner Court through the Ceremonial Directorate and terrorize the Outer Court and the rest of the capital through the Eastern Depot.[11]

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[9] *Eunuchs*, 13.

[10] *Eunuchs*, 18-21.

[11] *Eunuchs*, 40.

While eunuchs were always in charge of managing the Eastern Depot, they did not conduct all operations themselves. Generally, they would hire the most promising and trusted officers of the *jinyiwei* to do investigative work for the Eastern Depot. As such…

> …under the eunuch director, there were a battalion commander… and a company commander… both from the *jinyiwei*. Immediately below these two commanders were a number of foremen, section heads, and lesser officers, about forty people in all. The military officers from the depot wore special outfits and long boots, easily becoming the most feared secret police in Ming China… In addition to these top officers, about 100 agents, known as service captains, were routinely sent out to obtain information and seek out conspirators. These captains were divided into twelve sections, and each of them in turn hired a large number of "inquisitors," similar to the FBI's informants, to do the dirty work. It is estimated that, by the end of the sixteenth century, His Majesty's ubiquitous secret police numbered over 1,000 persons.

The extensive intelligence gathering activities of the Eastern Depot…

> …were not limited to political and military affairs, but covered a wide scope of activities. The depot agents check out periodically the market prices of various foodstuffs, such as rice, beans, oil, and flour. They also reported agricultural and business conditions to the court. They went around Beijing almost daily, in disguise, canvassing the streets for suspects, visiting government offices, particularly the Ministry of War, and listening to and taking notes at the trials.[12]

As in previous dynastic periods, the Ming service organizations could always expand their numbers and intelligence network by hiring gangsters, bandits, or members of secret societies – which were not always easily distinguished – to serve as informants or special operatives. This tactic was inconsistently successful, since criminals and underworld types, while living above the law just like the service agencies, had no ultimate loyalty to the state or to those that hired them.

During certain periods, the Eastern Depot was also involved in financial affairs. During the reign of the Emperor Hongzhi, the eunuch director of the depot "worked out a plan by which the circulated paper monies were classified into five categories, some to be retired while others were kept to trace counterfeit issues."[13] As with the FBI in the United States, which is also charged with combating counterfeiting, currency-related crimes were clearly seen as a threat to state security.

Like the *jinyiwei* before them, the Eastern Depot also possessed the authority to detain, imprison, and interrogate suspects without trial, necessitating the depot's administration of two detention centers. The first was designated for those considered the most dangerous or those suspected of

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[12] *Eunuchs*, 99.

[13] *Eunuchs*, 102.

the most serious crimes while the second was merely a temporary holding for those involved with lesser crimes. The detention center was also the site of beatings or other interrogation and torture methods, often with the purpose of eliciting a confession. The Eastern Depot, like all instruments of justice, subscribed to the traditional "Chinese notion that torture was a legitimate means of extracting a confession," meaning that, often times, "the suspect would either confess or die under severe physical abuse."[14]

The official Ming history, though a clearly biased and imperfect account, describes the series of eunuchs who led the Eastern Depot as a mixture of effective planners and tyrannical dictators. While isolating Feng Bao and Chen Ju as "well-cultured, talented, and civilized eunuchs who served their emperor loyally, wisely, and effectively," it also claims "a number of eunuchs at the depot did exercise quasi-dictatorial authority to advance their wealth and power. On the other hand, all of the eunuch directors had to live in a perpetual state of apprehension," since the head of the agency generally only lasted until a scandal or the death of the current emperor led to their own execution or exile. The hatred the Eastern Depot earned from scholar-officials meant that the agency was frequently restructured in response to remonstrances.[15]

THE WESTERN DEPOT AND INTERNAL ACTIVITIES DEPOT: WATCHING THE WATCHMEN

Chenghua Emperor Ming Xianzong established the Western Depot (*xichang*, 西厂) in 1477. The year previously, a man named Li Zilong had infiltrated the palace, disguised himself as a demon fox, hid in the Summer Palace, and attempted to assassinate the emperor before being seized and eventually executed by the *jinyiwei.* This incident caused the emperor to doubt the capabilities of the existing special service organizations. Xianzong "ordered his most trusted eunuch Wang Zhi to take one or two junior officers, disguise themselves as ordinary people, and conduct reconnaissance outside the capitol. They rode donkeys or mules, working outside for over a year, and no one knew." The success of this mission inspired Xianzong to establish the Western Depot with Wang Zhi as commander and to imbue it with far greater authority than even the Eastern Depot and *jinyiwei.* However, the Western Depot was suspended several times over the course of its short life, due to the opposition of officials, and was ultimately only in existence for a total of 6 years.

The succeeding Zhengde Emperor authorized his chief eunuch, Liu Jun, to establish the Internal Activities Depot (*neixingchang*, 内行厂) in 1508. That year, the emperor came across a note containing a scathing criticism of Liu Jin that had been placed on the way to his palace. Liu Jin summoned all members of the Inner Court together and demanded that they reveal the author of the note, even turning over three hundred people to the *jinyiwei* for interrogation, before discovered that the author was one of his closest grand eunuchs. This incident so unnerved Liu Jin that he founded the Internal Activities Depot under his direct control, using it to monitor the

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[14] *Eunuchs*, 98, 100.

[15] *Eunuchs*, 112, 114.

work of personnel of the *jinyiwei*, Eastern Depot, and Western Depot (collectively known as the *weichang*, 卫厂). Ultimately, the Internal Activities Depot was even more short lived than the Western Depot, operating only until the execution of Liu Jin in 1510 and then briefly revived during the reign of the Emperor Wanli.[16]

Over the course of the Ming period, then, succeeding emperors and chief eunuchs regularly sought to assert control over the existing special service organizations, but they did not always choose to reform them from the inside or appoint new personnel to take over existing posts. In several cases, they created entirely new service organizations with handpicked staff, giving the new organization power and jurisdiction above all previous organizations. It is no wonder then that the service organizations were constantly engaged in a political struggle with each other, especially the long-standing *jinyiwei* and Eastern Depot, in addition to attempting to fulfill their assigned tasks.

MING SURVEILLANCE OF THE PROVINCES

Speaking generally of the Ming special service, there were three basic types of organizations: those assigned to outlying areas, those assigned to the capitol, and those that were dispatched as the situation demanded. Of these three types of organizations, "the most numerous were those assigned to outlying areas, which were the so-called garrison eunuchs [*zhenshou taijian*, 镇守太监], founded under Zhu Di [the Yongle Emperor] and later established throughout every province and important municipality. Outwardly, their responsibilities were to guard the area, but they were actually there to report reconnaissance to the emperor about various local officials, military personnel, and others." Additionally, the Yongle emperor had the habit of giving eunuchs as gifts to various princes and princesses, "eunuchs who were professionally trained to work as 'eyes and ears' of the emperor in the provinces."

The organizations assigned to the capitol are the ones mentioned previously: the *jinyiwei*, Eastern Depot, Western Depot, and Internal Activities Depot. All these organizations would also occasionally send out reconnaissance groups into the provinces, but that was not their main focus. Special operations forces that were not standing organizations but were dispatched as the situation demanded included eunuchs, guardsmen, tax collectors, palace overseers, storehouse overseers, engineering overseers, trade inspectors, and the like, all of whom could also perform reconnaissance under the cover of their regular duties.[17]

MING SPECIAL SERVICE AGENTS: WHY EUNUCHS?

While the *jinyiwei* represent the original and longest-lasting Ming special service organization, the shift to eunuch leadership of the special service represents a significant development. Eunuch power was promoted, initially, because they had assisted Zhu Di, the Yongle Emperor, in

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[16] *Tewu Gaiguan*, 72-73; *Eunuchs*, 117-118.

[17] *Mingdai Tewu*, 4; *Eunuchs*, 20.

assuming the throne, but subsequent Ming emperors kept the Eastern Depot operational for a number of important reasons. Eunuchs supposedly had no outside concerns – family, children, wealth, land, local ties, religion, sex – that would compromise their absolute allegiance to the emperor and the Ming state. In fact, eunuchs often had very little possibility for advancement outside of the imperial service. Even a life of service working for a high-ranking prince would never rival a position in the emperor's household.

Additionally, eunuchs represented a class set apart from normal people by the very nature of their physical condition and by the inescapable life of service that it represented. As agents of the imperial household, eunuchs were privy to a world of politics and statecraft, but they were also – unlike the official bureaucracy – very close at hand, under the direct control of the emperor and his most trusted advisors. Due to their own mutilation and subsequent altered physical and psychological state, it was also thought that eunuchs would be willing to do whatever the emperor deems necessary to secure his rule.

The very traits that made eunuchs ideal candidates for the special service – their isolation, their familiarity, their loyalty – were also the same traits that were prized in those chosen for Dai Li's Special Service Department (*tewu chu*, 特务处). Of course, Chiang Kaishek's Nationalist forces could not depend upon eunuchs and special service practices in the first half of the Twentieth Century were very different than those in Ming times. However, Chiang, Dai, and other Nationalist leaders involved in special operations all looked to the past for models of how the special service should think of itself.

III. THE SPECIAL SERVICE DURING THE NATIONALIST ERA

ROMANTIC HEROISM AND THE NATIONALIST SPECIAL SERVICE

During the 1960s, there was an outpouring of memoirs and other primary source documents published on Dai Li, the intelligence organization he ran through the Military Investigation and Statistics Bureau (*juntong*, 军统), and the Nationalist Party's secret service record in general. On the mainland, scholars and former agents condemned the special operations of this period while, in Taiwan, the same events were lauded and celebrated. However differently the special service was judged on opposite sides of the Taiwan Strait, "the choice of a strikingly similar idiom in these otherwise divergent accounts points to the presence of a shared narrative tradition that was derived from the world of popular pre-modern novels such as the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and the *Water Margin*."[18] The Nationalist special service was, in effect, grounded in the romantic chivalry of the *wuxia* literature tradition.

When Dai Li was originally called on to create the Special Services Department (*tewu chu*, 特务处) in 1932, "Chiang Kaishek instructed his disciple to turn to *The Water Margin* (*shuihu zhuan)* for guidance, 'because when the bravos of Liangshanbo got together in the Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness, their activities consisted of nothing more than intelligence and operations.'"[19] From this point on, an extensive array of sources confirm that "the officers of the secret service inhabited a cultural universe of traditional heroic lore and historical allegories. Cultural symbols and values of the past in turn shaped the profile of secret service paragons during the Nanjing decade."[20]

Supposedly, after receiving the command to form the Special Services Department…

> …Dai Li responded by way of an oath: "From this day on my life is no longer in my hands. I will risk my life at the hands of the enemy in order to achieve the success of our mission. I will submit myself to the punishment of death by my leader in the event of failure." Dai Li's resolve at this juncture was often compared by his followers to the determination of the assassin Jing Ke of Yan of the Warring States period (ca. 400-221 B.C.), who sang to his desperate prince before embarking on a fateful mission in 227

[18] Wen- Hsin Ye, "Dai Lu and the Liu Geqing Affair: Heroism in the Chinese Secret Service During the War of Resistance," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 48, no. 3 (1989), 546.

[19] *Spymaster*, 78; "Heroism in the Secret Service," 546.

[20] "Heroism in the Secret Service," 550.

> B.C.: "The wind rustles through the dry leaves, the water of the River Yi chills. The brave man sets forth and vows never to return."[21]

This reference to Jing Ke invokes the oldest known example of *wuxia* fiction, *Prince Dan of Yan* (*yandanzi*, 燕丹子), which was written by an anonymous author during the late Eastern Han period. Serving as the direct inspiration for the recent films *The Emperor and the Assassin* and, to a lesser extent, *Hero*,[22] *Prince Dan of Yan* tells the story of the Prince's failed attempt to kill the Qin Emperor and the subsequent death of his assassin, Jing Ke.

Though *wuxia* fiction has an ancient lineage, tracing back at least to this period, it took centuries for the genre, influenced by the great epics of Chinese literature – *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*sanguo yanyi*, 三国演义), *The Water Margin* (*shuihu zhuan*, 水浒传), and *Journey to the West* (*xiyouji*, 西游记) – to grow more epic, more popular, and gradually more supernatural. Often times, as with the epics previously mentioned, the stories would exist for centuries as oral traditions before they were ever written down. It was not until the Ming era that *Journey to the West* was regularly available in print form and not until the modernizations of the late Qing and Nationalist periods when *wuxia* novels were mass produced.

In 1879, Tianjin-based storyteller Shi Yukun wrote the first true *wuxia* novel, *Three Heroes and Five Gallants* (*sanxia wuyi*, 三侠五义), based on the promptbook scripts used by himself and other oral performers. Critical to the novel, as well as much of the *wuxia* fiction of this era, was the collaboration of two different kinds of *xia* heroes, swordsmen and upright officials. While the swordsmen were often little more than bandits and the officials were likely to be isolated moral figures within an entirely corrupt bureaucracy, they gathered together to fight injustice outside of the untrustworthy state and its laws. In these cases, the education and perceptiveness of the officials – including, in this case, the legendary Judge Bao – allowed them to find the root of the problem, though they themselves lacked the martial prowess to deal with things directly. Righteous swordsmen were necessary to assist the righteous officials in fighting evil in whatever form it took.

Tang Yunzhou's 1894 novel *Seven Swordsmen and Thirteen Gallants* (*qijian shisanyi*, 七剑十三义), in which the heroes are able to "summon wind and rain and spread beans that turn into soldiers," ushered in a new age of supernatural wuxia literature, coming to a peak after the Republican revolution of 1911. Generally speaking, there were three main groups of *wuxia* fiction in the Republic:

> The story of the first group is based on historical facts and tradition. The major characters in the story are real, but the author has made artistic elaboration by mixing facts with unofficial history and anecdotes… The story of the second group deals with

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[21] "Heroism in the Secret Service," 547-548.

[22] Chen Kaige, *Jingke Ci Qinwang* 荆轲刺秦王 [The Emperor and the Assassin], Beijing Film Studio, 1998; Zhang Yimou, *Yingxiong* 英雄 [Hero], Beijing New Picture Film Company, 2002.

> factional strife among the gallants. Characters and episodes are all fictitious, but the story is set in human society and the swordsmanship has nothing to do with supernatural powers… The third group tends to be fantastic… [C]haracters are able to mounts the clouds and ride the mist, to blow white light from their mouths, and strike their enemies from the other side of a hill. Their swords can fly by themselves to kill their enemies.[23]

It was at this time too that *wuxia* first seized the imagination of the general public. *Wuxia* serials ran in every major newspaper during the 30's and 40's. Famous novelists with real literary credentials tried their hand at penning epic martial arts tales, including Wang Dulu, who wrote the series of novels that inspired the movie *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon*.[24]

It is easy to understand the appeal these stories had for those involved in the nascent secret service. *Wuxia* fiction was generally set during periods when the political situation in China was in chaos and the imagined and idealized unity of *da zhongguo* (Greater China) was divided into various squabbling kingdoms. Is it any wonder that these heroic tales of the Warring States or Three Kingdoms periods resonated with young men growing up in an era of fighting warlords? Chiang Kaishek may have periodically led the "central" government in Nanjing, but political rivals controlled the southern, northern, and western provinces, not to mention the internal Communist threat and the external threat of a Japanese invasion.

Additionally, there were strong similarities drawn between the life amid the *jianghu* (rivers and lakes) culture that permeated *wuxia* fiction and life in the special service. Like the outlaw heroes of old, special service agents lived above the law and feared no power in heaven or on earth. They gathered together in secret brotherhoods to fight for high ideals of righteousness, justice, and the property authority of the *lingxiu* (leader), Chiang Kaishek. The methodology of the service – espionage, surveillance, assassination, thievery, codes, intimidation, interrogation, thievery, etc. – was also not far removed from the *jianghu* lifestyle.

While treatment of civilian traitors was often horrendously brutal, there was tendency to view the never-ending struggle against the service agencies of the Communists, Japanese, and Nationalist Party rivals as part of an epic battle of tactics and glory. This conflict was not viewed in terms of good and evil (which are not generally emphasized in Chinese martial fiction), but as an honorable battle between opposing forces, one in which both sides treated their enemy with respect.

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[23] Cao Zhengwen. "Chinese Gallant Fiction," *Handbook of Chinese Popular Culture*. Wu Dingbo and Patrick D. Murphy, eds. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994).

[24] Ang Lee, *Wohu Canglong* 卧虎藏龙[Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon], Asia Union Film & Entertainment Ltd, 2000.

JIANGHU LIFESTYLE: NATIONALIST SPECIAL SERVICE AGENTS

In his search for 'true men of the rivers and lakes' (*jianghu haohan*, 江湖好汉), Dai Li gathered agents who possessed a background similar to his own. When the Special Service Department was first established, "most secret service officers had received a traditional education in the early provinces, insulated from the urban-based intellectual fervent of the May Fourth Movement… Dai Li drew a core of men from this sort of provincial background and methodically exploited the network of their relatives, classmates, and native-place associations to recruit others into the secret service."[25] By avoiding potential recruits from urban areas and concentration on those from rural backgrounds, the Special Service Department was packed with men with more traditional values, less bothered by the concerns of modernism.

Though more familiar with the concerns of the May Fourth Movement, Communist leaders such as Mao Zedong also hailed from this same group of semi-educated young men from rural areas, normally destined to teach primary school in the countryside. However…

> …the combination in them of the conceit of the petty intellectual together with the blocked ambition of their relatively low status must have fired powerful dreams of accomplishment. And being less firmly attached to the role of the pen-wielding and study-bound intellectual, they were far readier to turn to other modes of personal expression such as revolutionary organization or military training than higher-status intellectuals such as college professors might have been.[26]

A great example of this generation is Deng Wenyi, an early special service leader. Like so many of these young men, Deng was raised on *The Water Margin*, *Three Kingdoms*, and contemporary wuxia fiction, so that he "grew up filled with the romantic resolve of so many Chinese adolescents steeped in martial fiction – a resolve he shared with other modern *youxia* (knights-errant) like Mao Zedong – to help the weak through sage and courageous deeds, to save the people and the nation by being an anonymous hero, and to remain an honest and true *junzi* (gentleman) by rejecting money and women without regret and by enduring hardship and travel without complaint."[27] Deng and many others like him sought a restless life, denouncing the attachments of a stable existence, living like the wandering swordsmen in their literary imagination.

Initially all agents were also former students of Chiang Kaishek's Whampoa Military Academy (*huangpu junxiao*, 黄埔军校) in southern Guangdong province. Since these students had received military training, it was important that Chiang keep track of all Whampoa graduates,

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[25] "Heroism in the Secret Service," 550.

[26] *Spymaster*, 22.

[27] *Spymaster*, 39.

lest they fall under the sway of rival political or military forces. The predecessor and main recruitment tool of the early Nationalist special service, then, was the Whampoa Alumni Association (*huangpu tongxuehui*, 黄埔同学会), through which former students were called to serve their old "headmaster" (*xiaozhang*, 校长), Chiang, more directly.

Joining the special service, then, was the opportunity to reunite with a band of old friends and schoolmates, or at least gather together with those who knew of you from their fellows. There were bonds of familiarity and camaraderie among the Whampoa graduates, based on shared experiences but also comparable to the meeting of renowned warriors or the gathering of heroes in the martial literature tradition. Joining the special service meant belonging to a secret brotherhood of men who were set apart from normal society and endowed with the mission and the authority to set things right.

To summarize, then…

> …all of the members… were Whampoa cadets of classes one through six in their twenties and thirties, born during the last years of the Qing and mainly educated in classical learning before attending modern schools in the early years of the new Republic. According to Deng Wenyi's son, they came from all over China, but the majority were from the Yangzi region, and especially "from provincial grass roots and small towns," which "very much retained the qualities – the strengths and the weaknesses – of traditional Chinese society. These youths personally experienced that society, so they possessed the intention to conserve its strength, but they also knew the weaknesses of the society as well and so were eager to reform it."[28]

This mixture of traditional and reformist values provided the core ideology of the special service. They saw themselves as outlaw heroes in the martial epic tradition, but also sought to reform traditional society to create a better future for the fragmented and internally weak China.

Ideals from *wuxia* fiction regularly carried over into the language of Dai Li's special service and other intelligence operations of the period. For example, the assassination of a leading Japanese collaborator was said to "arouse and excite the heroes of Yan and Zhao," two of the Warring States who resisted Qin domination.[29] Additionally, Dai Li preferred to talk about his service to Chiang Kaishak as "the labor of a horse or hound" (*quanma zhi lao*, 犬马之劳), a phrase uttered by to the supreme military strategist Zhuge Liang (on which Dai Li modeled himself) when he decided to serve Liu Bei in the *Three Kingdoms*.[30] This sort of romantic language was apparently very enthralling even to those outside special service circles. At one point, Dai Li was captured

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[28] *Spymaster*, 53.

[29] *Spymaster*, 118.

[30] *Spymaster*, 2-3.

by a rival power, but managed to convince his captor to "support the headmaster in occupying all under Heaven" (yonghu xiaozhang zuo tianxia, 拥护校长坐天下).[31]

Of course, following *wuxia* ideals did not always produce effective practices. At once point, "Chiang Kaishek authorized the Henan [Renaissance Society] to set up the Loyal and Patriotic Association in the province in order to enroll 'society's lower elements,' including 'leading elements' from 'martial arts circles' (*guoshujie*) and gangster leaders from the Green and Red gangs."[32] Gangsters and martial artists were the traditional companions of *wuxia* heroes, who were often little more than bandits themselves. Even though, in this case, the heroes of the secret service were not true outlaws, being agents of the ruling party, clearly they saw these 'lower elements' as natural allies. Predictably, pro-Chiang forces in Henan province soon developed a reputation for unruly, corrupt, and abusive behavior, since the Renaissance Society's leadership was not able to control their newest recruits.

Still, this was not enough to deter the Henan Nationalists from their plans. After the Manchurian Incident of 1937, when Japan began to invade central China, Chiang's supporters in Henan "entertained the notion of a *levée en masse*, along familiar populist lines in the *Water Margin* tradition. Orders went out from Kaifeng to local branches to arouse local bravos and magnates, and, as was to be expected, the local bandit chiefs for which Henan was justly famous began to make plans to come together and form a confederation to resist the invaders."[33] Of course, the bandit forces then spent the next several months gambling and whoring, causing Chiang to finally seek to arrest them. However much the special service hoped to emulate the legendary bandit kings of old, they had difficulty integrating their central allegiance and high ideals with the realities of outlaw life.

In another instance, Dai Li, "invited to the bureau a kung fu master who was believed to be the real-life model for the hero of the *Jianghu Qixia Zhuan* (Legendary Roving Knights of the Rivers and Lakes), a popular Republican *wuxia* (martial valor and knight-errant) novel popular among the petty urbanites of the time."[34] Throughout this period and even later during the Second Sino-Japanese War, Dai Li and the Nationalist special service emphasized traditional martial arts as an important part of an agent's training.

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[31] *Spymaster*, 37.

[32] *Spymaster*, 125.

[33] *Spymaster*, 128-129.

[34] "Heroism in the Secret Service," 550.

CONFUCIAN AUTHORITARIANISM: CHINESE FASCISM AND THE SPECIAL SERVICE

Chiang Kaishek saw in the *wuxia* life an upholding of Confucian ideals. When the central authorities failed to govern in a righteous and just fashion, true men of virtue were forced to operate outside the law in order to protect and serve the interests of the people and to create a more proper moral order. However, Chiang's emphasis upon central authority, the need to unify the nation under the Nationalist Party, and his efforts to exterminate dissenters and Communists tied him closely to the Confucian authoritarian tradition. The wandering swordsman tradition, on the other hand, generally opposed central authority, being a popular expression of dissatisfaction with the state's corruption, decadence, and injustice.

The organizations that formed the basis of Chiang's special service, the Whampoa Alumni Association, the secretive Society for Vigorous Practice (*lixing she*, 力行社), and the Renaissance Society (*fuxing she*, 复兴社), "were both modern and traditionalistic. They smacked vaguely of Western and Japanese ultranationalist youth groups while also drawing on the late imperial tradition of scholar-gentry academies and associations."[35] In fact, Chiang required the founding members of the Society for Vigorous Practice to submit to a classical-style examination. Prospective candidate for the secret organization wrote papers after listening to Chiang lecture on "knowing is difficult while acting is easy, the philosophy of vigorous practice" (*zhinan xingyi, lixing zhexue*; 知难行易, 力行哲学).

Once they passed the exam, each member of the organization took the following oath in front of a picture of Sun Yatsen, the deceased founder of the Nationalist Party:

> I swear in all my sincerity to practice the Three People's Principles with vigor, to recover revolutionary spirit, to revive the Chinese race, to sacrifice all personal interest, to obey orders, to adhere strictly to secrecy, and to complete the task of revolution and of building the country. If I breach this oath, I am willing to accept the most severe punishment. I pledge this sincerely.[36]

This mixture of Confucian traditionalism and ultranationalism was popularly considered a kind of Chinese fascism, modeled on German, Italian, and Japanese models as well as on traditional Confucian ideas about statecraft and morality. Like fascist leaders abroad, Chiang Kaishek was certainly interested in strengthening the state and increasing central authority through discipline, nationalism, and military control. This element of special service ideology betrays the wide gap between the freewheeling *wuxia* heroes many special operatives saw as models and the actual reality of serving a totalitarian, single-party government looking to expand its power.

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[35] *Spymaster*, 52.

[36] *Spymaster*, 61-62.

However, despite Chiang's strong central control, there were also ideological concepts that served to mitigate the harshness of his authority. One was the practice of calling Chiang "headmaster" (*xiaozhang*, 校长), as if everyone was still in school at Whampoa Military Academy. Additionally, the various organizations under the headmaster's direct authority…

> …thought of themselves as being part of Chiang Kaishek's *dixi* – that is, his direct line of descent, or family. …From the perspective of these "wives' sons," other cliques within Chiang's power structure were interlopers masquerading as filial progeny. Members of the "CC" clique, for instance, were viewed as being Chiang's "adopted sons" (*minglingzi*), while the Political Study Group leaders Yang Yongtai and Zhang Qun were mere "yamen advisors" (*shiye*) and "household servants" (*guanjia*).[37]

This too followed a Confucian model of leadership, but one that was familial instead of political, with Chiang as the head of a large household.

OFFICIAL SECRET SOCIETIES: AN OUTLINE OF NATIONALIST SPECIAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

Chiang Kaishek began the Chinese Civil War in 1927 with his attempt to exterminate suspected Communists within the Nationalist Party ranks, including students in Dai Li's class at Whampoa Academy. From this point on, even with the Japanese Guandong Army poised threateningly in the northeast, Chiang stood firm on the idea that "to resist foreign aggression you must first pacify the interior" (*rangwai bi xian annei*, 攘外必先安内), focusing most of his energy on monitoring, subverting, and destroying the internal Communist threat. Military campaigns against Communist forces – including, between 1931-1934, Mao's nascent government in the Jiangxi Soviet – were certainly a major part of the plan, but many Communist elements were believed to require subtler handling.

Chiang established the Special Investigations Group (*micha zu*, 密查组) under Chen Lifu in 1928, originally an organization with no official status. During this period…

> …Chiang's informal agents were many, for his method of controlling the various kinds of secret organizations that grew up under his aegis after 1927 was simply to let the special services fights amongst themselves for funds and authority, acting as a check the one upon the other. In this case, however, a semiformal group was established to deal with Communists and to control anti-Chiang elements within the [Nationalist Party] by using funds secretly provided under the "special expenses" (*tebie fei*) allocation in the budget of the Central Party Office (*zhongyang dangbu*).[38]

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[37] *Spymaster*, 88-89.

[38] *Spymaster*, 37.

The Special Investigations Group, then, was financed though discretionary funds Chiang controlled through his ties to the Nationalist Party and served as his private spy network. According to some sources, Dai Li was given charge of the portion of this organization devoted to investigating military personnel, a responsibility that he would continue to hold for most of his long career.

Then, in 1932, Chiang was appointed chairman of the Military Affairs Commission (*junwei*, 军委), giving him more direct administrative power than he'd had before as commander-in-chief of the Nationalist armed forces. Chiang decided to reorganize the Special Investigations group into a larger, official entity that would coordinate many of the existing organizations in his private intelligence service. This entity was the Bureau of Investigation and Statistics (*diaocha tongji ju*, 调查统计局), led once again by Chen Lifu and divided into three main departments. Each of these departments represented an emerging faction within the Nationalist special service agencies and was the direct descendent of a series of earlier organizations that existed before Chiang's special service apparatus was officially formalized.

The first department was led by Xu Enzeng, who, along with Chen Lifu, would go on to becoming Dai Li's biggest rival for dominance of all special operations. Xu had previously led the Investigations Section of Central Party Office (*zhongyang dangbu diaocha ke*, 中央党部调查科), which became the Party Affairs Investigation Department (*dangwu diaocha chu*, 党务调查处) before it was consolidated into the first department of this new bureau. Xu and Chen's faction represented the intelligence wing of the Nationalist Party itself. In 1938, when the three-way war with the Communists and the Japanese demanded further restructuring of the special services, this faction became the Central Statistics Bureau (*zhongtong*, 中统).

The second department was run by Dai Li, who began serving Chiang informally as head of the Liason Group (*lianluo zu*, 联络组) in 1928. Beginning around 1930, he began recruiting a small group of agents with which to personally conduct operations for the headmaster. Known unofficially as the League of Ten (*shiren tuan*, 十人团), Dai Li's small entourage was eventually given official status as the Investigation and Communication Small Group (*diaocha tongxun xiaozu*, 调查通讯小组). In early 1932, with Chiang now head of the Military Affairs Commission, Dai Li was authorized to expand his existing force and create the first true Special Services Department (*tewu chu*, 特务处) under the auspices of the military. The SSD was then incorporated into the bureau as its second department.

Whereas Xu and Chen's faction was based in the Nationalist Party, Dai Li's faction was based in the military. The military served the party of course, but in reality party leaders and military officers were often distinct groups with very different interests. Chiang Kaishek bridged the gap somewhat, but he had started his career as the chief military supporter of Nationalist Party founder Sun Yatsen. Chiang was ultimately more of a military than a civil administrator. During the 1938 reorganization, Dai Li's faction was transformed into the widely hated Military Statistics Bureau (*juntong*, 军统), the martial counterpart to the party-oriented Central Statistics Bureau.

The third department was run by Ding Mocun who, while a special service leader, would never go on to have the authority that Chen, Xu, and Dai Li possessed. He was ultimately executed as a

traitor and Japanese collaborator after the Pacific War. Ding ran the Bureau of Postal and Telegraphic Inspection (*youdian jiancha ju*, 邮电检查局), a significant office but not one on par with the other two departments. Later on, his organization would be reorganized as the Special Inspection Department (*tejian chu*, 特检处).

A fourth special service faction – and one that would play an important role in Dai Li's rise to dominance – had its roots in the Headquarters for the Extermination of Bandits (*jiaofei zongbu*, 剿匪总部) in Nanchang, Jiangxi. The purpose of this military headquarters was to root out the Communist forces camped out in three of the south central provinces. This included, most significantly, Mao Zedong and Zhe De's headquarters in the Jiangxi Soviet, a region that acted as a de facto independent Communist state from 1931-1934, complete with its own government.

In 1931, Chiang ordered the establishment of an Espionage Section (*diebao ke*, 谍报科) to conduct special operations in these "bandit-suppression areas." Then, in 1932, Deng Wenyi suggested the formation of the Investigation Section (*diaocha ke*, 调查科), which would create special service offices in all of the "mobile garrisons" (*bao'an xingying*, 保安行营) that were responsible for subduing the Communist "bandits." A central office was created in the Nanchang headquarters for the coordination of the section, which was "a provincial network as opposed to the two sections [Xu Enzeng's and Dai Li's] operating independently of each other in the national capitol at Nanjing."[39]

Deng was dismissed from office in 1933, soon after the reorganization of the central special services agencies in Nanjing. Dai Li maneuvered well and managed to assume the majority of Deng's responsibilities, gaining control of the provincial intelligence networks throughout all three bandit-suppression regions. Dai was quick to take advantage of his expanded influence, as, "under the aegis of the Investigation Section, the SSD began to use its new authority as an arm of the Military Affairs Commission by sending agents out to infiltrate the Investigation and Apprehension Departments (*zhenji chu*) of various garrison command headquarters and to try to take over the detective squads of public security bureaus under the control of the Nationalist government."[40] This enabled Dai Li to spread his personal network deeper into the provinces and positioned him well for the internal struggles that would come later.

UNOFFICIAL SECRET SOCIETIES: THE CHIANG "FREEMASONRY"

Another important component of Nationalist era special service culture were the secret societies that had no official status with either the party or the military, but served as recruitment and information networks for those loyal to the headmaster, Chiang Kaishek. The roots of most of these societies reach back to 1925, when a group of students at Whampoa Military Academy – including many future special service leaders, such as Deng Wenyi and He Zhonghan – formed

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[39] *Spymaster*, 40.

[40] *Spymaster*, 44.

the Sun Yatsen Study Society (*sunwen zhuyi xuehui*, 孙文主义学会). This student group, which clearly declared its support for Chiang as Sun Yatsen's successor, was formed to be a right-wing response to the main pro-Communist student group, the Federation of Young Soldiers.[41]

Several years later in 1931, pro-Chiang elements within the Whampoa Alumni Association – led by He Zhonghan and Teng Jie – formed the Preparations Department for Protecting the Party and Saving the Nation (*hudang jiuguo choubei chu*, 护党救国筹备处), a small group that began plans for a national network of Chiang supporter, fellow Whampoa graduates and other allied forces, coordinated in service to the headmaster's cause. Initially, their plans were kept secret from Chiang himself, who currently did not hold an official position in the government, thanks to the complex internal politics of the Nationalist Party.

However, in early 1932, as Chiang prepared to return to government and assume his new post as chairman of the Military Affairs Commission, the members of the Preparations Department contacted him and politely asked for his support in putting their plans into action. Chiang reportedly said, "You understand what the current situation requires. This plan is very appropriate. However, you are all very young and inexperienced and I am afraid that you may fail. Let me lead you."[42] He then summoned all the members of the Preparations Department for a series of discussion meetings at his private villa on the grounds of the Sun Yatsen Mausoleum outside Nanjing.

These meetings resulted in establishing the secret organization known as the Society for Vigorous Practice of the Three People's Principles (*sanmin zhuyi lixing she*, 三民主义力行社), more commonly known as the *lixingshe*. The true nature of this mysterious group is only beginning to be pieced together, a task made more difficult by the destruction of many important and potentially embarrassing documents by the government of Taiwan. Operating largely through front organizations such as the pervasive Renaissance Society (*fuxing she*, 复兴社), the *lixingshe* was a pro-Chiang "freemasonry" complete with its own rituals and strict membership guidelines.

Though the *lixingshe* was associated in the popular consciousness with the harshly fascists right-wing elements known as the Blue Shirts (*lanyi she*, 蓝衣社), recent evidence seems to indicate that these were distinct groups and that the Blue Shirts may not have even had any formal structure. In comparison, the *lixingshe* seems to be secretly behind all right-wing Nationalist political movements in this period, similar to the way the Broederbond dominated all right-wing Afrikaner politics in modern South Africa.

The *lixingshe* was a behind-the-scenes network of Chiang supporters answering directly to Chiang himself, a network that was constantly used by the secret service organizations, especially Dai Li's SSD, as a recruitment and resource tool. Even the secret society's public

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[41] *Spymaster*, 39.

[42] *Spymaster*, 56.

front, the massive Renaissance Society – a preliminary level of initiation into the *lixingshe*'s mystery cult, was used by intelligence agencies, such as in getting them to found the Loyal and Patriotic Association (*zhongyi jiuguo hui*, 忠义救国会) among the bandit kings of Henan province. The Renaissance Society was also an easy target for infiltration by Communist agents loyal to Zhou Enlai or other leaders, since its membership requirements were much less strict than the officially non-existent *lixingshe*. Tracking down Communist spies in the Renaissance Society, then, quickly became another task for pro-Chiang special service agents.

IV. Conclusion: Continuities, Developments, and Further Questions

Again in the middle Nationalist era, we see the same emphasis on the isolation, familiarity, and loyalty of special service agents that we see in the Ming. Though far from being eunuchs, Dai Li's agents were often young men from the countryside who left behind their attachments to pursue a bandit lifestyle in the *jianghu* tradition. Like their literary heroes, they gathered together as a band of brothers, reunited from their school days at Whampoa Military Academy. They were clearly set apart by their special position as intimates of high Nationalist leaders including Chiang Kaishek himself and by their involvement in Chiang's "freemasonry" of ritually reinforced loyalty.

When it came to domestic surveillance, the Nationalists continued the Ming tradition of mainly investigating officials (including, in this case, party leaders) and military officers, not the common people. The Blue Shirts, which were associated with Chiang's secret intelligence networks in the popular consciousness, did resort to brutal intimidation tactics against common people, but this was not really a major focus of the special service as a whole. This begs the question: where did the contemporary tradition of monitoring popular dissent and watching potential troublemakers (including foreigners) develop from, if it is not present in earlier eras?

Another continuity between the Ming and Nationalist eras is the constant infighting between various secret service factions, each of which has their own interests and leading figures. The politics and maneuvering that surrounded the *weichang* (guards and depots) of the imperial court is remarkably similar to the struggles between Dai Li's military intelligence faction and the Xu/Chen party intelligence faction.

Ultimately, the service organizations of these two very different eras had different models and ideologies on which to base their behavior. The *weichang* saw themselves as the direct, empowered servants of the emperor and the imperial household, while many Nationalist special service agents preferred to see themselves as outlaw heroes, even though all of these groups served an authoritarian state. While all of these service agencies subscribed to a series of high ideals, many of which were traditionally Chinese or Confucian in origin, the Nationalist era's emphasis on the *jianghu* lifestyle of bandit kings and wandering swordsmen represents a unique development. The Chiang "freemasonry" also represents an attempt to create an artificial family among special service agents in a way that was totally absent in the Ming.

For future research, we are left with many questions, including questions about the degree of continuity and difference between the Ming and previous historical eras. With regard to the methodology, professionalism, and targets of special service activities, do Ming practices truly represent a break with previous eras? Is it possible that the supposed emphasis on external threats by past governments is simply an artifact of the historical record, not of actual reality? Certainly, compared to domestic surveillance, surveillance of external targets, because of its close relationship to regional politics, diplomacy, and war, seems more likely to be included in official dynastic histories. Also, do the Ming represent the first instance of eunuchs being employed in

spy craft, and are the *weichang* really the first organizations established specifically for special service operations, as traditional historiography claims? How did Ming special service methodology differ from previous eras?

There are also questions of continuity among the Nationalist secret service apparatus, the Communist special service, and the post-1949 Taiwanese service. The relationship between Communist service organizations and Nationalist ones is sure to be revealing, particularly if the factionalism and emphasis on *jianghu* culture were also evident in Kang Sheng's organization. When looking at contemporary practices on the mainland and Taiwan a critical issue, once again, is how the agencies for monitoring common people developed, since that does not seem to be one of the main responsibilities of previous services.

Is the monitoring of civilians even considered to be a special service task or is such surveillance entirely in the hands of public security (police) organizations? Public security forces generally have established offices against which the people could potentially seek redress, as opposed to being above the law. Additionally, who monitors officials, party members, and the military? Who inherited these responsibilities from the *weichang* and Nationalist special service? Is the contemporary equivalent a standing force and, if so, whose interests does it serve? Are those involved in internal investigations only answerable to top leaders (such as the Central Committee of the People's Republic) as they were in times past?