

ABSTRACT

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This dissertation examines the attacks on the Three Kong Sites (Confucius Temple, Confucius Mansion, Confucius Cemetery) in Confucius's birthplace Qufu, Shandong Province at the start of the Cultural Revolution. During the height of the campaign against the Four Olds in August 1966, Qufu's local Red Guards attempted to raid the Three Kong Sites but failed. In November 1966, Beijing Red Guards came to Qufu and succeeded in attacking the Three Kong Sites and leveling Confucius's tomb. In January 1967, Qufu peasants thoroughly plundered the Confucius Cemetery for buried treasures. This case study takes into consideration all related participants and circumstances and explores the complicated events that interwove dictatorship with anarchy, physical violence with ideological abuse, party conspiracy with mass mobilization, cultural destruction with revolutionary indoctrination, ideological vandalism with acquisitive vandalism, and state violence with popular violence. This study argues that the violence against the Three Kong Sites was not a typical episode

of the campaign against the Four Olds with outside Red Guards as the principal actors but a complex process involving multiple players, intraparty strife, Red Guard factionalism, bureaucratic plight, peasant opportunism, social ecology, and ever-evolving state-society relations. This study also maintains that Qufu locals' initial protection of the Three Kong Sites and resistance to the Red Guards were driven more by their bureaucratic obligations and self-interest rather than by their pride in their cultural heritage. Finally, this study introduces the concept of "Qufu exceptionalism," namely, the unassailability and invulnerability of Confucius's birthplace throughout Chinese history, and provides the reasons why Qufu exceptionalism ultimately succumbed to the Cultural Revolution.

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REVOLUTION, AUGUST 1966-JANUARY 1967

By

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my mother, whose enduring love sustained me throughout my life, and to my daughters, Edna and Rebecca, whose formative years passed without me as I pursued my doctoral studies. For their love, understanding, and support, I am forever grateful.

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I am grateful to Professor Yongyi Song, eminent Cultural Revolution researcher and editor-in-chief of the Chinese Cultural Revolution Database. It was Professor Song who introduced me to Cultural Revolution studies and to the compilation of the Red Guard newspaper *The Denounce Confucius Battlefield Report*. It ultimately led to my research on the Qufu violence and served as an invaluable primary source for my study. This dissertation would not have been possible without Professor Song's unfailing material and moral support.

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Dedication | ii |
| Acknowledgements | iii |
| Abbreviations | ix |
| Introduction | 1 |
| Chapter I: Confucianism Before the Cultural Revolution | 9 |
| Confucianism from Antiquity to the Opium War: 551 B.C. – A.D. 1840..... | 10 |
| Confucianism in Decline: 1840-1949 | 11 |
| Reevaluation of Confucianism During the Early PRC: 1949-1966 | 23 |
| Conclusion..... | 42 |
| Chapter II: Qufu—China’s Mecca | 45 |
| China’s Holy Land..... | 45 |
| Land and People | 46 |
| Qufu from Confucius’s Lifetime to the Eve of Modern China: 551B.C.-1799 | 50 |
| Qufu and the Kong Lineage in Their Heyday on the Eve of Modern China | 59 |
| The Decline of the Kong Lineage in Modern China: 1800-1949..... | 70 |
| Conclusion..... | 79 |
| Chapter III: Defending the Three Kong Sites | 80 |
| The Prelude | 80 |
| Early Attempts of Red Guard Vandalism in Qufu | 88 |
| Preventing Future Attacks..... | 97 |
| Conspiracy in Beijing | 103 |
| Rallying the Troops | 109 |
| Conclusion..... | 121 |
| Chapter IV: Organized Destruction..... | 127 |
| Advance Team..... | 127 |
| First Engagement..... | 133 |
| Central Directives: A Catalyst for Change | 143 |
| Defending the Protection Steles | 155 |
| The Collapse of the Last Line of Defense..... | 158 |
| Planning the Final Assault | 162 |
| Mass Rally..... | 169 |
| Mission Accomplished..... | 171 |
| Conclusion..... | 175 |
| Chapter V: Rebellion of Confucius’s Descendants | 177 |
| Hasty Departure..... | 177 |
| The “New Sheriff” in Town..... | 179 |
| New Revolutionary Force | 183 |
| Seeking Peasant Advice | 186 |
| Preparing for the Class Education Exhibition..... | 190 |
| Poised for a New High Tide of the Anti-Confucian Campaign | 198 |
| Tomb-robbing Mania: From a Trickle to a Flood | 200 |
| Peasant Resourcefulness | 209 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Return of Tradition | 215 |
| Peasant Defiance | 217 |
| Community Rivalry | 224 |
| The Aftermath | 227 |
| Conclusion..... | 230 |
| Conclusion | 233 |
| Setting the Record Straight | 233 |
| Qufu Exceptionalism | 236 |
| The Cultural Revolution and the Qufu Violence..... | 242 |
| The Campaign against Lin Biao and Confucius..... | 246 |
| Qufu Violence and Its Implications..... | 249 |
| Glossary | 261 |
| Bibliography..... | 265 |

Abbreviations

| | |
|------|-----------------------------------|
| BNU | Beijing Normal University |
| CCRG | Central Cultural Revolution Group |
| CCP | Chinese Communist Party |
| QTC | Qufu Teachers Institute |
| PRC | People's Republic of China |
| RMB | Renminbi or People's Currency |

Introduction

In 479 B.C., Confucius died a humble man and a disappointed philosopher. When he was laid to rest, “Rome was an infant in arms, Socrates was not yet born, and Greece had not attained the Golden Age of Pericles.”¹ After his death, however, his status rose sharply. With the passage of time, his philosophy became the state creed; his birthplace became China’s holy land; his descendants gained unsurpassed imperial patronage and local power; and his influence spread across China and beyond. Even the United States House of Representatives passed House Resolution 784 on September 29, 2009, “honoring the 2,560th anniversary of the birth of Confucius and recognizing his invaluable contributions to philosophy and social and political thought.”²

As honorary titles were posthumously piled on Confucius, Master Kong, as Confucius has been known to the Chinese, was resting peacefully in his plain grave at his birthplace Qufu, Shandong Province. But his long peace came to a violent end at the outbreak of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). During the height of the campaign against the Four Olds (old culture, old ideas, old customs, old habits) in August 1966, Red Guards from his birthplace made repeated attempts to attack Qufu’s Three Kong Sites (Confucius Temple, Confucius Mansion, Confucius Cemetery). With support from local peasants, Qufu authorities initially repelled the attacks, but Red Guards kept coming. On November 9, 1966, over 200 Red Guards from the Beijing Normal University (BNU) descended on Qufu, raided the Three

¹ Walter K. Fisher, “A pilgrimage to the Home of Confucius” *The Scientific Monthly* 4 (1917): 487.

² United States House of Representatives, “H.Res.784 Honoring the 2,560th anniversary of the birth of Confucius and recognizing his invaluable contributions to philosophy and social and political thought” (September, 2009) <http://thomas.loc.gov> (accessed 6 October 2011).

Kong Sites and dug up Confucius's grave. After the departure of the Beijing Red Guards, Qufu peasants plundered the Confucius Cemetery for buried treasures and ignored every attempt by the Red Guards to stop them. In a mere blip of history, seventy-four percent of the material representation of Qufu's history and culture was obliterated from its map.³

Several questions arise: First, what was so special about the Three Kong Sites that motivated both the local and Beijing's Red Guards to attack them and local officials to protect them? How did the symbolic significance of the Three Kong Sites contribute to the mobilization of the Red Guards and the legitimation of their mission? And what was the relationship between the physical destruction of those sites and the consolidation of Mao's ideological and moral control and dominance? Next, how did the radical leaders, such as members of Mao's inner circle, manage to circumvent the rigid party and bureaucratic hierarchy to mobilize the Red Guards for the Qufu mission? What were the organizational links between the radical leaders and the Red Guards? What was the radical leaders' mechanism of manipulation? Moreover, since the local peasants ended up pillaging the Confucius Cemetery that they once fiercely defended and the Red Guards eventually defended the Confucius Cemetery that they once relentlessly attacked, what led to the changing roles of the attackers and defenders? What does it tell us about the volatility and complexity of the Cultural Revolution? Furthermore, why did the Qufu peasants, with one in five of them as a descendant of Confucius, so thoroughly and indiscriminately plunder the sacred burial grounds of their own ancestors and forefathers? Last, but not least, why

³ Ya Zi and Liang Zi, *Kongfu da jienan* [Great calamity of the Confucius Mansion] (Hong Kong: Tiandi tushu youxian gongsi, 1992), 276 (hereafter KFDJN).

did such horrific violence take place in the bedrock of the Chinese culture that “condemns violence” and “seeks harmony over all other values”?⁴ How does the peaceful community of Qufu reconcile itself to such extraordinary violence? The purpose of this study is to establish the relevant facts and answer these questions.

Research on the Qufu violence is sparse and, in some cases, dated or inaccurate. In his *History in Three Keys*, a multidimensional study of the Boxer Rebellion, Paul Cohen introduces the notion that there are three keys to history: events as narrated or explained by historians; experience as lived, remembered and recounted by participants; and myth as created by mythologizers who draw on history to “serve the political, ideological, rhetorical, and/or emotional needs of the present.”⁵ Existing publications about the Qufu violence generally fall into these three categories as well. The Qufu violence as narrated and recounted by historians and researchers is generally characterized as a typical episode of the campaign against the Four Olds and the most egregious example of cultural destruction during the Cultural Revolution.⁶ The blame is usually put on the Red Guards leaders. Little or no information is provided about the backers of the Red Guards in the Central Cultural Revolution Group (CCRG) who engineered the Qufu mission.⁷ Nor is there any

⁴ Jonathan N. Lipman and Stevan Harrell, ed., *Violence in China: Essays in Culture and Counterculture* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1990), 1.

⁵ Paul Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxer as Event, Experience, and Myth*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 290-293. 213.

⁶ Roderick Macfarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006). 119-120; Yan Jiaqi & Gao Gao, *Turbulent Decade*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1996), 89.

⁷ CCRG was the staff headquarters of the Cultural Revolution under the direct leadership of Mao and served as the de facto ruling body of China and the headquarters for the Red Guards. Its director was Chen Boda and its deputy director was Mao's wife Jiang Qing. CCRG was the driving force of the Qufu violence.

discussion of the locally initiated violence or analysis of the broad social basis and historical context of the Qufu violence.

The Qufu violence as remembered and recounted by participants primarily comes from the English translation of some excerpts of a Chinese source titled *Great Calamity in the Confucius Mansion*. As such, some details and recounts of the participants in the Qufu violence are provided, but no information or analysis of the massive peasant-initiated tomb-robbing mania is included in the translated essay.⁸ On the other hand, the Qufu violence as myth has been visible in both academic and general publications. It is mostly reflected in two areas. The Chinese government has ascribed the Qufu violence to the Red Guards, CCRG, and the Gang of Four, which fits the government's master narrative on the causes and villains of the Cultural Revolution that usually eschews the role of Mao Zedong.⁹ Another myth about the Qufu violence is the role of premier Zhou Enlai. Zhou, who has often been viewed as the patron saint of the Chinese culture by both scholars and the general public alike, is erroneously described as having attempted to stop the Red Guards violence in Qufu and succeeded in ordering them back to Beijing.¹⁰

The most significant time period covered in this study extends from late August 1966 to early January 1967. However, other related time periods, during which Confucianism and the Three Kong Sites evolved, are also included to provide

⁸ Thomas A. Wilson, *On Sacred Grounds: Culture, Society, Politics, and the Formation of the Cult of Confucius* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), 34-35;

⁹ *Li Shi Di Shen Pan [Trials by History]*. "Li Shi Di Shen Pan" Bian Ji Zu Bian. Beijing: Qun Zhong Chu Ban She Xin Hua Shu Dian Beijing Fa Xing Suo Fa Xing, 1981.

¹⁰ Fan Xiaoping, *Zhongguo Kongmiao [Confucius Temples in China]*, (Chengdu: Sichuan wen yi chu ban she, 2004), 82-87.

the necessary backdrop and context for this study, including Confucius's lifetime, imperial China, republican China, and the first seventeen years of the PRC.

The method of this study is decidedly that of narrative history. Not only is a good narrative the bedrock of history, but a brief chronicle of the evolution of Confucianism and the Three Kong Sites, as well as a step-by-step account of the events leading to Beijing Red Guards' Qufu mission are essential for the understanding of the entire Qufu saga. Likewise, a detailed account of the highly fluid and complex attacks on the Three Kong Sites by both the outside radicals and local Red Guards and peasants are critical for deconstructing the Qufu events as well. However, within the chronological framework, some developments will be treated topically, such as various aspects of the tomb-robbing mania. This is also a study of political, social, and cultural history, and as such adopts a multidisciplinary approach, whereby perspectives and analytical frameworks of several disciplines are employed, where appropriate.

The types of sources used in this study include: (1) official and unofficial publications, (2) Chinese and English sources, (3) sources published before, during, and after the Cultural Revolution, (4) unpublished sources, such as former Red Guards' confessions, diaries, or internal party documents, and (5) sources in various formats, including textual, oral, electronic, and pictorial sources.

This study relies heavily on three important sources. The first two are primary sources and the third one contains a significant amount of primary sources. The first one, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution Database*, provides a wealth of primary sources on the Cultural Revolution. The second one is *The Denounce Confucius*

Battlefield Report (Tao Kong zhanbao), a Red Guard newspaper launched by the Beijing Red Guards and exclusively devoted to the 1966-1967 anti-Confucian campaign in Qufu. It provides the most detailed, if propagandistic, information about the events in Qufu from its first issue published on November 10, 1966 to its last issue published on August 10, 1967. The third important source, titled *The Great Calamity in the Confucius Mansion*, is a Chinese source by two indigenous Chinese writers who are also Qufu natives.¹¹ Taking advantage of their unique access to internal government documents, Qufu local archives, and confessions of former Red Guards that remain unavailable to the public today, the authors carefully chronicled Red Guard attacks on the Three Kong Sites in great detail. They also interviewed many important players in the campaign concerning their specific roles during the campaign as well as their reflections on their participation in the campaign years later. The only caveat about this book is its genre: it is a popular work written in reportage style and provides limited documentation.

My two field trips to Qufu in 2007 and 2009 also generated valuable sources for this study. I studied both the general Qufu community and the Three Kong Sites, where I traced Red Guards' footsteps, taking pictures and collecting footage of all related locations and monuments. I also interviewed former peasant tomb-robbers, a staff member of the Confucius Cemetery during the anti-Confucian campaign, former Red Guards, peasants from the pre-communist era, scholars and researchers from Qufu Teachers University, and many descendants of Confucius and residents of Qufu from all walks of life. The photos, footage, and transcripts from the tours and

¹¹ KFDJN.

interviews proved to be invaluable for my research and are employed, where appropriate, in this dissertation.

The focus of this dissertation is the Red Guards attacks on the Three Kong Sites in late August and November of 1966 and the height of the tomb-robbing mania in January 1967. Additional damage was done to the Three Kong Sites by various entities and polities in the months and years following the events covered in this study, but it is not part of this study. The much better known campaign against Lin Biao and Confucius (1973-1975), whose genesis is not related to the anti-Confucian events of 1966 and 1967, is briefly discussed here for comparison purpose only.

Organizationally, this dissertation is structured in five chapters. Chapter I, titled “Confucianism before the Cultural Revolution,” traces the evolution of Confucianism from Confucius’s lifetime to the eve of the Cultural Revolution. Chapter II, titled “Qufu—China’s Mecca,” provides an overview of Qufu, its land and people, and the Confucian establishment, with special attention to Qufu’s unique status in Chinese history and the relationship between Qufu’s Confucian establishment and general public. Chapter III, titled “Defending the Three Kong Sites,” is devoted to describing the local Red Guards’ failed attempts to assault the Three Kong Sites and the Beijing Red Guards’ subsequent plan to attack the Three Kong Sites. Chapter IV, titled “Organized Destruction,” provides a detailed account of the Beijing Red Guards’ mobilization of the Qufu locals and their ultimate attacks on the Three Kong Sites. Chapter V, titled “Rebellion of Confucius’s Descendants,” details the local Red Guards’ methodical destruction of the Confucius Temple and the Confucius Mansion and Qufu peasants’ tomb-robbing mania.

This case study explores complicated events that interwove dictatorship with anarchy, physical violence with ideological abuse, party conspiracy with mass mobilization, state violence with popular violence, and cultural destruction with revolutionary indoctrination. The violence treated here occurred in the small rural community that happened to be China's holy land, but it served as a microcosm of the Cultural Revolution across China at large.

Chapter I: Confucianism Before the Cultural Revolution

The year 1919 was extraordinarily difficult for the 48-year-old Kong Lingyi (1872-1919), the last “Chinese Pope” and the last Yansheng Duke in Chinese history.¹² That year, an unprecedented convergence of crises unfolded before his eyes: China had fallen into disorder; his home province of Shandong was in danger of falling under Japanese control; and Confucianism had just lost its two-millennia-strong institutional clout. Meanwhile, the anti-Confucian May Fourth Movement had just reached its highest point and Shandong students’ anti-Confucian chanting was within earshot of the Confucius Mansion. Even his own family life was hanging in the balance as, after having two daughters and with his fourth wife pregnant with his third child whose sex was yet to be determined, he had suddenly learned that he was fatally ill and was certain to die before the birth of his next child. He was going to depart this world with a host of unanswered questions: Would a male heir be born to carry on the Yansheng Duke title? Would the anti-Confucian movement continue until “Confucius Family Shop” was totally discredited?¹³ Would the fast-growing modern society reduce Confucianism to an inconspicuous footnote in history? The questions were hard and the answers hard to come by.

¹² The institution of Yansheng Duke was inaugurated in 1055 during the Song dynasty. It was granted to the direct descendant of Confucius. Generations of Yansheng Duke enjoyed semi-religious status.

¹³ The expression *kongjiadian*, was created by Hu Shi, a leading figure in the May Fourth Movement. It means the Confucian ideology, tradition, and institution. The term has been variously translated as “Confucius and Sons,” “Confucius’s Shop,” “Confucian Store,” “Confucius Family Shop,” or simply “Confucianism.” For this dissertation, “Confucius Family Shop” is used for *kongjiadian*.

Despite the mounting uncertainties facing the Kong lineage and Confucianism, this was not the first time they encountered turmoil and changes. Indeed, the road to their unique and privileged status was paved with changes and challenges throughout Chinese history as a result of such circumstances as dynastic changes, domestic turmoil, and foreign invasions.

Confucianism from Antiquity to the Opium War: 551 B.C. – A.D. 1840

Confucianism dates back to sixth century B.C. when it co-existed with other schools of thought. The first major assault on Confucianism occurred during the centralizing and tyrannical Qin dynasty (221 – 209 B.C.). The famous historical event of “Burning Books and Burying Scholars Alive” under the First Emperor of Qin specifically targeted Confucian scholars and books because “they contained materials antithetical to the obedience of people to the ruler.”¹ But the Qin dynasty is known for its brevity as Confucianism is known for its longevity. Despite this setback, Confucianism was soon able to regain and even expand its influence. It became the official creed of the state during the reign of Wu Di (140-87 B.C.) of the Former Han dynasty (202 B.C. – A.D. 9) when Confucius was even dubbed a godlike, heaven-sent “uncrowned king.”² In the ensuing years, however, Confucianism had to compete with both imported and domestic belief systems for the hearts and minds of both the masses and the rulers alike. From the second century to the tenth century, Confucianism was “eclipsed” by Buddhism and Daoism that appealed to both rulers and the common people until the arrival of neo-

¹ Jonathan D. Spence, “Confucius” *The Wilson Quarterly* 17 (1993): 1.

² Julia K. Murray, “Idols” in the Temple: Icons and the Cult of Confucius” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 68 (2009): 374.

Confucianism during the Song dynasty (960-1279).³ This resurgence of Confucianism, however, came at a significant price to the original Confucian principles as neo-Confucianists incorporated Buddhist elements and added a dualistic structure to Confucianism, lending credit to the argument that Confucius was “neither the founder of Confucianism nor the highest manifestation of the Confucian ideal.”⁴ The transformation, alteration, and erosion of Confucianism continued during the ensuing dynasties of Yuan (1279-1368), Ming (1368-1644), and Qing (1644-1911), when Confucianism was appropriated and further transformed by both rulers and Confucian literati alike. The real challenge to the roles of Confucianism as state creed, the mainstream of Chinese thought, and the foundation of Chinese culture did not begin until around the end of the High Qing (1661-1796) when mounting external pressure, coupled with domestic turbulences, became too great and grave to be ignored.⁵

Confucianism in Decline: 1840-1949

The decline of Confucianism in modern China began with China’s defeat in the Opium War (1839-1842).⁶ A number of treaties after the war resulted in the opening of China’s door to foreign missionaries. Article 17 of the Sino-U.S. Treaty of Wanghia (1844) allowed American Protestant missionaries to erect churches in China. Likewise, the Sino-French Treaty of Whampoa (1844) also granted “full toleration to the Catholics,

³ Lloyd Eastman, *Family, Fields, and Ancestors, Constancy and Change in China’s Social and Economic History, 1550-1949* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 42.

⁴ Tu Weiming, “Confucius: the embodiment of faith in humanity” *World and I* 14 (1999): 5.

⁵ The term “High Qing” refers to the high point of Manchu rule. Its definitions vary. For the purpose of this dissertation, this term covers the reigns of Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong emperors (1661-1796).

⁶ The Opium War, also known as the “Anglo-Chinese War,” was a conflict between Britain and China that resulted from Chinese attempts to suppress British merchants’ smuggling of opium. The war ended with the treaty of Nanking and marked the beginning of a series of unequal treaties which China had to sign.

reversing Yongzheng's edicts against missionaries."⁷ These watershed reversals turned the flow of Christian missionaries to China from a trickle to a flood and the missionary expansion began to erode Confucian influence in many parts of China.

Initially, the Qing court and scholar-officials did not view Confucianism as a roadblock to China's adaptation to the new world order. To them, the solution to China's weakness lay in the improvement of "hardware," i.e., guns and ships rather than in the change of its "software," i.e., institutions and culture. Reflecting on the failure in the Opium War, scholar-official Lin Zexu (1785-1850) wrote in 1842 that he recommended ships and guns to the emperor and stressed, "Ships, guns, and a water force are absolutely indispensable."⁸ Another Confucian scholar Wei Yuan (1794-1856) also noted in 1844 that China "possesses a spiritual and moral strength that can yet triumph over the enemy," but they needed to equip themselves with the necessary hardware to deal with the "barbarians." Wei asked rhetorically, "Without mastering the best techniques, how can the stormy seas be tamed?"⁹ Apparently, both scholars believed in a "hardware" solution and continued to regard Confucianism as an asset rather than as a liability.

While the "stormy seas" around China remained untamed, domestic storms arose with the arrival of the quasi-Christian Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864), which repudiated Confucianism and destroyed many physical representations of Confucianism. The pro-Confucian Chinese gentry and scholars were so threatened and enraged by the Taipings that they organized massive counterattacks against the Taiping rebels and finally helped the Manchu court suppress this massive rebellion. Although the Taiping

⁷ Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990), 161

⁸ Wm. Theodore de Bary and Richard Lufrano, eds., *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, vol. 2, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 205.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 206; 212.

Rebellion was finally quelled, its aftermath deepened the sense of crisis and inspired the ruling class's desire to revive Confucianism as a cure for the moral decline that they believed had contributed to the decline of the empire.

Consequently, in the ensuing Self-Strengthening Movement (1861-1895), the status of Confucianism changed from a mere asset to an active cure. Confucianism became part of the solution to the empire's woes. The Self-Strengthening Movement was triggered by the recognition of the empire's overall weakness and the desire for a dynastic revival. The Self-Strengtheners identified two primary weaknesses: "military inferiority to the West" and "moral inadequacy with respect to traditional ideals."¹⁰ They attempted to address the military inferiority problem through the application of Western knowledge and technology. They tried to solve the problem of moral inadequacy by reviving Confucianism as an indispensable ideological foundation for a moral renewal. Feng Guifen, the ideological architect of the movement and the inventor of the famous saying "using barbarians to control barbarians," dismissed the need for Western ideas and stated in 1861: "We have only one thing to learn from the barbarians, and that is strong ships and effective guns."¹¹ In his 1879 *Suggestions on Foreign Affairs*, Xue Fucheng also advocated the adaptation of Western knowledge and technology to protect the way of "Duke of Zhou and Confucius."¹² Zhang Zhidong, the creator of the Ti-Yong theory, also listed "preserving the doctrine of Confucius" as a precondition for saving China."¹³ Indeed, the whole Self-Strengthening Movement was a Neo-Confucian construct, for

¹⁰ Ibid., 234.

¹¹ Ibid., 236.

¹² Ibid., 243.

¹³ Ibid., 245, 249.

neo-Confucian principles, such as self-reliance and self-discipline, were the core underlying values of the Self-Strengthening Movement.”¹⁴

While Confucianism was considered a moral source for modernization, the xenophobia of its adherents actually retarded the industrialization effort. Ardent Confucianists refused to accept modern technology and Western learning, so much so that even Li Hongzhang (1823-1901), chief architect of the movement, complained that, “The gentry class forbids the local people to use Western methods and machines... Scholars and men of letters always criticize me for honoring strange knowledge and for being queer and unusual.”¹⁵ Li’s complaints were echoed loudly by the noises from the 1874 dismantling of the British-built railroad from Shanghai to Wusong by the locals who resented it, purchased it, and destroyed it.

The Self-Strengthening Movement failed spectacularly with China’s defeat in the 1895 Sino-Japanese War. Some scholars ascribe its failure to such factors as lack of coordination, shortage of capital, foreign imperialism, technical backwardness, and limited vision.¹⁶ Others point their fingers directly at Confucianism. Among them is Mary Wright who writes, “The obstacles to successful adaptation to the modern world were not imperialist aggression, Manchu rule, mandarin stupidity, or the accidents of history, but nothing less than the constituent elements of the Confucian system itself.”¹⁷ Whatever one’s position on the role of Confucianism in this movement, there is no disputing that it did not turn out to be the moral and spiritual asset it was initially perceived to be.

¹⁴ Ibid., 235.

¹⁵ Li Chien-nung, *The political History of China, 1840-1928*, tran. S.Y. Teng and J. Ingalls (New York, 1956), , 108-109.

¹⁶ Immanuel Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 287-291.

¹⁷ Mary Wright, *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism: The Tung-Chih Restoration, 1862-1874* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957), 10.

The humiliating defeat in the 1895 Sino-Japanese War precipitated a series of crises that put China on the brink of partition and called for a new approach to national salvation. Some reform-minded scholars, headed by Kang Youwei (1858-1927) and Liang Qichao (1873-1929), began to find new medicine for China's ills. The new prescriptions they recommended were sweeping political and institutional reforms that entailed drastic changes in a wide array of areas. Again, Confucianism became relevant to the process as, given the historical context, it was necessary for the reformists to find Confucian justifications for reforms. That was precisely what the reformists did. In an essay he penned in 1870, pro-reform writer Wang Tao (1828-1897) argues that reform was in keeping with Confucian tradition and boldly posits: "If Confucius lived today, we may be certain that he would not cling to antiquity and oppose making changes."¹⁸ Kang Youwei also offered his new interpretation of Confucianism to paint Confucius as a reformer. In his "Study of Confucius's Reforms" (1897), Kang maintains that, "Every founder of doctrine in the world reformed institutions" and Confucius was just such a founder.¹⁹

With this self-proclaimed Confucian mandate for change, the reformists took concrete steps to achieve their objectives. They persuaded the Guangxu emperor (1871-1908) to support them and embarked on the 1898 One Hundred Days Reform. But the radical reform met with stiff resistance and died a quick death. Among the main reasons for its quick demise was the tension between the reformists and the gentry class with vested interest in the civil service examination based on Confucian Classics, as well as the conservatives' ideological opposition to reformists' liberal interpretation of

¹⁸ De Bary, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, vol. 2, 253.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 266.

Confucianism. The reformists were so despised that Kang Youwei was even described as having a “Confucian face” but a “barbarian’s heart.”²⁰ Evidently, Confucianism became a significant polarizing factor during the ill-fated reform movement and continued to be part of a problem rather than part of a solution for China’s modernization endeavors.

Although the conservatives succeeded in defending the Confucian state and the status quo, their victory was short-lived. Shortly after the defeat of the court-backed Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901), the Qing court finally carried out a stream of substantive institutional reforms during much of the so-called Xinzheng Revolution (1898-1912) that included the establishment of modern schools and the abolishing of the civil service examination (1905), stripping Confucianism of its institutional clout and ending its tie to access to officialdom. Despite the sweeping institutional reforms, the Manchu empire was still toppled following the 1911 Wuchang Uprising, which ended the two-millennia-long monarchial-Confucian relationship and the role of Confucianism as the state creed. As institutional Confucianism became cultural Confucianism, the heyday of Confucianism came to a major halt and great uncertainties for Confucianism loomed large.

However, neither institutional reforms nor regime change solved China’s perennial problems. Life in the new republic was chaotic: constitutional procedures were disregarded and warlordism descended. The state of Confucianism after the 1911 Revolution was marked by a tug-of-war between its admirers and detractors. While the 1911 Republic discontinued the teaching of Confucius Classics in schools, various attempts to restore Confucian influences began almost immediately. Loyal Confucianists led by Kang Youwei made the first wave of attempts to turn Confucianism into the state

²⁰ Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China*, 382.

religion, starting with the establishment of the Confucian Association in Shanghai in 1912. Kang's efforts were echoed three years later by Yuan Shikai's (1859-1916) monarchical movement and warlord Zhang Xun's attempt to restore the monarchy (1917). These persistent efforts unmistakably demonstrated the staying power of Confucianism in the post-dynastic era. Given all the upheavals in the first few years of the new republic, it was clear that the "new republican bottle" was still holding the "old dynastic wine." But another crisis for Confucianism was brewing and it came with the debut of Chen Duxiu's magazine *New Youth*.

The iconoclastic *New Youth* became the opening salvo for an all-out war on Confucianism and announced the arrival of the May Fourth Movement (1916-1919).²¹ It was initiated by leading intellectuals such as Chen Duxiu (1879-1942), Hu Shi (1891-1962), and Wu Yu (1871-1949). Since all previous efforts had failed to arrest China's decline and address her perennial problems such as poverty, sickness, illiteracy, corruption, and disorder, these intellectuals concluded that Chinese culture and Confucianism upon which it was based were the culprits and must be problematized and destabilized.²² Their rationale for an intellectual revolution also resonated with John Dewey, Hu Shi's mentor, who observed, "China could not be changed without a social transformation based upon a transformation of ideas."²³

This "cultural prescription" specifically targeted "old ethics, customs, literature, social relations, and economic and political institutions."²⁴ Practically all of them were tied to Confucianism and the iconoclasts spared no effort to attack this perceived root of

²¹ This collective term refers to both The New Culture Movement and the 1919 May Fourth Movement.

²² Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China*, 508.

²³ John Dewey, "New Culture in China," *Asia*, XXI: 7:581 (July 1921).

²⁴ Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China*, 511.

China's evils. Chen Duxiu considered Confucianism totally incompatible with an industrial and capitalistic modern society and identified Confucianism with "everything from the past that, to his mind, had smothered progress and creativity."²⁵ Under his aegis, "Mr. Science" and "Mr. Democracy," became the signature slogans of the era and a major legacy of the movement. Hu Shi, known for his promotion of pragmatism and the vernacular style of writing, invented the pejorative phrase 'Confucius and Sons Incorporated,' and his followers shouted "Down with Confucianism."²⁶ Wu Yu, on the other hand, considered Confucianism's advocacy of paternalism "the basis for despotism" and maintained that the Confucian notion of filial piety turned China into a "big factory for the manufacturing of obedient subjects."²⁷ Other major players in the movement, such as Cai Yuanpei, Li Dazao and Lu Xun, also made scathing criticisms of Confucianism through their own styles and perspectives.

The 1919 Versailles Peace Conference intended to transfer to Japan the control of Shandong, the birthplace of Confucius and Mencius and arguably the Holy Land of China. This took the May Fourth Movement to its peak. On May 4, enraged Beijing students held a huge demonstration against the verdict and protests spread across the country. It was at once "an explosion of public anger, an outburst of nationalism, a deep disappointment in the West, and a violent indictment of the 'traitorous' warlord government in Peking."²⁸ The May Fourth Movement inflicted unprecedented and irreparable damage to the status and image of Confucianism. Following the gradual erosion and eventual loss of institutional, political, and ideological power during the

²⁵ De Bary and Richard Lufrano, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 352.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 409.

²⁷ Tse-tsung Chow, *The May Fourth Movement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), 304.

²⁸ Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China*, 501-502

preceding years, Confucianism had now also lost its aura of orthodoxy and authority and a significant part of its long-held intellectual and moral clout. Although some argue that this revolution did more to destroy the past than to create a new future,²⁹ one of the movement's most noteworthy legacies is the rise of the Chinese Nationalists and the Communists. "The contemporary history of China from 1921 onward," notes one historian, "is primarily a story of the struggle between these two parties and their different approaches."³⁰

In the 1920s, Confucianism enjoyed a brief respite as the debate on it took a backseat to other pressing issues. Liberal intellectuals such as Hu Shi, Qian Xuantong (1887-1939), and Gu Jiegang (1893-1980) adopted a "scientifically critical historical approach" to reassessing traditional Chinese thought and scholarship.³¹ Meanwhile, conservatives tried to strengthen their defense of the old tradition, as exhibited in Liang Qichao's exaltation of Confucius in his long essay "Confucius" (1922), and the unveiling of the Confucian University in Peking (1923). The Nationalists were initially anti-Confucian, but they turned conservative after the rise of the Nanjing government in 1927 and their split with the Communists. The new government under Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975) adopted a series of pro-Confucian, pro-tradition policies. In 1928, Chiang Kai-shek toured Qufu, issued decrees to protect Confucian monuments, and made Confucian virtues the moral standards for all citizens.³² The following year, the government removed the principal of Qufu Teachers College, who permitted a play "Confucius Saw

²⁹ Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China*, 511.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Julia Ching, "Confucius and His Modern Critics: 1916 to the Present" *Papers on Far Eastern History* 10 (1974): 122.

³² Gangquan Lin, ed., *Kongzi yu 20 shi ji Zhongguo* [Confucius and the twentieth century China], (Beijing: Zhongguo she hui ke xue chu ban she, 2008), 203.

Nancy” that was deemed disrespectful to Confucius. Overall, Confucianism in the 1920s receded from the foreground to the background.

The 1930s and 1940s witnessed a reversal of fortune for Confucianism as it was courted by almost all the players as national survival and unity took the front stage. As tension with Japan grew, the Nationalist government decided to employ both the “hardware and software” approaches in preparation for an all-out war with Japan. As it prepared militarily for the war, the government also followed the example of the Self-Strengtheners and attempted to strengthen the nation through the application of Confucian social virtues and personal ethics. This approach reflected a quintessential Confucian tradition of mixing politics with ethics where political order is dependent on social order and social order on personal cultivation.³³ The vehicle for this new round of Confucian revival and “civilization project” was the New Life Movement of 1934. In that year alone, the government officially declared August 27 as the official National Confucius Commemoration Day, conducted elaborate ritual ceremonies in honor of Confucius in Qufu, and named Kong Decheng (1920-2008), the seventy-seventh generation descendant of Confucius, the first Sacrificial Official to Confucius.³⁴ Many more pro-Confucian policies and measures followed.

After the Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937, the pro-Confucian effort maintained its momentum with the government asking citizens to apply Confucian precepts of “loyalty” and “filial piety” to “show loyalty to the country and filial piety to the nation.”³⁵ Even some May Fourth iconoclasts softened or reversed their anti-Confucian rhetoric and stance. Just two months after he was released from a Kuomintang

³³ Lin Yutang, *From Pagan to Christian* (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1959), 76.

³⁴ Gangquan Lin, *Confucius and the twentieth century China*, 203

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 232.

prison in August 1937 after the Second Sino-Japanese War broke out, Chen Duxiu, the man who is synonymous with the May Fourth Movement and once described Confucius as a roadblock to science and democracy, wrote “Confucius and China” in *Oriental Magazine*. In it, he gave Confucius a different assessment, stating that Confucius’s ideas were valuable in his own lifetime and that “Science and democracy are the two driving forces of human society. Confucius did not deal with ghosts and spirits and therefore he was close to being on the side of science.”³⁶ As China’s ambassador to the U.S., Hu Shi remarked in 1939, “China is rich in democratic ideas owing to the influence of Confucius’s democratic ideals and educational approaches. It is Confucius’s ideas that made it possible for China to become a liberal and democratic country.”³⁷ Scholar Feng Youlan (1895-1990) also authored a series of books during that period to establish connections between Confucian values and the new environment.

Chinese communists also publicly declared a truce with Confucianism, as manifested in Mao Zedong’s 1938 statement: “As we are believers in the Marxist approach to history, we must not cut off our whole historical past. We must make a summing up from Confucius down to Sun Yat-sen and inherit this precious legacy.”³⁸ The following year, another prominent communist leader Liu Shaoqi (1900-1969) authored his *How to Be a Good Communist* where he quoted extensively from Confucian Classics. By 1940, Mao had already begun to formulate cultural policies of the new government he was envisioning. In his *On New Democracy*, Mao points out the tendency of Confucianism to resist change, but he is also careful to point out that the feudal society

³⁶ Ibid., 243.

³⁷ Ibid., 242.

³⁸ Mao Zedong, “The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War,” *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1954), 259-260.

also gave birth to a “splendid ancient culture.” Therefore, it was necessary to “clarify the process of development of this ancient culture, throw away its feudal dross, and absorb its democratic essence.”³⁹ While Marxist historian Guo Moruo (1892-1978) shared Mao’s view on the “feudal nature” of Confucius, he was more positive about Confucius than Mao. In his *The Ten Critiques* (1945), Guo lauds Confucius and his disciples as political revolutionaries and considers Confucius a “progressive” in his own times.⁴⁰ Even the Japanese and the Wang Jinwei regime were not to be “out-worshiped” as Confucianism was enthusiastically embraced in both Manchukuo and other parts of occupied China as part of Japan’s war propaganda strategy. The financial situation for the cash-strapped Kong lineage in Qufu actually improved during the war when it was under occupation.⁴¹

During the Chinese Civil War (1945-1949), Confucianism again took a backseat as the war ravaged the country. Although Qufu changed hands between the Communist and Nationalist troops three times during the war and extreme violence was committed by the surrogates of both sides, namely, the communist radicals in the region and their Nationalist counterpart, the “home-going legions (*huanxiangtuan*),”⁴² the Confucian monuments in Qufu stayed intact.

In brief, Confucianism in the 1930s and 1940s initially enjoyed a brief revival despite (or because of) the wars, but faded into the background towards the end of the 1940s. Confucianism was appropriated by all political and warring parties when it was expedient to do so but put on the backburner when its utilitarian value was not apparent.

³⁹ Mao Zedong, “On New Democracy,” *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1954), 141; 153-55.

⁴⁰ Ching, “Confucius and His Modern Critics: 1916 to the Present,” 126.

⁴¹ Kong Demao and Ke Lan, *The House of Confucius* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1988), 139-140.

⁴² James Z. Gao, *The Communist Takeover of Hangzhou: The Transformation of Cadre and City, 1949-1954* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2004), 27.

The opportunistic use and cynical political manipulations of Confucianism by many players during these two decades not only made the endorsement of Confucianism questionable and disingenuous, but it also foreshadowed the difficult years ahead for both Confucianism and the Kong lineage.

In 1949, Kong Decheng, head of the Qufu Kong lineage and the living symbol of Confucianism, left for Taiwan with the retreating Nationalist government. The communist triumph in China that year pushed the future of Confucianism to entirely new and unfamiliar terrains. On the eve of the Communist takeover, a historian made this certain prediction about the future of Confucianism, “In what esteem the Chinese of the future will hold Confucius, only the future can tell. Yet it seems clear that, whether they praise his name or forget it, all Chinese will continue to be influenced by him for a long time to come.”⁴³

Reevaluation of Confucianism During the Early PRC: 1949-1966

Confucius in the early PRC was still remembered and occasionally celebrated, but under entirely different circumstances and for very different reasons. The new regime committed to the Marxist-Leninist ideology imposed a fundamental paradigm shift in the assessment of China’s intellectual past in general and the assessment of Confucianism in particular. The new assessment criteria included dialectical materialism, class struggle, and Marxist historiography that entails a five-stage evolutionary process of history. Chinese scholars were now to base their assessment of Confucius on Marxist historiography and focus on two main issues: (1) whether or not Confucius lived in the

⁴³ Herrlee G. Greel, *Confucius and the Chinese Way* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), 285.

slave-owning or feudal age and served as a voice for the slave-owning or feudal society;
(2) whether or not Confucius was an idealist or a materialist thinker.⁴⁴

Under these rubrics, Confucius and some of his doctrines were reexamined and found by some to be instrumental in illustrating the historical stages within the Marxist theory of progress. First, the feudal society with which Confucius was often associated was supposed to be one step more progressive than the slave-owning society. Therefore, Confucius was considered a voice for a progressive stage and deserved some recognition. Second, Confucius's lack of interest in the afterlife, ghosts, and spirits put him in the camp for materialist thinkers as well. Based on these factors, it made sense for Confucius to be, in Joseph Levenson's words, "kept as a national monument, unworshipped, yet also unshattered" instead of being simply buried and thrown into the "dustbin of history."⁴⁵ The sage-philosopher was to be unworshipped because his tenets ran counter to the dominant revolutionary ideology, but he was to be unshattered because he remained instrumental to validate Marxist historiography. But lest there should be any confusion about the designated role Confucianism was meant to play in the communist discourse, Levenson hastens to add: "Feudalism *per se* wins no communist admiration. It is the progressive stage, not the entity [of Confucianism], that is praiseworthy."⁴⁶ Given all these factors, it can be said that there was, in the early PRC, generally an inactive Confucianism and a non-antagonistic position towards it on the part of the new regime, which neither dismissed nor resuscitated Confucianism but put him in a museum. Confucius, as Levenson proclaims, "is ready for history."⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Gangquan Lin, *Confucius and the twneith century China*, 269.

⁴⁵ Joseph R. Levenson, "The Place of Confucius in Communist China," *China Quarterly* 12 (1962): 17.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 15, 18.

The reconfiguration of the ideological fields at the start of the PRC set the tone and stage for the reassessment of Confucianism. The new assessment guidelines that resulted then dictated and directed a series of related policies and practices in the early PRC. Consequently, between 1949 and mid-1966, Confucius, Confucianism, and their material symbols were delinked from contemporary politics and found themselves generally in three places that can perhaps be figuratively referred to as a national museum, a national park, and an ivory tower.

Preservation of the material symbols of Confucius and Confucianism as museum items not only had the aforementioned ideological reasons, but it served two additional public relations benefits as well as they helped: (1) contrast the new society's effort to preserve the nation's cultural heritage with the neglect and "cultural crime" of the old society that failed to conserve it;⁴⁸ (2) create a patriotic image for the new regime as the hostility towards Confucianism from the Chinese intelligentsia during the previous regimes was viewed as evidence of the "liberal, bourgeois, pro-Western abuse of Confucius" and "reverence for Western culture and disparagement of China's."⁴⁹

The handling of Confucian monuments as museum pieces actually dates back to the start of the Chinese Civil War. Just one day after the takeover of Qufu by communist troops on December 31, 1945, signs announcing the occupying force's policy to protect Confucian monuments were already publicly posted in Qufu on January 1, 1946. On Confucius's birthday anniversary the same year, a commemorative service in honor of Confucius was held in the Confucius Temple and a prominent CCP "scholar-official" Kuang Yaming made remarks at the service. On March 1, 1949, Qufu County's Ancient

⁴⁸ Ibid., 17.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 15-16.

Cultural Relics Administration Commission was established and the new government appropriated funds for the repair of the Confucius Temple wall despite its own financial difficulties. Special security and firefighting personnel were also assigned for the Confucian monuments, starting a long string of continuous annual state funding for preservation until 1966.⁵⁰

Following the rise of the People's Republic on October 1, 1949, not only did the preservation efforts pick up speed, but the impact of the new regime was soon felt in the academic and intellectual circles. Under the new regime, the debate on the role of Confucianism shifted from a contentious pro-anti dichotomy to a Marxist dialectical approach whereby Confucianism was “viewed and recognized for both its strengths and weaknesses.”⁵¹ The newly prescribed assessment tools and guidelines changed the rule of the game and created challenges for members of the intellectual community who were either “baptized” in the May Fourth Movement and/or accustomed to a pluralistic discourse on Confucianism in the post-May Fourth era. Although Marxist historians, such as Guo Moruo, were already adept at assessing Confucianism from a Marxist standpoint, others who were predisposed to Confucian and Western ideas found themselves scrambling to understand, adapt, and apply the new paradigm. Feng Youlan, for instance, voluntarily wrote a letter to Mao in October 1949 in which he pleaded guilty to his previous involvement with “feudal philosophy” and pledged to study Marxism and write

⁵⁰ Shandong sheng difang shizhi bianzuan weiyuan hui, *Shandong sheng zhi: kongzi guli zi* [Shandong Provincial History: the local gazetteer of Confucius's hometown], 55.

⁵¹ Gangquan Lin, *Confucius and the twentieth century China*, 267-271.

a new version of *The History of Chinese Philosophy* in five years using “Marxist viewpoints, ideas, and methods.”⁵²

As the intelligentsia hurried to adjust to the new ideology and assessment guidelines, the newly assigned role of Confucian monuments as a de facto “museum-and-park complex” also began to take shape. On March 20, 1950, the CCP Luzhongnan District Committee briefly opened the Confucius Temple and Confucius Cemetery to the public.⁵³ That same year, senior government officials and foreign guests began to descend on Qufu one after another. PLA Commander-in-Chief Zhu De visited Qufu in 1950, followed in October 1951 by Song Qingling, Vice President of the Central Government, and Chen Yi, standing committee member of the central government. Two months later on December 2, Liu Shaoqi, the Vice Chairman of the Central People’s government, set foot in Qufu too.

The following year was even more noteworthy and significant as Qufu witnessed a second visit by Mao Zedong. Mao first visited Qufu in March 1919 during his trip from Beijing to Nanjing. Although Mao was practically penniless and had to borrow money for this trip, it did not deter him from making a detour for a pilgrimage to China’s holy land. He visited Confucius’s grave and Mencius’ birthplace, and stood in front of the “small stream where Confucius’s disciples bathed their feet.”⁵⁴ When Mao took his first trip, he was not yet a committed communist. But on October 28, 1952, he went there as the head of a communist party and state. During his second trip, Mao not only visited the famous

⁵² Youlan Feng, *The Hall of Three Pines: An Account of My Life*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999), 159.

⁵³ During the first seventeen years of the PRC, the Three Kong Sites were closed to the public except on a few special occasions, such as the National Day, when they were briefly open to the public.

⁵⁴ Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China* (New York: Bantam Books, 1968), 141.

Confucian sites again but he also inquired after the wellbeing of the descendants of Confucius.⁵⁵

Mao's pronounced interest in Confucius's birthplace stood in sharp contrast to the fact that he never went back to Yanan, the place where he regained his breath and strength after the Long March, even once. Nor did he return to his own birthplace Shaoshan until 1959. Yet, he chose to visit Qufu a second time less than three years after he seized power. Practically all rulers in Chinese history since the Han dynasty reached out to the Confucius lineage in Qufu upon seizing power, but they were motivated by their search for a "Mandate of Heaven" through the endorsement of the Confucian establishment there. There appear to be no publicly available documents concerning Mao's motives for this trip and as such it remains unclear what motivated Mao, a card-carrying Marxist who was most instrumental in replacing Confucianism with communist ideology, to downplay Yanan, the cradle of communist revolution, and his own birthplace in favor of a second visit in the middle of the Korean War to the "cradle of feudal China."

Soon, Qufu became a top state-preferred place of interest for its international guests. In October 1952, an Indian cultural delegation visited Qufu as its first group of foreign visitors after the founding of the PRC. Qufu henceforth became a noted cultural place for the government to showcase to its international guests and enjoyed more or less the same status as the Great Wall and the Forbidden City.⁵⁶ Thereafter, a steady stream of international visitors toured Qufu as a choice government-designated historical and

⁵⁵ Shandong sheng di fang shi zhi bian zuan wei yuan hui, *Shandong Sheng Zhi: Kongzi gu li zi* [Shandong Provincial History: the local gazetteer of Confucius's hometown], 15-70.

⁵⁶ Louise Chipley Slavicek, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution* (New York: Chelsea House, 2010), 65

cultural site. Over time, visits from overseas guests became so regular that an international guesthouse was built inside the Confucius Mansion to accommodate them.⁵⁷

By 1953, Qufu even became a vacation place for government dignitaries as well, as Dong Biwu, Vice Premier of Political Affairs Council, vacationed there that year. Thereafter, many high-level officials and foreign guests kept coming to visit this elaborate museum-and-park complex and symbol of China's "splendid ancient culture."

By 1954, additional impact of the new assessment guidelines began to be felt in the academic and intellectual circles. As non-Marxist intellectuals adapted to the new rubrics dictated by the master narrative, Marxist historians who were previously highly critical of Confucianism also began to soften their rhetoric to fit into the new political reality. In his 1954 revised edition of *A Primer for General Chinese History*, prominent Marxist historian Fan Wenlan revised his earlier criticism of Confucius and described him as a "great representative of the ancient Chinese culture" who had left a valuable cultural heritage.⁵⁸

Between 1955 and 1956, the government launched two major political campaigns that affected intellectuals to varying degrees, namely, the Case of Hu Feng Counterrevolutionary Clique and the Campaign to Eradicate Counterrevolutionaries. However, there seems to be no public record of anyone being adversely affected for their remarks or views on Confucianism. In fact, despite the seemingly endless political campaigns in the early PRC and even as Mao repeatedly made remarks critical of Confucius during that time, both academic debate on and preservation of Confucian monuments continued unabated. In 1956, Mao compared Confucius to his archrival

⁵⁷ *Shandong Sheng Zhi: Kongzi gu li zi*, 15-70.

⁵⁸ Gangquan Lin, *Confucius and the twentieth century China*, 268-269.

Chiang Kai-shek when he told his colleagues that they could improve their knowledge of materialism and dialectics by studying their opposites through reading “Kant, Hegel, and Confucius and Chiang Kai-shek, which are all negative stuff.”⁵⁹ Yet in the same year, the government dispatched Beijing Palace Museum Deputy Director and other experts to Qufu to classify and archive cultural relics. In August 1956, the Qufu Cultural Relics Administration Commission, with the assistance of experts from the Nanjing Second National Archives, started the project of inventorying and archiving massive amounts of original historical documents stored in the Confucius Mansion. In December, the Confucius Research Society was also unveiled at Qufu Teachers College.⁶⁰

The year 1957 witnessed a watershed moment for Chinese intellectuals and contemporary Chinese history, as it was the year for the One Hundred Flowers Movement (1956-1957) proposed in Mao Zedong’s speech *On the Correct Handling of Contradiction Among People*⁶¹. The Anti-Rightist Campaign came right on its heels. In January, Mao invited Feng Youlan to join the movement, saying, “Go ahead and speak out. You are one of the one hundred flowers. Whatever you write, I will read.”⁶² Feng soon found an opportunity to speak his mind. The political environment became so encouraging that a Forum on the History of Philosophy was convened from January 22 through January 26 by the Philosophy Department of Peking University, attended by over one hundred scholars. At the meeting, some participants openly questioned the materialist-idealist dichotomy in interpreting China’s intellectual past while others

⁵⁹ Mao Tse-tung, “Talks at a Conference of Secretaries of Provincial, Municipal and Autonomous Region Party Committees,” (January 1957) <http://www.marxists.org> (accessed 11 October 2011).

⁶⁰ Gangquan Lin, *Confucius and the twentieth century China*, 256-257.

⁶¹ This movement started in 1956 when Mao Zedong encouraged intellectuals to voice their opinions about communist rule. However, when the intellectuals spoke out, Mao and the CCP persecuted them for their views in the 1957 Anti-Rightist Campaign.

⁶² Youlan Feng, *The Hall of Three Pines: An Account of My Life*, 387.

rejected indiscriminate rejections of traditional ideas.⁶³ Two participants were especially outspoken at the forum. One was Feng Youlan, who repeated his favorite “abstract theory of ‘cultural inheritance’” in which he argued that certain philosophical ideas can transcend time and space and have universal applications and values. This applied to many Confucian thoughts as well, such as Confucius’s concepts of “ren” (human kindness) and “In teaching, there is no distinction of classes (*youjiao wulei*).”

The other outspoken speaker was He Lin, Chair of Peking University’s Philosophy Department. He argued that the past interpretation of the materialist-idealist dichotomy was too narrow and dogmatic; the relationship between adherents of materialism and idealism was one between teachers and students, who could learn from one another. He also shared Feng Youlan’s view of certain ideas having transcendent values and rejected indiscriminate dismissal of things past. “The Grand View Gardens may have collapsed,” he argued, “but *Dream of the Red Chamber* lives on forever.”⁶⁴

The rebuttal to their views was swift and strong and it first came from Guan Feng, a relatively young but high-profile CCP cultural official from the Propaganda Department. Guan argued that the conflict between materialism and idealism was “life and death” and that there was absolutely “no room for compromise.”⁶⁵ These remarks, though blunt, were made within the confines of an academic debate and did not seem to have any immediate political repercussions for Guan’s opponents. Although in the ensuing Anti-Rightist Campaign both Feng and He were denounced for their views at the

⁶³ Ching, “Confucius and His Modern Critics: 1916 to the Present,” 129-30.

⁶⁴ He Lin, “Some Views on Two Controversies in the Study of the History of Philosophy” *Guangming Daily*, 30 January 1957; *Dream of the Red Chamber* is one of China’s four great classic novels. It was composed by Cao Xueqin in the middle of the eighteenth century during the Qing dynasty. The Grand View Garden is a large interior garden in the novel.

⁶⁵ Guan Feng, “On Issues Concerning the Struggle Between Idealism and Materialism in the History of Philosophy” *People’s Daily*, 1 February 1957

forum, neither was officially labeled a rightist. This was nothing short of a miracle considering well over half a million people were branded rightists and severely dealt with, many of whom said very little or nothing at all against the party and the state during the campaign.

In fact, even as large numbers of rightists were demoted or shipped to reeducation camps across the country and additional rightists were being “ferreted out” throughout 1958, preservation of Confucian sites continued unabated and Mao continued to make remarks that were positive about Confucius and in favor of preserving historical artifacts. On November 21, 1958, Mao reiterated the party’s assessment guidelines on Confucius. He noted that, as historical materialists, the Chinese communists recognized Confucius’s historical roles, but they would not recognize his sagehood. “Confucius’s math level could not even match the math at the junior high level,” Mao commented. “He was probably just at elementary school level. Our college students are sages, and Confucius was just a virtuous person”⁶⁶ Meanwhile, Qufu’s Confucian monuments continued to play their museum-and-park roles. In 1959 alone, Qufu saw visits by both CCP Vice Chairman and Deputy Premier Chen Yun and Marxist historian Guo Moruo who wrote five highly laudatory poems in praise of Confucius.⁶⁷ On October 1, 1959, the Confucius Temple and Confucius Mansion restoration projects were completed. Both places were briefly open to the public as part of the commemorative activities for PRC’s tenth National Day.

⁶⁶ “Mao Zedong zai wuchang huiyi shang de jianghua” [Mao Zedong’s Remarks at the Wuchang Meeting] (November 21, 1958), Song Yongyi, ed., *Zhongguo fanyou yundong shuju ku, 1957-* [China’s Anti-Rightist Campaign database] (Hong Kong: Xianggang Zhongwen daxue Zhongguo yanjiu fuwu zhongxin, 2010).

⁶⁷ Guo Moruo, “Touring Confucius Temple” *Qufu Daily*, 9 October 1989.

As the radical Great Leap Forward (1958-1960) went awry, moderates in the government began to gain more control and the general political atmosphere became more relaxed. It was in this historical context that a succession of academic forums and activities on the assessment of Confucius sprang up across the country between 1960 and 1962. A rigorous national debate on how to assess Confucius and his ideas emerged in academic and intellectual circles and brought the post-1949 debate on Confucius to its climax. The participants in this national debate came up with four concrete criteria with which to assess Confucius, namely, assessment of Confucius based on (1) Confucius's own class background, (2) Confucius's intellectual contributions compared with those before him, (3) evaluation of Confucius by other historical figures, and (4) Confucius's own views on others.⁶⁸ In 1961, the State Council under Zhou Enlai designated the Three Kong Sites as National Key Cultural Relics Protection Sites, making "official" the place of Confucian monuments as a national cultural heritage. On the 2,440th anniversary of Confucius's death in 1962, the debates and commemorative activities reached their highest point. To both honor this occasion and to debate Confucius further, yet another round of forums was held across the country including those called by Jilin University, Guangdong academic circles, the Shanghai History Association, and Shanxi Province history circles. The common denominator of all these forums was the application of "Marxist dialectical approach," namely, assessing Confucius and his ideas for both their strengths and weaknesses.⁶⁹

By September 1962, there were already indications that Mao, who had been briefly and nominally sidelined due to the Great Leap Forward debacle, was maneuvering

⁶⁸ Gangquan Lin, *Confucius and the twentieth century China*, 276-280.

⁶⁹ Shandong sheng di fang shi zhi bian zuan wei yuan hui, *Shandong Sheng Zhi: Kongzi gu li zi*, 614-616.

to return to the political center when he called for the renewal of the class struggle at the Tenth Plenum of the Eighth Party Congress. However, the gravity of this move somehow appeared to be lost on many academics and government officials alike. The extraordinarily lively, and at times heated, debate on the interpretation and roles of Confucius and his ideas in the socialist era continued and eventually culminated in the Second Shandong Forum on Confucius (Confucius Forum) held on November 6 – 12, 1962 in Jinan, Shandong's capital city. This forum was initiated and organized by Zhou Yang, a senior official at the Department of Propaganda, and attended by more than 160 scholars and experts, along with a few government officials from eighteen provinces and cities across the country.⁷⁰ The participants of the Confucius Forum were arguably the Who's Who of experts on Confucian studies. Among the moderates or traditionalists were Zhou Yutong of Fudan University, Gao Zanfei, President of Qufu Teachers College Liu Jie of Sun Yat-sen University, and the aforementioned Feng Youlan. Among the staunch critics of Confucius were Yang Rongguo, also of Sun Yat-sen University, and orthodox Marxist theorist Gaun Feng. While the theme of the Confucius Forum was the perennial "How to apply Marxist viewpoints and methodologies to inherit China's historical and cultural legacy critically,"⁷¹ the tone of this particular forum was very different as there seemed to be an especially "kinder and gentler" approach towards Confucius and his ideas.

This "Confucius-friendly" atmosphere was detected by Guan Feng, who attended the forum in a last-minute decision and arrived in Jinan on the evening of November 6 after the forum had already started. Upon joining the forum, Guan immediately sensed

⁷⁰ "Shandong Forum on Confucius," *Philosophical Studies*, January 1963, 54-57.

⁷¹ *Guangming Daily*, 30 January 1957

that “the atmosphere of the Confucius Forum was inconsistent with the general political climate at that time.”⁷² He immediately demanded access to all papers that had been submitted and scanned them for “black materials,” “reactionary viewpoints,” and “black words.”⁷³ The following morning, Guan demanded that the forum organizer alter the program to squeeze in his presentation. What transpired next made the forum even more unbearable for Guan as his presentation was “cut short” by the moderator, who concluded that Guan had used up his 30-minute presentation time. Guan actually had to argue for more time for his lengthy speech on the grounds that his paper was coauthored and he therefore deserved twice as much time.⁷⁴

But Guan was more alarmed by the content of the papers submitted and presented than he was irked by the “snub” he received during his presentation. As an orthodox hardline party theorist, he actually had good reasons to feel that way. The viewpoints expressed at the forum and during the subsequent tour of Qufu seemed to present an apparently spontaneous but actually well-coordinated corpus of ideas that almost seemed to systematically problematize the government’s established position on Confucius and his ideas. There was Liu Jie who questioned the appropriateness of using class analysis for historical matters when he observed, “To entangle ancient historical facts into class viewpoints may not be easily workable.” There were also attempts to merge Confucianism into the mainstream ideology as shown by scholar Jing Zhaoxing, who remarked, “The Confucian worldview not only reflects materialism, but it even borders on dialectic materialism. It was as if a red [revolutionary] line ran across all of the

⁷² KFDJN, 198-199

⁷³ Luo Chenlei, “The Incident of Collective Bowing and Kowtowing” *Wenhui Reading Weekly* 6 June 2007; the word “black” was usually used to refer to incriminating things that can be used against someone, including remarks, diaries, and books.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*; note 67.

remarks Confucius made in his lifetime.” Scholar Zhu Kairui also made similar remarks where he even used Liu Shaoqi to validate his point, “The ideas of Confucius and Mencius have already been critically absorbed and turned into one of the important components for the cultivation of a communist party member.... Comrade Liu Shaoqi in his outstanding theoretical work *How to Be a Good Communist* had already successfully accomplished this task.”

Others even strived to break through the prescribed ideological boundaries by going above and beyond the accepted level of praise for Confucius. Scholar Zhu Qianzi boldly elevated the status of Confucius when he remarked, “Confucius is indeed the most sagacious, most sacred philosopher. Human happiness is closely tied to just a few remarks by Confucius.” Such laudatory remarks were usually reserved for Mao Zedong. Jing Jingfang went one step further and almost compared Confucius to Mao when he proclaimed, “Confucius is the representative and center of the Chinese culture. He lives in the words and hearts of the Chinese people.”⁷⁵ Even a senior government official chimed in and audaciously suggested that somehow the application of the class struggle analysis in the evaluation of Confucian ideas was a matter of little significance. Yu Xiu, lieutenant governor of Shandong Province, observed in his closing remarks, “Some comrades are not good at studying Confucianism through class analysis; and some comrades are not even accustomed to this approach, but I don’t think this is a serious issue when it comes to studying Confucius.”⁷⁶

In the Chinese classic novel *Journey to the West*, Guanyin bodhisattva gives the monk Xuanzang a golden headband that would keep the Monkey King under control. If

⁷⁵ KFDJN, 2-3

⁷⁶ KFDJN, 1-3

the Monkey King becomes misbehaves, all Xuanzang has to do is say the magic words and the gold headband would tighten around the monkey's head, causing him severe pain and making him stop his unruly behavior. In some ways, Guan Feng, a de facto thought police, had long played the role of monk Xuanzang and the Chinese intellectuals were playing the role of the Monkey King, who was always restless and tried to break the "rules" even after being repeatedly punished. To Guan Feng, this was the time to read the magic spell and tighten the golden headband again. In 1957, he did this to Feng Youlan and He Lin, who attempted to both universalize and eternalize some Confucian values, causing Feng and He tremendous "headaches." It worked then, and the act was worth repeating.

Guan was caught unawares by the tone and content of the forum, but he confronted the "out-of-the-line" comments head on. Having read all the papers the night before, he fired back quickly the following morning and offered his scathing rebuttals to various "heretical" ideas articulated at the forum. He pointed out some "noteworthy tendencies" observed during presentations, such as the tendencies to make Confucius relevant to the modern world, put Confucius's ideas almost on a par with Marxist ideas, and conduct "supra-class, supra-social-stage abstract analysis." All these, he concluded, boiled down to "a departure from Marxist class analysis and historicism." Guan especially cited papers by Gao Zanfei and Liu Jie on the Confucian precept of "ren" as notable examples of such a departure. He skillfully tied his criticism of these two scholars to his criticism in 1957 of Feng Youlan by describing their ideas as similar to the "abstract theory of 'cultural inheritance'" that Feng advanced in 1957. To illustrate his class struggle approach, Guan even turned Confucius's Golden Rule on its head: Instead

of “Do not impose on others what you do not wish for yourself,” Guan admonished, “Do impose on others what you do not wish for yourself!”⁷⁷

Guan’s ‘magic spells’ caused fear among some participants but rejections by some others, but no arrangement was made to allow anyone to make any counterarguments. Guan was, after all, the voice for the party orthodoxy. Although Guan represented a minority view at the forum and felt uncomfortable, he was not the only person who felt somewhat isolated and concerned. Yang Rongguo, for instance, also echoed Guan and recalled that “At the Confucius Forum, more than ninety-five percent of the participants extolled Confucius.”⁷⁸

In short, under the brief moderate administration of Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai, who engaged in the deradicalization of many aspects of Chinese life, the 1962 Confucius Forum was a unique event in more ways than one. Some interpreted it as an attempt to “reevaluate Confucian philosophy more positively” and “supplement communist ideology with Confucian ideas of ethics and personal cultivation.”⁷⁹ The overall subtext of the Confucius Forum is probably even more significant. There were bold attempts to challenge the dominant revolutionary ideology and prescribed evaluation guidelines. A few prominent scholars even attempted to take the retired Confucius out of the museum to put him in the “hall of fame” and mainstream of Chinese life despite repressive historical circumstances. Some forgot the “golden headband” they were wearing and cast doubt on the relevance of Marxism with respect to Confucian studies and attempted to

⁷⁷ Guan Feng and Lin Yueshi, “Several Issues Concerning Using Class Analysis Approach in Discussing Confucius Ideas,” *Literature, History and Philosophy* 1 (1963)

⁷⁸ Song Yongyi, ed., *Zhongguo wenhua da geming wenku* [Chinese Cultural Revolution database] (Hong Kong: Xianggang Zhongwen Daxue Zhongguo yanjiu fuwu zhongxin, 2002).

⁷⁹ Ching, “Confucius and His Modern Critics: 1916 to the Present,” 130.

make Confucianism “in addition to” rather than just “in support of” the master narrative. This forum was brief, but its timing was noteworthy and its impact consequential and lasting. If the 1957 Forum on the History of Philosophy held during the government’s One Hundred Flowers Movement represented a tentative attempt on the part of some Chinese intellectuals to make Confucianism at least peripherally relevant to the new society, then the 1962 Confucius Forum after the Great Leap Forward and at the end of the Great Famine of 1959-1961 represented bold attempts by some scholars to reject the marginal role the new regime had assigned Confucianism and to renegotiate its proper place in the Chinese society.

The fallout of the Confucius Forum was significant as criticisms of this “new Confucius-worshipping meeting” began almost immediately and greatly intensified in 1963 when the nation’s political life gradually swung to the left again with the increasingly louder rhetoric on class struggle and the launching of the Socialist Education Movement.⁸⁰ While Confucius again managed to stay in the eye of the political storms, he continued to be a popular topic in the ivory tower of academia. A significant number of papers published in 1963 and listed in a comprehensive bibliography on Confucian studies in China between 1949 and 1986 were in direct response to the views expressed at the 1962 forum, most of which were critical of the forum.⁸¹ Despite such vehement criticism and the fact that Confucius was returned to his “museum” shortly after the 1962 Confucius Forum, the polemics largely remained an academic affair within the ivory tower. Rebuttals were usually published in scholarly journals, the leading “academic

⁸⁰ The Socialist Education Movement (1962-1966), also known as the Four Clean-ups Movement, was launched in 1962 to address “class struggle” issues. Its targets shifted from rural corruption, rural cadres, to purification of politics, economics, organization, and ideology.

⁸¹ Zhongguo she hui ke xue yuan, *zhe xue yan jiu suo, Zi liao shi, Kongzi yan jiu lun wen zhu zuo mu lu, 1949-1986* [A bibliography on research sources on Confucius, 1949-1986] (Jinan, qi lu shu she, 1987).

newspaper” *Guangming Daily*, or sections of regional newspapers reserved for academic news. No scholars were immediately persecuted as a result of their viewpoints expressed at the Confucius Forum. Somehow, the scholars on Confucian studies seemed to be an exception to the government’s handling of dissenters. Compared with others who disagreed with the party state, they only got a slap-on-the-wrist punishment for their remarks and views between 1957 and 1962.

As the academic community was busy with the debate on the relevance or irrelevance of Confucius to socialist China, the Confucian monuments in Qufu continued to play their roles as a national museum and park. In September 1964, Party Secretary General Deng Xiaoping toured Qufu with his entourage. On his 75th birthday on May 19, 1965, Ho Chi Minh, the founding father of the Vietnamese communist revolution, toured Qufu as the President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and his host organized celebratory activities for his birthday.⁸² The fact that Ho’s Chinese host and fellow communists selected Confucius’s birthplace instead of a place of revolutionary significance for Ho’s visit on his birthday is as significant as Mao’s visiting Qufu twice on his own initiative but never once to Yanan, the birthplace of his political power. It demonstrates how the new regime had morphed Confucius from his old role as a defender of the past and bedrock of reactionary ideas into his repackaged role as a cultural icon and a proud symbol of the national heritage.

By early 1966, thunder clouds of the Cultural Revolution were rolling in as the debate over the historical play *Hairui Dismissed from Office* by historian Wu Han heated

⁸² Shandong sheng difang shizhi bianzuan weiyuan hui, *Shandong sheng zhi: kongzi guli zi* [Shandong Provincial History: the local gazetteer of Confucius’s hometown], 58.

up along with other signs of the nation's political life swinging further to the left.⁸³ Guan Feng and another relatively young “cultural official” Qi Benyu jumped on the bandwagon of attacks again. In March and April 1966, Guan and Qi accused Wu Han of engaging in analogical historiography and “using the past to mock today.”⁸⁴ Again, culture and history became powerful tools and weapons on the political stage, except the context this time was even more sinister than before.

Just as hardline party “cultural officials” were using Confucius and his ideas as instruments to attack their political opponents, Confucius and his material symbols continued to rest peacefully in the quiet little town of Qufu by the gentle murmuring Zhu River, as they did for more than 2,444 years despite domestic turmoil, foreign invasions, and dynastic changes. On the fateful day of May 16, 1966, the May 16 Circular fired the opening salvo for the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.⁸⁵ On May 20, 1966, the largest delegation of international visitors composed of sixty foreign diplomats to China descended on Qufu to marvel at the wonders and symbols of the “splendid ancient culture” of China. The storms of the Cultural Revolution had already burst, but the sage-philosopher was not to be bothered. After being turned topsy-turvy for more than a century in which he was called all sorts of names, given all sorts of accolades, and

⁸³ *Hai Rui Dismissed from Office* is the title of a historical play by Wu Han, a historian on the history of the Ming dynasty and a deputy mayor of Beijing. The play portrays an upright and outspoken Ming dynasty official Hai Rui. It was greatly politicized by Mao and members of his inner circle who used the play to attack Beijing's culture circles and party establishment on the eve of the Cultural Revolution.

⁸⁴ Guan Feng and Lin Jie, “Hairui ma huangdi he hairui baguan shi fadang fan shehuizhuyi de liangzhu da ducao” [*Hairui Blasting the Emperor and Hairui Dismissed from Office* are two anti-party, anti-socialist poisonous weeds] (April 5, 1966), in Song Yongyi, ed., *Zhongguo wenhua da geming wenku* [Chinese Cultural Revolution database] (Hong Kong: Xianggang Zhongwen daxue Zhongguo yanjiu fuwu zhongxin, 2002) (hereafter WGSJK).

⁸⁵ Edited by Mao and approved by the Politburo, the *May 16 Circular* is considered the “first programmatic document” of the Cultural Revolution. It identified the targets of the Cultural Revolution. The day of its release, May 16, 1966, is generally viewed as the start of the Cultural Revolution.

accorded all sorts of interpretations, the Master was simply tired and preferred to be alone.

Conclusion

It is perhaps not an exaggeration to suggest that Confucius had a “rollercoaster experience” since the Opium War, when the roles he played in Chinese society drastically evolved from an asset, a reformer, and the root of all China’s ills to a precious legacy and a historical figure in a national museum-and-park complex. Confucius’s retirement from pedestal to the museum was the result of many factors: covert appropriation or overt political manipulations of his ideas by different historical players; the predispositions these players had to his ideas; the state’s reconfiguration of the ideological fields; and the ever-evolving state-society relations.

By spring 1966 Confucius had been “retired into a museum” again. Confucianism had lost its influences in the political, intellectual, and ideological spheres, and the Confucian monuments in Qufu had been nationalized and reduced to a museum-and-park complex devoid of any significant political and social impact. De Bary describes Confucius as a neglected “shadowy figure” not recognizable to most Chinese and the state of Confucianism as, “virtually off-limits to any kind of serious study in Mao’s China, Confucianism survived...only as a museum piece.”⁸⁶ However, all these facts might not sound that horrific to Kong Lingyi. When he learned in 1919 that mortality was going to remove him from the face of the earth, Kong had every reason to be extremely distraught because all the things that mattered most to him were hanging in the balance—the sex of his unborn child and its impact on his family’s ability to carry on the Yansheng

⁸⁶ de Bary, *The Trouble with Confucianism*, x.

Duke title; the vociferous anti-Confucian May Fourth Movement and its impact on the status or even livelihood of the Kong lineage; the fast pace of modernization and its impact on the place of Confucianism in China. It seemed as though the only certainty in 1919 was uncertainty.

Sixty-seven years after his passing, however, Kong Lingyi had every reason to be content. He did have a son who produced a grandson, although both were in Taiwan. The Kong lineage no longer enjoyed as much prestige and as many privileges as it used to, but all seventy-six generations of the Confucian lineage were resting peacefully in the Confucius Cemetery. Even though emperors and warlords no longer came to pay respect or seek approval, communist leader Mao Zedong stopped by just the same. Diehard Confucianists no longer came regularly to pay tribute, but Marxist historians still cared to make a stop and say a few words of praise. Western and Japanese visitors no longer came as much, but foreign dignitaries as significant as Ho Chi Minh showed up for their birthdays and vacations.⁸⁷ Maintenance and repairs of the Kong sites remained costly, but the state was taking care of it. While Confucian ideas were no longer heard much in the public sphere, Master Kong still ruled behind the closed doors in many homes.⁸⁸

Indeed, things could be better—much better—but, all things considered, Kong Lingyi still had good reasons to be content. The anti-tradition chanting reminiscent of the May Fourth era was within earshot of the Confucius Cemetery and another revolution was fast unfolding right outside the long walls of the Confucius Temple and Mansion, but Kong Lingyi was not to be too concerned. He had already paid his dues and all his

⁸⁷ Qufu was a place of interest for foreign tourists and John Dewey visited Qufu in 1922, among others.

⁸⁸ In the pre-Cultural Revolution Chinese society, many Chinese, including avowed communists, were at home devout Confucians as they exercised filial piety, preferred male heirs, disapproved of remarriages of widows, exercised male authorities, looked after their younger siblings, and observed traditional festivals.

ancestors were already resting safely in this national museum-and-park. The Kongs were not to be worshipped, but they were not to be shattered either because they, after all, represented the splendid ancient culture and belonged only to history. There was the State Council's stele to prove it. The Kong family had been busy for over two thousand years and had earned a long, peaceful rest in their ancestors' land, undisturbed and alone.

Chapter II: Qufu—China’s Mecca

China’s Holy Land

Qufu’s de facto status as China’s holy land was well known among the Chinese, but broad international awareness of this status did not come until 1919 when China faced her crisis for national survival. The catalyst for this awareness was the so-called Shandong Question, namely, the articles in the treaty reached at the 1919 Versailles Peace Conference to cede former German concessions in Shandong to Japan. Among the most compelling arguments made against these articles was the symbolic significance of Shandong to China. Speaking on behalf of China’s 400 million, Wellington Koo, head of the Chinese delegation to the Conference, emphatically stated on January 28, 1919, “Shandong was the cradle of civilization, the birthplace of Confucius and Mencius, and a Holy Land for the Chinese.”¹ Koo’s designation of Shandong as China’s Holy Land and his putting the issue in a cultural and religious context resonated well with many delegates. Indeed, the Shandong to which Koo referred gave China not only her two great sages Confucius and Mencius, but two heroes of the Golden Age “Yao and Shun” as well, making Shandong “home of the Chinese race.”²

Koo, however, was not the first person to call Confucius’s birthplace China’s holy land. As early as 1866, W.A.P. Martin, a prominent American protestant missionary in China, made a pilgrimage to the tomb of Confucius and referred to Confucius’s birthplace Qufu as a “holy city” and the “Mecca of the empire.”³ Martin’s

¹ Stephen G. Craft, *V.K. Wellington Koo and the Emergence of Modern China* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 51

² *Ibid.*, 481. Yao and Shun were legendary sage-rulers of antiquity in China.

³ W.A.P. Martin, *A Cycle of Cathay* (Taipei: Ch’eng-wen Publishing Company, 1966), 283, 280.

characterization of Qufu was echoed years later by fervent advocates for establishing Confucianism as China's state religion, such as the founder of the Confucian Association Chen Huanzhang, who observed in 1913, "Christians' Jerusalem, Muslims' Mecca, and Confucians' Confucius Cemetery are all Holy Land."⁴

This notion of Qufu as China's holy land was eventually applied by Qufu's Kong lineage in 1930 when the Yan-Feng War against Chiang Kai-shek resulted in severe damage to major Confucian sites in Qufu. In an open letter of appeal, the Kong lineage compared Qufu to the "Holy Land of Jerusalem" and urged all Chinese warring parties to follow European armies' practice of protecting their holy city by remaining a minimum of ten miles from Jerusalem, a city sacred to the memory of Jesus. "Qufu," the letter stated, "is the location of sacred Temple and Forest."⁵ Indeed, while the religiosity of Confucianism is a matter of scholarly debate and the fortunes of Confucianism fluctuated from dynasty to dynasty, Qufu's reputation and image as China's sacred land have been deeply-rooted in the Chinese consciousness and recognized by the international community.

Land and People

As China's holy land, Qufu assumes many unique characteristics. Located in an area known as Luzhongnan (Central and Southern Shandong), Qufu is rich in historical significance.⁶ In the early Zhou dynasty (1122-770 B.C.), Qufu was enfeoffed to Duke Dan of Zhou, a prominent founder of the Zhou dynasty. From 1060 B.C. to 249 B.C., it

⁴ Chen Huanzhang, *Kong Jiao Lun* [On Confucianism as a Religion] (Xianggang : Kong jiao xue yuan, 1941), 28.

⁵ Kong Demao and Ke Lan, *The House of Confucius* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1988), 138.

⁶ Qufu is geographically located in southwestern Shandong province but administratively defined as part of Central and Southern Shandong (Luzhongnan). According to James Gao's *Communist Takeover of Hangzhou*, Luzhongnan was an administrative district created by the CCP in 1948. Based on the content and context of this dissertation, the term Luzhongnan is used here.

served as the capital of the state of Lu, which occupied most of the southern half of today's Shandong Province. Qufu also served as the seat of the local government almost uninterrupted from the Wei dynasty (220-265) to the end of the Qing dynasty (1911).⁷ The Qufu area also happens to be known as the “land of paradox,” for it was both the homeland of prominent violence-averse thinkers such as Confucius and Mencius and the “hotbed of military conflicts” and peasant revolts, such as the Nian Rebellion.⁸

Situated in the “Nine bends of the Yellow River and the single peak of Mount Tai,” Qufu is also rich in geographical significance.⁹ To its west is the Yellow River, known as China's “Mother River.” Sixty miles to its south is Mount Tai, the foremost of China's five most sacred mountains and a prominent place of religious worship for over 3,000 years. Often, emperors would make pilgrimages to Mount Tai to declare the legitimacy of their rule and then stop by Qufu to pay personal homage to Confucius and seek ideological legitimation for their rule. Qufu is also easily accessible by train and water as the Grand Canal is in the general vicinity and the major railway is close by.

Economically, Qufu has been a predominantly rural community throughout history with 70.9% of its land covered by a fertile plain and the rest of it being either hilly or low-lying areas. Sandwiched between the two rivers of Zhu and Si, Qufu produces such traditional agricultural products as wheat, soybeans, corns, sorghum, cotton, and vegetables. Qufu enjoys plenty of rainfall during summer but tends to have drought during spring and fall and limited snow in winter.¹⁰ Thanks mostly to the Confucian tradition of privileging scholarship and agriculture over commerce, commercial activities

⁷ Cai Xiqin, *A visit to Confucius's Home Town* (Beijing: New World Press, 1986), 11.

⁸ Gao, *The Communist Takeover of Hangzhou*, 20-21

⁹ Cai Xiqin, *A visit to Confucius's Home Town*, 16.

¹⁰ Zhong gong Qufu shi wei dang shi yan jiu shi, *Zhongong Qufu difang shi* [CCP Qufu Local History] (China: Zhong gong dan shi chu ban she, 2004) 4.

in Qufu had traditionally been less active than many other parts of Shandong. Many visitors described Qufu as lacking commerce and basic infrastructure. A nineteenth-century traveler described Qufu as totally lacking in trade, and this largely remained the case even during the Republican period.¹¹ Despite Qufu's high-profile domestic and international visitors, such as Chinese thinker Kang Youwei and American philosopher John Dewey, basic hospitality service there was so lacking that travelers to Qufu in the 1920s and 1930s often had to find acceptable accommodation for the night outside Qufu.¹² "Dogs were lying in the middle of the streets," one traveler recalled, "and donkeys were sleeping on the roadside."¹³ Even the rich and famous in Qufu, such as Kong Demao and Kong Deqi, the two sisters of the seventy-seventh Yansheng Duke Kong Decheng, once mistook shiny rubber boots for fancy fashion shoes and wore them around the Confucius Mansion just to show off on perfectly fine days in the early 1930s.¹⁴ Modernization, somehow, bypassed Qufu.

Although Qufu was lacking in commerce, it was rich in cultural traditions. One of the most distinctive characteristics of Qufu and its people are its folk customs. Shandong is well known as "The Land of Qi and Lu" because the province consists of the former feudal states of Qi and Lu separated by Mount Tai. Interestingly, the people of Qi were popularly known for their worldly pursuit of profit and material interest, but the people of Lu were known for their emphasis on agriculture, morals, and rituals. Situated on the former Lu side of today's Shandong, Qufu has been so heavily influenced by Confucian

¹¹ Martin, *A Cycle of Cathay*, 282.

¹² Ni Xiyong, *Qufu Tai Shan Youji* [a trip to Qufu and Mount. Tai] (Shanghai: zhonghua shuju., 1931), 96.

¹³ People's Political Consultative Conference of Shandong and Qufu Cultural and Historical Materials Committee, *Gongshang Jishi* [recollections of industrial and commercial activities] (Qufu: Qufu Cultural and Historical Materials Committee, 1994), 109.

¹⁴ Kong and Ke, *The House of Confucius*, 52-53.

teachings that its customs and values, such as emphasis on education and respect for teachers, have become the gold standard for the finest of folk customs and practices in China.¹⁵ The respect for Confucius and his birthplace was such that practically every prominent Shandong warlord, such as Zhang Zongchang and Han Fujun, was a close friend of the Kong lineage. The famous “Pigtailed General” Zhang Xun and Yansheng Duke Kong Lingyi were so close that they even became “blood-brothers.”¹⁶ These warlords often provided not only protection of the prominent Kong sites in perilous and turbulent times but also significant financial support for the upkeep of the Kong sites when Confucianism and the Kong lineage were in sharp decline and had lost their appeal to rulers and the intellectuals, such as during the May Fourth Movement and the early Republican years (1911-1930). The cultural appeal of Qufu, somehow, managed to come through hard times unscathed.

The demographic dominance of the Kongs in Qufu population is another highly distinctive characteristic of Qufu. Although the two-million strong known and registered descendants of Confucius today are scattered all over China and overseas, enough of them stayed in Qufu that the Kongs there have had absolute numerical dominance since time immemorial. According to a 1985 government census, the number of people in Qufu surnamed Kong constituted as many as 20.54% of the total Qufu population (537,555). In other words, approximately one out of every five persons in Qufu is supposed to be a descendant of Confucius. The dominance of the Kongs in Qufu population has naturally

¹⁵ San Man, *Kong Men Zhi Xiang Min Su* [folk customs in the land of Confucius and Mencius] (Jinan: Jinan chu ban she, 2002), 1-19.

¹⁶ Kong and Ke, *The House of Confucius*, 19.

led to many popular sayings in Qufu, such as the well-known, “There is not a village without a Kong in it.”¹⁷

Qufu from Confucius’s Lifetime to the Eve of Modern China: 551B.C.-1799

Qufu is synonymous with Confucius. Almost anything prominent in Qufu is somehow rooted in its ties with Confucius, be it its material culture, nonmaterial culture, or the Kong lineage. The vast majority of Qufu’s 300-plus places of interest are tied to Confucius in one fashion or the other. Thus a visit to Qufu is necessarily “a visit to Confucius’s birthplace.”¹⁸ The preeminence of Qufu and the Kong lineage there resulted strictly from Confucius’s long and sometimes dramatic rise to prominence.

Although Confucius’s political career can be characterized as unsuccessful, he was quite accomplished as an educator and a philosopher during his lifetime when he claimed as many as 3,000 private students. But that was not enough to make him a happy man. Shortly before he died, Confucius lamented to his favorite disciple Zi Gong, “No intelligent monarch arises; there is not one in the empire that will make me his master. My time is come to die.”¹⁹ Confucius died a disappointed and embittered man in 479 B.C.

After his death, however, Confucius’s fortune began to change. He was gradually venerated, glorified, deified, and mythologized. The respect for Confucius the educator and philosopher, over time, morphed into a cult for a master, a sage, a prince, and a deity. Indeed, the limited recognition Confucius received during his lifetime stood in sharp contrast to the glorification and deification gradually heaped on him after his death. This

¹⁷ San Man, *Kong Men Zhi Xiang Min Su* [folk customs in the land of Confucius and Mencius], 87-88.

¹⁸ Cai Xiqin, *A visit to Confucius’s Home Town*, 20.

¹⁹ James Legge, *The Life and Teachings of Confucius* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1874), 88.

contrast was captured by James Legge, who aptly observed that Confucius was, “unreasonably neglected when alive” but “unreasonably venerated when dead.”²⁰

Confucius put a premium on humility and frowned upon undeserved credit when he proclaimed, “Riches and honors acquired by unrighteousness are to me as a floating cloud.”²¹ However, such “floating clouds” kept coming following his death through a long string of increasingly more laudatory posthumous titles conferred on Confucius and higher social status for his descendants in Qufu. No sooner had Confucius died than he received recognition from Duke Ai, the reigning ruler for the state of Lu, who lamented in his eulogy, “Heaven has not left to me the aged man. There is none now to assist me on the throne. Woe is me! Alas! O, Venerable Ni!”²² Duke Ai ordered Confucius’s three-room former residence to be converted into a temple in his honor and decreed that sacrifice should be offered to Confucius periodically throughout the year.²³ Little did Duke Ai know that, by establishing the first Confucius Temple in Qufu, conferring the posthumous title of “Venerable Ni,” and starting the ritual practices of paying homage to Confucius, he had actually begun the first step of a millenniums-long journey marked by increasing glorification and deification of Confucius, continuous imperial patronage to his descendants, and the ever-growing prominence of his birthplace Qufu.

Since the Han dynasty, Confucianism served as the state creed and Confucius’s descendants in Qufu continuously received preferential treatment from the state throughout imperial China. In 43 B.C. Emperor Han Yuandi (48-32 B.C.) conferred on Kong Ba, the thirteenth-generation descendant of Confucius, the rank of Guannei

²⁰ James Legge, *The Life and Teachings of Confucius*, 93.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 157.

²² Venerable Ni was another title for Confucius who was born by a hill by the name of “Ni.”

²³ Legge, *The Life and Teachings of Confucius*, 91.

Marquis and the title of Lord Praised for Fulfillment, along with a grant of 800 households and exemption from corvee labor.²⁴ This was followed in 1 A.D. by Emperor Han Pingdi, who granted the sixteenth-generation descendant of Confucius Kong Jun the hereditary title of Praising Perfection Marquis along with an additional 2,000 households to help cover the expenses for the sacrifices to Confucius. Together, these Han rulers began in earnest the practice of appropriating state resources for the upkeep of the Confucius Temple through the guardianship of Confucius's descendants in Qufu. By the middle of the Han dynasty, Qufu Kongs' accumulation of wealth and influence reached such a level that they became "owners of a considerable estate, with at least 3,800 imperially granted households providing financial support for sacrifices to Confucius in the Confucius Temple."²⁵

The truly groundbreaking event in Qufu's history occurred in 1055 when Emperor Renzong of the Song dynasty created the inheritable title of Yansheng Duke (the Duke for Fulfilling the Sage) and made the forty-sixth generation descendant of Confucius Kong Zhongyuan the first recipient of this title.²⁶ For over 800 years thereafter, a total of forty one more Yansheng Dukes were to inherit this title before the Yansheng Duke system ended in 1935.²⁷ The institution of Yansheng Duke was a highly unique and complex one. A Yansheng Duke was the senior heir of the main Kong lineage and the oldest or adopted son of the previous Yansheng Duke. He was supposed to be a direct

²⁴ Abigail Lamberton, "The Kongs of Qufu: Power and Privilege in Late Imperial China" in *On Sacred Grounds: Culture, Society, Politics, and the Formation of the Cult of Confucius*, ed. Thomas A. Wilson (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), 306.

²⁵ Lamberton. "The Kongs of Qufu: Power and Privilege in Late Imperial China" 319.

²⁶ Several translated versions for this title are available. The one selected here is from the Charles Hucker's *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*. Charles Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1985.

²⁷ Li Jing Ming and Gong Yuan Wei, *li dai kong zi di yi yan sheng gong* [a biography of Yansheng Dukes who were direct descendant of Confucius], (Ji nan: Qi lu shu she, 1993), 2

descendant of Confucius and must be recognized by the Kong lineage and approved by the imperial court. A Yansheng Duke wore many hats and assumed multiple responsibilities. As the head of the lineage, he was the lineage's face and voice to the public and representative to the imperial court. He was the chief guardian of the Confucius Cemetery and the Confucius Temple responsible for offering sacrifices to Confucius, perpetuating the Kong lineage by producing offspring of the Sage, and modeling best behavior for the rest of the populace to emulate.

Before long, the viability and resilience of the Yansheng Duke system was put to the test in the closing years of Northern Song dynasty (960-1127) and early years of Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279) when various domestic and foreign forces contended for dominance of the Middle Kingdom. When the Jurchen Jin attacked Northern Song in 1128, Emperor Zhao Gou retreated to the southern city of Lin An (today's Hangzhou) with the sitting Yansheng Duke Kong Duanyou of the forty-eighth generation. Unable to return to the Jin-occupied Qufu to continue his dukedom, Kong Duanyou settled in the southern city of Quzhou (in today's Zhejiang Province) where he served as the first Yansheng Duke of the southern branch. Meanwhile, the invading Jin in 1130 named his younger brother Kong Duancao as the new Yansheng Duke in Qufu. Thus, there existed for the first time two simultaneous Yansheng Dukes. Meanwhile, two other coexisting regimes Xi Xia (1038-1127) and Liao (907-1125) also embraced Confucianism. Before long, the Mongol empire conquered China, and the Yuan dynasty (1280-1367) that ensued also embraced Confucianism and enthusiastically supported the institution of Yansheng Duke. It can be said that in the chaotic "jungle" of twelfth-fourteenth century China, the fittest "survivor" was Confucianism and its derivative beneficiaries—the Qufu

Kongs. The need for Confucianism or the control of the orthodoxy was never lost on the rulers, domestic or foreign.

The Ming dynasty (1368-1644) further elevated the status of Qufu and the Kong lineage. Its founder Taizu redefined the role of Yansheng Duke by relieving him of the less important public service and administrative work so that he could focus exclusively on sacrifices to Confucius.²⁸ The Yansheng Duke's rising status in the Ming court went hand in hand with the Kong lineage's increase in wealth. Upon his ascendance to the throne, Taizu immediately enfeoffed the Kong lineage with 98,400 acres of land. In 1377, a mansion was built by imperial order for the Yansheng Duke and his family."²⁹ Thus, the heirs of Confucius lived in a grand mansion with generous state subsidies and performed ritual services to their famous ancestor.

In 1511, peasant rebels led by the Liu Brothers were briefly stationed in Qufu and caused some physical damage to the Confucius Temple. Although the incident was not ideologically motivated, what happened still served as a warning to the vulnerability of the sacred Confucian sites. At the request of the reigning Yansheng Duke Kong Wenshao and through the petition of a high-ranking Ming official, the Zhengde emperor approved the relocation of the city of Qufu so that the Confucius Temple would be in the center of the city and therefore better protected.³⁰ Consequently, the famed project of "relocating the city to protect the temple" (*yichengweimiao*) began and a new Qufu was built over a ten-year period (1512-1522), all with state treasure and labor. Since its purpose was to protect the chief Confucian sites, the Confucius Mansion and Temple were situated in the center of the town and all traffic in Qufu would have to circle around the Confucius

²⁸ Gong and Li, *A biography of Yansheng Dukes Who Were Direct Descendant of Confucius*, 6.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 317-319.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 67.

Temple and the Confucius Mansion (Confucian Complex). It became the prototype of today's Qufu.³¹

However, neither the walled city nor imperial patronage were going to keep the Qufu Kong lineage from the impact of the upheavals in the closing years of the Ming dynasty when the declining dynasty was faced with famine, rebellions, and the rising Manchus in the Northeast. Since the Ming court was barely able to defend itself from attacks from both within and without, the Kong lineage was left to fend for itself. Thus, its ability to handle major crises without government assistance was put to the test and such challenges kept coming to Qufu. When a major famine hit Shandong in 1640, the sixty-fifth Yansheng Duke Kong Yinzhi intervened by both petitioning the government for tax relief for peasants and using the lineage resources for famine relief, which ended up “saving thousands of lives.” The same year, Qufu fell under siege by tens of thousands of peasant rebels, but the Yansheng Duke Kong Yinzhi climbed the city wall, communicated directly with the rebels, and managed to persuade them to leave Qufu unharmed.³²

Before long, the Kong lineage's ability to respond to crises was put to an even greater test when the insurgent forces led by rebel leader Li Zicheng surrounded Qufu. Li told Qufu residents that he would enter the city and create havoc unless his conditions were met. The said conditions were that the Yansheng Duke should “attire himself in his ceremonial robes and put himself at the mercy of the besiegers by mounting the city wall.” Everyone was terrified about what might happen to the Duke and advised against meeting Li's demand, but the Duke decided to accept the conditions and face the

³¹ Wu Guanghua and Kong Linghe, “Qufu chengshi de jiedao” [The Streets of the Qufu City] 7 (1987): 1.

³² Gong and Li, *A biography of Yansheng Dukes Who Were Direct Descendant of Confucius*, 78.

consequences in order to save the city.³³ He put on his ducal robes as demanded and appeared on the city wall above the south gate with the weeping and terrified townspeople beneath the wall expecting his certain death. However, what happened next was a complete shock to all. Rebel leader Li “emerged on horseback...dismounted, bowed to the sagely figure on the wall above him, went down on his knees, and prostrated himself in reverent humility. Three times, he performed the ceremony of the kowtow; then, rising to his feet, he once more bowed to the motionless figure still standing on the wall above him, remounted his horse, and returned whence he had come.”³⁴ The siege was lifted and the fear of a massacre gave way to a collective sigh of relief. The rebel leader responsible for the downfall of the Ming dynasty came to Qufu just for the privilege of seeing and showing reverence to the living representative of Confucius. The Kong lineage was so proud of this fact that it kept a poster that Li Zicheng left behind that declared his policy for the protection of Qufu and the Kong sites.³⁵

The rulers of the Qing dynasty that replaced the Ming dynasty in 1644 were quick and eager to embrace Confucianism, for identification with Confucianism became an important part of the Manchu rulers’ carrot-and-stick strategy to win the hearts and minds of their newly conquered subjects. To their delight, the reigning Yansheng Duke Kong Yinzhi wrote a letter to the Qing court to pledge the Kong lineage’s allegiance to the conquest regime upon the fall of Shandong to Manchu forces in September 1644. The

³³ The name of the Yansheng Duke was not mentioned in Johnston’s book but it would have been the sixty-fifth Yansheng Duke Kong Yinzhi who was the reigning duke of the time.

³⁴ Reginald Johnston, *Confucianism and Modern China* (Westport, Connecticut: Hyperion Press, 1934), 128.

³⁵ Yao Xueyin, “Foreword to volume I of *Li Zicheng*,” in *Yao Xueyin yanjiu zhuanji* [anthology on research on Yao Xueyin], ed. Yao Beihua (Zhengzhou Shi: Huanhe wen yi chu ban she, 1985), 299 .

Qing court reciprocated immediately and rewarded the Kong lineage's timely endorsement with a decree in October to confirm Kong Yinzhi as the new Yansheng Duke. Political expediency trumped ethnic divide. Almost immediately, the Manchu conquerors and Confucius's descendants forged a relationship that had all the signs of a "love at first sight" and was to surpass all previous court-lineage relationships. Not only did the Qing court recognize and continue all the previous privileges and honors bestowed on the Kong lineage by previous dynasties, but it added so many more to it that the Kong lineage during the Qing dynasty would have easily been the envy of their forefathers. In 1645, the second year of the Shunzhi emperor of Qing, Yansheng Duke Kong Yinzhi received a unique gift from the Qing emperor that no previous Yansheng Dukes had ever dreamed of—a Yansheng Duke Official Mansion with over 100 rooms. It served as the Yansheng Duke's representative office in the capital where the visiting Duke could stay and work during his regular trips to the capital.³⁶

The three most accomplished Manchu emperors also happened to be among the most devout practicing Confucianists. In 1684, the Kangxi emperor (1662-1722) made the first imperial procession to Qufu since the twelfth century when he "set the example of kneeling thrice, and each time laying his forehead thrice in the dust, before the image of the sage."³⁷ In so doing, he turned homage to Confucius to worship of the Sage. Kangxi's visit brought not only additional prestige to the Qufu Kongs but tangible material benefits to them as well as he enfeoffed the Kong lineage with even more sacrificial lands, provided resources to enlarge the Confucius Cemetery, and reduced corvee labor for

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Legge, *The Life and Teachings of Confucius*, 91.

Qufu residents.³⁸ In 1691 alone, the Kangxi emperor ordered a renovation of the Confucius Temple costing 86,500 taels of silver.³⁹

Fortune continued to smile on the Kong lineage when Kangxi's successor the Yongzheng emperor (1723-1735) assumed the throne and piled more privileges and financial favors on the lineage. He posthumously conferred princships on the five generations of Confucius's immediate descendants and repeatedly provided the Kong lineage with large grants for the repairs and renovations of the Confucian Complex and Confucius Cemetery. In 1724, after a devastating fire in the Confucius Temple destroyed the Hall of Great Perfection and much of the Confucius Temple, Yongzheng emperor appropriated 157,000 taels of silver to rebuild the Confucius Temple.⁴⁰ He even told the reigning Yansheng Duke, "Don't hesitate to say it whatever should be added to the Confucius Temple."⁴¹ When the visiting Yansheng Duke was ill, the Yongzheng emperor even sent his own personal physician to assist him.⁴²

The only emperor that outdid emperors Kangxi and Yongzheng was emperor Qianlong of Qing (1736-1795) who created a new record by showering the Kong lineage with unprecedented imperial attention and material support. Emperor Qianlong made as many as nine imperial processions to Qufu between 1748 and 1790, each with grandiose ceremonies and rituals and generous gifts to the Kong lineage. His relationship with the

³⁸ Gong and Li, *A biography of Yansheng Dukes Who Were Direct Descendant of Confucius*, 84-85.

³⁹ Lamberton, "The Kongs of Qufu: Power and Privilege in Late Imperial China" 303. A tael is a Chinese ounce of silver.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁴² *Ibid.*

Qufu Kongs was so close that he was believed to have married his daughter to the seventy-second Yansheng Duke Kong Xianpei in 1773.⁴³

Indeed, the continuous and committed state support for the Qufu Kong lineage left an unmistakable mark on both Qufu and its First Family. One needs to look no further than the ironic contrast between the simplicity of the tomb of Confucius, just a mound of earth inside a brick wall, and the grandiosity of the tombs of Yansheng Dukes during the Ming-Qing dynasties to know how much had changed since the Master had departed from this world with disappointment in 479 B.C. While both Confucius and his descendants were resting peacefully in their walled lineage cemetery, the descendants, splendid in their elaborateness and lavishness, outshone their famed ancestor, splendid in his humility and humanity.

Qufu and the Kong Lineage in Their Heyday on the Eve of Modern China

By the end of High Qing and before the dawn of modern China (1796), Qufu had evolved into a unique place and the Kong lineage into a unique institution. As the birthplace and burial site of China's most influential and revered thinker, Qufu had developed some distinctive characteristics. As previously noted, the walled city of Qufu, one mile long and half a mile wide, was relocated and rebuilt to protect the Three Kong Sites—an unprecedented event in Chinese history. The city now had five gates with the south gate reserved for admitting only an emperor, an imperial envoy, or the Yansheng Duke himself. Only the reigning Yansheng Duke, not even the Qufu magistrate, had

⁴³ Since the Manchus were not supposed to intermarry with Han Chinese, this tale was viewed with a grain of salt by some but the latest Kong genealogy compiled in the 1930s confirmed this Manchu-Han marriage.

exclusive access to this prestigious gate.⁴⁴ By now, many landmarks and street names in Qufu had become directly connected with the Confucian establishment, such as the famous Queli Street (*queli jie*) in honor of Confucius's old abode, Poverty Lane (*louxiang jie*) in honor of Confucius's disciple Yan Hui, and Examination-Tent Street (*kaopeng jie*) named after the site where the Confucianism-based imperial examinations used to be held.⁴⁵ Because of the dominance of Confucian influence, Qufu was practically off limits to traveling Buddhists and Daoists, as reflected in the famous Qufu saying, "Buddhists and Daoists never entered Qufu since antiquity," except during Jin and Yuan times when other belief systems forced their way into Qufu with the blessings of conquest rulers.⁴⁶

As the most revered city in imperial China, Qufu, before the dawn of modern China, had also earned the rare distinction of attracting a great many emperors. During the 2,000 years between Han and Qing, as many as nineteen emperors came to Qufu to honor Confucius, which earned Qufu significant "bragging rights." During the same period, 196 special imperial envoys were sent to Qufu to make sacrifices to Confucius on behalf of various emperors and imperial courts.⁴⁷ But Qufu was not just a magnet for emperors only. Since Confucius was also the patron or spiritual ancestor of Chinese literati and Confucianism a religion of gentlemen, countless prominent men of letters visited Qufu to pay respect to their patron. The literati who left their footprints in Qufu

⁴⁴ Kong Fanyin, *yansheng gong fu jian wen* [stories from Confucius Mansion] (Jinan: qi lu shu she, 1992), 380

⁴⁵ Wu and Kong, *The Streets of the Qufu City*, 1.

⁴⁶ *Zhong gong Qufu difang shi*, 13.

⁴⁷ Yang Zhaoming, *Ru jia wen hua mian mian guan* [Aspects of Confucian culture], (Ji'nan: Qi lu shu she, 2005), 243.

include such household names as poets Li Bai and Du Fu of the Tang dynasty as well as poet Su Shi and Zhu Xi, the founder of neo-Confucianism, of the Song dynasty.⁴⁸

Qufu had also been repeatedly spared or even revered by the vast majority of countless rebels, bandits, and all types of outlaws that traveled through the Qufu area throughout history, as was the case with peasant rebel leader Li Zicheng. It was nothing short of a miracle that Qufu survived so many impossible situations in an area chronically plagued by military conflicts and peasant insurgencies. Its ability to survive so many crises had everything to do with the place of Confucius in Chinese society. Qufu became such a unique place that even the common people in Qufu were said to “walk with dignity, speak more truthfully, and behave with more graciousness than people anywhere else in China.”⁴⁹ The carefully nurtured respect for Confucius by people from all walks of life was demonstrated in Qufu and became a de facto insurance policy for its safety throughout China’s war-torn centuries.

The uniqueness of the town of Qufu was surpassed only by the uniqueness of the Kong lineage in Qufu, such as the hereditary status of the ducal title for the Yansheng Dukes established long after feudalism had ended in China and a meritocracy system had become the norm for social mobility.⁵⁰ The list for the Kong lineage’s unique characteristics is long and endless, but they can be roughly classified into three interconnected yet separate categories of power, wealth, and privilege—the three components that German sociologist Max Weber uses to measure one’s social class.⁵¹

⁴⁸ *Zhong gong Qufu difang shi*, 15.

⁴⁹ Fergus Bordewich, “The way of Confucius” *Smithsonian* 32 (2001): 104.

⁵⁰ The Kong lineage as used here refers to the main lineage and the senior descent line of the Qufu Kongs from which a Yansheng Duke is produced and for which the Yansheng Duke is the head.

⁵¹ Michael Kimmel and Amy Aronson, *Sociology Now* (New York: Pearson, 2009), 210.

The Kong lineage's power began to take shape during the Han dynasty but gained significant momentum during the Song dynasty when the worship of Confucius began to accelerate and the new system of Yansheng Duke became increasingly formalized and institutionalized. Although this system was primarily created to ensure the proper guardianship of the Confucius Temple and Cemetery, the Kong lineage in due course attained both symbolic and practical power probably far beyond what its creator had ever imagined or intended.

As China's "oldest hereditary noble clan" with an "ever-expanding fiefdom since the Han," the Kong lineage's power was omnipresent in Qufu.⁵² It enjoyed so much autonomy and latitude as to be able to keep a private security force and run its own lineage court with full jurisdiction over lineage members, members of the servant households, and tenants of the lineage-owned sacrificial land. The duke's influence extended to the imperial court, at least symbolically, as the Yansheng Duke since the Ming dynasty was a grade-one official and would regularly go the capital to attend mandatory rituals where he was ranked with the "highest officials in the land."⁵³ He was even given the privilege to "walk beside the emperor along the Imperial Way within the Imperial Palace in Beijing, ride a horse inside the walls of the Purple Forbidden City, and accompany the emperor on inspection tours of institutions of learning."⁵⁴ The Yansheng Duke was further granted a sizable mansion in the capital for his frequent trips to and stay there. He also had the ear of accommodating emperors who would from time to time grant him special privileges. In the first year of the Ming dynasty, for instance, the

⁵² Thomas Wilson, "The Ritual Formation of Confucian Orthodoxy and the Descendants of the Sage" *The Journal of Asian Studies* 55 (1996): 571.

⁵³ Lamberton, "The Kongs of Qufu: Power and Privilege in Late Imperial China" 321.

⁵⁴ Kong and Ke, *The House of Confucius*, 8.

reigning Yansheng Duke received a special “ruling cane” from Ming emperor Taizu, with which he could wield extra court-authorized power over lineage members and local affairs.⁵⁵

One major manifestation of the Kong lineage’s power was its undisputed authority over the “lesser Kongs” or the minor descent lines of the Kongs as well as the descendants of Mencius, Yanhui and Zengzi, who were doctrinal descendants of Confucius known as “correlates.” The Kong lineage was divided into the main or great lineage and minor lineages. The Yansheng Duke served as the head of the main lineage. The minor lineages were further divided into nine close collateral branches (known as the Twelve Mansions) for the siblings of the Yansheng Duke and sixty remote collateral branches for members of the Kongs scattered around the Qufu area. As members of the Qufu Kongs, both close and remote branches of the Kong lineage enjoyed relatively high social status, but they all fell under the jurisdiction of the main lineage.⁵⁶

This lineage further had power over the poor Kongs, who were either tenants of the land owned by the main lineage or servants of the Confucius Mansion. Anyone working for the Kong lineage who happened to be surnamed Kong had to change his last name from Kong to a different last name because, according to the Kong family genealogy, the Kongs, male or female, were above being other people’s servants.⁵⁷ The Yansheng Duke and his main lineage also used its control of the family genealogy to exercise power over other Kongs as inclusion in the family genealogy meant privileges and benefits. Family genealogy was even used to exercise control over other Kongs who had settled across

⁵⁵ Luo Chenglie et al., *kong fu dang an xuan* [selected documents from the archives of the Confucius Mansion], (Beijing: zhongguo wenshi chubanshe, 2002), 12.

⁵⁶ Kong and Ke, *The House of Confucius*, 92-94.

⁵⁷ Kong Fanyin, *yansheng gong fu jian wen* [stories from Confucius Mansion], 364.

China and were required to update their family genealogy periodically.⁵⁸ Those Kongs, who had settled elsewhere, had to handle the main descent line with care, lest they be excluded from the lineage and lose their benefits and privileges.⁵⁹

However, the most salient manifestation of the power of the Kong lineage was its control of the local bureaucracy. During the Tang and Song dynasties, the office of the Qufu magistrate was mostly served by Confucius's direct descendants, such as the Yansheng Duke himself. Yuan rulers even turned this position into a hereditary one for the Kongs only.⁶⁰ Between Ming and mid-Qing, this office was always served by someone from the broad Kong lineage. Even after this office turned into an officially-appointed one under emperor Qianlong, any new Qufu magistrate must first report to the Yansheng Duke upon arriving in Qufu, a practice that continued until the communist takeover.⁶¹ In short, the office of the Qufu magistrate during most of middle and late imperial China was variously served, appointed, nominated or approved by the Kong lineage. With sympathetic ears in the imperial court and a larger-than-life public image, the Kong lineage for all intents and purposes ruled Qufu.

Aside from power, wealth is another yardstick to measure the social status of the Kong lineage. The lineage's economic status, like its power and privileges, fluctuated with the political vicissitudes, but it also reached its zenith at the end of High Qing. Income from land was the most important source of revenue for the Kong lineage. The lineage's land consisted of imperially granted sacrificial land and self-purchased land.

⁵⁸ Wilson, "The Ritual Formation of Confucian Orthodoxy and the Descendants of the Sage," 574.

⁵⁹ Jun Jing, "Knowledge, Organization, and Symbolic Capital" in *On Sacred Grounds: Culture, Society, Politics, and the Formation of the Cult of Confucius*, ed. Thomas A. Wilson (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), 340. .

⁶⁰ *Zhong gong Qufu difang shi*, 13-14

⁶¹ Kong Fanyin, *yansheng gong fu jian wen* [stories from Confucius Mansion], 384.

Imperially granted land was spread in over thirty counties across the five provinces of Shandong, Hebei, Henan, Jiangsu, and Anhui. By the middle of the Qing dynasty, the lineage owned as much as 164,000 acres of land.⁶² In Qufu county alone, the Kong lineage owned as much as 9.7% of the arable land.⁶³ Additionally, the land was free from grain tax and the servant households were free from corvee obligations. The lineage also received government positions that it would sell for money. A grade-four position was sold for 1,200 taels of silver and grade five for 1,000 taels of silver.⁶⁴ This further enhanced the lineage's coffers. The income from the land was used to cover expenses for sacrifices, provide financial contribution to the imperial court and regional officials on special occasions, and cover the daily expenses at the duke's mansion.

The imperial financial blessings made it possible for the lineage to operate its own bank and own pawn shops.⁶⁵ The duke's mansion also had a regular staff of about 500 people and was the largest employer in Qufu, where most economic activity revolved around the Confucian establishment.⁶⁶ The lineage's financial strength also made it possible for it to cover such expensive expenditures as a lineage-owned opera troupe as well as highly elaborate and expensive funerals and burials for diseased Yansheng Dukes. The wealth of the Kong lineage resulted strictly from government subsidies. The Confucian establishment became such a regularly funded entity that the line between the state and the Confucian establishment became very blurred. In fact, they had more in common than in difference.

⁶² Lamberton, "The Kongs of Qufu: Power and Privilege in Late Imperial China" 320; according to kong fu dang an xuan by Luo Chenglie et al, the lineage owned approximately 1.8 million mu or 296,526 acres around the same time.

⁶³ *Zhongong Qufu difang shi*, 18.

⁶⁴ Kongfu dang'an, 6667.

⁶⁵ Kong and Ke, *The House of Confucius*, 15-16; Luo Chenglie et al, 5.

⁶⁶ Kong and Ke, *The House of Confucius*, 7.

While government support did allow the Kongs to live a luxurious life, it also created two problems. One was the sharp contrast between the affluent Kong lineage and the poverty of the general populace. This economic gap had the potential of leading the way to other issues. The other problem was the extreme dependence of the Kong lineage on government subsidies, without which the Kong sites could deteriorate seriously in very short order. It perhaps explained the lineage's propensity to collaborate with whoever was in control of power. Both problems would come to haunt the Kong lineage in later years.

The Kong lineage's power and wealth were well-matched, if not eclipsed, by the unparalleled prestige that it enjoyed. While the lineage's political and economic power was largely local or regional, its prestige was national or even international. The manifestations of the lineage's prestige were so voluminous that they almost defy enumeration. Not only did the Kongs witness a succession of pilgrimages of bygone emperors, but they also received titles, lands, and servant households from the rulers of both domestic and conquest dynasties. When a Yansheng Duke died, the emperors would send a special envoy to convey condolences and grant "burial money";⁶⁷ when the lineage felt threatened by insurgents, it could ask the court for protection; when there was a regime change, the new ruler invariably honored the privileges granted to the Kong lineage by the previous ruler; when misdeeds were committed by senior members of the Yansheng Duke's family, lenient treatment could usually be expected; when a Yansheng Duke committed a major offense, his family members would not be implicated and his son could still succeed him; and when, in 1530, all the sculptural images of Confucius in

⁶⁷ Luo Chenglie, *kong fu dang an xuan* [selected documents from the archives of the Confucius Mansion], 15.

Confucius Temples across the country were replaced by inscribed tablets through an imperial mandate, the images of Confucius in the Confucius Temple in Qufu were the only ones that remained intact.⁶⁸ All these unsurpassed privileges, however, pale in comparison to the ultimate privilege of the Kong lineage, namely, the Confucius Temple, Confucius Mansion, and Confucius Cemetery. It was these three gems of China that put Qufu on the cultural and religious maps of China and the world.

Despite the simple, rustic lifestyle of Confucius and his immediate descendants, the metamorphosis of the Kong sites from the Han to the end of High Qing was so thorough that the Kong lineage ended up having a walled family cemetery as a last resting-place for every generation of the Kongs over twenty five centuries. Located right outside Qufu city and a few hundred years older than the world-renowned tomb of Emperor Qin Shi Huang for which the terracotta army is known, this family cemetery covers over 494 acres and is surrounded by walls 3.4 meters high and 7.5 kilometers long. It is the “most enduring and best preserved clan graveyard and garden in China.”⁶⁹ With an estimated 200,000 burials marked by a forest of tombstones ranging from those for the first three generations of Confucius to his latest descendants in Ming and Qing, the Confucius Cemetery commanded tremendous spiritual power for a country where ancestor worship is the essence of its spiritual life.

The Confucius Temple, in the words of famed Chinese architect Liang Sicheng, “evolved from three simple rooms...to a gigantic temple maintained by the state and admired and worshiped by emperors for over 2,000 years....A record unmatched

⁶⁸ Julia K. Murray, “Idols” in the Temple: Icons and the Cult of Confucius” 371, 386.

⁶⁹ Michael Dale, “Focus on Confucius” *PSA Journal* 60 (1994): 13.

anywhere elsewhere in the world.⁷⁰ Indeed, the Confucius Temple became the de facto state church or China's "Sistine Chapel," so to speak. Encompassing forty-nine acres and resembling Beijing's Imperial Palace in style, this majestic temple with 466 rooms and halls is located in the heart of the city and surrounded by a red wall. Its significance to various rulers was so apparent that they readily took ownership of it and in 1511 relocated the city of Qufu to provide better protection for it.

The ever-increasing aggrandizement of the Confucian establishment in Qufu through ceaseless state sponsorship and patronage resulted in the majesty of the Confucius Temple with such landmarks as the Kuiwen Pavilion or the temple library, the Apricot Altar where Confucius was supposed to have taught his students, and the Hall of Great Perfection, the central shrine. Not only was the workmanship for the ten stone dragon pillars of the Temple so exquisite as to be "superior even to that of the dragon pillars of the Imperial Palace in Beijing,"⁷¹ but the Temple itself was also "vaster in proportions" than the Confucius Temple in Beijing, which it resembled.⁷² The Hall of Great Perfection also easily stood out among other Confucius Temples in the country in that here Confucius and his close disciples were "represented by statues of stone, while elsewhere they have only tablets inscribed with their names."⁷³ The grandiosity of the Temple was well-matched by the deified status of Confucius, who was described by the tablets in the shrine as, "the Model Teacher of All Ages" with virtue "Equal to that of Heaven and Earth."⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Liang Sicheng, *zhongguo jianzhu shi* [History of Chinese Architect] (Tianjin: baihua wenyi chu ban she, 2005), 444.

⁷¹ Kong and Ke, *The House of Confucius*, 10.

⁷² Martin, *A Cycle of Cathay*, 284.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 285.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

The 463-room Confucius Mansion is situated adjacent to the Confucius Temple and has the reputation of being the residence for the “First Family under the Heaven” because of its association with Confucius. This family compound is the largest landlord manor in Chinese history and served both as the lineage office building and family residence of the Yansheng Duke. Its uniqueness is marked by the fact that the administration of the Confucius Mansion was modeled after that of the central government, in that the former had six ministries while the latter had six departments, such as the departments of rites and music. This was a privileged organizational structure permitted by the imperial court, which actually granted the Confucius Mansion ranked officials. The head of each department, for instance, was a grade-four official.⁷⁵ Yongzheng emperor in 1731 provided as many as forty official posts ranked grade three to nine to help with the management of the Kong sites.⁷⁶ The Yansheng Duke could fill these state-sponsored positions with whomever he deemed fitting for them.

Another unique feature of the Confucius Mansion is the Double Gate, which, like the Qufu south gate, was reserved only for emperors and distinguished visitors only. It was a feature not observed in any other noble houses in the country. The Mansion’s residential section had a special living quarter for females, and those who trespassed upon it would be harshly dealt with. The upkeep of the Confucius Mansion was handled by state-granted servant households who were exempt from taxes and corvee labor. These households provided such specific services as supplying fireworks and music for sacrifices or even weeping and wailing at family funerals.⁷⁷ The aura of the Mansion was

⁷⁵ Kong and Ke, *The House of Confucius*, 11.

⁷⁶ Luo Chenglie et al, *kong fu dang an xuan* [selected documents from the archives of the Confucius Mansion], 15.

⁷⁷ Kong and Ke, *The House of Confucius*, 12-13.

further enhanced by two imposing lions at its main gate where a couplet unabashedly proclaims its importance, “As long-lived as the heavens, the house of the Learned Sage of Moral Excellence.”

The Decline of the Kong Lineage in Modern China: 1800-1949

The dawn of modern China heralded the beginning of the end of the golden age of Confucianism and Qufu. Modern China falls into three distinctive phases: decline and crises (1800-1850), rebellions and reforms (1851-1900), and wars and revolutions (1900-1949).⁷⁸ The fate of Qufu and the Kong lineage was closely tied with the vicissitudes in each phase. While the Opium War (1839-1842) during the first phase opened China’s door to Christian missionaries and allowed them to compete with Confucians in the religious and moral fields, its impact on the Kong lineage was minuscule compared with the main problems facing the Qufu Kongs during that time, namely, the lineage’s declining political influence and economic power. As the Manchu empire struggled to deal with internal revolts and external pressure, the Kong lineage also found itself facing falling donations, decreasing revenues, and challenges to its judicial authority.⁷⁹

However, the rebellions and reforms during the second phase of modern China posed more direct and tangible challenges to Confucius’s birthplace and descendants. The first major challenges came from the anti-Confucian, anti-Manchu Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864), and the Nian Rebellion (1851-1868), each responsible for extreme violence and destruction. Fortunately for Qufu, the Taiping forces did not manage to move into the Qufu area and the Nian rebels left Qufu alone as their primary target was the Qing state.

⁷⁸ James Gao, *Historical Dictionary of Modern China: 1800-1949*, (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2009), xxxviii.

⁷⁹ Christopher Agnew, “Bureaucrats, Sectarians, and the Descendants of Confucius” *Late Imperial China* 31(2010): 2, 22.

Although Qufu survived the threat to its physical existence and welcomed the revival of Confucianism during the post-Taiping years, more serious challenges were on their way. In the 1898 One Hundred Days Reform, reformers advocated modernizing the education system at the expense of the Confucian establishment, but the critical situation was diffused by Empress Dowager Cixi through a coup.

The Qufu Kongs had barely managed to breathe a sigh of relief when the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901) swept over northern China and ushered China into the phase of wars and revolutions. While the anti-foreign Boxers did not pose any threat to the physical existence of Qufu, the Confucian establishment paid for the ultimate price for the “sins” of the Boxers in that the sweeping institutional reforms that Empress Dowager engineered stemmed from the lessons she learned from the Boxer debacle. These reforms led to the 1905 abolition of the imperial examination system—practically the coup-de-grace for institutional Confucianism and the foundation of the Kong lineage’s social status. By 1911, all the reforms and the radical changes in the preceding years culminated in the sudden collapse of the Manchu empire and, along with it, Confucianism’s place as the state creed. Thus, in the last decade of the Manchu empire and imperial China, the Kong lineage lost most of the ideological and institutional ground upon which its prestigious social status was built.

The impact of the 1911 regime change not only cost the Kong lineage its hereditary revenues, such as imperial gifts, official posts, and the annual stipend for the Yansheng Duke, but it also ushered in the warlord period and an era of great uncertainties. Gradually, the Kong lineage faced even more financial stress and erosion of their social status, forcing it to improvise coping strategies. Despite its remarkable resilience, new

challenges kept coming. The warlord problem was compounded by the advent of the anti-Confucian, anti-tradition New Cultural Movement which started in 1915 but culminated in the anti-imperialist May Fourth Movement of 1919. While neither movement presented any meaningful physical threat to Three Kong Sites, the arrival of the revolution did. As a result of revolutionary wars and their guiding ideologies, the survival of Qufu's Confucian establishment came into question.

The hardest years for Qufu and the Kong lineage fell between 1927 and 1930 when Qufu's Confucian establishment was economically strangled, ideologically attacked, and physically assaulted. Early in 1927, the radical Northern Expedition troops composed of both Chinese Nationalists and Communists swept across the country and attacked Confucian establishments in their path, causing great alarm in the pro-tradition and pro-Confucian community across the country.⁸⁰ In 1928, anti-Confucian fever reached its zenith. Cai Yuanpei, the new government's Minister of Education and a former key player in the May Fourth Movement, presented a "draft proposal for reforming Qufu's Confucius Cemetery and Temple" when he called on the nationalization of the Kong properties. In 1929, students in the Second Teachers' College of Shandong in Qufu performed a play "Confucius Meets with Duchess Nanzi" in which they publicly mocked Confucius and humiliated his descendants.

But it was in April 1930 when a massive physical assault befell the walled city of Qufu and the Three Kong Sites. The assault resulted from the Central Plains War—a military confrontation between two factions of the Nationalist government. A fierce battle was fought in the very town of Qufu. The Shanxi troops besieged Qufu for eleven days and relentlessly shelled it with bombs landing all over the city. Townspeople all over

⁸⁰ Johnston, *Confucianism and Modern China*.172.

Qufu flocked to the Confucian complex as they customarily did many times before during wars to seek a safe haven, but shells indiscriminately rained on the Confucian complex anyway, causing a total of some 3,000 casualties in Qufu.⁸¹ Even the nine-year-old Yansheng Duke, who was hiding under a table below many layers of protection inside the Confucius Mansion, barely survived the bombing; a few shells landed near where he was hiding but failed to explode.⁸²

After eleven days of besiegement and shelling, the Shanxi troops finally retreated as their rival's reinforcement troops arrived. The aftermath of the battle was horrific. The combat inflicted significant damage to the Three Kong Sites: fifteen different locations of the Confucius Temple were damaged, including a punctured ceiling in the Hall of Great Perfection and a hole in the northwest corner of the Kui Literature Pavilion.⁸³ Qufu's Confucian establishment was so distraught and alarmed that it issued a public statement calling on any warring parties to protect this holy land of China. No wonder a Western observer referred to 1930 as the year when Confucianism "had touched the nadir of its fortunes."⁸⁴

Respite and relief finally came to the Qufu Kongs when Chiang Kai-shek in 1934 launched the New Life Movement. Chiang designed this movement to promote the Confucian virtues of politeness (*li*), righteousness (*yi*), integrity (*lian*), and self-respect (*chi*). He had hoped to achieve social regeneration by addressing such issues as hygienic practices, promptness, and courtesy. While the movement failed to revive Confucianism

⁸¹ Kong and Ke, *The House of Confucius.*, 137.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Johnston, *Confucianism and Modern China*,172.

as an appealing ideology, it did provide the Kong lineage with an opportunity to forge a solid alliance with a powerful new partner and brought it back to the public life.

A whirlwind of activities kept the young Yansheng Duke on his toes. On the anniversary of Confucius's birthday in 1934, he hosted top Kuomintang party and state officials, who came to Qufu to perform sacrifices to Confucius. On January 18, 1935, after terminating the 800-plus-year old Yansheng Duke system, the Nationalist government issued an official decree that appointed Kong Decheng as the Sacrificial Officer of the Great Accomplished and Most Sacred Teacher.⁸⁵ On July 8, 1935, the fifteen-year-old Kong Decheng went to Nanjing where he was officially sworn in as the Sacrificial Official to Confucius. Marginalized Confucianism had finally found its way back to the officialdom, and the Kong lineage had returned to the limelight and put itself on the government payroll again.

Just as the Kong lineage was relishing its remarkable return to prominence, its good fortune ended abruptly at the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945). To prevent the Japanese from using the head of the Kong lineage as a propaganda tool, Chiang Kai-shek hastily evacuated Kong Decheng to the war capital Chongqing. On January 4, 1938, Qufu fell into Japanese hands. China was subsequently divided between the Chinese defenders and Japanese invaders. These two forces were further divided into five political forces of the Chinese Nationalists, Chinese Communists, Wang Jinwei's puppet regime, the Manchukuo under Japanese control, and the Japanese occupiers. Interestingly, other than the Chinese communists, all warring parties seemed to agree on one thing: they all identified with Confucianism and each claimed Confucianism to be on

⁸⁵ Luo Chenglie et al., *kong fu dang an xuan* [selected documents from the archives of the Confucius Mansion], 20.

their side. Even Mao Zedong put Confucius on a par with Sun Yat-sen, the founding father of republic China. Whether this rare agreement stemmed from political expediency, ideological affinity, or nationalistic instincts, The Kong lineage and the Three Kong Sites largely remained intact throughout the eight-year-long war.

The devastating war finally ended in August 1945, but it was immediately followed by a brutal civil war between the old adversaries—Communists and Nationalists. Land reform was part of the communists’ war strategy as it would help the CCP win over the peasants, among other reasons. The Kong lineage, with its enormous landownership, became a natural target of land reform. Consequently, soon after the communist takeover of Qufu on December 31, 1945, tenant peasants of the Kong lineage began to look for ways to seek some economic justice from their famed landlord. The Kong lineage had every reason to be very concerned: it was the largest landowning entity in Qufu with about ten percent of the land in the area in its possession, not to mention the “exploitative and coercive tactics” that were associated with Confucius Mansion’s rent collection practices. Much to the relief of the Kong lineage, however, the new communist government sent someone to the Confucius Mansion to tip them off about a forthcoming peasant mass rally and revealed to them all the demands that were to be made of them, thus allowing the Kong lineage ample time to prepare for their responses.⁸⁶

Having made detailed arrangements with the Kong lineage, the new government staged a massive peasant rally. On March 25, 1946, some 10,000 tenant peasants of the Kong lineage from the general Qufu area marched into the center of Qufu and held a rent-and-interest rates reduction rally. They held a large flag on which four demands they

⁸⁶ *Mass Daily*, 21 April 1946.

made of the Kong lineage were listed: “implement the twenty-five percent rent reduction, abolish the ‘Hundred Servant Households,’ stop the Confucius Mansion’s security force from physically and verbally abusing people, and allow those who had to change their last name from Kong to other last names to restore their original name.”⁸⁷

Kong Lingyu, the interim chief administrator of the Confucius Mansion, sent a representative, Kong Jieqing, to meet the peasants and respond to their demands. Kong Jieqing met the peasants and calmly addressed each and every demand, noting, “The system of the Hundred Servant Households should have been abolished a few hundred years ago. Rent reduction is even more reasonable. Plenty of grain had already been prepared for this purpose so this demand can be met immediately.” After responding to all thirteen extra demands, Kong Jieqing added, “The feudal nature of the Confucius Mansion must be reformed based on the law of social progress. All the demands that you have raised point to the areas where the Confucius Mansion has fallen behind the times. We must and will expedite the changes.”⁸⁸ With that, a rally of 10,000 peasants that had every potential for a violent end came to a peaceful conclusion. The intellectual circles in Qufu were so impressed with the way the situation was handled that they reportedly remarked, “Communists and peasants do not dismiss history. [This rent reduction episode] both reduced rent and left the Sage totally unharmed!”⁸⁹

The Kong lineage’s relief was short-lived, however. Soon, an all-out civil war broke out in June 1946 and quickly intensified, turning Qufu into a “gray area” caught in the crossfire between the Nationalists and Communists. To Qufu’s east were the “old

⁸⁷ *Mass Daily*, 21 April 1946. The Confucius Mansion specified that no one surnamed Kong was allowed to work as a servant in the Confucius Mansion. Hence many people surnamed Kong had to change their last name in order to be eligible for employment in the Confucius Mansion.

⁸⁸ *Mass Daily*, 21 April 1946.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

liberated areas” occupied by the communists; to its west was the city of Yanzhou held by the Kuomintang troops. To make the matters even more complicated, the intensification of the war also drastically radicalized the land reform policies and practices as rent-and-interest rates reduction was replaced by hostile land confiscation and expulsion of landlords from their homes, causing both sides to engage in a bloody war of retaliations. Casualties rose sharply for both sides. Just in Qufu alone, 1,100 peasant activists were killed as a result of such retaliations.⁹⁰

Even the Kong lineage became involved in this conflict as it took the opportunity to nullify all the terms it had to accept earlier, generating animosity between the Kong lineage and the tenant peasants. Although historically there did not exist any serious tension between the landlords and peasants or between the rich and poor in the villages, the land reform and revenge of the landlords completely changed this situation.⁹¹ The genie was out of the bottle and the centuries-old unequal but steady landowner-tenant relationship became antagonistic and could never return. Even the hometown of China’s First Sage, to which aesthete George Kates once referred as a “tender place,” had now become hardened to such bloody retaliations and slaughters.⁹²

The tug-of-war continued. On June 11, 1948, the communists retook Qufu and turned the newly liberated area into a secure communist base. The senior management personnel of the Confucius Mansion fled Qufu before the communist takeover for fear of reprisals. Nine days later on June 20, the CCP East China Bureau had already issued a directive titled "Suggestions on How to Handle the Confucius Temple, Cemetery, and Land." The

⁹⁰ zhonggong Shandong shengwei dangshi yanjiushi *Jie fang zhan zheng shi qi Shandong de tu di gai ge*, [land reform in Shandong during the war of liberation] (Jinan, Shandong renmin chu ban she, 1993), 31..

⁹¹ Gao, *The Communist Takeover of Hangzhou*, 27.

⁹² Bordewich, “The way of Confucius,” 105.

directive stipulated the inclusion of Kong lineage members in the Confucius Temple Management Commission, the reprinting of the 1946 announcement for the protection of the Kong sites, and immediate deployment of armed protection of the Kong sites.⁹³

While the directive also encouraged efforts to persuade the Kong lineage members who had fled Qufu to return home, it made no mention of the lineage head Kong Decheng.⁹⁴ But Kong Decheng was not in a hurry to return to Qufu. To him, the road home was closed once again. Qufu was firmly in communist hands. Senior members of his management team had fled Qufu for fear of their lives. All three Confucian sites were nationalized and all Kong lineage land was confiscated and given to the former tenant peasants. The Confucius Mansion was already officially under the management of a trade union that only answered to the communists. Shandong was also irrevocably lost following the Huai-hai Campaign in late 1948, and the whole country followed suit shortly thereafter.⁹⁵ The Nationalist government's political, military, and social institutions crumbled. The tidal wave of changes engulfed anyone in its way.

In December 1949, Kong Decheng left for Taiwan, which turned out to be his trip of no return. It was an extraordinarily difficult decision for someone whose life mission was to stay at home and ensure proper sacrifices to his ancestors. Kong Decheng weighed the pros and cons and followed his instinct. He would know in seventeen years if he had made the right decision.

⁹³ Zhang Peiying, "hui yi wo shao nian shi he kong decheng zai yi qi" [Recollection of My Childhood Years with Kong Decheng] *Qufu Wenshi* [Qufu's culture and history] 2 (1982): 12.

⁹⁴ *Jie fang zhan zheng shi qi Shandong de tu di gai ge* [land reform in Shandong during the war of liberation], 828

⁹⁵ The Huai-hai Campaign (November 1948-January 1949) was one of the three major military campaigns during the Chinese civil war of 1945-1949. Chinese communists' victory in this campaign was a turning point that paved the way for the complete defeat of Chinese Nationalist government in the civil war.

Conclusion

The Kong lineage enjoyed unsurpassed imperial patronage and commanded unmatched respect from people from all walks of life throughout imperial China. The advent of modern China presented major challenges to the Kong lineage and the Three Kong Sites in its care. However, through perseverance and resilience, the Kong lineage survived the May Fourth Movement and the iconoclastic fervor during the Northern Expedition. It even enjoyed a brief rally in the 1930s and survived two debilitating wars thereafter. With the takeover of China by a group of committed revolutionaries who subscribed to an ideology that was the antithesis of core Confucian values of moderation, compromise, and nonviolence, Confucianism seemed to have outlived its usefulness for the powers-that-be and the Kong lineage as a result had lost its *raison d'être*. The unsettled and unsettling questions were: What would happen to China's Mecca in the hands of the heirs of The May Fourth iconoclasts who called themselves communists? What would happen to the Three Kong Sites that had always been in meticulous care? What would happen to the people of Qufu and the descendants of Confucius who had for over 2,000 years always lived under the auspices and shadow of the Kong lineage?

Chapter III: Defending the Three Kong Sites

The Prelude

When the largest ever contingent of foreign diplomats in China descended on Confucius's birthplace on May 20, 1966, Qufu was still enjoying a respite from the radical political and economic campaigns that dominated the first seventeen years of the People's Republic. By 1966, the Great Leap Forward had already been abandoned and the Three Bitter Years had become a recent memory.¹ Although Qufu residents endured tremendous hardships during those tumultuous years, the Three Kong Sites not only remained intact but continued to bring pride, privilege, and state subsidies to the little town of Qufu. It was as though the revolution did little to the Three Kong Sites, save for the change of their caretakers.

The Qufu government proved to be competent stewards of these national treasures. Cui Xuyi, Director of the Qufu Cultural Relics Commission, ably maintained and promoted the Three Kong Sites. These sites meant the world to the local officials, who viewed themselves as the proud guardians of these national treasures. They knew that the Three Kong Sites were the only reason why a steady flow of high-profile domestic and international dignitaries from Mao Zedong to Ho Chi Minh had come to this otherwise inconspicuous rural community. In 1966, Cui, who had already added an international guesthouse in the Confucius Mansion, was still busy making reprints of the famous *Pictures of the Traces of the Sage Confucius* (*shengjitu*) for visitors. He even

¹ The "Three Bitter Years," also known as "Three Years of Natural Disasters" or "Great Famine," refers to the period of 1959-1961 which saw widespread famine across China caused by the policies of the Great Leap Forward. It claimed tens of millions of lives. Qufu was also greatly affected by this famine.

instructed Kong Zhaopei, a former top administrator of the Confucius Mansion and now a consultant for Cui's office, to write to the last Yansheng Duke Kong Decheng in Taiwan to assure him that "all was well in Qufu" and that the new government was taking excellent care of his ancestral home.²

However, all was not well in the nation's capital. By the time the foreign diplomats arrived in Qufu on May 20, 1966, the tension between the chairman of the party Mao Zedong and the president of the state Liu Shaoqi had already come to a head and a series of significant political events had unfolded that set the stage for the Cultural Revolution. By May 16, Mao had already ousted Beijing's party boss Peng Zhen, a protégé of Liu, through organized attacks on Beijing's cultural establishment. The May 16 Circular released that day euphemistically referred to Liu as China's "Khrushchev types sleeping right next to us" and announced the formation of the Central Cultural Revolution Group to lead the Cultural Revolution.³ Intensified attacks on the party establishment ensued. On May 25, Nie Yuanzi, a party branch secretary at Peking University, put out the first "Marxist-Leninist big-character poster" attacking the party committee at Peking University. The spark that Nie's poster lit spread across college campuses like a prairie fire. Liu responded by sending work groups en masse to college campuses across the country to contain the situation and "put out the fire."⁴

But the fire fueled by Mao through the CCRG refused to be contained. Opposition to Liu's crackdowns grew quickly. By mid-June, students from as many as thirty-nine

² Song Yongyi, ed., *Xin Bian hongweibing ziliao*; [A New Collections of Red Guard Publications], Part II, vol. 29. 11392. (hereafter XBHZL)

³ "Zhongguo gong chan dang zhong yang wei yuan hui tong zhi" [The Chinese Communist Party Central Committee Notification] (May 16, 1966), in ZWDGW.

⁴ Work groups are a unique CCP ad hoc trouble-shooting mechanism composed of party officials. They were usually formed in response to a pressing situation but disbanded after the situation is resolved; Yan Jiaqi & Gao Gao, *Turbulent Decade*, 44.

universities in Beijing tried to throw out the work groups.⁵ Using the party's long-established authority and prestige, Liu directed the party establishment to put down the burgeoning dissent by turning the heat on the rebellious students. From June 1 to July 20, work groups suppressed the rebellious students using highhanded tactics, creating what Mao later called "fifty days of white terror" and "the bourgeois reactionary line."

Frustrated by the setbacks, Mao ended his retreat in Hangzhou and returned to the capital on July 18 to "personally lead the Cultural Revolution." With the help of CCRG, he disbanded the work groups and rehabilitated the persecuted students. In the ensuing Eleventh Plenum of the CCP Eighth Central Committee in early August, Mao wrote his famous big-character poster "Bombarding the Headquarters" in support of the persecuted students and oversaw the creation of the Sixteen Articles (*shiliutiao*), another "programmatic document" providing guidelines for the Cultural Revolution. This document clearly defined the main target of the Cultural Revolution as "those within the party who are in authority and are taking the capitalist road."⁶ In so doing, Mao hit the reset button of the Cultural Revolution and directed its focus back to Liu and the party establishment. Despite Mao's fresh offensive, the party establishment remained in power and party officials and bureaucrats at all levels of the government stayed loyal to the incumbent government.

Unable to unseat Liu and rally the party base, Mao resorted to his personal charisma and turned to those to whom he now had a quasi-religious appeal—the Red

⁵ Guo Jian, et al, *Historical Dictionary of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2006), xx.

⁶ Zhongguo gong chan dang zhong yang wei yuan hui guan yu wu chan jie ji wen hua da ge ming de jue ding" [Communist Party of China Central Committee's Decision on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution] (August 8, 1966), in ZWDGW.

Guards—to create “great disorder under heaven” to achieve “great order under heaven.”⁷ Exploiting the Red Guard movement and the Cult of Mao, the Chairman reviewed one million fervent Red Guards in the Tiananmen Square on August 18—the first of eight such Hajj-like pilgrimage events—and then unleashed them to engage in destructive acts through the campaign against the Four Olds and spread the Cultural Revolution to the provinces through the Great Exchanges of Revolutionary Experience (*dachuanlian*). Almost overnight, the fire of the Cultural Revolution set the country ablaze at both the center and localities. Teenage Red Guards roamed across the country destroying anything they deemed as belonging to the “Four Olds” and spreading the “Cultural Revolution fire.”⁸ By the end of August, the Cultural Revolution that started in the Beijing party and cultural spheres in early 1966 and moved to college campuses in June and July had finally spread to the entire country.

The sudden eruption of the campaign against the Four Olds posed a direct and credible threat to the Three Kong Sites in Qufu. Although all three sites were among the 180 historical places declared in 1961 by the State Council as “Key National Cultural Protection units” and had been managed by the state since 1948, the effectiveness of this designation was rendered almost nil due in part to the loose definition of the “Four Olds” and the indiscriminate nature of Red Guards’ destructive acts.⁹ As soon as CCP vice-chairman Lin Biao endorsed the concept and practice of “destroying the Four Olds” at the August 18 mass rally celebrating the Cultural Revolution, Red Guards attempted to raid the Forbidden City on the very same night despite the fact that it was a Key National

⁷ Roderick Macfarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao’s Last Revolution*, 52,

⁸ The original “old” Red Guards were comprised of middle school and high school students in their teens.

⁹ Among the 180 Key National Cultural Protection units, thirty three of them were “revolutionary sites” associated with the peasant and communist revolution, including, ironically, former Confucius temples that had been transformed into revolutionary sites and therefore preserved as revolutionary sites.

Cultural Protection unit right in the heart of Beijing and under the nose of the State Council. With daily encouragement from top party publications and state media, the emboldened Red Guards stopped at nothing in their wanton destruction of the nation's cultural heritage. Soon, other prominent cultural sites in the Beijing area were attacked by rampaging Red Guards, including two other Key National Cultural Protection units: the Summer Palace and the Ming period Great Wall. Ming wall tiles ended up being used for "building dams, repairing roads, walling pigsties, and making toilets."¹⁰

The campaign against the Four Olds quickly spread beyond Beijing after August 23 when the *People's Daily* gave official endorsement of Red Guards' violence against the "Four Olds" and the *Liberation Daily* issued its support through an editorial titled: "You did it right! You did it well!"¹¹ Across the country, Red Guards descended on one crown jewel of the nation's cultural heritage after another. Nearly all prominent state-protected sites had now become prominent targets. Many such sites bore similarities to the Three Kong Sites—cemeteries, temples, Confucian monuments, or Key National Cultural Protection units.

The Red Guards declared war on countless cemeteries and graves as soon as the campaign against the Four Olds started on August 19. The prominent burial and memorial sites that the Red Guards vandalized included the state-protected grave of Southern Song patriot general Yue Fei (1103-1142) noted for combating the Jurchens. Yue's grave and temple were both destroyed and the famous statue of Yue Fei at his gravesite in Hangzhou "disappeared without a trace."¹² The grave of Huo Qubing, (140-117 BC) another patriot general of the former Han dynasty famous for fending off the

¹⁰ Yan Jiaqi & Gao Gao, *Turbulent Decade*, 70.

¹¹ Editorial, *People's Daily*, 23 August 1966; Editorial, *Liberation Daily*, 23 August 1966.

¹² Yan Jiaqi & Gao Gao, *Turbulent Decade*, 72.

Xiongnu confederation, was yet another state-protected site that Red Guards desecrated and destroyed.¹³ In Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, the Memorial Park for Genghis Khan was pillaged by local cadres, workers, and peasants. All cultural relics and exhibits in the park were “thoroughly looted.”¹⁴ The frenzy reached such a white-hot level that Red Guards destroyed not only the graves of such obvious targets as the pro-Confucian figures Yuan Shikai and Kang Youwei, but also the ancestral burial grounds of prominent state and party leaders such as PRC vice president Madame Song Qingling and ousted top communist leaders Deng Xiaoping and Yang Shangkun.¹⁵ Never before had China witnessed such an all-out war on the nation’s dead, and, through them, the living.

The Red Guards total war on the “Four Olds” also targeted temples and other places of worship. In Beijing, the Biyun Temple, the Reclining Buddha Temple, and the Buddhist statues on top of the Longevity Hills in the Summer Palace all became targets of attack.¹⁶ In Hangzhou, teenage Red Guards tried to assault the world-renowned Lingyin Buddhist Temple.¹⁷ In Henan Province, the White Horse Temple outside Luoyang city, a state-protected site known as the “cradle of Buddhism in China,” was attacked and looted by the local peasants. In Shanxi Province, Wutai Mountain, one of the most sacred Buddhist pilgrimage sites in China and a state-protected site, was branded “the home of demons and spirits” and “pillaged and left to deteriorate.”¹⁸

¹³ Ding Shu, “cong shi xue ge min dao wa zhu feng” [from revolutionary in historiography to digging of ancestral graves] (November 1996) <http://www.cnd.org/CR/ZK96/zk105.hz8.html> May 2007).

¹⁴ *Yijinghuolou Qi Zi* [The History of the Yijinhuolou Banner], (Hohhot: nei menggu ren min chu ban she, 1997). 56.

¹⁵ Ding Shu, “cong shi xue ge min dao wa zhu feng” [from revolutionary in historiography to digging of ancestral graves] (November 1996) <http://www.cnd.org/CR/ZK96/zk105.hz8.html> May 2007); Yan Jiaqi & Gao Gao, *Turbulent Decade*, 71.

¹⁶ Yan Jiaqi & Gao Gao, *Turbulent Decade*, 70.

¹⁷ James Gao, *Communist Takeover of Hangzhou*, 231.

¹⁸ Yan Jiaqi & Gao Gao, *Turbulent Decade*, 73.

As the “cradle of Chinese civilization,” the culturally rich Shandong Province where the Three Kong Sites were located was among the hardest hit by the onslaught of the Red Guards. Even though approximately half of the CCRG members were Shandong natives (Jiang Qing, Kang Sheng, Zhang Chunqiao, Guan Feng, and Qi Benyu), they did not spare Shandong from the Red Guards’ wrath. Among the most atrocious acts of violence committed by Shandong Red Guards was the destruction of the grave of Wu Xun, a nineteenth-century Shandong beggar committed to Confucius’s ideal of universal education and raised money to fund education through any means within his reach. Red Guards from his hometown “exhumed Wu Xun’s corpse, walked with it to a nearby public square, held a mass sentencing rally, and finally broke it into pieces and burned it.”¹⁹

Violence against the Four Olds quickly spread to the city of Tai’an just thirty miles away from Qufu. Qufu and Tai’an are like sister cities. Whereas Qufu is home to the Three Kong Sites, Tai’an is home to the Daimiao Temple, a replica of the Imperial Palace, and a gateway to Mount Tai. Throughout Chinese history, rulers and emperors would make a pilgrimage to Mount Tai to seek legitimation for their rule from heaven and then come to Qufu to seek ideological support for their rule. On August 23, Red Guards from the local Tai’an Hydraulic Academy along with some traveling Red Guards created havoc on Mount Tai. They smashed their way from the foot to the top of Mount Tai, destroying all the tombs, steles, stone tablets, and engravings that they considered to be part of Four Olds.²⁰

¹⁹ MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, *Mao’s Last Revolution*, 120.

²⁰ KFDJN, 13. When I toured Mount Tai in 1980, much of the damaged remained visible to visitors.

As if this ominous development was not enough of a threat to Qufu's Three Kong Sites, the rampant destruction of artifacts and historical sites associated with Confucius and Confucianism also intensified in volume and frequency. Although by 1966 most of the once-flourishing Confucius temples across China had either been destroyed or repurposed, a few had survived the vicissitudes of time and remained standing. However, the Cultural Revolution labeled Confucian tradition as the root of the Four Olds and made all Confucian-related artifacts and sites fair targets for attack by Red Guards. Thus, across the country, the remaining Confucian monuments received devastating blows to their existence. In Beijing, the Confucius Temple that was once known as the National Academy of Imperial China became Red Guards' chosen site for torturing dozens of the nation's top writers and artists and burning huge piles of theater props and costumes.²¹ In the remote city of Lanzhou in the Northeastern province of Gansu, a college-based Red Guard organization burned a complete set of the family genealogy of the Kong lineage consisting of 108 volumes and 9,000 pages.²² In Quzhou, Zhejiang Province where the southern branch of the Kong lineage is located, Red Guards ransacked the Confucius Temple there, which is second in importance only to the Confucius Temple in Qufu.²³ In Shandong Province, the majestic and venerable Confucius temple in Laiyang county was torn down and gone.²⁴

With Red Guards wreaking havoc all over the country and in the vicinity of Qufu, the fate of the Qufu's Three Kong Sites was left hanging in the balance. Many questions arose, but answers to them were hard to come by. Would Qufu's Red Guards lay their

²¹ Guo Jian, et al., *Historical Dictionary of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 71.

²² Jun Jing, *The Temple of Memories: History, Power, and Morality in a Chinese Village* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1996), 42.

²³ *Quzhou shizhi* [Quzhou city gazetteer] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1994), 1098.

²⁴ *Laiyang xianzhi* [Laiyang county city gazetteer] (Beijing: huaxia chubanshe, 1999), 597.

hands on the Three Kong Sites? How would Qufu's general population respond to possible violence against the crown jewels of Qufu's culture? If worse came to the worst, would Premier Zhou Enlai come to the rescue? After all, didn't he make the Forbidden City off limits to Red Guard attacks and stop hordes of Red Guards in Hangzhou from destroying the Lingyin Temple?²⁵ Time and again, Qufu faced impossible odds in China's long history and, time and again, she survived the unsurvivable. Would Qufu remain unassailable this time or had she run out of luck? Uncertainty, it seemed, was the only certainty facing Qufu.

Early Attempts of Red Guard Vandalism in Qufu

As Mao's birthplace of Shaoshan became China's new Mecca, the glory of Qufu quickly dimmed. The click-clack of trains crisscrossing the country carrying Red Guards to create disorders everywhere finally jolted Qufu's local officials out of their false sense of security. Just two months before in May, they proudly hosted a large group of foreign diplomats. When word came in June that Red Guard organizations had appeared at the local Qufu Teachers College (QTC), they felt curious and asked, "Why do we need Red Guards since we already have our People's Militia (*minbing*)?"²⁶ Even by July when Mao's portraits were omnipresent across China, not a single one was to be found in the Confucius Mansion. When Red Guards from QTC provided five portraits of Mao to be displayed in the Confucius Mansion, Cui Xuyi asked rhetorically, "Do you really think this is an appropriate place to display Chairman Mao's portraits?"²⁷

²⁵ After making the Forbidden City off limits to Red Guards attacks, Zhou Enlai proposed a list of other sites to be protected across the country but Mao vetoed this idea and Zhou did not persist, in Roderick Macfarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, 119.

²⁶ KFDJN, 291.

²⁷ XBHZL, 11388

The local cadres' lack of political sensitivity, though astonishing, was not totally unexplainable. Not only had the Three Kong Sites never been an intentional target for any serious attacks throughout history, but the communist officials had always gone out of their way to protect and preserve the Three Kong Sites, as was the case in 1946 and 1948 when they first captured and then recaptured Qufu. The new government maintained its funding for the upkeep of the Three Kong Sites even when the Great Famine devastated much of the country. Given the history, there was naturally some hope on the part of the local officials that, somehow, the Three Kong Sites would survive this political storm. Little did they know, however, that this truly unprecedented revolution was exceptional in making no exceptions. No sooner had the Beijing Red Guards declared war on the Four Olds on August 19 than footsteps of their brethren were already heard at Qufu's gates. Red Guards of all factions, motivations, and origins immediately found their way to Qufu, first in a trickle, then in a flood.

The first appearance of Red Guards was noticed in mid-August when some traveling Red Guards were spotted in Qufu. Soon after, the local Red Guards started to become restless as well. Qufu's local officials became both confused and nervous. Although the Sixteen Articles clearly indicated that the vast majority of officials were "good" or "fairly good," officials at all levels came under even more and harsher attacks by both the local and traveling Red Guards after August 18.²⁸ Things were especially challenging for Qufu officials who happened to be the guardians of the Three Kong Sites, which had acquired a new identity as the source of all Four Olds. They knew the Three Kong Sites were protected by the State Council's steles, but the situation was too volatile

²⁸ CCRG member Zhang Chunqiao noted that by the end of September, almost every provincial and municipal party committee was under siege. See Wang Nianyi *Da dongluande nianda*, [Turbulent Years], (Beijing: ren min chu ban she, 2009). 69.

and perplexing for them not to be prepared for the worst. They held their “disaster planning” meetings in the safety of the PLA barracks in Fangshan Commune to avoid detection by the Red Guards.²⁹ A decision was soon reached to strengthen the leadership of the Cultural Relics Commission in charge of the Three Kong Sites by adding the Deputy County Commissioner Wang Huatian to the management team in order to protect the Three Kong Sites from either Red Guards from outside or their own employees from within.³⁰

Soon, the first phase of the campaign against the Four Olds erupted in Qufu. It was spearheaded by local Qufu Red Guards with neither support nor interference from the local government. These Red Guards committed the usual destructive acts associated with this campaign, such as changing street names and assaulting local academic authorities. Somehow, whether out of their reverence for the Three Kong Sites or respect for the State Council protection steles, the Qufu Red Guards seemed totally oblivious to the existence of the Three Kong Sites that occupied the center and the bulk of the city. However, the Kong sites were too obvious and too large a target to escape the notice of outside Red Guards, who did not share local Red Guards’ possible reverence for their cultural heritage. So in they came, one after another.

The first batch of marauding Red Guards came to Qufu on August 20. Upon arrival, they demanded entry to the Confucius Mansion. Staff members at the mansion declined their demand, citing ongoing renovations as the reason. Some Red Guards wanted to stay in the International Guesthouse inside the Confucius Mansion but they were also refused. Two days later on August 23, the local officials learned that Red

²⁹ KFDJN, 166-167.

³⁰ KFDJN, 14, 21-22

Guards from the neighboring Tai'an Hydraulic Academy were smashing cultural relics all over the nearby Mount Tai and claimed that Qufu would be their next target. The little town of Qufu was immediately abuzz with this disturbing news. Alarmed local officials leapt into action and adopted a two-pronged strategy. First, they took proactive measures to prevent the local Red Guards from joining forces with the outsiders by asking the school officials at the First Middle School of Qufu and Qufu Teachers School to keep the students there under control. The county officials then used two reliable constituencies to preempt the anticipated assault. The first constituency was the party-faithfuls in the student bodies from these two schools; the other was the local peasantry—the party's traditional ally.

This strategy proved to be effective. Upon hearing the news, outraged local students asked, "Who are they to smash our Three Kong Sites?" and wanted to debate with the intruders from Tai'an. To them, the Tai'an students were troublemakers who were trying to destroy state properties in Qufu. Overnight, students from the First Middle School closed three side-doors to the Confucius Temple and posted banners on its main gate that read, "Rise up immediately to prevent any destructive acts of the class enemy!" and "Long Live Proletarian Dictatorship!" Students from Qufu Teachers School also covered the ground outside the main gate of the Confucius Mansion with big-character posters and banners and promised swift retribution to anyone who dared to step on them.³¹ To intercept the Tai'an students from entering the city, some students were dispatched to the eastern, southern, and western gates of the city. As if this was not enough to block a small team of teenage Red Guards, peasants were also mobilized to guard the Confucius Mansion. Since there was not enough time to make red armbands,

³¹ KFDJN, 14

these peasants simply put on their chests a piece of red cloth, on which was written their indisputable revolutionary credentials, “poor and lower-middle peasants.”³²

Having taken these preventative measures, Qufu officials anxiously waited for the arrival of the intruders, but the much-anticipated assault by Tai’an Red Guards somehow did not materialize on the night of August 23. However, local officials were not taking any chances. As a committed communist with impeccable revolutionary credentials, Qufu’s Party Secretary Li Xiu made a clear distinction between the Three Kong Sites as a symbol of feudalism and the Three Kong Sites as state properties. He viewed the State Council protection stele as his license to legitimately block any vandalistic attempts.

On August 24, Li convened an urgent cadre meeting where he outlined his top two reasons for protecting the Three Kong Sites: First, they were state property; second, they were protected by the State Council. But Li also hastened to underscore the need to handle the Red Guards with tact. Li was very confused about the Cultural Revolution, but he was not at all confused about the fact that the Red Guards had Chairman Mao’s blessings. Just two days before on August 22, a party central document warned against any hostility towards the Red Guards.³³ Li told the local officials at the meeting to avoid confrontations and to make sure to “courteously escort the Red Guards out of Qufu.”³⁴

Just as Qufu officials were busy making plans to keep the outside Red Guards at bay, their own backyard was suddenly on fire. It happened when some students from QTC met on the night of August 24 to discuss what happened over the past two days.³⁵

³² Ibid.

³³ Wang Nianyi, *Da dongluande nianda*, 53-57.

³⁴ KFDJN, 15.

³⁵ While Qufu’s First Middle School and Qufu Teachers School were under the jurisdiction of local Qufu authorities, Qufu Teachers College was not subject to local government’s control and its students enjoyed much more latitude than students in the other two schools.

They felt ashamed that outside Red Guards were doing their own revolutionary work and concluded that they should fire the first shot at the Three Kong Sites. On the morning of August 25, three groups of QTC-based Red Guards marched to the Confucius Mansion, where they posted big-character posters, chanted Mao's quotations, and demanded entry to the Confucius Mansion. Wang Huatian and Cui Xuyi, two top officials of the newly created "crisis management team," immediately tried to block the Red Guards by citing the familiar reasons that Li Xiu iterated at the meeting two days before and that they had now learned by heart, "the Confucius Mansion is state property and a state-protected cultural unit." Pointing at the State Council protection stele, Wang Huatian stated emphatically, "The State Council protection stele is right there. Take a close look at it. Whoever engages in destructive acts will be breaking the law of the land!"³⁶

Unable to challenge the authority of the State Council under Zhou Enlai, the local Red Guards took out their frustration on Wang Huatian. Calling him a watchdog of Confucius, the Red Guards began to rough Wang up when dozens of mansion workers suddenly emerged from the Confucius Mansion and confronted the Red Guards. "Chairman Mao did not say the Confucius Mansion is Four Olds," they told the students bluntly. "All we know is this mansion is the work of generations of our forefathers. If you want to smash it, show us government papers!"³⁷ Unable to respond, the students had to abandon their attempt. But they were frustrated. Chairman Mao said "to rebel is justified," but they did not know how to overcome the two overwhelming barriers to their rebellion: the protection steles and mansion workers with far superior proletarian credentials.

³⁶ KFDJN, 23-24.

³⁷ Ibid., 24.

Just as the fire in the backyard was temporarily contained, the threat from the outside Red Guards returned. On the evening of August 25, the much-feared Tai'an Red Guards finally appeared in Qufu. Upon arrival, they networked with the Qufu Hydraulic Academy students and worked on their plan to storm the Three Kong Sites the following morning. Deputy County Party Secretary Zhang Yumei found out their plan and went to meet them in hopes of persuading them to give up their plan, but to no avail.³⁸ The assault by Tai'an students had now become a matter of time.

August 26 was an eventful day in Qufu's history. Early that morning, Li Xiu gathered party secretaries from all brigades in the Chenguan Commune for another "pre-battle" talk.³⁹ He compared students' attempts to storm the Confucius Mansion to the 1956 Hungarian Revolt and called on peasants to unite to protect state properties. Li's urgent meeting was not just a knee-jerk reaction. As the meeting was going on, Red Guards from QTC who were rebuffed the day before were out on the Qufu streets again posting banners attacking the two "watchdogs of Confucius" Wang and Cui, who blocked their attempts to rebel against the Kong sites the day before.

As soon as the meeting was over, members of Red Rebels—Qufu's first peasant Red Guards organization under the leadership of Nanguan Brigade Party Secretary Zhang Fuhai—immediately set out to stand guard at the Confucius Mansion and began patrolling the city.⁴⁰ Using peasants was a calculated move on the part of the Qufu officials. They had all the security personnel they needed to guard the Kong sites, but

³⁸ XBHZL, 11365.

³⁹ Chenguan Commune is closest to the city of Qufu.

⁴⁰ The term "Red Guards" initially referred to rebellious students but it eventually became a political label for various mass organizations that sprang up and participated in the Cultural Revolution, such as workers Red Guards and peasant Red Guards. Members of this peasant Red Guard organization were mostly militiamen and Communist Youth League members, which was quite common for peasant Red Guard organizations in early Cultural Revolution.

they chose to let the peasants handle the Red Guards as they knew only the politically correct peasants had the necessary credentials to handle the students backed by the Great Leader.

On the afternoon of August 26, twenty-nine Tai'an students finally marched to the now well-guarded Confucius Mansion. As they began to read the Sixteen Articles, a ritual practice in those days, to justify their demands, scores of peasant Red Guards led by Zhang Fuhai rushed to the Confucius Mansion to handle the intruders. A brief scuffle between the peasants and students ensued, but the greatly outnumbered Tai'an students were quickly out-muscled by the peasants before they even had a chance to make their arguments. Instead, they were called "hooligans" and "fake Red Guards" by the peasants.⁴¹ In the face of the overwhelming power of the Qufu party apparatus and the peasants under its control, the much-feared assault on the Confucius Mansion by the Tai'an students simply fizzled out. The party-peasant alliance proved to be an effective model for fending off marauding Red Guards.

The scuffle outside the Confucius Mansion became the talk of the town immediately. That evening, crowds of townspeople began to congregate around the Confucius Mansion and discussed the day's events when they witnessed yet another Red Guard attempt to clear the hurdle to an assault on the Kong sites. At about 8 p.m., about a dozen Red Guards from QTC showed up before the Confucius Mansion and specifically demanded to see Qufu's party boss Li Xiu. The students had learned the lesson of their fellow Red Guards from Tai'an and decided to avoid any direct confrontation with the peasants or workers. Instead, they went after the peasants' backers, namely, the

⁴¹ XBHZL 11365.

politically inferior and vulnerable local party leaders. It was a savvy strategic move in theory, but it did not even stand a chance in practice.

As soon as the students demanded to meet Li Xiu, Zhang Fuhai, the party secretary-turned leader of the recently formed peasant Red Guards, tried a stalling tactic by asking the students to come back the next day while sending for reinforcements at the same time. The students refused to leave. The situation quickly deteriorated, but Zhang's reinforcements arrived at the right moment. They were peasants from other brigades of the nearby Chenguan Commune led by their respective party secretaries. Meanwhile, enraged townspeople began to swarm towards the Confucius Mansion to show support for the defenders of the Kong sites. To make the situation even more explosive, over 100 Red Guard reinforcements from QTC also arrived to support their fellow Red Guards. Immediately, the short Donghuamen Street on which the Confucius Mansion was situated was packed with partisans from both sides.⁴²

Chaos ensued. The two camps, one the Red Guards from QTC and the other the peasants, militia, and residents, got into heated arguments. With all the shouting, screaming and pushing around, the situation began to spiral out of control. A team of PLA soldiers suddenly appeared out of nowhere to separate the two sides but they soon lost control of the situation too. Before long, what happened in the afternoon repeated itself: The attackers were hopelessly outnumbered by the defenders, who strong-armed their opponents into small groups and then pushed them around and roughed them up. Some female students even had their clothes torn off and were heard screaming.⁴³

⁴² KFDJN, 26.

⁴³ KFDJN, 27.

Faced with adversaries with sounder revolutionary pedigree and greater physical strength, the students quickly retreated. But even fleeing became a struggle for some students as they continued to be harassed and beaten. Some were even pushed into the Confucius Mansion and roughed up inside it. What started as a daring challenge to the county party leadership for their protection of the Kong sites ended as a fiasco for the attackers. The confrontation became so lopsided in favor of the defenders that a vice president of QTC sympathetic to the Red Guards called the behind-the-scene county officials and threatened them with grave consequences unless they ordered the peasants to free the students immediately. It was a credible threat. The county officials summoned the peasant leaders and ordered the immediate release of the students, but it was not until three o'clock the next morning when the crestfallen students managed to return to the QTC campus.⁴⁴

Preventing Future Attacks

Although the Qufu government prevailed over some loosely connected Red Guard organizations, the county officials knew only too well that their success was attributable to the fact that they had support from or control of local students, peasants, townspeople and the military as well as the backing of the party establishment and the State Council. While the Red Guards' defeat was practically a foregone conclusion, the county officials also knew that it was Red Guards that they defeated, not the traditional class enemies. They realized their victory might be temporary and proceeded to take preventative measures to avert possible future assaults.

⁴⁴ KFDJN, 28.

To begin with, they reported the events of August 26 to the Ministry of Culture and the provincial government. They were relieved to learn that, while all the commotion was going on on August 26, some students from the First Middle School of Qufu actually telephoned the State Council and were told that cultural relics must be protected and not willfully vandalized. The students posted the State Council's instructions all over the town to prove the righteousness of Qufu's responses to the Red Guard attacks.⁴⁵

Another piece of encouraging news came on September 3 when local officials learned from a QTC Red Guard leaflet that, also on August 26, five QTC students actually had a dialogue in Beijing with some officials of the Bureau of Cultural Relics under the Ministry of Culture about how to handle cultural relics in the Cultural Revolution. The outcome of this meeting also confirmed the appropriateness of the way Qufu officials handled the crisis. The State Council made it clear that cultural relic sites should be closed off, rather than destroyed, and the handling of the Palace Museum in Beijing served as a good model for other cultural relic sites.⁴⁶ There seemed little doubt now that the State Council disapproved of any vandalism or destruction targeting the Three Kong Sites.

As if to confirm and reinforce this message, the State Council asked the Qufu government to send an official and a student representative with party membership to attend a special meeting in Beijing to discuss the issue of how to properly handle the Three Kong Sites. On September 5, Qufu County Commissioner Gao Keming went to Beijing with QTC Red Guard Wang Zhengxin to attend this meeting but, Wang, who was not a party member, was replaced by a QTC student who was. Gao and the student were

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ The Palace Museum was closed as soon as the campaign against the Four Olds started per Zhou Enlai's instruction. See Macfarquhar and Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, 118.

to have a three-party meeting with an official in the Ministry of Culture. However, before the meeting, this official had a one-on-one meeting with Gao without the knowledge of the student. Gao updated the official on the events of August 26, and the two discussed ways to handle the student representative at the meeting.⁴⁷ This process was not unlike what happened in 1946 when the new government negotiated conditions and tactics with the administrators of the Confucius Mansion behind the backs of the peasants before the massive peasant rally against the Confucius Mansion took place.

The subsequent three-party meeting began with the student representative accusing the Qufu government of protecting the Four Olds and suppressing the student movement and Commissioner Gao defending the county government's response. At this point, the official from the Ministry of Culture stopped their wrangling and helped them reach an agreement. It stipulated that there was going to be incremental reform of the Three Kong Sites based on a 1965 blueprint of the Qufu government for the reform of those sites. No physical destruction would be involved in the process, but the Three Kong Sites would eventually be open to the public and serve a "class education" purpose. Gao and the student representative both agreed that this reform would commence after the fall harvest.⁴⁸

Although as a result of this meeting the immediate threat to the Three Kong Sites was removed, Qufu officials felt it was important to make a public statement that they wanted to protect the Three Kong Sites for a sound political reason but that they were by no means opposed to destroying "legitimate Four Olds" per se. To prove this, they

⁴⁷ KFDJN, 30-31.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

launched a second round of the campaign against the Four Olds in Qufu in early September.

The second round of the campaign had a few distinctive characteristics of its own. First, it happened at a time when the nationwide Destroy the Four Olds frenzy that flared up in “Red August” had already significantly waned. Second, it was carried out in the entire culturally rich county of Qufu rather than just the city proper, as was the case in the first round in late August. Third, it was a top-down operation completely initiated, planned, and implemented by the Qufu government as all the personnel in the county apparatus, from militia to members of the Communist Youth League were involved. By contrast, the nationwide campaign against the Four Olds was almost unanimously a “spontaneous” bottom-up mass movement with very limited, if any, direct involvement on the part of the local government. Fourth, it happened at a busy season in rural China, and the Central Committee had issued a circular around the same time that specified that the campaign against the Four Olds in rural China should be conducted only during the non-peak time.⁴⁹

In this second round, all the “Four Olds” in the possession of either the “class enemies” or the poor peasants were fair games. Other than the Three Kong Sites and the Temples to Duke Zhou and Yan Hui that were marked as off limits, countless other cultural and historical relics in Qufu were methodically identified and physically destroyed. The Qufu government even created a special incentive whereby whoever pulled down any historical or cultural relics got to keep any reusable materials from

⁴⁹ “Zhongguo gong chang dang zhong yang wei yun hui guan yu xian yi xia nong chang wen hua da geming de guiding ji fujian” [CCP Central Committee’s decision and related documents concerning how to conduct the Cultural Revolution in rural areas under the country level] (September 14, 1966), in ZWDGW.

them, such as stones and bricks.⁵⁰ Soon, house by house, village by village, and community by community, a significant part of what made the millenniums-old Qufu one of the preeminent world culture centers was systematically dismantled for the first time in history—not by any wartime intruders or natural disasters, but by its own people in peacetime. Qufu was in mourning, but there was still some consolation to be had in this state-initiated self-destruction campaign: the Three Kong Sites and the Temples to the Duke of Zhou and Yan Hui remained standing, erect and intact.

Despite all that had been said, done, and agreed upon, Qufu officials still felt the Three Kong Sites were not out of the woods yet. This was because the mind-boggling Cultural Revolution was still evolving at a head-spinning pace and traveling Red Guards would still stop by and ask about why the Kong sites were left untouched. By late September as the personality cult of Mao and the revolutionary fanaticism reached another all-time high, an opportunity suddenly presented itself to Qufu officials. A Red Guard organization at the Beijing Institute of Aeronautics invented a new fad whereby they attempted to turn China into a “Red Sea” by painting bright red revolution slogans and images “on all available space” including doors, houses, and even toilet walls.⁵¹ This new fad soon spread near and far, turning the country into a “red sea.”

The Qufu Cultural Relics Commission also exploited this upsurge of zealotry to conceal some valuable items and statues in the Confucius Mansion and Temple with revolutionary slogans and Mao’s quotations in hopes of discouraging attempts to damage the items behind or beneath the slogans. They covered the stone lions at the front gate of the Confucius Mansion with Mao’s quotations “We must believe in the masses; we must

⁵⁰ Ibid., 32-34.

⁵¹ Yan Jiaqi & Gao Gao, *Turbulent Decade*, 89-90.

believe in the Party. These are two fundamental principles.” The county leaders were so proud of this innovative idea that they went one step further by relocating the entire Qufu County Agricultural Exhibition from a nearby location to the Hall of Great Perfection in the Confucius Temple. They tried to cover the statue of Confucius, the four correlates and the twelve philosophers with various decorative pictures and exhibits.⁵² Similar “cover-up” practices were also widely adopted all over the country. They became so successful that eventually the CCRG banned this “devious” practice of painting everything red and Zhou Enlai also described it as a “deliberate attempt to boycott big-character posters.”⁵³

By the end of September and in early October, the Destroy the Four Olds frenzy had already peaked and the Qufu officials had every reason to congratulate themselves for having accomplished a tour-de-force in protecting their cultural assets. After all, they were guarding the “root of all Four Olds” which had been targets for relentless and continuous attacks by Red Guards of all colors and shades. Compared with other prominent historical sites, Qufu did especially well. Other than the Palace Museum that was closed off and then guarded by the military allegedly at the order of Zhou Enlai, all other sites were attacked by teenaged Red Guards across the country. Wherever Red Guards attacked, there was often spontaneous or organized resistance to the attacks by local officials, residents, and oftentimes college students, but most defensive measures were unsuccessful. This was why Qufu officials and community stood out so remarkably. They soundly beat back every attempt at the Three Kong Sites. The only time any Red Guards were in the Confucius Mansion was when they were pulled in and beaten by the defenders on August 26.

⁵² XBHZL, 11347, 11350, 11383,

⁵³ “Zhou Enlai Dui Beijing Jianggong Xueyuan “Bayi Zhandoutuan” de jianghua” [Zhou Enlai’s remarks to the “August 1 Battalion] (January 7, 1967), in ZWDGW.

By early October, Qufu officials were finally able to put the safety of the Three Kong Sites aside for a while and began to busy themselves with the “grasp revolution and promote production” campaign and the preparation of the fall harvest and planting. They could tackle the reform of the Three Kong Sites later, or so they thought. Little did they know, however, that another storm was already brewing in the nation’s capital—one that was soon going to engulf Qufu with earth-shattering consequences.

Conspiracy in Beijing

Qufu officials’ sense of security stood in sharp contrast with the rapid development of the Cultural Revolution at the nation’s capital. Having failed to dislodge Liu Shaoqi and win over the party establishment under him, Mao launched the campaign against the bourgeois reactionary line in early October, 1966.⁵⁴ On October 3, a *Red Flag* editorial titled “March Forward along the Broad Road of Mao Zedong Thought” fired the first salvo of the nationwide campaign to criticize the “bourgeois reactionary line,” namely, Liu and the entire party establishment under him that resisted Mao’s Cultural Revolution. On October 6, the “Red Third Command Post,” a coalition of college Red Guard organizations in Beijing, held a mass rally of over 100,000 people to denounce the bourgeois reactionary line and its representatives Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. From October 9 through October 28, Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping repudiated themselves at the Central Work Conference.⁵⁵ The fall of Liu and the old party establishment was followed by the rise of several political upstarts. Chief among them were the CCRG and

⁵⁴ The campaign against the bourgeois reactionary line was launched by Mao in late 1966 to purge the party establishment and incumbent bureaucracy. It was synonymous with Mao’s effort to remove his former comrades from the party and the government who were supposed to have followed “bourgeois and reactionary” policies and practices. The eventual outcome of the campaign was the removal of the old government and the establishment in 1969 of a government loyal to Mao.

⁵⁵ Guo Jian, et al., *Historical Dictionary of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, xxi-xxii.

the pro-CCRG college Red Guards. Two individuals from each group were going to collaborate and plunge Qufu into another round of confusion, disorder, and chaos.

On the afternoon of October 25, Tan Houlan went to see Lin Jie. Tan was the head of the Jinggangshan Regiment, a Red Guards organization at the Beijing Normal University. Lin was Tan's mentor and an editor at the *Red Flag*, an official party theoretical journal. Earlier that month, Tan's organization stormed the Da Qing Exhibition in Beijing at Lin Jie's suggestion in an attempt to discredit Liu's officials Yu Qiuli and Tao Lujia. That afternoon, Tan went to Lin's place to give him a progress report on a project that Lin proposed earlier. Lin wanted the Jinggangshan Regiment to "take the Cultural Revolution to the Da Qing Oilfield" in Northeast China as a follow-up operation of their earlier attack on the Da Qing Exhibition. Tan had already made concrete plans for this trip but wanted to seek Lin's further guidance.

Tan and Lin had forged a unique partnership and fought together through thick and thin. Born in Hunan Province in 1940, Tan joined the party in 1958 and worked as a middle school teacher of political education in Hunan until she joined the BNU as a cadre-turned student.⁵⁶ Although a rather average student, Tan, due to her sound political background, was "loaned" to the *Red Flag* at the end of 1965 when she was a graduating senior. Tan's job was to assist Lin Jie, an influential and well-connected editor at the publication, with research for his attack articles on the Beijing party establishment and cultural circles, most notably the "Three Family Village." This chance meeting between Tan and Lin was a life-changing event that was going to transform Tan the ordinary student into Tan the Red Guard leader extraordinaire. At the *Red Flag*, Tan not only

⁵⁶ Michael Schoenhals, *China's Cultural Revolution, 1966-1969: Not a Dinner Party* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1966), 150, 381; Guo Jian, et al., *Historical Dictionary of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 273-274.

gained access to a great deal of inside information but also became acquainted with nearly all the leaders of the CCRG who happened to be associated with this influential journal, such as its editor-in-chief Chen Boda, deputy editor-in-chief Guan Feng, and Qi Benyu, the head of the journal's history group.⁵⁷

But it was Lin Jie who exerted the most influence on Tan. Lin and Tan had much in common. Both were party members before they became teachers and both were cadre-turned students at BNU. After he graduated from BNU in 1961, Lin landed a job at CCP's mouthpiece *Red Flag* as a writer in the philosophy and history group under its chief Guan Feng whose worldviews and modus operandi exerted significant influence on the younger Lin. He soon proved to be a worthy follower of Guan, with his first major essay attacking Confucius and his second targeting Confucian scholar Feng Youlan. Before long, he joined the ranks of prominent leftist writers, such as Yao Wenyuan and Qi Benyu, and endeared himself to top CCRG members Kang Sheng, Chen Boda, and eventually even to Mao himself.⁵⁸

Lin and Tan were eight years apart, but they formed a mutually beneficial relationship. Although Lin was technically not a member of the CCRG, he was nonetheless closely connected with some ultra-radical members of the CCRG, such as Qi Benyu and Guan Feng, and had a reputation for being the voice for the CCRG. Oftentimes, Red Guards would sound out Lin Jie first before deciding if a high-profile project would be worth the effort and risk.⁵⁹ Lin's wife Wang Naiying, a senior staff member at the *Red Flag*, who also happened to attend CCRG meetings regularly, was

⁵⁷ KFDJN, 39-43.

⁵⁸ Guo Jiang et al., *Historical Dictionary of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 154-56.

⁵⁹ Zhao Jianwen, "Wo bi po Lin Jie zhi zhao jia sheng ming" [I forced Lin Jie to make a false statement], *Bai Nian Chao* 10, (2000), 44-46

privity to a great many confidential CCRG discussions and decisions.⁶⁰ Consequently, she was able to keep her husband abreast of the goings-on at the CCRG and enabled him to have the “information advantage.” Through Lin and her own exposure to the day-to-day activities at *Red Flag*, Tan gained insider’s knowledge on the latest developments in the Cultural Revolution. This proved to be critical for Tan’s eventual rise to stardom. Lin, on the other hand, used Tan as a means to increase his revolutionary credentials as well as his eyes, ears, and, at times, fists.

The two put their partnership to work at every opportunity. As soon as the *People’s Daily* published Nie Yuanzi’s big-character poster on June 2, for instance, Tan returned to the BNU on June 3 to post her own even more radical big-character poster attacking the BNU party chief. BNU people began to wonder who this daredevil Tan Houlan was and many more wanted to debate with this “anti-party student.” But Tan was nowhere to be found as she had already returned to *Red Flag* as soon as she “set the fire” at the BNU. It was not until two days later on June 5 when the *People’s Daily* carried an editorial supporting attacks on party authorities on campuses did people begin to realize that Tan was ahead of them and toeing the CCRG line.⁶¹

Despite isolation from her fellow students and persecution from the work group for her June 3 poster, Tan became even better known just two weeks later. On June 20, Tan Houlan and sixteen other BNU students put out a big-character poster attacking Sun Youyu, head of the BNU work group. Sun dismissed their criticisms and labeled the

⁶⁰ Macfarquhar and Schoenhals, *Mao’s Last Revolution*, 101,

⁶¹ Pu Shouzhang, “Zai Beishida de banian” [Eight years at the Beijing Normal University], (4 May, 2009) <http://blog.rednet.cn/user1/710609/archives/2009/247330.html> (accessed 8 January, 2011)

students “counterrevolutionaries” and “cow demons and snake spirits.”⁶² Many students collapsed under the pressure. They repented or committed suicide, but Tan refused to be subdued; her contact with Lin assured her that she was on the side of the winning team despite temporary setbacks.

Tan’s gamble paid off when her problems began to be her political asset. With Lin Jie’s intervention, the CCRG came to Tan’s rescue even before the “Fifty Days of White Terror” was over.⁶³ As early as July 10 when the “anti-interference campaign” that Liu launched to crack down on rebellious students was still raging on campuses, the new mayor of Beijing Wu De was already at the BNU where he fired the work group and publicly vindicated Tan.⁶⁴ On July 12, Cao Yiou, wife of CCRG key member Kang Sheng, came to the BNU on behalf of the CCRG to investigate the work group’s persecution of Tan. On July 16, Sun Youyu was officially relieved of his duty as head of the BNU work group.

Tan was victorious and her popularity continued to rise, especially after Mao’s return to Beijing on July 18 to “personally lead the Cultural Revolution.” On July 27, key members of CCRG Jiang Qing, Kang Sheng, and Chen Boda attended a BNU rally. Each spoke in support of the persecuted students. Kang Sheng specifically accused the BNU work group of trying to use Tan to “target comrade Lin Jie, a leftist from the *Red Flag*.” He went so far as to publicly proclaim that Lin Jie was supported by Guan Feng, who was in turn supported by Chen Boda and himself, practically acknowledging Tan

⁶² Tan Houlan, “Xiang zhongguo xiuzhengzhuyi de hai shiling Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping menglie kaihuo” [vehemently shooting at the black commanders of revisionism in China Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping] (December 27, 1966), in ZWDGW.

⁶³ Mao created this expression which refers to the days between June 1 and July 20 of 1966 during which period Mao was away from Beijing and Liu was the primary decision maker and dispatched work groups. Mao later referred to the policies carried out during that time frame “bourgeois reactionary line.”

⁶⁴ “Wu De zhai Beijing shi fan da xue de jianghua” [Wu De’s remarks at the Beijing Normal University] (July 10, 1966), in ZWDGW.

was doing the job for the CCRG. Kang Sheng then introduced Lin Jie to the rally as a BNU alumnus and a CCRG-trusted member.⁶⁵ As a result, Tan's political capital rose sharply again. But good tidings kept coming for her. On July 29, Tan attended a rally for Cultural Revolution activists at the People's Hall and was received by Mao. With her "correct" political position publicly recognized, Tan's fame was guaranteed.⁶⁶

After the 11th Plenum of the Eighth Party Congress in early August and following Mao's August 5 "Bombarding the Headquarters" in support of the students as well as the release of the Sixteen Articles on August 8, Tan's popularity soared. On August 23, she formed her own organization Jinggangshan Regiment, served as its commissar, and became a prominent student leader. She became so well known that even Mao affectionately called her "an empress" and "a tough woman."⁶⁷

After Tan became rehabilitated and a magnet to her former BNU opponents, she continued her alliance with Lin, except her work now was made easier since she had an organization at her disposal. In a race for radicalism, Tan plunged herself into taking out one CCRG target after another, including the aforementioned Da Qing Exhibition. Despite all these special operations, Tan still paled in comparison with her fellow, more charismatic student leaders, each of whom had a special badge of honor, whether it was Nie Yuanzi's first big-character poster, Kuai Dafu's hunger strike, Han Aijing's famous sit-in, or Wang Dabing's four trips to the Ministry of Geology."⁶⁸ One of Tan's former

⁶⁵ "Kang Sheng, Jiang Qing, Chen Boda zai Beijing shifan daxue de jianghua" [Remarks by Kang Sheng, Jiang Qing, and Chen Boda at Beijing Normal University] (July 7, 1967), in ZWDGW;

⁶⁶ KFDJN, 40; Pu Shouzhang, "Eight Years at the Beijing Normal University."

⁶⁷ "Mao Zedong zhao jiang shoudu hong dai hui "wuda lingxiu" de tanhua" [Mao Zedong's remarks at his meeting with the five student leaders of the Capital Red Guard Congress] (July 28, 1967), in ZWDGW.

⁶⁸ Wen Lequn and Hai Ruiting, *Wen hua da geming zhong the ming ren zhi sheng* [The rise of prominent individuals during the Cultural Revolution], (Beijing: Zhong yang min zu xue yuan chu ban she, 1993), 40.

fellow Red Guards referred to her as “the least impressive of all five student leaders.”⁶⁹ To make matters worse, towards the end of October, an internal split within the Jingtangshan Regiment emerged with some members accusing Tan’s faction of being “old men” (*laotouzi*) and too “measured (*wen*).”⁷⁰ Tan badly needed her own legendary experience to boost her public profile and quell the emerging internal revolt.

While the “chili girl” from Mao’s hometown of Xiangtang County was determined to find a public relations success, the pool of targets was running low towards the end of October. With so many college Red Guard organizations in Beijing, there was a kind of “Enclosure Movement” where college Red Guard organizations were racing against one another to see who could hit new and big targets first so as to earn their bragging rights. Marshall Peng Dehuai had two teams of Red Guards competing with each other to bring him from Sichuan to Beijing to be harassed and persecuted.⁷¹ Tan did storm the Da Qing Exhibition, but it did not create enough publicity. She badly needed something newer, bigger, and more novel.

Rallying the Troops

Suddenly, the “earth-shattering project” for which Tan had been hoping emerged. At her meeting with Lin on the afternoon of October 25, when she was to update him on her organization’s preparatory work for the trip to the Da Qing Oilfield, Lin asked her if she was personally interested in participating in the Great Exchanges of Revolutionary Experience. Tan responded almost by reflex with an enthusiastic “Of course!” Pleased with her reply, Lin continued, “I suggest a place, a good place. It is Confucius’s

⁶⁹ KFDJN, 42.

⁷⁰ KFDJN, 295-296.

⁷¹ Xin, Ziling, *Hong tai yang de yun luo: qian qiu gong zui Mao Zedong* [The fall of the red sun: the merits and demerits of Mao Zedong], (Xianggang : Shu zuo fang, 2007), 508-509.

hometown in Qufu, Shandong. Go there and rebel against Confucius.” Lin went on to explain the significance of the proposed Qufu expedition—to finish the unfinished job left from the May Fourth Movement and to attack the Confucian Family Shop which was the root of Four Olds. The tasks, Lin stressed, “have now fallen on the shoulders of the Red Guards who should take the lead in completing the unfinished work left by those with historical limitations.” Lin asked Tan to go back to the BNU to “fan some flames” and find out if her organization had any interest in going to Qufu.⁷² Tan was overjoyed to be trusted with this high-sounding, promising project where she could combine completing the unfinished work of the May Fourth Movement with eradicating the root of the Four Olds. It was a defining moment for her as a Red Guard leader. Tan’s ego “simply exploded” upon hearing Lin’s suggestion.⁷³ She hopped on her bike and rushed back to the BNU to share the great news with her fellow Red Guards and “fan some flames.”

Lin was pleased with Tan’s reaction. The mission ahead was actually far more complex and challenging than Lin was ready to admit to Tan at this initial meeting. He revealed enough to get Tan excited. Tan bit on the enticing bait immediately, but this skillful agitator chose to walk carefully this time. A successful expedition to Qufu was as much Tan’s ticket to glory and fame as it was his, but Lin was keenly aware that this particular path was paved with potholes and roadblocks. One wrong move and he could jeopardize his own political career. But it was too tempting an opportunity for him not to give it a try.

⁷² KFDJN, 45-6

⁷³ KFDJN, 60.

Lin had been studying the political benefit and feasibility of this project for quite some time. As one who made his first pot of “political gold” attacking Confucius in the early 1960s, he was intimately familiar with the political sensitivity of the debate surrounding the role of Confucianism in the PRC. He knew his mentor Guan Feng was snubbed at the 1962 Confucius Forum. He also knew that on July 30, Mao’s wife Jiang Qing, the de facto chief of the CCRG, publicly denounced the 1962 Forum at the Chinese Science Academy, calling it a “pilgrimage conference [to Confucius]” and connecting it to the pro-regime [Liu] conservative intellectuals.” He further knew Chen Boda on September 16 also made a public speech at a mass rally in which he repeated Jiang Qing’s characterization of the 1962 Forum.⁷⁴ On October 23, Lin met Zhao Yiming at Guan Feng’s home. Zhao was a teacher from Qufu’s QTC and a mutual friend of Lin and Guan as he joined Guan in the 1962 Confucius Forum and worked with Lin at the *Red Flag* in early 1966 in their attacks on the Beijing cultural circles. At this meeting, Zhao briefed Lin and Guan on the Red Guard debacles in Qufu on August 26.⁷⁵

Lin was intrigued by this information and his acute political sensitivity helped him recognize an opportunity of a lifetime. He realized that a Red Guard expedition to Qufu could be a stone that could kill multiple birds. First, it would hit Qufu’s Three Kong Sites or “the root of all Four Olds” for the first time. Second, it would further damage the reputations of old “black gang” members of Zhou Yang and Wu Han, who backed the 1962 Confucius Forum.⁷⁶ Third, it would further diminish the status of the fast-falling Liu Shaoqi, who borrowed Confucian notions of cultivation in his signature book on how to

⁷⁴ “Chen Boda zai zhong ke yuan de jiang hua” [Chen Boda’s remarks at the Chinese Science Academy] (September 16, 1966), in ZWDGW

⁷⁵ KFDJN, 67.

⁷⁶ “Black gang” was a pejorative term for denounced academics and party officials.

be a good communist. Fourth, it would undermine the authority of Liu's party base in both Shandong Province and Qufu. And last, but not least, it would challenge the authority of the State Council—its stone steles were a major cause of Red Guards' humiliating defeat on August 26 and its chief Zhou Enlai had been a persistent but hard-to-remove barrier to the CCRG's radical political agenda. A Red Guards expedition to Qufu in the name of the campaign against the Four Olds could potentially hit CCRG's old, current, and potential targets all at once.

Operationally, the politically shrewd Lin also recognized two factors that would contribute to the success of the expedition. First, Lin was no longer just a theorist and an armchair general but someone with a real organization at his disposal, namely, Tan Houlan's Jinggangshan Regiment that had been hitting Lin's targets at the snap of his fingers. Second, the political circumstance was ideal for the expedition—the Work Conference of the Party Central had just ousted Liu Shaoqi, and the CCRG became the only correct and legitimate voice from the top. Neither Shandong provincial nor Qufu local governments were likely to effectively resist the Red Guards this time because the Qufu-bound Red Guards would have the full support of the CCRG, which in turn would have the full support of Chairman Mao. Of course, there was another apparent motive for Lin's interest in the Qufu expedition: this pet project of his would further endear him to both CCRG top leaders Jiang Qing and Chen Boda and boost his own status in Mao's inner circle. In short, notwithstanding some possible political risks, the benefits of the Qufu expedition seemed limitless and the political circumstances for it couldn't have been more favorable.

Lin was totally convinced of the merit of his bold ideas, but he knew he needed the endorsement and blessing of his superiors to ensure the smooth operation of the expedition. Consequently, he consulted with his mentor Guan Feng. However, Guan was not supportive because he felt Tan's organization, with a membership of 500 from a campus of 5,000 students, was too small for this major operation. "They had barely gained their foothold at the BNU," Guan recalled in 1991, "What business did they have going to Qufu?"⁷⁷ Lin also consulted Qi Benyu, an influential member of the CCRG who was at that time also serving as Mao's personal secretary. Qi lent his full support to Lin and the idea was approved.⁷⁸ Having weighed all the pros and cons and secured necessary support from the top, Lin proceeded to implement his audacious and creative project.

Lin's initial conversation with Tan proved to be a good start. Upon her return from Lin's place on the evening of October 25, Tan convened a meeting of the leaders of the Jinggangshan Regiment where she relayed Lin's proposal and her own thoughts on the proposal. As expected, Lin's lofty ideas associated with the Qufu expedition resonated well with the key members of her organization. They were not only mesmerized by the political significance of the expedition, but they also knew that, from a practical standpoint, Lin was a voice for the CCRG and therefore a safe person to follow. A decision was soon made to broadcast the expedition through the BNU campus public announcement system to recruit people immediately in order to have enough participants since so many people were involved with the Great Exchanges of

⁷⁷ KFDJN, 205. Guan Feng also claimed that he disapproved of Lin Jie's involvement with the planning of the Qufu expedition as well and blamed the Qufu trip entirely on Qi Benyu. It is not clear if Guan's disapproval was based on his concern about operational effectiveness or on his personal views on the appropriateness of the proposed physical assaults on Qufu with which he became very familiar personally.

⁷⁸ In 1983 when Qi Benyu was on trial for his role in the Cultural Revolution, he accepted the charge he instructed Lin Jie to send Tan Houlan to go to Qufu, although he also blamed Chen Boda for the leveling of Confucius's tomb. See Editorial Group of "Trial by History," *Trial by History* (Beijing: Qun zhong chu ban she: 1981), 9-28; KFDJN, 205

Revolutionary Experience away from the capital city. Over 200 people signed up as soon as the word got out on the BNU campus.⁷⁹

Having successfully “fanned some flames” and attracted sufficient people to the expedition, Tan returned to Lin’s place to update him on her progress and told Lin that her organization would be ready for the Qufu expedition shortly. Lin was pleased to see the enthusiastic response to his proposal but, as Tan’s mentor, he also realized this was a teachable moment. He calmed her and educated the politically naïve Tan about the complexity of the Qufu expedition. “Are you going to rebel against just Confucius?” Lin asked rhetorically and then continued, “Confucius has been dead for over 2,000 years and you are still going to rise against him. Before you go to Shandong, you need to figure out the practical significance of your mission first.”⁸⁰ For a moment, Tan could not decipher what her mentor was getting at and looked perplexed. Lin expected this and proceeded to give her a quick overview of the real purposes and challenges of the Qufu expedition. He began by showing Tan Chen Boda’s September 16 speech on the 1962 Confucius Forum and gave her an overview of the Three Kong Sites as Tan knew practically nothing about Qufu and Confucianism. He then proceeded to cover all the important and sensitive aspects of the expedition that he made no mention of in his initial conversation with Tan, including the 1962 Confucius Forum, the Red Guards’ humiliating defeats on August 26, and how and why State Council’s protection steles contributed to their defeat.

Lin elaborated on the last point. He pointed out the fact that both the 1961 State Council steles and the 1962 Forum had the blessings and fingerprints of Premier Zhou although ostensibly they were the projects overseen by Zhou’s subordinates Zhou Yang

⁷⁹ KFDJN 46-47

⁸⁰ KFDJN, 48.

and Lu Dingyi (Vice Premier of the State Council). Lin went on to reveal the most important objective of his proposal: “Your trip to Qufu is more than just targeting the dead. You must connect the dead with the living and Confucianism with the current class struggle and line struggle.” Lin then posed a surprising question to the now perplexed and startled Tan, “If you targeted the Confucius Family Shop, would the premier not intervene? What are you going to do if he did?”⁸¹ He urged Tan to recognize the challenges and be prepared both organizationally and ideologically but cautioned her against any rash action, “This is not the time yet when you can point your fingers directly at the premier.” Tan had followed Lin for a while now and completed a few daring acts Lin assigned her, but she never thought Zhou Enlai was on the other side and could be a fair target too. She asked Lin, “Does this mean the premier has been a member of the black line too?” Lin replied, “It does, doesn’t it? You can figure it out for yourself.”⁸²

Having confided in Tan the more important reasons for the Qufu expedition, Lin proceeded to guide her on how to best approach it. “Before you go to Shandong,” Lin suggested, “you should prepare a few documents. One is a declaration of war on Confucius; one is a declaration to smash the protection steles; and one is a letter to the people of Shandong.” Lin was fully aware of the causes of the August 26 debacles and his three steps would help address each of those causes. The declaration of war on Confucius would provide the ideological legitimation for the expedition; the declaration to smash the steles would help remove both the operational obstacles and the ultimate barrier to attacks on the Three Kong Sites; the letter to the people of Shandong would drive a wedge between the local authorities and their support base, namely, peasants,

⁸¹ KFDJN, 47-49.

⁸² KFDJN, 49

townspeople, and conservative students, who thwarted Red Guards attempts in August. To ease any concern Tan might have once they arrived in Qufu, Lin also assured Tan of local support from his friend Zhao Yimin at QTC. He then instructed Tan to work out a concrete plan with her fellow Red Guards.

Tan returned to the BNU and gave her fellow Red Guards a watered-down version of what Lin just shared with her. Using the language familiar to her comrades, she educated them about how the supporters and protectors of the Three Kong Sites were actually the pro-Liu Royalists (*baohuangdang*), such as the State Council and reactionary academic authorities. She elevated the purpose of the expedition from “combining Destroying the Four Olds with completing the unfinished work of the May Fourth Movement” to “combining the campaign against the Four Olds with the campaign against the bourgeois reactionary line.” At a time when the bourgeois reactionary line was practically the strongest curse word everywhere in China, nothing could have been more exciting and motivating for the Red Guards than combining two grand missions of the Cultural Revolution into one trip. Everyone was thoroughly sold on Tan’s new justifications for the Qufu expedition. No one realized that Tan actually did not disclose what Lin Jie told her about Zhou Enlai’s role in it. It was from that point on that Tan’s purpose of the Qufu expedition took on a different meaning from that of other participants of the expedition.⁸³

Excited about the noble objectives of the expedition, Tan and her fellow Red Guards followed Lin’s instructions to produce a concrete plan for the expedition and proposed eleven actionable items. Quite a few of them were elaborations of Lin’s original

⁸³ During the “Investigation of the May 16 Counterrevolutionary Conspiratorial Clique” that began in 1970, many who went to Qufu were interrogated about the connection between the Qufu expedition and attacking Zhou Enlai. Tan readily admitted the connection but others denied any knowledge between the two.

recommendations, including forging an alliance with the local Red Guards and mobilizing the local peasantry. Some items were a radicalization of Lin's original recommendations, such as switching "A letter to the people of Shandong" to "A letter to the whole country" and Tan's suggestion to change "the declaration to smash the steles" to "a letter of protest to the State Council" to point the finger directly at the State Council. Some items were purely their own creations, including burning Confucius statues, leveling the Confucius tomb, establishing an anti-Confucius liaison station to unite all Red Guard organizations, and sending one advance team each to the Shandong and Qufu governments to secure their support for the mission of the expedition.⁸⁴

Recognizing the critical importance of support from the CCRG, Tan and her fellow Red Guards also included in the plan three items that would ensure support and guidance from the CCRG through Lin Jie during the expedition. One was the establishment of a "home office" in Beijing responsible for communication with the CCRG and Lin Jie during the expedition; one was the decision to have Lin Jie review and approve all the related documents for the expedition; the third one was to request Lin Jie to make a pre-expedition pep talk to expedition members.⁸⁵ With this long list of thoughtfully chosen items, a blueprint for the Qufu expedition was born.

Having mobilized the key members of her organization, Tan moved on to motivate all other members of Jinggangshan Regiment. On October 28, she held a meeting for the lower-level cadres of the Jinggangshan Regiment where she once again successfully excited her audience with the same rhetoric of combining the campaign against the Four Olds with the campaign against the bourgeois reactionary line. After

⁸⁴ KFDJN, 51-52.

⁸⁵ KFDJN, 52.

having Zhang Daoying, the designated head of the advance team to Qufu and a graduate of QTC, introduce Qufu to those cadres, Tan took over the floor and began to reveal a bit more of what Lin Jie told her was the true purpose of the Qufu expedition. “We are going to Qufu not just to denounce Confucius,” Tan reminded everyone, “Rather, we must combine denouncing Confucius with the practical class struggle and line struggle.” She cautioned everyone against the resistance they were going to face but asked them to rebel against anyone who dared to stop them from rebelling against the Confucius Family, “whoever he is and whatever his position, seniority, and prestige.”⁸⁶ It was code language frequently used by members of the CCRG to attack Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, and even Zhou Enlai.

Tan’s motivational skills produced impressive results. After several mobilization speeches, more people signed up for the expedition, including some junior faculty members and those who were not members of Jinggangshan Regiment. The rank-and-file Red Guards were truly motivated and wrote “resolution letters” to show their resolve. Their sincerity was reflected in the comments by Zhang Daoying, head of the advance team to Qufu, who recalled years later, “We were truly inspired by an ideal. Others used the Great Exchanges of Revolutionary Experience for pleasure trips...but we went to Qufu to dig out the root of Four Olds.”⁸⁷ Few had ever imagined that, five years later, they would all be investigated for plotting to use the expedition to attack Zhou Enlai.

No matter how impressive Tan’s motivational skills, she realized and people knew that there was no Tan Houlan without Lin Jie. Although Lin was rejected and unpopular at BNU in the earlier months of the summer for his support of Tan Houlan and

⁸⁶ Ibid., 53.

⁸⁷ KFDJN, 58.

meddling with the Cultural Revolution at BNU, the campaign against the bourgeois reactionary line changed everything. By October, Lin became an undisputed representative of the CCRG and his words were deemed authoritative. Tan knew a mobilization talk by Lin Jie to everyone would be critical to boosting the morale, confirming the legitimacy of the expedition, and affirming the endorsement of the CCRG.

Lin Jie did not let them down. On the evening of November 2, a day before the departure of the advance teams, he spoke to an enthused and enthralled audience in a packed classroom at BNU. Lin was a skilled backstage schemer and always more at home behind the curtain than before the curtain. His speech that evening was “instructive” but incoherent. Following a stream of consciousness, he rambled on disjointedly on many topics. He educated a roomful of current and future teachers who were ill-informed about the most prominent teacher in Chinese history whose home and birthplace they could not wait to assault. Lin characterized Confucius as a “running dog” for the “slave-owning class” and compared Confucius to the defenders of the bourgeois line. He asked everyone to follow the policies and protect cultural relics, but he then asked everyone to be daring enough to “storm into the Confucius Mansion” and “pee and poo right before Confucius’s statue!”⁸⁸ Despite his rambling, some critically important information can be gleaned from his meandering remarks: he defined the primary purpose of the expedition as a part of the two-line struggle;⁸⁹ he also assured everyone the Qufu expedition had his approval and, therefore, the support of the CCRG.”⁹⁰

⁸⁸ KFDJN, 54-55.

⁸⁹ Two-line struggle refers to the conflict between the “Maoist socialist line” and “capitalist revisionist line,” or simply the conflict between Mao and Liu factions.

⁹⁰ KFDJN, 54.

Although Lin's remarks were not particularly rational, there was nothing irrational about his decision not to mention the State Council during the mobilization talk, much less Zhou Enlai. It was a calculated move on Lin's part to use the Red Guards' enthusiasm about the campaign against the Four Olds and their intense hostility towards the bourgeois reactionary line to accomplish the implicit objectives of the expedition, which only members of the CCRG, himself and Tan Houlan, had in mind. Lin was an accomplished Machiavellian strategist who summarized his political strategies and tactics as "excluding ethical considerations from politics, forming cliques, and deliberately misguiding opponents into mistakes."⁹¹ As such, he played by no prescribed formal rules and had employed similar tactics many times before. He would continue to do this until he outsmarted himself and landed himself in Mao's jail just a few months later.

Moments after his talk, Lin had a brief meeting with Tan and her top lieutenants to wrap up the preparatory phase of the expedition. He commended them for their good work and complimented them on their change of the "a declaration to smash the steles" to "a protest letter to the State Council," noting once again that the steles were the "trump card" for their opposition. "If you dare to beard the lion in his den and remove this trump card," Lin assured them, "you would be setting an example for the masses."⁹² He concluded his brief remarks with a surprise gift: he would send two cameramen from the Beijing Film Studio to go with them and make a film of their activities in Qufu. "The film would be good material for an exhibition for Red Guards Accomplishments later," Lin

⁹¹ Su Shaizhi, "Shenke jiepou Mao Zedong jiqi sixiang" [carefully analyzing Mao Zedong and his ideas] (August 2011) <http://www.wangruoshui.net/jinian/sushaozhi-shuping.htm> (accessed 2 November 2011); Nie Yuanzi, *Nie Yuanzi huiyi lu* [Memoirs of Nie Yuanzi] (Hong Kong: Shidai guoji chuban youxian gongsi, 2005), 219.

⁹² KFDJN, 55-56.

assured them.⁹³ He asked them to stay in touch with him and then bid farewell to the Red Guards. He had completed his agitation and mobilization. It was now time for the Red Guards to put the blueprint into action.

The next day on November 3, the advance teams set out for Jinan and Qufu as planned. On the morning of November 7, members of the expedition team gathered in Tiananmen Square for their pledge ceremony before Chairman Mao's portrait. The pledge was a compilation of many radical slogans: "We must let Mao Zedong Thought shine all over the world! Confucianism is a barrier to the absolute authority of Mao Zedong Thought! We will defend Chairman Mao and Mao Zedong Thought to our death!"⁹⁴ The pledge consisted of nothing but stereotypical language—there was no mention of the black gang, the bourgeois reactionary line, or State Council. However, it did provide a public performance and initiated the participating Red Guards into a radical group committed to a particular ideology and mission with which they would forever be associated.

The assault on Qufu was now for all intents and purposes a matter of time. The plan was made, the clock was ticking, the advance teams had been dispatched, and a new but disastrous chapter of Qufu's history was going to be written momentarily.

Conclusion

By all accounts, it was nothing short of a miracle that the Three Kong Sites survived the height of the campaign against the Four Olds unscathed, despite the fact that they had all the quintessential identifying characteristics of the Four Olds as they consisted of China's best-known and longest-lasting lineage cemetery, feudal family

⁹³ KFDJN, 56.

⁹⁴ XBHZL, 11348.

manor, and Confucius temple. Practically all similar sites across the country fell victim to Red Guard attacks whether or not they were protected by the State Council. Indeed, there was no shortage of Red Guards attempting to assault the Three Kong Sites. Waves of them came from near and far, making local officials feel like they were playing a game—barely had one group of Red Guards been hammered down when another group had already popped up. Despite all that, Qufu authorities stood their ground and resoundingly fended off one attack after another.

Their success was attributable to many factors. For one thing, Qufu officials skillfully used the party's long established authority and bureaucratic hierarchy to mobilize the general public and organize an effective defense. For another, some local residents identified with Qufu leaders' efforts and assisted them to protect the Three Kong Sites. But the most important contributing factors to the successful defense of the Three Kong Sites were the peasant Red Guards and the State Council's protection steles. Not knowing how to deal with the peasant defenders and the steles symbolizing the authority of the State Council under their beloved premier Zhou Enlai, the ideologically driven but politically unsophisticated teenage Red Guards had to abandon their attempts and make a humiliating retreat. All these contributing factors can perhaps be characterized as the local defenders' "August advantages," so characterized because these advantages existed only during the unique circumstances of late August 1966.

The "August advantages" soon gave way to "October disadvantages," however. The game changer was the campaign against the bourgeois reactionary line that flared up in early October. This campaign greatly empowered the CCRG and radical Red Guards but severely crippled the party establishment and demoralized the party faithfuls. As a

result, most of the advantages the Qufu authorities enjoyed in August, such as the authority of local officials, local government's effectiveness in mobilizing the public, and the local population's unquestioning support of Qufu authorities, began to erode in October.

The campaign against the bourgeois reactionary line further saw the sharp rise of an important power player, Lin Jie, who recognized an opportunity in the resulting reconfiguration of the power structure and took advantage of this optimal moment to revisit the Qufu case. Through his communication with various national and regional Cultural Revolution activists, Lin realized that a new attack on the Three Kong Sites would not only improve his own revolutionary credentials but also fulfill some important ideological agendas of the CCRG to which he wholeheartedly subscribed. To begin with, the fact that the Three Kong Sites as "the root of all Four Olds" remained untouched was a symbol of defeat for the Cultural Revolutionaries and totally unacceptable, but a successful Qufu mission could resolve this situation. Besides, both leading black gang members Wu Han and Zhou Yang and the head capitalist roader Liu Shaoqi had some connections with Confucianism or Qufu and these connections needed to be explored to deliver further blows to CCRG's political opponents. Moreover, the Qufu government's successful defeat of Red Guards attacks in August was a demonstration of the power of Liu's support base in the provinces, and a Red Guard trip to Qufu could help weaken or even crush that power base. Finally, since Qufu authorities repeatedly used the State Council's protection steles to thwart Red Guard attacks, a successful Qufu expedition would undermine the authority of the State Council and its chief Zhou Enlai whose "old bureaucratic apparatus" had become a source of frustration for some ultra-radical

Cultural Revolutionaries.⁹⁵ All these factors became compelling reasons for Lin and his backers at the CCRG to initiate a fresh assault on Qufu.

But just having the motives to attack the Three Kong Sites was not enough. For their plan to have a reasonable chance of success, the obstacles that contributed to the Red Guards debacle in August must be removed. By all accounts, the Qufu officials' victory over the Red Guards stemmed from Qufu authorities' effective use of the bureaucratic method of mobilization, whereby the local officials used their bureaucratic authority, hierarchical structure, and established rules and procedures to mobilize the Qufu public, isolate the Red Guards, deny them access to the Three Kong Sites, and repel their attacks. As long as Qufu officials continued to have those advantages, any additional attempts to attack Qufu would probably be futile.

However, changes occurred quickly during the Cultural Revolution. At the nation's capital, the bureaucratic advantages in question were already greatly weakened in late July and August after Mao bypassed the bureaucracy and ordered the recall of work groups.⁹⁶ The campaign against the bourgeois reactionary line further tilted the balance and enabled Mao's personal leadership to replace party hierarchy. This drastic change both strengthened and facilitated the charismatic method of mobilization whereby authority came from charismatic individuals rather than from a bureaucratic hierarchy; leaders were chosen for their devotion to a central leader rather than their adherence to the party hierarchy; and communication was carried out through informal networks instead of rigid bureaucratic channels. As such, the charismatic method of mobilization

⁹⁵ Gao Wenqian, *Wangnian Zhou Enlai* [Zhou Enlai's Later Years] (Hong Kong, Mirror Books, 2003) , 149-150..

⁹⁶ Joel Andreas, "The Structure of Charismatic Mobilization: A Case Study of Rebellion during the Chinese Cultural Revolution" *American Sociological Review* 72 (2007): 442.

made it possible to “mobilize people without the benefits or constraints of formal organization.”⁹⁷

Charismatic mobilization proved to be critical for the mobilization of the Red Guards and planning of the new attack on the Three Kong Sites. The ability to bypass or ignore the established bureaucratic procedures and party principles allowed Lin Jie to get approval for the Qufu attack directly from the CCRG, rather than from any government or party intermediaries. It also allowed him to directly approach Tan Houlan to plan for the Qufu trip without worrying about following any “chain of command.” It further allowed Tan Houlan to mobilize BNU students for the Qufu trip and recruit over 200 people into the Jinggangshan Regiment within two hours without seeking any approval from above or being concerned about any breach of rules. This was astonishing, considering it could often take years for an application for communist party membership to be considered and approved in the pre-Cultural Revolution years. Last but not least, the characteristics of charismatic mobilization allowed Lin Jie and the leaders of Jinggangshan Regiment to predict the extent of local resistance to the expedition and plan accordingly. Indeed, without charismatic mobilization, it would not have been possible for Lin Jie and the Red Guards leaders of Jinggangshan Regiment to complete the highly complex process of deliberations, planning, and mobilizations for the Qufu expedition in just three days from October 25 to October 28. The unanswered question, however, was whether or not charismatic mobilization would help Tan Houlan and her comrades overcome the predictable challenges once they got to Qufu. They would find out soon.

On November 7, 1966, the curtain for the first act of the drama concerning the Three Kong Sites came down with a large contingent of future teachers from China’s top

⁹⁷ Joel Andreas, “The Structure of Charismatic Mobilization,” 437.

teachers' university standing ready to assault the birth and burial place of China's model teacher of all ages, level his tomb, and topple his statue. For over 2,000 years, Qufu survived numerous brushes with destruction, but the seemingly unassailable holy city of China now faced another unprecedented challenge. The stage was set for the next act. Could Qufu survive another ordeal? Time would soon tell.

Chapter IV: Organized Destruction

Advance Team

Sixty-seven days after the August 26 debacle, Red Guards returned to Qufu. On November 4, 1966, the advance team of the BNU Jingtangshan Regiment descended on Qufu to lay the groundwork for the BNU Qufu Expedition scheduled to arrive five days later. Unlike their failed predecessors, these Red Guards were not only better organized and disciplined but also backed by the CCRG, which was fast becoming the only legitimate voice for the central government and Mao.

Such favorable circumstances notwithstanding, the traumatic memory of the August 26 debacle was still fresh in the minds of many. Questions remained as to the Red Guards' chances of success at their new mission to rebel against the well-protected Three Kong Sites. Would the local officials still dismiss them as mere troublemakers and treat them as such? What would happen if the Qufu peasants were to take orders from the local officials and rough them up again? Would they be outnumbered and out-muscled again by the hostile townspeople? Would the myriad local or regional Red Guard organizations challenge their legitimacy and leadership? What would happen if the local officials were to use the State Council's protection steles to refuse cooperation? Worse still, would the State Council intervene? Would attacking the Three Kong Sites be viewed as attacking the State Council and its chief Zhou Enlai? Indeed, BNU Red Guards' tasks were daunting, their potential obstacles formidable, and their chances of success anything but certain.

Recognizing the tall order the Qufu expedition would face, BNU Red Guards chief Tan Houlan deliberately sent her top lieutenant Zhang Daoying to head the advance team. Zhang was probably the most qualified candidate to lead this team by any measure. He graduated from Qufu Teachers College and joined the BNU as a graduate student in the History Department. He was the most familiar of anyone Tan could find with Qufu's history, culture, society and the significance of the Three Kong Sites. But Zhang did not need Tan's orders to motivate him to go to Qufu. He had long been resentful of various school officials who denied him membership to the Communist Youth League and the CCP throughout his student career despite his impeccable academic achievements. To the school ideological workers, Zhang was sufficiently "expert" but inadequately "red." They viewed Zhang as too "egoistic" and "wrongly motivated" and therefore unfit for the Youth League and the CCP.¹

Now that the Cultural Revolution allowed him to rebel against the oppressive party establishment, Zhang turned the neglect he received from the now-disgraced party officials into his political capital and turned himself into a fervent devotee of the Cultural Revolution. He truly subscribed to Mao's idea of capitalist roaders within the party and wanted to help cleanse the system of its impurities. Before Tan had organized the Qufu expedition, Zhang was already eager to go to Qufu to rebel against the Confucian establishment instead of engaging in the popular "red tourism" through the Great Exchanges of Revolutionary Experience. Tan's Qufu expedition was a godsend to Zhang, who finally found a CCRG-backed Red Guard leader who recognized his unique combination of knowledge and motivation and put them to good use. No longer was Zhang viewed as "egoistic" or "wrongly motivated." He was going to take the campaign

¹ KFDJN, 64.

against the Four Olds to the root of all Four Olds. It was Zhang's moment to realize his self-worth and make history, and he was resolved to dedicate every ounce of his being to making it a splashing success.

Consequently, upon arriving in Qufu on November 4, Zhang and his cohorts rolled up their sleeves and got down to work. Their primary tasks were to put Qufu officials on notice, raise public awareness about their mission, and establish connections with local Red Guards. On the very evening of the day of the team's arrival, Zhang was already knocking on the door of Zhao Yimin, the team's local contact person designated by Lin Jie. As an anti-establishment teacher at QTC, Zhao was not only a contrarian like Guan Feng in the 1962 Confucius Forum, but he was also often at odds with the conservative QTC school authorities as well. Zhao was labeled by the QTC party committee as a "black gang" member at the start of the Cultural Revolution, but a letter from his close friend CCRG member Guan Feng saved him from the fate of a black gang member and turned him into an even more committed follower of the CCRG.² Long frustrated with the slow progress of the Cultural Revolution in Qufu and bitter about the "wrongs" that he had suffered at the hands of QTC authorities, the disgruntled Zhao was elated to be tapped by the CCRG to be a mentor for Tan's expedition team. Thus when Zhang visited him to seek his guidance, Zhao obliged, noting that he was expecting them as Lin Jie had asked him to assist and advise BNU Red Guards.³ With little effort, an alliance between the BNU Red Guards and a critically important local resource person was forged.

² KFDJN, 67.

³ KFDJN, 65-67.

This alliance was put to work the very next day. On the morning of November 5, accompanied by Zhao Yimin, Zhang and his team members stopped by the Qufu party committee headquarters to officially announce their arrival and demand support. “We are supported by the Central Cultural Revolution Group and have come to Qufu to rebel against Confucianism,” Zhang emphatically told the local party apparatchiks, “We would like to tour the Three Kong Sites today. We ask the Qufu party committee to please facilitate this for us.”⁴ Zhang’s demand was polite but nonnegotiable.

Qufu officials found themselves in a difficult position. No sooner had the advance team disembarked at the neighboring Yanzhou train station the day before than the local officials there warned their Qufu colleagues of the “trouble” coming their way. They were at a loss how to deal with the uninvited visitors this time. They knew the political dynamic in the nation’s capital had drastically changed; these Red Guards were not ordinary marauding youths doing sightseeing in the name of revolution. Qufu officials could neither afford to offend them nor forfeit their obligations as the guardians of the state-protected historical sites. Their bureaucratic instinct and inertia told them to look for directions from the editorials of the major party publications such as *Red Flag* and *People’s Daily*.⁵ Ironically however, the editorials were either written or managed by those who sent the BNU Red Guards to Qufu in the first place, such as Lin Jie and Chen Boda. The leading party publications were getting increasingly more radical and of no help to Qufu officials.

Unable to get any encouraging news from the leading party publications, the local officials turned to the Shandong provincial government for instructions on how to handle

⁴ KFDJN, 69.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 289.

the advancing Red Guards. But under siege and struggling for its own survival, the provincial party leadership simply instructed the Qufu officials to both support the Red Guards and protect the Confucian sites—an impossible order as the two charges were mutually exclusive. Caught in a catch-22, Qufu officials resorted to their old isolation tactic. They forbade all local officials and peasants from engaging the Red Guards in any debate, having any contact, providing any information, or participating in any of their activities, in the hopes that these measures would somehow give them some time and help prevent the unthinkable.

With this coping strategy, the local officials handled their uninvited visitors on the morning of November 5. Kong Qingzhuang, head of the Qufu County Cultural Revolution Office, became the natural contact person for the advance team. Upon hearing Zhang’s request for a tour of the Confucius Mansion and Confucius Temple, he complied without resisting and accompanied the Red Guards during the tour. With Zhao Yimin as their guide, the advance team made its first foray into the Confucius Mansion and the Confucius Temple. Both sites were eerily quiet and so were the visitors. Nobody was talking except their tour guide Zhao Yimin, but everyone noticed clear signs of concealing Confucius statues and other “four-old items” by the local officials.⁶ The Red Guards entered and exited the complex without causing any disturbance. Yet, without any commotion, they completed an important reconnaissance visit.

Having put Qufu officials on notice of their arrival and following a site visit of the Confucian Complex, the advance team went on to carry out its other objectives. They distributed the three documents prepared in Beijing, namely, “Set the Confucius Family Shop on Fire—an Anti-Confucian Manifesto,” “A Letter to the Country” and “A Letter to

⁶ KFDJN, 69-71.

the People of Shandong.”⁷ They also visited various schools in Qufu to forge an alliance with a variety of local Red Guard factions. This was both important and necessary not only because the local residents were afraid to interact with them but also because some local Red Guard factions might actually challenge their authority. Furthermore, many local Red Guards still had the nightmarish memory of the August 26 debacle and remained resentful but fearful. It was BNU Red Guards’ job to exploit their resentment, allay their fears, and turn them into part of a coalition against Qufu authorities.

Therefore, within the first three days of the advance team’s stay in Qufu, Zhang had visited almost every campus in Qufu to rally the local Red Guards behind the BNU Red Guards and motivate them for the “big moment.” Zhang assured his excited but skeptical local Red Guard brethren that their actions on August 26 were justifiable and that the BNU Red Guards, backed by the CCRG, were in Qufu to complete their unfinished work. When asked about how to handle the State Council’s protection steles, Zhang dispelled their concerns by asserting that the steles were set up by the notorious black gang members Zhou Yang and Lu Dingyi and were therefore legitimate targets.⁸

Having successfully started, Zhang decided to confront the Qufu party committee with substantive issues. On the evening of November 7, he summoned three county officials to the QTC to brief the advance team on the progress of the Cultural Revolution in Qufu but used the opportunity to characterize the August 26 incident as an act of Qufu officials following the bourgeois reactionary line. He then made eight demands on the Qufu party committee, including publicly apologizing for the August 26 incident, making Confucian sites accessible to Red Guards, and allowing the Red Guards access to rural

⁷ KFDJN, 71

⁸ KFDJN, 72-73

communities. The three officials only agreed to relay the demands to the Qufu party committee.⁹ With this, the advance team had achieved its primary objectives of raising public awareness, networking with local Red Guards, and putting local officials on notice of their arrival and mission. They had opened a small crack in the huge wall of resistance against their overall mission. It was now time for Tan and the whole expedition to enlarge that crack and eventually tear down that wall.

First Engagement

On November 9, ten days after the CCRG and the State Council publicly urged Red Guards all over the country to discontinue their participation in the Great Exchanges of Revolutionary Experience, Tan and the entire expedition team arrived in Qufu in six trucks following an overnight train ride from Beijing. For the first time in China's long history, students, and teachers from the country's leading teachers' university had come to the birthplace of the country's Foremost Teacher for the express purpose of digging up his grave and burning his statue. Local Red Guards gave their high-profile visitors a hero's welcome at QTC, the expedition's chosen site for its headquarters.

Tan immediately convened a cadres' meeting to assess the situation and map out their strategies. It was soon decided that their most immediate priorities were to establish rapport with all other Red Guard factions and obtain cooperation from the Qufu party committee. "Without the Qufu government's assistance and facilitation," Tan stressed, "nothing could be accomplished."¹⁰ Consequently, they planned to meet with the Qufu officials the following day and to demand both access to the Three Kong Sites and material support necessary for their operation. Tan was determined to leave a "deep first

⁹ KFDJN, 73-74.

¹⁰ KFDJN, 78.

impression” on the local “capitalist roaders” who had yet to learn what it was like to be on the receiving end of revolutionary violence.

Day two was an action-packed day. On the morning of November 10, Tan led her troops to launch their offensive through a series of aggressive and highly visible moves. They put out leaflets and posters all over the town with messages like “Set the Confucius Family Shop on Fire.”¹¹ The posters and slogans caused widespread alarm and panic among cadres and townspeople, many of whom literally thought that the Red Guards were going to burn down all Three Kong Sites. BNU Red Guards also launched the *Denounce Confucius Battlefield Report*, the official publication of the campaign where they associated the Three Kong Sites with the Four Olds and connected the protection of the Three Kong Sites with the bourgeois reactionary line and its Qufu followers. The inaugural issue of this publication also methodically refuted all the “excuses” that had been used to oppose the BNU Red Guards’ planned attack on the protected historical sites, especially the use of State Council’s protection steles to deter attempts to rebel against the Kong sites. More important, this key publication clearly identified the campaign’s objectives, namely, to burn Confucius’s statue, level Confucius’s tomb, and publicly parade the “Confucius-worshipping” reactionary academic authorities.¹²

Having set the public awareness and mobilization campaign in motion, Tan and her troops marched from QTC to the Qufu party committee headquarters to demand support for their mission. When over 200 BNU Red Guards reached the Qufu party headquarters, they were surprised to be greeted by some 200 local government officials and employees, all neatly lined up, each holding a copy of Mao’s Little Red Book. The

¹¹ KFDJN, 87.

¹² XBHZL 11346-11348.

Red Guards ritualistically began their face-off with the local officials with the rhythmical chanting of Mao's quotations: "To rebel is justified! Dust won't disappear by itself without a broom!"¹³ This quotation recitation was followed by Tan's reading of the expedition's key document "Set the Confucius Family Shop on Fire: an Anti-Confucius Manifesto." They then sang one Cultural Revolution song after another at the top of their lungs to overwhelm their opponents. To their dismay, the county officials confidently responded to the challenge by reciting in unison Mao's *Three Old Articles*¹⁴. The poise, discipline, and preparedness of the local officials caught BNU Red Guards by surprise. Frustrated, they resorted to shouting, "Burn the Confucian Family Shop in fire! Thoroughly denounce the bourgeois reactionary line!"¹⁵ They had no idea that the county government, in anticipation of the arrival of the Red Guards that day, ordered the government officials to recite the Three Old Articles for their anticipated clash with the Beijing Red Guards. The local government's disaster-preparedness plan paid off handsomely. Tan was hoping for a powerful start, but Qufu officials effectively neutralized her aggressive push through a recitation contest of Mao's quotations.

Not only were Beijing Red Guards unsuccessful in staring down Qufu officials, but they began to encounter resistance from their presumed natural allies as well. Some visiting Red Guards of Jinan No. 1 Middle School challenged their leadership position and dismissed them as "representing just one school." They would debate with BNU Red Guards at every opportunity and believed that the pompous BNU Red Guards should

¹³ KFDJN, 79-81.

¹⁴ The "Three Old Articles," is a popular reference to three essays by Mao Zedong, namely, "Serve the People," "In Memory of Norman Bethune," and "The Foolish Old Man Who Removes Mountains." During the Cultural Revolution, they were required reading for everyone and the ability to memorize and recite them became a sign of dedication and allegiances to Mao and the Cultural Revolution.

¹⁵ Ibid.

“pay close attention to what the poor and lower-middle peasants have to say” instead of ordering everyone around haphazardly. They told Kong Fanshen, an employee of the Confucius Mansion, to ignore the BNU Red Guards and continue his preservation and maintenance work.¹⁶ Even more blunt and hostile were some visiting Red Guards from Xuzhou No. 2 Middle School, who blasted the BNU Red Guards for “acting like bandits!”¹⁷ Some Qufu peasants took issue with them too. One frustrated peasant remarked, “If only we peasants were not as loosely connected as we are, or else we could be organized and reason with them!”¹⁸ All these rumbling complaints were indicative of the bumpy road ahead for the visiting iconoclasts.

Despite the emerging resistance and rejection, Tan was not to be discouraged or deterred. After all, setbacks characterized her life in the past several months. Time and again, she was mocked, isolated, and struggled against;¹⁹ and time and again, she beat the seemingly impossible odds and emerged victorious. However, a strong resolve alone was not enough this time. To turn things around quickly, Tan needed a breakthrough—some turn of events that would dispel people’s doubts about their intentions and justify the righteousness and legitimacy of their mission. Fortunately for Tan, such a turn of events occurred almost as soon as she needed it. Immediately following their shouting match with the Qufu officials on the morning of November 10, Tan and Zhang led a group of Red Guards to search the Confucius Mansion for incriminating evidence. They moved in

¹⁶ KFDJN, 91.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ XBHZL, 91.

¹⁹ To “struggle against someone” means to denounce and criticize someone publicly in a group meeting or at a mass rally. It was commonly used in the Chinese communist revolution, especially during the Cultural Revolution. Guo Jian, et al, *Historical Dictionary of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 269.

and out of various rooms and halls in this long-closed palatial mansion in search of “noteworthy items.”

Soon, Zhang noticed a closed storage area in the Qiantang Building towards the rear of the mansion. Upon close examination of the miscellaneous items stored in this dark space, filled with spider webs, dust, and mold, the Red Guards were astonished to see items that immediately made that dark, dusty space look like a “crime scene.” Unfolding before their eyes were a Kuomintang flag, portraits and instructions of Chiang Kai-shek, a Japanese sword from Chiang Kai-shek’s minister of finance Kong Xiangxi, a dagger from Shandong warlord Han Fuju, pictures of Confucius Mansion elders with Japanese officers and officials of the Wang Jingwei-led puppet regime, and a Kuomintang hit-list for the “Country Cleansing Campaign” used to purge communists during the 1945-49 Civil War....²⁰

Tan reveled in her initial success. The outcome of this search far exceeded her expectations as she had no idea such “reactionary items” were still housed in the Confucian Complex. Even Lin Jie in his pre-expedition orientation of the Kong sites did not allude to the possible existence of such a “crime lab.” Tan’s limited, partial knowledge about the role of the Confucian establishment in modern China made it difficult for her to fully understand the historical circumstances related to these artifacts. Naturally, she and her fellow Red Guards were outraged that people’s “blood and sweat money” were spent on the preservation and protection of such “reactionary items.” It seemed crystal clear to them that the Confucius Mansion was used to preserve and protect not only the Four Olds but also various vestiges of other “reactionary forces” as well. The accidental discovery of the damning evidence provided undisputed moral clarity and

²⁰ XBHZL, 11349.

authority for their mission and became a critical turning point for both the defenders and the attackers of the Kong sites. No longer would the local officials be able to use “protecting cultural heritage” as the reason to block Red Guards’ actions.

Encouraged by this critical development, the Red Guards went on to search the International Guesthouse on the east side of Confucius Mansion. There, they saw a portrait of Liu Shaoqi on the wall and evidence of “bourgeois creature comforts,” such as mattresses, bathtubs, sofas, and carpets. The Red Guards insisted that guesthouse personnel take down and tear up Liu’s portrait because he was China’s “No. 1 capitalist roader,” but they were refused cooperation. The rebuffed Red Guards simply took down the portrait and tore it up themselves. They then called on the guesthouse employees to rise against their superiors and displayed the sofas and mattresses in public to show how the International Guesthouse was used as a “bourgeois nest for repose and pleasure.”²¹ The findings from this search further convinced the Red Guards of the righteousness of their mission. All in all, the entire search of the Confucius Mansion was an exhilarating and rewarding experience for the BNU Red Guards. Within thirty hours of their arrival in Qufu, they had already obtained incriminating evidence that was going to serve as a catalyst for all the drastic events that ensued.

As the Red Guards advanced into their opponents’ territory, Qufu officials began to retreat. The incriminating evidence had turned them into protectors of an “evil institution.” What little advantage they gained from the quotation shouting match evaporated into the thin air. Their newly discovered vulnerability compelled them to take defensive measures to both protect themselves and the cultural relics in their control. As a Deputy County Commissioner and the head of the Qufu Cultural Relics Preservation

²¹ KFDJN, 84-86.

Bureau, Cui Xuyi knew the items that the Red Guards discovered in the Qiangtang Building were kept there because of central government's instructions. But Cui was politically astute enough to know that using such government instructions to justify keeping these items would only prove the Red Guards' argument that they were following the old bureaucratic apparatus and therefore the "bourgeois reactionary line." Realizing he could not argue and reason his way out of his trouble, Cui decided to burn or hide these items to avoid trouble for himself and his colleagues.²²

As the chief guardian of the Three Kong Sites, Cui knew the collections there like the back of his hands. He also knew what the Red Guards found during the day was just the tip of the iceberg. There were incriminating photos in the warehouse as well as miscellaneous Buddhist statues and other religious figurines in the Buddhist Building. They were kept there as a result of a government directive stipulating that all things in the Confucius Mansion were to be displayed exactly "as they were before liberation." If the Red Guards discovered those quintessential "Four Olds" items the next day, the consequences would be even harder to imagine. Cui decided to defuse these "time bombs" by hiding or destroying the evidence before the Red Guards got to them.

He shared his ideas with the county commissioner Gao Keming. Gao not only supported his ideas but also asked him to hide some highly valuable cultural items to "protect the state property." So, under the cover of the night, Cui and a few trusted employees broke into the Buddhist Building already sealed by the Red Guards during the day and hurriedly "stole" some religious items and threw those items into a well behind the Confucius Mansion. They then gathered and burned much of the entire photo collection in the Confucius Mansion all night to destroy the evidence. Finally, they buried

²² KFDJN, 93-96.

the “Shang-Zhou Ten Sacrificial Vessels” in an inconspicuous courtyard near the back garden. These items were classified as first-grade national cultural relics that were personally given to the Kong Lineage as a gift from Emperor Qianlong in the eighteenth century and treasured by the guardians of the Confucius Mansion for centuries.²³

While the Qufu cultural officials were busy hiding, burning, and burying the would-be evidence, the nervous Qufu party officials were also in a frenzy to contain the situation and prevent further damage. They had to figure out a way to prevent what was perceived to be the real possibility of Red Guards actually setting the Kong sites on fire. Losing the Kong sites to fire would certainly be dereliction of duty on their part and would lead to disastrous ramifications. The frightened officials frantically called the central government in Beijing in a desperate attempt to find any authoritative figures to help prevent the feared calamity. Despite their repeated attempts, however, they couldn’t get anyone to answer their call. Little did they know that, on November 10, the government itself was in the epicenter of a political earthquake where the entire old party establishment was crumbling. The central leaders from whom Qufu officials used to get advice were like the clay Buddhist figurines in the Confucius Mansion that could not take care of themselves. But the desperate Qufu bureaucrats knew no other way to handle a crisis of such magnitude. Their bureaucratic instinct and party principles compelled them to call the higher-ups for directions. So they kept calling and hoping.²⁴

While the Qufu officials were forced into a crisis management mode, Tan decided to step up the offensive. The events of the day gave her much-needed persuasive power which she could use to sway and mobilize the skeptical public. On the evening of

²³ KFDJN, 93-96.

²⁴ KFDJN, 96.

November 10, Tan summoned an emergency cadres' meeting in the operation headquarters at QTC for a strategy session for the following days. It was decided that they were going to seize the momentum to launch a propaganda campaign. They would use the incriminating black materials they seized to forge an alliance with all factions of Red Guards, mobilize the peasants, and unite the wavering elements. But it was Tan who cut through the chase and pointed out their foremost priority: "It is clear that State Council's protection steles are the stumbling block. We must kick out this stumbling block!"²⁵

Words turned into actions the following morning. On November 11, Red Guards launched a mass media blitz. They bulldozed their way into the Qufu streets and flooded them with even more leaflets and posters. Copies of the *Denounce Confucius Battlefield Report* that detailed the "black materials" discovered in the Confucius Mansion were also disseminated, lending more legitimacy to Red Guard actions and shaking locals' confidence in Qufu officials. One resident asked a Cultural Bureau employee incredulously, "Did you really keep a Kuomintang flag and sword in the Confucius Mansion?"²⁶ As the drumbeat of "setting the Confucius Family Shop on fire" grew louder, the local officials panicked, but all they could do was keep calling higher authorities in Beijing for directions. Finally, they got through to the State Council. The panicked official briefed the State Council on the chaos in Qufu since the arrival of BNU Red Guards and sounded the alarm on the phone, "Beijing Normal University Red Guards are going to burn down the Confucius Mansion and Confucius Temple!" But all

²⁵ KFDJN, 112.

²⁶ KFDJN, 123.

they heard from the other end of the phone was a brief and emotionless, “Stay tuned for instructions from central leaders.”²⁷

While the nervous Qufu officials were eagerly awaiting government’s response, the Red Guards were already intensifying their offensive. On the morning of November 11, just a few hours after Cui Xuyi hid and destroyed some cultural treasures and historical artifacts, a special team of about thirty Red Guards led by BNU Red Guard Hu Wensong invited themselves into the Confucius Mansion and declared their intention to be stationed there. County officials strongly objected to the intrusion, but their objections fell on deaf ears. Upon entering the Confucius Mansion, the Red Guards immediately followed the leads they had received about possible clandestine counterrevolutionary activities inside the Confucius Mansion and searched for an alleged underground radio station and a hiding spot for illicit weapons.²⁸ Although their search turned out to be futile, the Red Guards wasted no time before working on their next project—the preparation for a class education exhibition to be opened to the public two days later on November 13. They had only two days to turn the Confucius Mansion from its “pre-liberation form” to a class education facility where all the “trophies” they had discovered and other related items would be on display and used to educate the public of the “heinous stories and facts” regarding the Kong family. They had said enough about the evils of the Confucius Mansion in all their public campaigns, but seeing is believing—it was time now for the public to bear witness to the actual manifestations of such evils.

As Hu’s team was turning things upside down inside the Confucius Mansion, another group of Red Guards led by Zhang Daoying were ratcheting up the pressure on

²⁷ KFDJN, 97.

²⁸ KFDJN, 104-105.

the Qufu party leadership. On the evening of November 11, they interrupted a business meeting chaired by County Commissioner Gao Keming. Zhang demanded a copy of the script of Gao's welcome speech that he used the day before as well as a response to the eight demands that the advance team made on November 7. Gao used all kinds of stalling tactics to refuse cooperation. Frustrated, Zhang told Gao that they were going to smash the State Council protection steles because they had been used to protect the "black materials."²⁹ Gao refused to budge an inch on this issue. The county committee couldn't afford to make any concession on the steles, as they were the last and only line of defense left against the impending ruin of the Kong sites in their care. Neither side blinked in this test of wills. A stalemate had set in, and no one was yet strong enough to break the impasse. The county government was on the defensive but still had the State Council protection steles to fall back on; the Red Guards claimed to be sent by the CCRG, but they could not produce any ironclad proof to substantiate their claim. As a result, they not only received no cooperation but also risked repeating the fate of their August 26 debacle. Already, Red Guards who ventured into the villages to galvanize the peasants were ignored or even harassed by the peasants and rural cadres. The first engagement between the BNU Red Guards and the Qufu authorities ended in a deadlock. Some external intervention was badly needed to break the impasse.

Central Directives: A Catalyst for Change

The external intervention unexpectedly arrived at 11 p.m. November 11 when Tan received a telegram from Chen Boda and a telephone message from Qi Benyu, both high priests of the CCRG. Chen's telegram read: "Do not burn down the Confucius Temple,

²⁹ KFDJN, 97-98.

Mansion, or the Confucius Cemetery. Keep them as museums of the feudal system and the Kong lineage as a landlord family, like the Rent Collection Courtyard. Confucius's grave may be dug up.”

Qi Benyu's telephone message was similar but more specific “Han dynasty steles should be preserved, as should be steles from before the Ming dynasty. Qing dynasty steles may be smashed. The Confucius Temple can be repurposed, like the Rent Collection Courtyard. Confucius's grave may be dug up. Find someone knowledgeable on cultural relics to take a look.”³⁰

These two directives proved to be a turning point for the campaign. Apparently, they were the “instructions from the central leaders” that the Qufu county committee was waiting for from the State Council. Interestingly, they came from the CCRG instead of the State Council. This was a clear sign that the nation's power center had shifted to the CCRG. Even more interestingly, the directives came first to the Red Guards who did not request them rather than the Qufu party committee who did.

Tan and BNU Red Guards were unprepared for this “midnight gift” from above and had mixed reactions. They were pleased because the recognition and support from two prominent firebrands of the CCRG gave the expeditionary force a boost at a time when their campaign was bogged down. The two directives were sure to send an unmistakable message to the entire Qufu community about who was behind the BNU Red Guards and confirm the legitimacy of their mission. But they were also upset because both directives made clear that Chen and Qi actually believed that the BNU Red Guards truly intended to burn down the Kong sites. Apparently, Qufu officials and the public were not quite used to such incendiary revolutionary expressions as “smash

³⁰ KFDJN. 97.

someone to a pulp” and “fry someone in oil.” Failing to distinguish between rhetoric and reality, they took a figurative “Set the Confucius Family Shop on Fire” to mean a literal “Burn down the Kong sites” and sounded the alarm to the central government.

Tan, however, was convinced that Qufu officials deliberately misinterpreted their intentions and went behind their backs to misrepresent their intentions to central authorities in order to smear their name and undermine their mission. She convened an impromptu midnight meeting where she relayed the two directives and strategized on what to do next. It was decided that they were going to debunk the rumors before the Qufu public and create a coalition of all Red Guard organizations in Qufu under the umbrella title of “The Revolutionary Liaison Station of Completely Smashing the Confucian Family Shop and Establishing the Absolute Power of the Mao Zedong Thought,” (Liaison Station). The creation of this organization would unite the scattered Red Guard organizations, give them a group identity, create a clear us-against-them environment, and work towards a common cause endorsed by the CCRG.

Before Tan had the opportunity to put her plan into full operation, she received two unlikely visitors. At 7 a.m. November 12, Qufu county leaders Gao Keming and Zhang Yumei came to QTC to request a meeting with Tan. Local officials had tried to avoid and isolate the BNU Red Guards since their arrival in Qufu, but this time the unwilling hosts came to consult the unwelcome guests because local officials received the same directives from Chen and Qi via the Shandong government early that morning. The directives were a mixed bag for Qufu officials. On the one hand, they were relieved to know that the CCRG disapproved of burning down the Kong sites and had spared them from destruction. On the other hand, they had to comply with the directives, which would

involve elaborate and complex planning. Faced with the indisputable evidence of CCRG support for the BNU Red Guards, local officials realized the rules of the game had changed. Their party principles and bureaucratic instinct compelled them to choose consultation over confrontation with the BNU Red Guards. Thus, they hurried to consult those whom they rejected just hours ago.³¹

However, Tan viewed the Qufu officials as the targets of the Cultural Revolution and refused to accommodate. She decided to follow her own agenda and use the CCRG directives to push for more gains. Therefore, upon seeing her subdued visitors, Tan blasted them for spreading rumors and using the State Council protection steles to protect the “Four Olds.” She told them the Red Guards were going to smash the steles and demanded the Qufu government’s support for it. Recognizing that the steles were from the State Council under Zhou Enlai, county leaders refused to cooperate and the talk broke down.

Tan was not going to take “no” for an answer from capitalist roaders and kept up the pressure. She sent Red Guards to the county committee headquarters to denounce the Qufu government and to demand that the party committee clear up the rumors across the county about Red Guards’ intention to burn down the Kong sites. Tan had great confidence in making these demands, as Lin Jie had called her that day and shared with her the reassuring news: Chen Boda had already instructed the Shandong party committee to assist the BNU Red Guards’ mission in Qufu.³² The CCRG had already spoken on this issue. To defy them was to commit political suicide. Tan’s political calculation proved correct. The following day, Deputy Commissioner Zhang Yumei issued a public

³¹ KFDJN, 101-102.

³² KFDJN, 150.

statement through the countywide wired broadcast network. In it, he apologized to the Red Guards for smearing their image by spreading misinformation about their intentions to burn down the Kong sites and called on his listening audience to support Red Guards' revolutionary actions.³³ With that, the capitulation of the county leadership began.

Tan proceeded according to plan and good news kept coming. On the afternoon of November 12, the Liaison Station under the de facto control of the BNU Red Guards came into being without difficulty. Apparently, the CCRG directives had a decisive impact on the seven Red Guard factions that joined this organization, some of which had previously challenged BNU Red Guards' authority. They realized BNU Red Guards truly had the full support of the CCRG and wanted to be on the right side of history by siding with the BNU Red Guards. The formation of this organization marked the alliance of capital Red Guards and local Red Guards and presented a united front to their opposition. To ensure its success, Tan appointed Zhang Daoying as the head of the Liaison Station and made the newly published the *Denounce Confucius Battlefield Report* its official publication. Henceforth, the Liaison Station became the official headquarters and public face of the campaign. The campaign was now organizationally well-positioned to forge forward.

The ripple effect of the CCRG directives continued into the next day. On November 13, all Three Kong Sites, off limits to the public for centuries, were finally open to anyone who cared to step in and take a look. Despite county officials' ban on contact with Red Guards and participation in their activities, Qufu residents from near and far swarmed into the Three Kong Sites.³⁴ Before Qufu came under communist control

³³ KFDJN, 103.

³⁴ KFDJN, 111.

in 1948, access to the Confucius Mansion was left to the discretion of its owners. For visitors and tourists, it was usually a matter of a small fee. This was how Mao Zedong managed to catch a glimpse of it in early 1919. Many locals were fairly familiar with the Confucius Mansion too as the entire community revolved around the Confucian establishment and frequently came into contact with it for one reason or another.

However, after the communist takeover in 1948, the Kong sites were closed to the public except for a few special occasions such as the tenth National Day in 1959. Consequently, the vast majority of the locals had never set foot inside the Confucian Complex since 1948. They had long been awe-struck by its outward grandeur but had no clue what was behind the tall walls. Since they were kept away from it, they never had the opportunity to develop any emotional attachment to it. They felt like they knew it well as it occupied the center of the city and they walked around it every day; but they also felt they knew nothing about it at all as it was a place for the highly-placed people and foreigners only.

When the locals finally had an opportunity to tour the Three Kong Sites on November 13, they did not see a serene and stately treasure trove of Chinese culture. Instead, they saw a hastily assembled “class education” site and had an incredible eye-opening experience. As they casually walked past Confucius Mansion’s main entrance and strolled through its famous Double Gate, previously reserved for emperors and heads of the state, they saw evidence of the opulent lifestyle of the Confucius Mansion’s former residents in stark contrast to their own life at the subsistence level. They saw ironclad evidence of Qufu officials’ complicity in covering up the evils of the Confucius Mansion’s former owner, such as the stone lions at the gate of the Confucius Mansion covered by wooden boards with Mao’s quotations. They saw a chaotic Hall of Great

Perfection, the first time for most of them, with Confucius's statue plastered with slogans such as "No. 1 Scoundrel!" And they saw Cui Xuyi, chief guardian of the Three Kong Sites and one of their "father-and-mother officials" standing at the gate of the Confucius Mansion wearing a melon-shaped hat and a Kuomintang flag as a Qufu "black gang" member.³⁵ As this went on, people's awe for the Confucius Mansion and the traditional authority it represented gave way to resentment; their respect and obedience to the local officials and the party establishment behind it turned into puzzlement or disrespect; their confidence in everything they used to trust began to erode while their respect for and recognition of the "troublemakers" from Beijing began to rise.

The local officials could only stand by and watch this unfold with disbelief and helplessness. Repurposing the Confucius Mansion as a class education site was a mandate from the CCRG directives and the local officials were duty-bound to support it. Any opposition would be futile. Already, their fellow official Cui was "betrayed" by a trusted employee and ferreted out for covering up evidence of reactionary and "Four Olds" items. It was a chilling example of the consequences of defying the Red Guards endorsed by the CCRG. If Cui's fall to disgrace was not enough to convince the county leaders as to who was truly in charge, the arrival of a provincial team dispelled any remaining doubts about the power of the CCRG directives. The team was made up of one provincial official and two experts on cultural relics. CCRG director Chen Boda had explicitly instructed the provincial government to assist the Red Guards, and Qi Benyu's telephone message specifically mentioned the need for experts to help identify things for destruction or salvation. The local officials who greeted this team did not know what the next day might bring, but they did know tomorrow would probably be more ominous

³⁵ KFDJN, 106-107.

than today. Their last line of defense was the State Council protection steles. The BNU Red Guards had repeatedly threatened to smash them, but they had not yet put their words into action. Maybe they never would risk being accused of attacking Premier Zhou whose State Council erected the protection steles; maybe common sense would prevail in the end.

Qufu officials were not the only people who had the protection steles on their mind. Tan had been thinking a lot about it too. Although the CCRG's directives had been helpful and BNU Red Guards gained strength, Tan saw the protection steles as the ultimate roadblocks to the goals of her mission. Her concern was well-grounded. For one thing, the BNU Red Guards needed to secure from the local government significant logistical support and a sizable peasant workforce to achieve their original and newly added objectives, such as the leveling of massive amounts of Qing dynasty steles. Yet the local authorities had already proven unwilling to provide full cooperation, and their trump card was the protection steles. For the same reason, many local residents and even some Red Guards were not fully committed to support their mission either. To make matters worse, the CCRG directives did not mention if the protection steles could be smashed. Without the mandate from CCRG to remove the protection steles, the local officials would use the steles to confront the BNU Red Guards' move at every opportunity. Tan knew removing the protection steles would be her next battle.

On the evening of November 13, Tan convened yet another meeting of her top lieutenants where she assessed the situation and identified their priority. The central directives had reconfigured the nature of the conflict between the Beijing Red Guards and the local bureaucracy. To the Red Guards, the two directives had legitimized their

mission and their publicly stated objectives of burning Confucius's statue, leveling Confucius's tomb, and parading the Confucian scholars.”³⁶ The roadblock to the implementation of their objectives was the State Council's protection steles. The local authorities, who were obligated to obey the central directives but remained unconvinced, would use the protection steles to resist the BNU Red Guards. The local Red Guards and population also held the State Council in high regard and respected the State Council protection steles. Removing the protection steles would ensure support from the local Red Guards, assistance from the local people, and cooperation from the local officials. It was therefore a battle they had to win.³⁷

Tan's assessment and rationale for removing the protection steles resonated well with everyone at the meeting and a unanimous decision was reached to hold a mass rally on November 15 to smash the “loyalist steles.” It would be organized by the Liaison Station and Zhang Daoying would be in charge of the entire operation. Some important preparatory work was also conducted to facilitate the process and ensure success. Among other things, they secured the approval and support from the CCRG for this mass rally. They also composed a letter to be read at the rally titled “A Protest Letter to Some People in the State Council.”

On the morning of November 14, Zhang Daoying got to work immediately. He had less than twenty-four hours to have everything in place. After directing the Red Guards to focus on preparatory and promotional work for the stele-smashing rally the following day, he headed to the Qufu Teachers School, where many local Red Guards expressed strong opposition to smashing the protection steles because they saw no

³⁶ XBHZL 11346-11348.

³⁷ KFDJN, 111-112.

connection between an anti-Confucian campaign and the State Council. Using his oratory and political skills, Zhang easily dispelled their doubts through his usual tactic of associating the protection steles with the bourgeois reactionary line and those “black gang members.” It was the same line that Lin Jie used in his mobilization talk in Beijing to justify the expedition, and it was their favorite argument against any suggestion that smashing the protection steles was an attack on Zhou Enlai.

Having allayed the concerns of the teenage Red Guards at the Teachers School, Zhang hurried to the County Cultural Revolution Office to announce to the county leaders the decision to hold a rally to smash the protection steles. In the name of the Liaison Station, Zhang demanded that all county leaders participate in this rally and expected them to ensure both the peasants’ participation and a trouble-free rally.³⁸ The county officials, who already had their back against the wall, were shaken by this alarming development. But they were no longer able to bargain with the Red Guards who considered them the absolute “other” and diehard loyalists of the old party establishment. Ironically, although they had become “incorrigible lackeys” of the old government apparatus, they remained “necessary evils” for the Red Guards who needed them as a “prop” for the audience during their violent public performance the next day. Since Qufu leaders still held some sway over the locals and remained the symbol of government authority to the peasants, such “props” were critically important for the Red Guards who wanted to win over the fence-sitting Qufu public and ensure the rally’s success.

Zhang’s nonnegotiable demands left the county officials scrambling for a response to this alarming development. They not only viewed the protection steles as their last line of defense, but as the state-appointed official guardians of the Three Kong

³⁸ KFDJN, 117.

Sites, they were also obligated to protect those steles and the cultural relics they protected. But the now powerless Qufu officials had exhausted their ideas on how to handle the Red Guards. To make matters worse, Li Xiu, Qufu's party boss and chief decision maker, was still attending a mandatory conference in Jinan where all Shandong party chiefs at the provincial, prefectural and county levels were themselves under fierce attack from Red Guards. Having no one else to turn to, the frustrated county officials began calling on Li Xiu for help, hoping that somehow Li would wave a magic wand to ward off the unthinkable.

On the evening of November 14, as Zhang convened a final meeting to put the finishing touches on the plan for the rally, Qufu officials finally succeeded in reaching their chief administrator Li Xiu in Jinan. When Li learned the news about the November 15 rally to smash the State Council steles, he was both enraged and alarmed. Li quickly consulted two top Shandong party leaders: Su Zaiwen and Su Yiran. Together, they decided almost by reflex that they must report it to the State Council immediately. Li was just dictating the report on the phone when he was interrupted by Bai Rubing, a Secretary of the Secretariat of the CCP Shandong Committee. As the interim party chief of Shandong, Bai felt torn between his obligation to the State Council and his obligation to (or fear of) the CCRG. His really wanted to protect the State Council steles, but he knew the time was not right. He knew the CCRG's November 11 directives meant CCRG's full support for BNU Red Guards' mission in Qufu. He also received instructions from Chen Boda specifically requiring the Shandong government to assist Tan.

Considering all these factors, Bai vacillated. "I think we may not want to report this to the State Council, for it might fall into the hands of the CCRG again," Bai told Li.

explaining the consequences it might cause: “We could be in even deeper trouble if this report were to lead to another directive from Chen Boda.” Bai then instructed Li to tell Qufu officials to wait so that they could study the situation first.³⁹ Bai’s decision to tread carefully both intensified and prolonged the agony of top Qufu officials. The rally was literally just hours away, but they still did not know how to react to the impending catastrophe. Fortunately, before long the phone rang again. Gao grabbed the phone, his heart racing. From over the phone came Bai Rubing’s strong and resolute voice, “Protect the State Council’s steles at any cost. Whatever happens, someone will take responsibility for you.”⁴⁰

Gao was relieved to finally receive a definitive answer from his superiors. However, Bai’s instructions were long on what to do but short on how to do it. They would not address various scenarios that could easily escalate into unmanageable situations. Despite that, Gao followed the order as best he could. He relayed Bai’s “protect at any cost” message to his fellow county leaders the same night. Together, they decided to make one last attempt to dissuade the Red Guards from smashing the protection steles. Should that attempt fail, they were going to adopt a “three no’s policy,” namely, no participation in the rally, no remarks at the rally, and no commitment to anything.⁴¹ With that, the stage seemed set for a confrontation between the crusaders and the defenders the following day.

³⁹ KFDJN, 119.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Defending the Protection Steles

At 7:30 a.m. on November 15, county leaders Gao Keming and Zhang Yumei came to see Tan in a last-ditch effort to talk her out of holding the rally. Gao began by explaining to Tan the explosive situation they had on their hands. “The vast majority of the masses do not support smashing the protection steles,” Gao cautioned. “Many peasants are already in town and many more are on their way. Smashing the steles would cause serious clashes with unthinkable consequences. Please do not smash them.”⁴² But Gao’s pleading fell on deaf ears. Tan not only refused to listen but also demanded that county officials participate in the rally scheduled for 11 a.m. that day. That was a nonstarter for Gao and Zhang who angrily refused to accommodate her and responded to Tan’s demand with their own “three no’s policy.”⁴³ The last attempt to avert the smashing failed.

As Tan and county leaders were exchanging arguments at QTC, Zhang Daoying was already busy getting ready for the rally. It was going to be a busy day for him, as a rally of this magnitude and complexity required careful planning. He had already formed stele-smashing teams with strong-muscled Red Guards. At 9 a.m., several hundred BNU and QTC Red Guards marched to the Confucius Mansion where they merged with Red Guards from other schools. As many as 2,000 Red Guards were packed in the short Donghua Street outside the Confucius Mansion. Many more non-Red Guards—townspeople and peasants—came to be part of this once-in-a-lifetime spectacle.⁴⁴ The last time when Qufu experienced an event that generated this much excitement and commotion was the funeral of the last Yansheng Duke Kong Lingyi on November 19,

⁴² KFDJN, 120.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ KFDJN, 126-127.

1920 when almost everyone in Qufu came out to pay their last respects to the town's patriarch and catch a glimpse of his corpse for good luck.

Near 11 a.m., the crowds grew larger and the atmosphere became more intense. The stele-smashing team and all the smashing equipment were ready, but there was no sign of the rally starting soon. Just as people began to wonder what was going on, they saw Commissioner Gao Keming and Deputy Party Secretary Zhang Yumei being escorted by Red Guards onto the scene. The two county officials were "invited" by the Red Guards to be part of the rally. Despite their adherence to their "three no's policy," they had been hustled into the rally site by the frustrated Red Guards. Once they actually arrived at the scene, however, the two county leaders were astounded by the chaos they witnessed. They realized that there were peasants, townspeople, and conservative Red Guards in the crowds that were opposed to the rally. If nothing was done about the pandemonium, the situation could quickly spiral out of control and the ramifications would be unthinkable. The two officials immediately decided to turn their passive resistance into active intervention. Zhang Yumei quickly left the scene and entered the county theater where he held an impromptu emergency meeting with all party secretaries of all brigades of the Chenguan Commune. There Zhang warned them against any physical conflict between the Red Guards and peasants and ordered them to go into the crowds to restrain the peasants from their own brigades.⁴⁵ Although the county officials were nothing but "capitalist roaders" in the eyes of the Red Guards, their words were still official to the grassroots rural cadres who immediately started reining in their people to avoid a replay of the August 26 episode.

⁴⁵ KFDJN, 127-128.

As Deputy Party Secretary Zhang Yumei was defusing a pending crisis, county commissioner Gao was hustled by Red Guards into the County Cultural Revolution Office where he was asked to join the presidium of the rally and make statements in support of smashing the steles at the rally. Gao adamantly refused to cooperate. Red Guard leader Zhang daoying made a concession and told Gao that he could remain silent but he must sit on the stage of the rally on behalf of the county party committee. Gao raised his voice and told Zhang, “Let me say it one more time: I do not agree with smashing the steles. Therefore, I will not join the presidium!”⁴⁶ But Zhang refused to back off. As the head of the Liaison Station and the Master of Ceremony for the rally, he knew it was his moment to make history by ensuring the rally’s success. Although the practice of “kick out the party committee to make revolution” started in early October, Zhang also knew it was not yet the right time to exclude the local party committee from the political process. He needed a Qufu party committee representative to be on the stage for the public to see. Nothing would send a stronger message to the agitated Qufu peasants, the biggest threat to the rally’s success, than a subdued and compliant top Qufu leader on the stage. In view of these factors, Zhang refused to give an inch to Gao. “You must attend today’s rally. The county party committee must have a representative on the stage!”⁴⁷ Zhang insisted. As 11 a.m. drew nearer, a stalemate seemed to have set in, to the dismay and panic of the rally organizers.

Although Commissioner Gao steadfastly adhered to the “three no’s policy,” he was not sure if the provincial leaders would steadfastly hold on to their “protect the State Council steles at any cost” position. After his talk with BNU Red Guard leader Tan fell

⁴⁶ KFDJN, 128.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

through that morning, Gao immediately reported Tan's new demands to the provincial leaders and asked for further instructions. He had been waiting for a reply since then. Now that he had reached another stalemate with the rally organizers, he became even more eager to know how the provincial leaders would like to handle the volatile situation. It was at that critical moment when his secretary found him. Gao eagerly asked the secretary, "Did you get a reply yet?" "Yes," his secretary replied, "Provincial Party Secretary Bai said, 'Just let it go. Do not resist anymore'."⁴⁸ Hearing this, Gao felt like a deflated balloon. As the interim top administrator of Qufu, he had led the Qufu government to resist the BNU Red Guards from the day they set foot in Qufu, but all the efforts were for nothing. The caving-in of the provincial government to the Red Guards signified the end of any meaningful resistance on the part of the local government. It was now time to accept the reality, acknowledge Tan's authority, and cooperate with the Red Guards.

The Collapse of the Last Line of Defense

At 11 a.m., the "Completely Crush the Confucian Family Shop Oath-taking Rally" officially began before the Confucius Mansion. Speaker after speaker took the stage accusing government officials of using the steles to protect "cow ghosts and snake demons." Document after document was read to expose the evils of the Kong lineage and those who protected them, including the "A Protest Letter to the State Council."⁴⁹ As this was going on, the crowds began to be boisterous and started to surge forward. There were those who tried to get closer to the State Council steles to witness the smashing; there were those who wanted to take a close look at the now legendary Red Guard leader Tan

⁴⁸ KFDJN, 129.

⁴⁹ KFDJN, 130.

Houlan; and there were those peasants, conservative Red Guards, and townspeople who wanted to confront the Red Guards and stop the imminent destruction of the steles. An incredible pandemonium ensued. The chaos Gao Keming warned Tan about in the morning was closer to becoming a reality.

As the chief organizer of the rally, Zhang Daoying tried frantically to keep the crowds under control, but his voice was hopelessly drowned out by the din. In despair, Zhang turned to Gao Keming and yelled at the top of his lungs, “Commissioner Gao, you must immediately stop the chaos. If anything should go wrong with the rally, the county party committee would be held fully accountable!”⁵⁰ Gao was sitting on the stage as a “prop” for the rally, but the tumultuous circumstances turned the “prop” into a main actor and an unexpected “fire extinguisher.” Gao stood up, moved a few steps forward, and held out his hands to signal for calm and order. Miraculously, without a single word uttered, people began to calm down and the crowds stopped moving.⁵¹ Gao proved that the local government still commanded significant respect among the Qufu residents despite Red Guards’ efforts to undermine their public image in recent months.

With the crowd under control, Zhang resumed the rally and concluded the ritual opening ceremony with the recitation of the “Stele-Smashing Oath” by all participating Red Guards: “We pledge to overthrow any protection umbrella of the ‘cow ghosts and snake demons’! We will smash to pulp any loyalist steles that impede revolution!” With that, Zhang solemnly declared, “The stele-smashing will now begin!”⁵² Immediately, pandemonium resumed. The excited crowds surged forward again to catch a better view of this historic moment. Among them were also some conservative Red Guards shouting

⁵⁰ KFDJN, 131.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² KFDJN, 134.

“Smashing the steles is to attack the State Council!”⁵³ However, their shouts were drowned by the even more deafening shouts and noises of the crowd.

Despite the strong muscles of the attackers, the State Council stele was made of such quality granite that it refused to be smashed easily. The Red Guards had to use ropes to pull down the base of the stele first and then took turns to smash it. With their fellow Red Guards’ rhythmic chanting of Mao’s quotation: “Be resolute, fear no sacrifice, and surmount every difficulty to win victory,” the stele-smashing team finally smashed the 1,000 pound heavy granite stele into pieces—along with the authority it represented.⁵⁴ The idea of smashing the State Council steles was conceived in Beijing, resisted in both Jinan and Qufu, opposed by people from all walks of life in Qufu, but finally delivered by the BNU Red Guards.

Ironically, as soon as the Red Guards broke the stele into pieces, they were asked to piece it back together again, and they gladly accommodated. This was because a Xinhua News Agency photographer assigned to take photos of the rally was stuck in the crowds and did not catch the live smashing of the stele. Therefore, he asked the Red Guards to reassemble the stele and then re-smash it for the photo opportunity.⁵⁵ While “A picture is worth one thousand words,” a picture of Red Guards smashing the State Council’s stele was worth even more. The photo captured the fall of the authority and prestige of the State Council and the futility of all resistance to the CCRG and its storm troops.

The domino effect of the fall of the protection steles was both swift and violent. As soon as the stele before the Confucius Mansion fell, Zhang led a group of Red Guards

⁵³ KFDJN, 135.

⁵⁴ KFDJN, 135.

⁵⁵ KFDJN, 136.

and locals to the Temple to the Duke of Zhou. There, they smashed the State Council protection stele for that site and even pulled down the centuries-old statue of the Duke of Zhou, which crumbled into pieces.⁵⁶ Some Red Guards and locals marched into the Confucius Cemetery where they not only destroyed the State Council stele for the Confucius Cemetery but also started smashing some prominent symbols of the Confucius Cemetery, such as the “Most Sagacious Cemetery” Memorial Archway.⁵⁷

The Confucius Temple was not spared devastation either. A group of Red Guards stormed into the Confucius Temple followed by local mobs. They climbed onto the shrines of Confucius’s disciples and knocked down the heads of these statues one after another. Those who couldn’t get on the shrines kicked the fallen heads back and forth like soccer balls. A man in his thirties climbed on to the statue of Confucius and pried into a crack on its chest. He first pulled out some cotton and then, on second try, discovered a string of silver internal organs and a bronze heart-protecting mirror.⁵⁸ When he dug in further, he found a copy of Confucius’s *Book of Rites*. The onlookers followed suit and searched the interior of the other now headless statues and discovered more silver internal organs, bronze mirrors, and copies of various Confucian classics such as *The Book of Change*, and *The Analects*. Together, they took out seventeen silver internal organs, seventeen bronze mirrors, and dozens of vintage Confucian classics. The only head that was spared during this violent and sudden assault was that of Confucius. The Red Guards saved it for special use in the next phase of their campaign.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ KFDJN, 137.

⁵⁷ XBHZL, 11356.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ KFDJN, 138-139.

The extensive, rampant destructive acts immediately following the rally boded ill for the Three Kong Sites. Those acts were neither clearly mandated by the CCRG directives nor previously announced. Yet they erupted violently and abruptly with no one attempting to stop them. What was even more ominous was that, from the very start, the locals were more violent and extreme than the Red Guards, who knew their specific objectives and demonstrated some discipline and constraints. What is also worth noting was the contrast between people's reaction to the destruction of the protection steles and to the Kong sites: there was strong objection to the destruction of the symbols of state authority, but there was little public anger and outcry over the violence against the symbols of traditional authority and Chinese culture.

The events of November 15, 1966 marked the demise of the last line of defense for the Three Kong Sites. Not only was their physical symbol of protection lost, but the psychological line of defense for the local residents and cadres was lost too. The loss of the protection steles was an ominous harbinger of what was coming next. Indeed, each violent performance was a rehearsal for the next one. The signal for the final assault was given; the floodgates for waves of violence were loosed, and the ancient town of Qufu, sitting helplessly in the cold winter of 1966, waited for the impending calamity.

Planning the Final Assault

On November 16, the Red Guards, while still relishing the sweet victory of the day before, were already contemplating their next moves. They developed some ideas to exploit their victory, but it was the radical leader Lin Jie in Beijing who again brought his trusted Red Guards a complete set of ideas for the next phase. Lin had followed his "pet project" closely and brought new instructions to the BNU Red Guards through the

expeditionary force's special envoy to Beijing. On the evening of November 16, this special envoy relayed Lin's instructions to the heads of the BNU Red Guards: they were to combine the anti-Confucian campaign with the campaign against bourgeois reactionary line.⁶⁰ Their foremost priority was to mobilize the peasants. Without thoroughly awakening and mobilizing the peasants, the Red Guards' victory would be superficial and incomplete.

Tan was once again struck by Lin Jie's insight and vision. Indeed, the events of the past few days clearly indicated the existence of a "peasant problem." Tan knew how the peasants were instrumental in the local Red Guards' debacle on August 26. She remembered how on the evening of November 13 some BNU Red Guards, who ventured into a village to mobilize the peasants, were harassed, ridiculed, and held up by some peasants with the encouragement of village cadres.⁶¹ She certainly had a fresh memory of how much the peasants respected Commissioner Gao. During the stele-smashing rally when peasants were clashing with the Red Guards, it was Gao who, with a wave of his hands, stopped the pandemonium. Tan knew the peace between the Red Guards and the peasants stemmed from the peasants' recognition of the Red Guards' power, but Tan wanted to turn their recognition of power into recognition of the anti-Confucian campaign as a mutually beneficial cause for both the Red Guards and the peasants. Tan had to accomplish this in order to complete the objectives of the campaign.

Having digested Lin's instructions, Tan introduced a four-step plan to carry them out. The first step was to ask Zhao Yimin, the aforementioned rebel-teacher at QTC, to "educate the educators"; that is, Zhao would educate the Red Guards about the "evils of

⁶⁰ KFDJN, 151.

⁶¹ KFDJN, 156.

the Kong Lineage” and those who protected it, and the Red Guards would then bring the messages to the villages to educate the peasants. The second step was to send BNU Red Guards to rural Qufu to mobilize the peasants. The third step was to fetch some prominent scholars who participated in the 1962 Confucius Forum and “worshiped Confucius.” The fourth step was to get more people to visit the Confucian sites to raise their awareness and consciousness of the “evils of the Confucius establishment.” More specifically, they were to enhance the class education exhibition in the Confucius Mansion, send “Jinggangshan Light Calvary Propaganda Teams” to the streets to get the word out, and demand a three-day break for all Qufu government employees and peasants so that they could come to see the exhibition in the Confucius Mansion. Once these objectives were accomplished, the final rally and a full-scale assault would commence.⁶²

The following days were spent on implementing this four-step plan. On the morning of November 17, a general meeting for all BNU Red Guards was held where the rank-and-file Red Guards were informed of the four-step plan and given a general orientation about the evils of the Kong lineage by Zhao Yimin. Zhang Daoying also went to the Qufu Cultural Revolution Office and demanded a three-day break for employees and peasants to visit the class education exhibition in the Confucius Mansion, which the government reluctantly obeyed. On November 19, a team of Red Guards headed by Tan and Zhao Yimin went to the provincial capital Jinan to ensure the provincial government’s support for their final assault. Another team was dispatched to bring to Qufu various “reactionary academic authorities” for the grand finale of the campaign. The vast majority of the BNU Red Guards then went to rural Qufu to mobilize the peasants.

⁶² KFDJN., 151-152.

To ensure the local government's support of the Red Guards and avoid the past experience of peasants harassing Red Guards, the now compliant county government held a countywide cadre meeting where Commissioner Gao called on the officials to support the Red Guards. Liaison Station chief Zhang Daoying also delivered a powerful "carrot-and-stick speech" at the meeting. He criticized Qufu officials for their roles in the August 26 incident but also encouraged them to rise up against the bourgeois reactionary line.⁶³ Zhang's tone of "you are either with us or against us" before Qufu's number-one leader sent a strong message to the cadres at the meeting about who was really in charge in Qufu now.

By November 20, the time of the final rally was announced through an open telegram that the BNU Red Guards sent to the whole country. It was titled "Ten proposals to completely overthrow the 'Confucian Family Shop' and establish the absolute authority of Mao Zedong Thought."⁶⁴ Not only did it announce the end of November as the time for the mass rally, but it also spelled out the specific objectives of the rally, including the formation of a nationwide massive anti-Confucian campaign and the establishment of a nationwide liaison committee to "unite all anti-Confucian revolutionary organizations in the country." The telegram was a clear effort on the part of Tan to expand the influence of the Jinggangshan Regiment to the entire country.

The following day, November 21, county Party Secretary Zhang Yumei held a "broadcast rally" through the countywide wired broadcast network in which he called on the peasants to support the BNU Red Guards. This was followed by yet another countywide cadre meeting on November 22 to ensure facilitation of Red Guards'

⁶³ KFDJN, 153-154.

⁶⁴ XBHZL, 11353.

mobilization activities in the villages. At this meeting, Qufu cadres were specifically told to “support BNU Red Guards, organize peasants to tour the class education exhibition in the Confucius Mansion, engage peasants in ‘grievance meetings,’ and actively prepare for the 50,000 people rally.”⁶⁵ This succession of meetings and follow-up meetings was indicative of an increasingly more powerful hand of the Red Guards in the local affairs as well as a clear sign of local cadres’ acquiescence or capitulation to the power of their “new boss.” These meetings sent a clear message to their silent audience—the peasants and Qufu public who watched the steady decline of the old leadership and unmistakable rise of the new power.

The Qufu cadres’ surrender to the Red Guards’ authority dovetailed well with the Red Guards’ comprehensive peasant mobilization project. BNU Red Guards moved into villages in Qufu where they practiced the “Three Together,” namely, “Eat Together, Live Together, and Labor Together [with the peasants] (*santong*).”⁶⁶ Without the interference of the local cadres, they freely explained the significance of their anti-Confucian campaign to the peasants. Their most significant roadblock was the mansion-town relationship. Although Zhao Yimin gave them a quick orientation on the evils of the Kong lineage, demonizing and dehumanizing the Kong lineage to a rural population where twenty percent of the population was surnamed Kong was no small challenge. Although the Kong family was probably the largest landlord family in the nation and numerous local people toiled for it for centuries and generations, many peasants had

⁶⁵ KFDJN, 154. “Grievance meetings,” also known as “speak-bitterness meetings,” were meetings where exploited, oppressed, and downtrodden people, such as workers and peasants, were given the opportunity to voice their grievances against those deemed responsible for their hardships and miseries. Such emotionally charged meetings served as an effective mechanism widely used by the Chinese communists to mobilize peasants and workers during mass movements.

⁶⁶ “Three-togethers” was a popular communist practice aimed at making the government officials and intellectuals mingle with workers and peasants and know them better by sending them to factories or villages where they would eat, live, and labor together with the workers or peasants.

mixed feelings towards the Kong family: while they respected Confucius and had internalized many Confucian values, they did resent the economic hardships due to their status as tenants of the Kong lineage and were never given the chance to fully express their resentment. Besides, the new government since 1948 had also been protective of the Three Kong Sites, which had served to suppress any grievances they bore against the Kong family. Now that both the local cadres and Red Guards encouraged the former tenants and poor peasants to publicly air their pent-up grievances against the Kong family, the result was like the eruption of a dormant volcano. The Red Guards' rural mobilization program was so successful that soon "Confucius" and "Confucian Family Shop" became curse words in villages that children would use to attack other children.⁶⁷ Grievance meetings were an important communist peasant mobilization instrument and its effectiveness was proven one more time.

On November 23, Tan returned from her trips to Jinan and Beijing where she secured provincial leaders' commitment to support the rally and received further instructions from Lin Jie. That evening, she convened a meeting where she gave a progress report and concluded that the conditions were ripe for a major rally to conclude the campaign. A detailed plan was worked out at the meeting. The official time for the rally would be November 28-29.⁶⁸ After Tan's meeting, Zhang Daoying as the head of the Liaison Station held his own meeting to work out the details for the rally, including the formation of a gravedigging team by the local peasants. Two days later on October 25, the Qufu party committee made its own contribution to the preparation of the final rally by holding a countywide cadre meeting to mobilize the entire county in support of

⁶⁷ KFDJN, 155-158.

⁶⁸ KFDJN, 163-164.

the students' revolutionary activities. The Red Guards also ordered the Qufu government to get 100,000 people to attend the two-day rally and find 300 peasants to form a tomb-digging team to work with the Red Guards on November 29. Suyuan Commune Party Secretary Chu Hongjiang was put in charge of gathering these peasants, who would receive 50 cents a day for their gravedigging work scheduled for November 29.⁶⁹

As top Red Guard leaders were busy getting ready for the rally, their foot soldiers were already producing impressive and unexpected results out in the villages. After a highly successful mobilization session in the Lihuadian Village on November 25, the peasants became so agitated and emotional that they took the initiative to smash the tomb of a prominent descendant of Confucius who was buried outside the Confucius Cemetery. They did so without any direct encouragement from the Red Guards. It was the peasants, not the Red Guards, who fired the first shot for gravedigging. Two days later, peasants at Chenguan Commune held a spontaneous "Smash the Confucian Family Shop Rally" to express their resolve to assist the Red Guards to smash the historical sites and treasures that they defended with all their might on August 26.⁷⁰ The significance of this was that Chenguan Commune and the peasants there were Qufu government's "fire extinguisher" and had often been used to fend off Red Guards attacks. Now the "fire extinguishers" turned into "fire breathers." They were going to breathe revolutionary flames into the oldest edifice of feudal China. Evidently, Lin Jie's "peasant strategy" began to work. In fact, the peasants had already exceeded Lin Jie's expectations.

On the eve of the two-day rally, everything seemed to be ready for the big moment. Even the long-absent Qufu Party Secretary Li Xiu returned to Qufu for this

⁶⁹ KFDJN, 165.

⁷⁰ KFDJN., 158-159.

occasion. Li had been attending the Shandong “Work Conference” in the wake of the “Central Work Conference” for the previous two weeks, where he and other provincial leaders were condemned for being loyalists and capitalist roaders.⁷¹ When he finally returned to Qufu on November 26, he had to sneak into the city under cover of darkness to avoid detection by the Red Guards. After 18 days in Qufu, BNU Red Guards managed a thorough transformation of Qufu’s political, social, and cultural landscapes. The preparation for the final assault was complete.

Mass Rally

From November 28 to November 29, the two-day rally as announced in the open telegram proceeded precisely as planned. A human mass of about 100,000 Red Guards, workers, and peasants congregated at QTC’s sports field “to completely crush the Confucian Family Shop.” Many participants started their journey very early in the morning; some were sent by the communes and many came of their own volition. Some Red Guards from neighboring localities even walked overnight to QTC. By 6 a.m. the Red Guards and peasants began to converge at the rally site “like red molten iron from all directions” with people waving flags of their organizations and Mao’s quotation book, turning Qufu Teachers College into a “red ocean.”⁷²

The rally officially started at 10 a.m. Representatives of the Red Guards, workers, and peasants were sitting on the center stage, while the provincial and county party officials Shu Zaiwen and Li Xiu were sitting on the west side of the stage. As soon as the

⁷¹ The Central Work Conference (October 9-28, 1966) was where the Liu-led party establishment began to collapse and both Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping repudiated themselves. The Shandong Work Conference was the provincial equivalent of the Central Work Conference where provincial, prefectural, and county leaders in Shandong became the targets of the Cultural Revolution.

⁷² XBHZL, 11361.

sound of *The East Is Red* died down and speakers were about to start their speeches, an unexpected commotion occurred along with the sound of drums.⁷³ People were startled by this sudden disruption and began to swarm towards the west side of the stage from where the sound came. Soon, it became clear that the commotion was caused by “The Qufu Teachers College Red Guards,” which was one of the three factions of Red Guards at QTC. They came to rebel against Tan and her Beijing Normal Red Guards, who they claimed denied their opportunity to speak at the rally. Chanting “We won’t allow Beijing Normal to monopolize everything!” and “Tan Houlan must get the heck out!” they tried to storm the stage to remove Tan from the platform.⁷⁴ A general melee followed where the Red Guards on both sides engaged in shouting matches and physical fights. At one point, the attacking Red Guards seized the broadcast studio and began to blast “Beijing Red Guards get out!” through the loud speakers. County Party Secretary Li Xiu was asked by Tan to restore order, but Li was only effective when he stood up and tried to calm down the crowd. As soon as he sat down, the chaos would resume. It was not until the Red Guards on Tan’s side regained the control of the broadcasting studio and the public announcement system and defeated the attackers in the crowds that the rally was able to continue again.

During the rally, speaker after speaker decried reactionary figures ranging from Confucius to the participants in the 1962 Confucius Forum. The speeches were followed by struggle sessions against the “reactionary academic authorities.” Confucian scholars from all over China were hustled onto the stage where they were struggled against. The first day of the rally started on a high note but deteriorated somewhat due to disruptions

⁷³ “The East Is Red” is an ode to Mao Zedong and a de facto national song during the Cultural Revolution.

⁷⁴ KFDJN, 172.

from fellow Red Guards. However, it was just a prelude to the main event. The most important agenda items of the rally were scheduled for the next day.

Mission Accomplished

On the morning of November 29, the rally resumed. It began with self-criticisms by provincial and county representatives Shu and Li, which was followed with concluding remarks by Tan.⁷⁵ The rally ended with the reading of “Ten proposals to completely overthrow the ‘Confucian Family Shop’ and establish the absolute authority of Mao Zedong Thought” and “A Message of Greeting to Chairman Mao,” whereby they pledged their allegiance and loyalty to Chairman Mao the Great Teacher and informed him of the destruction that they were going to inflict on the monuments of China’s Foremost Teacher. To the music of the popular song “Sailing on the Seas Depending on the Helmsman,” the fever of the participants reached its peak.⁷⁶

Personal attacks and physical abuse began immediately following the rally. Master of Ceremony Dong Lianmeng shouted the agenda for the remainder of the day to the crowd: “Put the cow demons and snake spirits on the truck, start the parade, march to the Confucius Cemetery, burn down Confucius’s statue, and level Confucius’s tomb!”⁷⁷ The Confucian scholars were then put on a waiting truck with a Confucius’s statue already on it. A tall dunce cap was placed on the statue’s head with the wording, “Down with No. 1 Scoundrel Confucius!” The scholars were made to stand next to or around Confucius’s statue. The parading trucks with Confucian scholars and other “cow demons

⁷⁵ Self-criticism is a political ritual of the Chinese communists whereby people criticize themselves at public events for the wrongs they are supposed to have committed or weaknesses they are supposed to have.

⁷⁶ KFDJN, 178-179.

⁷⁷ KFDJN 179.

and snake spirits” then moved around the entire city stopping at various intersections for the public to see and ridicule. The loudspeakers on the propaganda truck introduced the “cow demons and snake spirits” as they passed by the onlookers. Finally, the crowds and the parading trucks stopped at a small bridge on the west side of the Confucius Cemetery. Beneath the bridge, a fire was already burning. Red Guards threw various cultural relics especially gathered for this occasion into the flames, including the tablet for “the Most Sagacious Teacher.” Finally, they unloaded Confucius’s statue from the truck and threw it into the flames as well. Cheers erupted and spiraled into the sky along with billows of black smoke.⁷⁸ In just a few hours, two of the three main objectives of the expedition were accomplished, namely, burning Confucius’s statue and parading the reactionary academic authorities. The crowds headed to Confucius Cemetery to complete the last objective of the expedition—leveling Confucius’s tomb.

The assault on the Confucius Cemetery actually got underway early in the morning with some members of “the Red Guard Shock Brigade” starting the destructive work around the periphery of the Confucius Cemetery. By 9 a.m. a 300-strong peasant gravedigging team appeared on the “Sacred Path” leading to the Confucius Cemetery. They were immediately spotted by the cameramen from Beijing Film Studio whom Lin Jie sent to Qufu to film the historical event. The cameramen were elated to see the “poor and lower-middle peasants’ gravedigging team” and asked them to pose for the camera. The peasants were only too happy to oblige and thoroughly enjoyed this “rare privilege.”⁷⁹ They did not even get to see films often and now they were in a film.

⁷⁸ KFDJN, 179-181.

⁷⁹ KFDJN, 182.

Since the task of the day was to dig out the tombs of the first and last three generations of the Confucian lineage, the 300 peasants were split into two sub-teams—200 of them were assigned to help Red Guards to exhume the tombs of Confucius, his son Kong Li and his grandson Kong Ji. The remaining 100 were assigned to assist Red Guards to dig up the graves of the last three generations of Kong lineage, namely, those of the Kong Lingyi, Confucius's 76th direct descendent, and his father and grandfather.

A ground-breaking ceremony was held for the exhuming of the tomb of Confucius. Red Guards chanted Mao's quotations and Commissioner Gao Keming made remarks in support of their revolutionary actions. Following the ceremony, Red Guards and peasants began to dig out the graves of Confucius and his son and grandson simultaneously with crowds watching and cameras clicking. Qufu county party secretary Li Xiu and the prefectural party secretary also participated in the digging to show support. A representative from Shandong cultural relic preservation office provided technical assistance and advised the peasants on how to effectively dig out the tomb. A vehicle belonging to the People's Bank of Qufu was parked nearby with bank employees ready to collect the much anticipated funerary objects from Confucius's tomb.⁸⁰

Digging up Confucius's tomb proved to be far more time-consuming than expected. Following two days of hard work and after digging three meters into the ground, the gravedigging team and their advisors finally lost their patience. They drilled a few holes around the tomb, filled the holes with dynamite and then blew it up. When the dust settled, people swarmed to the gaping hole to catch the first glimpse, but they saw only an empty tomb. There was only yellow earth to be seen.⁸¹ Confucius had been

⁸⁰ KFDJN, 183-186.

⁸¹ KFDJN, 187.

absorbed into the yellow earth and became part of it. The gravediggers were disappointed. They used destructive modern explosives to dig out the body of an ancient sage, but no explosives, no matter how lethal and destructive, were going to find him—the sage and the earth had become one.

The digging of the graves for the last three generations of the Kong lineage turned out to be more dramatic. Of the 100 peasants assigned to dig out the tombs, fifty were assigned to assist to dig out the grave of Kong Lingyi, who was buried forty-six years before in 1920. After two days' hard work, they finally succeeded. On November 30, with the assistance of state-assigned cultural relic experts and medical professionals, five well-preserved bodies were exhumed, emitting an unbearable stench that caused many to vomit. The officials from Qufu Cultural Relics Commission and employees of the People's Bank in Qufu also helped collect the jewelry found in the graves and coffins. The jewelry greatly interested the onlookers. The tomb of Kong Linyi in particular attracted curious visitors from near and far for the next few days. The five exhumed bodies were eventually moved to a stretch of grass away from the tombs. Two of the female bodies were bundled together and hung from a tree as a prank by someone. Finally, Chu Hongjiang, the head of the peasant gravedigging team, disposed of the naked corpses because they were "unsightly."⁸²

At this point, all objectives of the rally had been successfully accomplished. With permission from the CCRG and central authorities, support from the government officials at various levels, technical assistance of the cultural and medical experts, and the fervor and zeal of tens of thousands of Red Guards and the Sage's own descendants, the physical symbols of Confucius lineage came to an abrupt end. The action of every

⁸² KFDJN, 191.

participant lived up to the spirit of Mao's famous quote, "A revolution is not a dinner party...A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another," to the fullest

Conclusion

Despite their strong resolve and enormous zeal, the BNU Red Guards faced tremendous odds when they set out to accomplish their Qufu mission. The possible obstacles they faced were peasant harassment, conflict with local Red Guards, rejection by the local officials, a hostile community, and the State Council's protection steles. Yet, during their twenty-eight days in Qufu, they scored a resounding victory in the end. This victory, however, was no accident but the consequence of a combination of factors and circumstances within or without their control. First, there was the careful planning of the Qufu operation. Next, there was the accidental discovery of the incriminating evidence in the Confucius Mansion that lent justification and legitimacy to their Qufu mission. Further, there were the disciplined and tactful college Red Guards who knew how to handle the local officials.

But their advantages by themselves would not have guaranteed their victory in the absence of the critical developments that tipped the balance and transformed an initially hostile and skeptical Qufu community and bureaucracy to become enthusiastic supporters or reluctant collaborators of the Red Guards. Chief among those developments were the instructions from the CCRG that not only approved the destruction but also specified its scope. This, in turn, broke the stalemate and empowered and emboldened the Red Guards, who used the momentum the CCRG support created to smash the State Council protection steles. The fall of the protection steles broke the local officials' will to resist

the Red Guards and protect the Three Kong Sites. The then subdued Qufu officials and paralyzed party control in rural Qufu further enabled the Red Guards to move into the villages and mobilize the peasants completely unopposed. In effect, it was the combined effect of a paralyzed bureaucracy, a mobilized peasantry, a compliant community, and a coalition of CCRG-backed Red Guards organizations that ended the centuries of unassailability of the Three Kong Sites.

Tan and the BNU Red Guards brought the full wrath of the Cultural Revolution to Qufu and accomplished all of their stated objectives. But every solution creates new problems. The Red Guards' victory gave rise to some uncertainties for the Qufu community, and some troubling signs began to emerge during their siege of Qufu. There was a paralyzed local government and a power vacuum. There were also the factional disputes among Red Guard groups that challenged even the CCRG-backed Red Guards. Qufu locals also engaged in spontaneous recreational violence and acquisitive vandalism and followed no rules. Finally, there was the eye-opening experience of seeing buried treasures being unearthed in the Confucius Cemetery by Red Guards and state employees. Would these factors create any problems once the BNU Red Guards departed Qufu? What would happen to the ransacked Three Kong Sites? Who would lead the "anti-Confucian movement" that the BNU Red Guards started? There were many questions and few answers at first, but people would soon find the latter.

Chapter V: Rebellion of Confucius's Descendants

Hasty Departure

Tan Houlan and her jubilant BNU Red Guards were still rejoicing over their victory when they were ordered to return to Beijing immediately. On December 3, 1966, just two days after BNU Red Guards accomplished the main objectives of their Qufu mission, Tan received an urgent telegram from the mission's chief architect Lin Jie in Beijing. The message was brief and clear, "An anti-Guan Feng, anti-Qi Benyu adverse current is making its way to the capital city. The Jinggangshan Regiment must immediately return to the capital."

Though it was on short notice, the withdrawal order was not much of a problem for either Lin or Tan. After all, they had successfully accomplished the Qufu mission, from which they received both ideological satisfaction and the political gain they desired: Lin through his skillful orchestrating of the entire mission had bolstered his credentials and credibility with the CCRG, while Tan had greatly increased her name recognition through her Qufu mission and earned the extra political capital she had long coveted.¹ Besides, as the CCRG's storm troop, Tan and her fellow Jinggangshan leaders were duty-bound to defend their key backers in Beijing.

The situation in Beijing was indeed disconcerting. From mid-November to the end of that month, a strong resistance movement, referred to by the radical Red Guards and CCRG as the "Black Wind in November," emerged to oppose the widespread attacks on the "capitalist roaders," by whom they meant the incumbent party and government

¹ Tan Houlan started her organization's nationally circulated *Jinggangshan Battle Dispatch* as soon as she returned to Beijing. Its front page covered the achievements of the organization's Qufu mission.

cadres. Both Mao's handpicked heir Lin Biao and the CCRG came under attack from various conservative forces.² The Jinggangshan Regiment's return to Beijing was a priority that easily trumped all others. Consequently, Tan immediately summoned a Jinggangshan Regiment headquarters meeting where they decided to leave Qufu in three days and turn over the unfinished business to their local allies.

As the BNU Red Guards' primary contact with the local Red Guards, Zhang Daoying held a meeting on the evening of December 4 announcing the news about BNU Red Guards' forthcoming departure. The dismayed local Red Guards pleaded with Zhang, "Please stay a bit longer. Who is going to lead us when you are gone?"³ Their concerns were genuine and understandable. Qufu officials had often reminded people about the inevitable departure of the BNU Red Guards as a way to deter locals from getting too close to them. Now, just three days after they had violated the Three Kong Sites and Qufu, the BNU Red Guards were already getting ready to leave them. Their local allies were both concerned about reprisals from the Qufu authorities and unsure about their ability to carry on the anti-Confucian movement without the BNU Red Guards. After all, they did not have all the advantages that BNU Red Guards enjoyed—the CCRG's full support, dominance over local officials, and clout over various Red Guards factions.

Zhang Daoying was not unsympathetic to their concerns, but he was neither able nor interested to accommodate their wishes. Instead, he rolled out an eight-point plan that spelled out the transitional steps and tasks ahead for the reluctant local Red Guards. The plan stipulated that the Confucian Complex was to be transformed into an exhibition hall

² Guo Jian, ed., *Historical Dictionary of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, xxii.

³ KFDJN, 212.

for class education and the Confucius Cemetery was going to have all of its tombs leveled and be turned into an orchard. The plan also designated Wang Zhengxin as the new head of the Liaison Station.

With that, Zhang Daoying handed the seal of the Liaison Station to his replacement Wang Zhengxin without addressing a whole host of questions on the minds of his local allies: Would the local authorities fight back and retaliate? Would the Qufu peasantry switch sides and turn hostile to the rebel students again? Would the various Red Guards factions remain united under the Liaison Station? Most important of all, would Wang Zhengxin be strong enough to take Tan's place and lead them to overcome the odds and achieve new objectives?

The “New Sheriff” in Town

Wang Zhengxin viewed his sudden rise from sidekick to main player with both trepidation and excitement. Like his fellow local Red Guards, Wang had his concerns about the challenges ahead; but unlike them, he welcomed those challenges and felt he was well-positioned to lead the Liaison Station and the anti-Confucian movement. While his fellow rebels were mostly rookie Red Guards in their teens, this 24-year-old nontraditional student was already a veteran Red Guard. While the other Qufu students were participating in their abortive first assault on the Three Kong Sites, Wang was already in Beijing networking with the radical capital Red Guards. In fact, he was one of the very few Red Guards from Qufu who saw Chairman Mao during his second review of Red Guards on August 31, 1966.

Wang's early political activism and acumen were quickly recognized by QTC's radical Red Guards organization Mao Zedong Thought Red Guards, which appointed him

as the organization's representative in Beijing.⁴ In this capacity, Wang became closely acquainted with Tan's Jinggangshan Regiment. When Tan was putting together an advance team for the Qufu mission, Wang was naturally one of those selected and soon became the team's trusted Qufu guide and resource person.

Wang did not let Tan down. Since his return to Qufu, he became the No. 2 figure of the Liaison Station and proved to be most instrumental in carrying out Tan's operations. During the mass rally on November 28, for instance, it was Wang who led a team of Red Guards to regain the control of QTC's broadcasting studio from the rival Red Guard faction. Wang's total devotion to Tan's Qufu mission, demonstrated resourcefulness, and proven leadership skills became the reasons for him to be chosen to fill the void left by the departing Tan.

Although Tan chose Wang and despite what they had in common—both were radical nontraditional students with some charismatic qualities—the two student leaders were worlds apart in personality and work style. Where Tan was snappy, abrasive, and impulsive, Wang was tactful, methodical, and rational. Wang's personal strengths became an especially important asset to him on December 4 when the gargantuan responsibility of succeeding Tan and leading the Liaison Station was abruptly thrust into his hands. Practically overnight, Wang had become the new leader of a coalition of loosely connected fledging Red Guards organizations and would assume responsibility for the fate of the Three Kong Sites. However, unlike the guardians of the Three Kong Sites before him whose duty was to preserve and protect those sites, Wang's job was to engage in the “constructive destruction” of the Kong sites; that is, he was to level all the

⁴ There were over forty Red Guard organizations at QTC alone, but this organization was the largest and most influential radical and anti-establishment Red Guards on this campus and in Qufu.

tombs in the Confucius Cemetery and turn it into an orchard and convert the Confucian Complex into a facility for class education. Wang knew he had his work cut out for him, and he needed a quick success to establish his authority as Qufu's new leader. This was going to be challenging. Qufu's leading officials were all politically discredited but administratively functional. To keep the Qufu community running, Wang needed the support of the bureaucrats but could not share his power with them. He had yet to figure out how to accomplish this.

Fortunately, an opportunity appeared before he had need of his leadership skills. It so happened that, at practically the same time as when Tan was passing the leadership baton to Wang, a rival Red Guard organization popped into being on the evening of December 3—one that openly challenged the Liaison Station's authority in leading the anti-Confucian movement. The new opposition was spearheaded by the same group of Red Guards that had disrupted the November 28 mass rally. They had become a constantly recurring irritant for Tan. She was able to lord over the academic authorities and capitalist roaders, but she was simply unable to shake off this group of pesky Red Guards.

That evening, this new coalition of defiant Red Guards, along with some dissenting local residents and peasants declared the formation of the "Shandong Qufu Denouncing Confucius Committee" to formally challenge the Liaison Station's monopoly of the anti-Confucian movement. They obtained a letter of approval from the semi-paralyzed Qufu government to create a seal for the new organization and publicly

announced its inauguration.⁵ Needless to say, the new competition was a slap in the face of the BNU Red Guards and the Liaison Station under its control.

Tan was furious at the reemergence of her avowed foes, but she was shrewd enough to turn this crisis into an opportunity as she realized it created the perfect moment to initiate Wang Zhengxin into his new leadership position. She knew that this opportunity, if handled well, could boost Wang's public profile, improve his name recognition, and help him make an impressive debut on Qufu's political stage. As a result, Tan let Wang handle the crisis but threw her full support behind him.

On the morning of December 4, Wang Zhengxin and his fellow Red Guards stormed into the Qufu government's Cultural Revolution Office where they demanded that the county government invalidate its approval of the rival organization and issue an apology letter to be distributed across the country.⁶ The following morning, Wang led a mass protest parade in Qufu and organized a protest rally outside the Qufu Cultural Revolution Office. As if this was not enough, Wang brought Qufu Party Secretary Li Xiu and the Shandong secretary of the secretariat Shu Zaiwen to the Confucius Temple where they affirmed their support for Wang's Liaison Station. With the momentum he had created, Wang managed to confiscate the new office of the rival organization and smashed its signboard.⁷

Apparently, Tan's crisis-to-opportunity strategy worked. As a result of those decisive and well-publicized actions, Wang was able to not only discredit the nascent rival organization but also make a name for himself in Qufu. To the participants and

⁵ In those days, a seal-shop required a note of government approval before it would make any seal for a public entity.

⁶ KFDJN, 217.

⁷ Ibid.

audience of this political theater as well as his potential allies and foes, it became clear that Wang Zhengxin was not just an interim figurehead temporarily replacing Tan. Rather, he had demonstrated necessary skills and the qualities expected of a successful Red Guard leader.

Tan came to Qufu a troublemaker but left Qufu a kingmaker. After leaving Wang this perfect “going-away present,” she bid her farewell to a conquered and disfigured Qufu on December 6 and led her troop to their next battleground. It was now primetime for Wang.

New Revolutionary Force

The sudden departure of the BNU Red Guards literally catapulted Wang into the top leadership position overnight. It was both an exciting and sobering moment for him. On the one hand, he welcomed the autonomy and the latitude; it was a great opportunity to both differentiate and distinguish himself from his predecessors.⁸ On the other hand, with autonomy and latitude came responsibilities and risks. Wang knew he was walking on an unbeaten path full of twists and turns. Tan left him with important mandates but not a roadmap of how to get there. To carry out those mandates, Wang had to engage in both destruction and construction: he was going to tear down many parts of the Three Kong Sites and convert them into a combination of a class education facility and an agricultural production base, which would involve quite some administrative decision and work for him. To this point, Wang had been busy attacking bureaucratic administrators and

⁸ Joel Andreas describes the absence of formal organizational links between the CCRG and local rebel organizations as a salient feature of charismatic mobilization structure during the Cultural Revolution. This situation enabled local Red Guards factions to enjoy much latitude. In Joel Andreas, “The Structure of Charismatic Mobilization: A Case Study of Rebellion during the Chinese Cultural Revolution” *American Sociological Review* 72 (2007): 450.

tearing down the old world. Now, in an irony of fate, he was going to assume administrative roles and walk in the shoes of those whom he had just toppled.

Wang weighed his strengths and weaknesses and mapped out his own strategies. He knew he would never have the advantages that the BNU Red Guards enjoyed and must establish his own authority, forge his own alliances, and fight his own battles against his potential adversaries. His experience over the past few weeks in dealing with various players on Qufu's political stage made him acutely aware that he had many rivals biding their time to challenge him. He knew the seemingly subdued local officials could stage a surprise comeback at any moment. He also knew that Tan and the CCRG might not be able to come to his rescue at a moment's notice. He was going to be a lone warrior facing all challenges ahead.

After much deliberation, Wang came up with the strategy which he put in his diary, "I must find ways to mobilize the peasants, make use of the power holders, employ some individuals within the Qufu party committee, and be tactful."⁹ Apparently, he took a page from Tan's operation manual by putting a premium on mobilizing the peasants. He knew it was Lin Jie's trump card, having witnessed Tan's brilliant execution of a peasant mobilization campaign. However, he could not simply copy their experiences. He had neither Lin's CCRG background nor Tan's aura, much less a team of battle-tested Red Guards like those BNU students at his disposal. He had to devise his own peasant mobilization strategy.

Creating his own peasant mobilization strategy, however, was no easy task for Wang. Among other things, the power structure in rural Qufu in December 1966 was no longer the same monolith that the BNU Red Guards encountered on November 10. The

⁹ KFDJN, 232.

havoc wrought by Tan had led to a reconfiguration of the once top-down rural Qufu power structure. The old hierarchical rural governing structure with power concentrated at the top had now given way to a power structure shared by three constituencies: (1) county and commune party secretaries, (2) peasants, and (3) grassroots rural cadres. While the county and commune party secretaries were still administratively functional, they were politically incapacitated and could only be used but not counted on. In contrast, the once compliant and obedient Qufu peasantry was greatly empowered by the Beijing Red Guards. On August 26, they dutifully followed the county officials' order to expel the intruding Red Guards. By the end of December, however, they were busy forming their own rebel organizations and laying their own claims in the Cultural Revolution. Some of them even joined Wang's rival organization and became a thorn in his side. On the other hand, many peasants remained too timid and afraid to risk being involved with the Red Guards.¹⁰ The peasants, in other words, became a political force whose allegiance Wang coveted, but could not take for granted.

As a result, the grassroots rural cadres became Wang's only possible allies; fortunately, they happened to be good possible allies. The grassroots rural cadres were comprised of model peasants, heads of the poor and lower-middle peasants associations, women's federations, and youth leagues, as well as brigade and production team party secretaries.¹¹ They served as the Qufu party establishment's most important rural power base. Although their former superiors were recently stripped of their power, their own

¹⁰ Qufu peasants seemed extraordinary conservative. During the Four-Cleanup movement that was superseded by the Cultural Revolution, cadres stationed in Qufu experienced extreme difficulty in getting the peasants to open up and rise against the lineage elders or local cadres. Qiu Xuexing, "Qing li "shi qing" yun dong" [Personal experience in the Four Clean-ups movement] *Zhonghen* 7 (2005): 58.

¹¹ The system of "model peasant" was established in early PRC to recognize those peasants who were both hardworking and loyal to the party.

peasant pedigree and lower ranks shielded them from the Red Guards' wrath and helped them to remain a politically viable force in rural politics whose potential was yet to be fully recognized and realized.¹² Consequently, Wang decided to enlist their support and use them as the key to his rural peasant mobilization strategy. Not only would the grassroots rural cadres be administratively indispensable for Wang's operations, but they were also politically reliable and maintained considerable influence on the local peasantry. Back in November, Wang had reached out to them and obtained their assistance in requisitioning the manpower needed to level the prominent tombs in the Confucius Cemetery.

Interestingly, but not surprisingly, Wang's goodwill resonated well with the grassroots rural cadres. Since the old bureaucratic chain of command was broken as a result of Mao's purge of the old party establishment in late 1966, these grassroots rural cadres realized power was being redistributed at the expense of their former bosses. In order to stay relevant and viable, they had to decide on which side of the fence they would stand. Many grassroots rural cadres had by then already learned that if they did not take initiative and become politically active, they themselves might become the "struggle target."¹³ It was in the middle of their search for new political affiliations and allies when Wang reached out to them. A mutually beneficial alliance thus took shape.

Seeking Peasant Advice

Mutual interest alone, however, was no guarantee of the grassroots rural cadres' conviction in Wang's cause and support for his leadership. In order to win their hearts

¹² Grassroots rural cadres were not declared targets of the Cultural Revolution.

¹³ Peter J. Seybolt, *Throwing the Emperor from His Horse: Portrait of a Village Leader in China, 1923-1995* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996), 66.

and minds, Wang designed a unique forum whereby over ninety grassroots rural cadres from the Qufu area were invited to the Confucius Mansion to tour the Confucian Complex and then brainstorm about how to best move the anti-Confucian movement forward.

Three such forums were held towards the end of December 1966. Each would begin with a tour of the “Exhibition on the Evil History of the Confucius Mansion” in the Confucius Temple with Wang as their tour guide. This carefully designed tour was intended to give the participants a memorable orientation in the “Evil Mansion” and arouse their class hatred. Wang knew very few of them had ever set foot in the Confucius Mansion because the Qufu government had initially banned the locals from any involvement with BNU Red Guards activities and the compliant grassroots rural cadres would be the first ones to comply. Therefore, Wang’s tour served as a kind of “remedial class education” for his guests. He was confident that there were enough “evils” in the exhibition for these rustic, hardscrabble peasant-based cadres to intensify their hatred of the Confucius Mansion and its protectors. Once the floodgates of their emotions were opened, Wang reckoned, conviction in his cause and loyalty to his leadership would follow.

Despite heavy snows, three forums were conducted on December 26, 29, and 30. In his welcoming remarks, Wang succinctly stated the purpose of this forum, “After your tour of the Confucius Mansion, we hope to hear your thoughts on whether the Confucian sites should be smashed, if the class education exhibition should be held, and how to best do it. You poor and lower-middle peasants are the main force of the revolution and were

most oppressed by the Confucian establishment. I hope you will all contribute your ideas.”¹⁴

While Wang’s remarks had elevated the peasant representatives’ status and made them feel valued, the tour that he had carefully designed had the effect of making them sit up and want to join the anti-Confucian movement immediately. Wang showed them not only those incriminating items discovered on November 10, such as the Kuomintang flag and Japanese sword, but also the items that would directly appeal to their emotions. One guest spotted his own name in an accounting book that recorded the tenant-landlord relationship between himself and the Confucius Mansion. Horrified by the discovery, the peasant burst out crying, “If Confucius were to come back, wouldn’t my head be gone?!”¹⁵

After seeing some illustration of the opulent lifestyle in the Confucius Mansion as well as evidence of the “decadent bourgeois lifestyle” in the International Guesthouse, one emotional peasant poured out his anger, “I have not been able to afford any cotton-padded trousers for seven years and yet they led such an extravagant life! Kong Lingyi alone had over 300 fur coats! Just one meal in the Confucius Mansion would cost several hundred taels of silver, but we couldn’t even afford a bowl of thin porridge after a year’s hard work!” Other guests joined the outpouring of anger, “The ‘Kong Sages’ ate the flesh and drank the blood of us poor and lower-middle peasants... We are shivering with anger!”¹⁶ Some even became destructive right on the spot. When a female party secretary from Big Temple Village saw a porcelain pillow with what she considered to be sexually

¹⁴ KFDJN, 225.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ XBHZL, 11389.

graphic images on it, she smashed it into pieces in no time and asked rhetorically, “What kind of garbage is this?!”¹⁷

The display of raw emotions signaled the achievement of the tours’ desired effect. Having stirred up their indignation, Wang invited them to the special forum that he had designed for them to share their thoughts about how to move the anti-Confucian movement forward. This time, Wang’s somewhat timid guests became outspoken and eager Cultural Revolution enthusiasts who turned their anger into unconditional support for Wang and the Liaison Station under his leadership. Kong Zhaorong, a seventy-first generation descendant of Confucius, pledged, “If no one would support the Red Guards’ rebellion, we poor and lower-middle peasants will! We’d support you even if it meant we must sell our hens and smash and sell our pots!”¹⁸ Kong Xiangyuan, a seventy-fifth generation descendant of Confucius, also offered his pledge of support, “From now on, whenever you run into problems, just let us poor and lower-middle peasants know. Be brave and daring to do what you must do. We are your staunchest supporters!”¹⁹ Quite a few guests also denounced the capitalist roaders who used to be their superiors, while others assured Wang that they would oppose Wang’s rivals and support only Wang’s brand of Red Guards.

The guests’ raucous assurances of unflinching support for Wang’s cause was music to his ears, but he was even more pleased to hear their concrete suggestions on how to conduct the next stage of the anti-Confucian movement. Guest Gao Youming suggested that every incriminating item found in the Confucius Mansion be put on

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ These peasants measured their support by their material possessions. Hens and pots were their most important material possessions. Therefore, selling hens and pots meant to give everything they had to support the Red Guards.

¹⁹ Ibid.

display and a mobile exhibition be created to bring the exhibits to the villages. Another guest Wei Liangkuan suggested that Wang tell those in charge of China's foreign affairs that all foreign guests to the Confucius Mansion "must have their brains examined by Mao Zedong Thought first" or else "they should not be allowed to come to our Qufu!"²⁰ One peasant encouraged Wang to open the class education exhibition to the whole country and world. Wang's special forums were a smashing success.

Wang was so proud of this brain child of his that he had the *Denounce Confucius Battlefield Report* write a feature on the outcomes of the special forums.²¹ Through this innovative initiative, Wang had proven that he could be an effective Red Guard leader without an avalanche of big-character posters or belligerent shouting matches. His distinctive peasant mobilization strategy enabled him to rally the grassroots rural cadres, through whose support he hoped to obtain mass support from the peasants, isolate his rivals, and create his own brand of anti-Confucian movement.

Preparing for the Class Education Exhibition

As Qufu's new leader with a multitude of responsibilities, Wang had to multitask in order to keep things under control and moving. Therefore, as he was making progress in gaining support from grassroots rural cadres and taming Qufu officials, he also began to tackle his most important tasks as Qufu's new leader—repurposing the Three Kong Sites for class education. He began this process by embarking on two special operations, namely, the operations to "clean up the Confucius Temple" and "clear up the cultural relics in the Confucius Mansion."²²

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ XBHZL, 11389.

²² KFDJN, 231.

Wang wanted to clean up the Confucius Temple because the once immaculate temple grounds were now a disaster area. Since he was going to turn the Confucius Temple into a class education facility, Wang considered tidying up the place a necessary part of the preparatory work. The Qufu that the BNU Red Guards' saw on November 9 was in pristine condition, but the Qufu they left behind on December 6 was in ruins. The Three Kong Sites were hit especially hard and the Confucius Temple, in particular, looked like a ravaged war zone. Smashed bits-and-pieces of steles, shrines, and statues were strewn everywhere. Fallen or half-fallen stone tablets and columns were scattered all over the temple grounds. The Hall of Great Perfection was littered with trash, filth, and scattered hay that traveling Red Guards used as bedding when they spent the nights in this unique "hostel of convenience" for Red Guards. The last time the Confucius Temple had been occupied by intruders was 1511 when peasant rebels led by the Liu Brothers encamped upon and littered the temple grounds. Although the damage to the Confucius Temple in 1511 was minimal compared with what befell it in 1966, it was considered so sacrilegious that the Ming court relocated the city of Qufu to its current place for the sole purpose of using the city to protect the temple.²³ It had since then survived every social upheaval intact until the arrival of Tan and her minions.

Wang approached his projects with caution and instructed the Red Guards to pull down only the Qing dynasty stone tablets and columns that remained standing in the Confucius Temple. He knew Qi Benyu's November 11 telegram stipulated that all Qing-dynasty relics were fair targets for removal, but not the earlier ones.²⁴ Wang's cleaning team followed these directives first but somewhere along the way ended up going above

²³ Gong and Li, 67.

²⁴ Qi Benyu was a key member of the CCRG and a backer of the Red Guards. His November 11 1966 directive to the Qufu government authorized the Beijing Red Guards to destroy Qufu' monuments.

and beyond. They pulled down many pre-Qing stone tablets and columns that the BNU Red Guards had specifically marked “Keep” in bright red paint. In so doing, they had actually gone against Qi Benyu’s directive, but no one was going to blame the Red Guards for going “a bit overboard” in the name of the revolution. Soon, many bystanders who initially just watched and cheered on the Red Guards began to follow suit. Some even outdid the Red Guards. One mansion worker who witnessed it all recalls that those “accidental perpetrators of violence” willfully pulled down many stone tablets and columns regardless of their age and significance.”²⁵ Many of the removed items have since vanished from history and were never seen again.

If the operation to clean up the Confucius Temple was Wang’s way to get it physically ready for the class education exhibition, then the operation to clear up the cultural relics in the Confucius Mansion was his way to prepare for the content of the exhibition. Ever since Tan’s tour of the Confucius Mansion on November 10, BNU Red Guards had behaved like bulls in a china shop and reduced the palatial residence of the “First Family under the Heaven” to a shambles. When they hurriedly departed on December 6, they left behind a disaster area. It looked like a tornado had gone through the entire Mansion, leaving a trail of debris and chaos in its wake. Piles of old paintings and calligraphy works were all over the place; traditional thread-bound Chinese books lay rotting in warehouses; sacrificial vessels of all types, fine porcelain, silk clothing articles, and Buddhist statues covered the floors of the Mansion. The voluminous archival files of the Confucius Mansion accumulated over several hundred years were in similar conditions.²⁶

²⁵ KFDJN, 243.

²⁶ KFDJN, 231.

The Confucius Mansion was such a treasure house that, even though the floors of the Mansion were already scattered with relics, many more items were yet to be screened and processed. Ever since 1948, when the Three Kong Sites came under communist control, the new government had committed untold resources to their upkeep and tasked myriad archivists, historians, curators, and subject specialists with organizing this living museum of Chinese history. But the contents of the Confucius Mansion were so enormous that, even with such continuous and concerted efforts, the evaluation of the relics and the archiving of the documents were left half finished at best at the start of the Cultural Revolution. Yet, in a matter of just a few weeks, history reversed its course and the treasury had become a haunted house. Most of the national treasures housed in the Mansion suddenly became “dirty linens” of the Kong Lineage and the Red Guards suddenly became responsible for determining which “dirty linens” were to be aired in public in the forthcoming class education exhibition. The volume of work was enormous and the complexity indescribable, but the burden of leadership fell on the shoulders of Wang Zhengxin, a 24-year-old Red Guard leader with no professional training or related experience in archival and museum work. It was as if Christie’s and Sotheby’s auction houses had hired a lumberjack to be their expert in evaluating valuable works of art.

Wang understood the delicate political climate far better than he did the cultural artifacts. Given the volatile and unpredictable political circumstances and in the absence of clear directions from the Maoist government on how to handle the cultural relics in the Confucius Mansion, he decided to handle the contents of the Confucius Mansion with care. In the piles of “feudal dross” before him, there might be elements of the “splendid ancient Chinese culture” that the central authorities might find useful one day. If he

handled them roughly, he risked “throwing the baby out with the bathwater” and could end up being penalized for it. In fact, the November 11 CCRG directives clearly indicated that Han dynasty steles were to be preserved. If members of the CCRG did not even paint all the relics in the Three Kong Sites with one broad brush, the characteristically cautious Wang was certainly not going to outradicalize the Red Guards’ patron saints.

In order not to create situations that could come back to bite him, Wang felt it would be necessary to involve the participation of experts with sufficient knowledge and expertise on a variety of subject areas such as epigraphy and museology. The Liaison Station was not going to be the only party involved. This diffusion of responsibility would not only give the appearance of a consensus and a collective effort but also ensure that the complicity and culpability would be shared if anything should go wrong. A participative project would protect Wang from arbitrary and capricious state policies and practices.

With that strategy in mind, Wang approached some teachers from the history and Chinese departments of QTC to help the Liaison Station sort out the relics. However, he soon realized it was politically unwise and operationally unfeasible to depend on a group of local academics with dubious political credentials and limited expertise.²⁷ Therefore, he abandoned this approach and created a unique “Cultural Relics Trial Committee,” whose charge was to evaluate cultural relics in the Confucius Mansion and then determine their fate. Committee members were composed of representatives from the Qufu Cultural Revolution Office, Qufu Cultural Relics Commission, Shandong Provincial Museum, and the Liaison Station. By delegating the work to four groups

²⁷ KFDJN, 232.

representing Red Guards, local government, and cultural experts, Wang accomplished his goal of diffusing the responsibilities.

The Cultural Relics Trial Committee was further divided into two subcommittees. Each subcommittee had members from all four representative groups. The first subcommittee was responsible for screening all the archival files in the Confucius Mansion, while the second committee was put in charge of evaluating all other items including books, old paintings, calligraphy works, gold, silver, bronze vessels, and even valuable Chinese herbal medicines.

The “trial” got off to a bad start because the “jurors” had their own criteria and agenda. The Red Guards were primarily interested in finding four-olds items to be used for class education exhibition or to be discarded. However, the two experts from the Shandong Provincial Museum were supposed to provide expert opinions on cultural artifacts. It turned out to be a frustrating experience for the experts because the Red Guard representatives on the committee always had the final say. Their frustration was further fueled by the fact that the cultural items “on trial” were not limited to the Qing dynasty but included those dating back to the earliest epochs. All too often, the Red Guard representatives would throw away items based on their own interpretations of what the condemned items meant and the experts could only try to persuade them otherwise.²⁸

The experts were successful only on a few occasions. They would justify their recommendations for salvaging something by stating that a certain item had class struggle value or a certain book should be preserved because it was a rare edition. When Wu Xu, an expert from the Shandong provincial museum, heard the Red Guard representatives’ plan to burn the entire collection of Confucius Mansion Archives, he was shocked. He

²⁸ KFDJN, 235-240.

knew it took ten years of combined efforts on the part of the Chinese Academy of Science, the Second Historical Archives in Nanjing, and the Shandong Museum to just begin the process of inventorizing these priceless historical files. Wu tried to do something to prevent the unthinkable. As luck would have it, he saw an emperor-approved list of people slated for execution. Pointing at the list, he told the Red Guard representatives, “This list has documented the suppression of the people by the Qing ruler and is a good source for studying the Qing social system. If it were burned then we wouldn’t be able to conduct research and criticism.”²⁹

In the end the Red Guards did spare some items, but their decision was based not so much on the experts’ pleas as on the pertinence of the spared sources to the class education exhibition, such as those records that documented how many taels of silver were spent on a meal for members of the Kong family. More often than not, however, the experts would fail in their attempts. Anything that was suspected as being associated with the Four Olds would be grounds for discard. According to the diary of Du Mingpu, another expert from the Shandong Provincial Museum, an exquisite painting was discarded by a Red Guard representative because he believed a bird in the picture was a superstitious symbol for longevity. A classic scroll painting also was discarded because the same Red Guard representative did not like the warbler and swallow on the painting. A calligraphy scroll was trashed because a calligraphic inscription in it mentioned a legendary figure in Chinese history who was supposed to have mended the sky to save mankind. The Red Guard representative believed the whole concept of mending the sky was “feudal and superstitious” and condemned the scroll accordingly.³⁰

²⁹ KFDJN, 234.

³⁰ KFDJN, 238.

Wang was pleased with the outcomes of the Cultural Relics Trial Committee. The long list of the “guilty cultural relics” bespeaks the extent to which the contents of the Confucius Mansion were gutted. Among them were 209 sets of Confucian family genealogies, including the Ming and Qing originals, totaling 32,232 volumes and weighing 10,778.5 jin (14,439 pounds). They were shipped in eight horse carriages to a paper mill in the provincial capital Jinan where they were sold as waste paper for RMB269.4.³¹ A total of 114.2 jin (125 pounds) of bronze Buddhist statues were sold to a recycling center for RMB1,424.44.³² Although the Kong family genealogies weighed 114 times more than the bronze Buddhist statues, the bronze statues were sold for more than five times the amount for the Kong family genealogies. The historical, cultural, and artistic values of the relics in the Confucius Mansion had all given way to their material values. The value of the family genealogies was reduced to paper and the value of the Buddhist statues was reduced to copper. The difference between the two was simplified as the difference between two types of raw materials.

In sum, the two special operations that Wang launched were intended to “tidy up” the Confucius Temple and “clear up” the relics in the Confucius Mansion in preparation for the ultimate goal of turning the Confucian Complex into a class education facility, but both ended up damaging the two sites even further. Wang, however, was not bothered by this. He was able to justify all that had happened through the rules of the Cultural Revolution. If anything, he had, through these operations, gained more confidence about his leadership, more skills in handling thorny and complex matters, and more control of

³¹ RMB stands for renminbi which is name of the Chinese currency, otherwise known as the Chinese yuan or people’s currency.

³² XBHZL, 242.

all facets of life in Qufu and the anti-Confucian movement. Wang felt he was on the right track and ready for the next battle.

Poised for a New High Tide of the Anti-Confucian Campaign

By the end of December 1966, Wang had proven himself to be the worthy successor of BNU Red Guard leader Tan who handpicked him as the Red Guard leader in Qufu after the departure of the Beijing Red Guards. Indeed, in the highly volatile and complex political landscape of the early Cultural Revolution, when various competing forces vied for power control and political legitimacy, Wang's list of accomplishments achieved in the three weeks since Tan's departure was long and impressive. He won over the important grassroots rural cadres through tours and forums and completed two special operations. He also pressured the politically discredited but functionally-important Qufu top officials into siding with the Liaison Station under his leadership. He even crushed his opposition by directing the Qufu Public Security Bureau to have the key members of his main rival Red Guard organization arrested and paraded in public as "counterrevolutionary elements."³³

Not only was Wang able to put Qufu's rural cadres and county officials under his control and his enemies in jail, but the strong momentum that he had built up also led to support for his Liaison Station from Qufu's general public as well. As radical Maoists gained even more control in Beijing and Wang demonstrated his ability to lead Qufu's Cultural Revolution, members of the Qufu community, who had initially viewed the BNU Red Guards as pariahs, began to express their support for the anti-Confucian movement. Letters from workers, peasants, and soldiers poured in to the Liaison Station's

³³ KFDJN, 220.

official publication *Denounce Confucius Battlefield Report* from near and far. Former tenant peasants condemned the “evil practices” of their former landlord—the Confucius Mansion. Many Qufu residents expressed their scorn for the Kong lineage. Some letter writers, who used to take pride in their association with the Kong lineage, now felt ashamed of it. Kong Xiangzhen, a seventy-fifth generation descendant of Confucius, wrote to support the leveling of Confucius’s tomb and the burning of her ancestor’s statue. “All Kongs are not the same,” she declared, “From now on, my name will be Kong Weidong (Kong who defends Mao Zedong) instead of Kong Xiangzhen (Kong who is precious and valuable).”³⁴ Support letters from other parts of the country began to arrive. In his letter to the editor, one reader from Hubei Province announced his break with Confucius through the change of his first name, “I solemnly declare that I have changed my original name Sui Jingni (Sui who admires Confucius) to “Sui Dong (Sui who follows Mao Zedong).”³⁵

Indeed, not only was the anti-Confucian movement gaining new momentum, but the Campaign against the Bourgeois Reactionary Line in late December 1966 roared into high gear as well, creating the optimal moment for an upsurge in the anti-Confucian movement in Qufu. On December 15, the official beginning of the Cultural Revolution in the countryside was unveiled with the passage of the “The CC Directive on Implementing the Cultural Revolution in Rural Areas.”³⁶ This development added legitimacy to Wang’s work in rural Qufu and freed his hands to introduce even more aggressive initiatives to bolster the anti-Confucian movement.

³⁴ XBHZL, 11384.

³⁵ XBHZL, 11424.

³⁶ Kal Renganathan Sharma, *China: Revolution to Revolution* (New Delhi: South Asia Books, 1990), 240.

By the end of December 1966, conditions were ripe for Wang to accelerate the anti-Confucian movement to the next level. He had crushed the opposition, rallied the base, and tamed the bureaucrats. As the chief overseer of both the Three Kong Sites with power over Qufu's administrative and political apparatus, he had amassed so much power that he was popularly known in Qufu as "nine thousand years of life" (*jiu qian sui*). It was a Chinese title reserved for anyone who was beneath an emperor or a "wan sui" (ten thousand years of life).³⁷ The title suggested the public's perception of Wang's power next only to the paramount leader's.

But Wang was not just content with an empty title. He planned to lead the anti-Confucian movement to the next level and make his own mark in history. On December 30, 1966, he unveiled his new plan to the entire country through an editorial on the front page of the now nationally circulated *Denounce Confucius Battlefield Report* titled "Usher in a New Tide of the Anti-Confucian Movement." In it, Wang proclaimed that the Liaison Station was going to unite the workers and peasants to push the anti-Confucian movement to a new phase and create a "swelling new high tide." "Our victory so far is just the first step of a long march," the editorial noted, mimicking what Mao said in 1949 upon taking over the country, "We will remove any obstacles and sweep away any road-blocking tigers. He who follows the tide will survive; he who impedes it will perish!"³⁸

Tomb-robbing Mania: From a Trickle to a Flood

Just as Wang was envisioning the grandeur of the imminent "new high tide" of the campaign, another explosive situation was nearing eruption. It so happened that just

³⁷ It was a title originally given to the famed Ming dynasty eunuch Wei Zhongxian. Since people were wishing Mao Zedong ten thousand years of life, as in the popular "Long Live Chairman Mao," the title Wang received apparently can be interpreted as having yet another layer of meaning.

³⁸ XBHZL, 11382.

as the *Denounce Confucius Battlefield Report* announcing the advent of the new high tide was leaving Qufu for national circulation, a team of 20-30 peasants carrying picks and shovels quietly walked past the Confucius Mansion, through Qufu's north gate, and into the now unguarded Confucius Cemetery. They stopped at a large mound-shaped tomb and began digging, spade by spade and shovel by shovel. Everyone seemed to know exactly what they were supposed to do and why they were doing it. Not much was said but much was getting done.³⁹ Few people noticed it and few people seemed to care, but what was unfolding was the first shovel of a massive catastrophic tomb-robbing frenzy hitherto unseen in Chinese history.

These peasant tomb-robbers were members of the “Southgate Brigade Breakthrough Team”—a peasant Red Guard organization headed by the brigade party secretary Zhang Fuhai. Previously in August, Zhang and the peasants he led followed the order from Qufu authorities and successfully protected the Three Kong Sites. This time, however, they followed their own interest to plunder and pillage the cemetery of their own forefathers and ancestors. However, this dramatic transition of Zhang from a gallant protector to an exploitative predator of the same site did not just happen overnight. Several events contributed to the transition of this former party loyalist to a leader of peasant anarchists. Among them were the smashing of the State Council protection steles and mass rallies that led to the mass violence against the Three Kong Sites.

However, the most direct catalyst for the peasants' ironic transition from defenders to attackers was their witnessing of the excavation of the tombs for the last three Yansheng Dukes. It was through that particular firsthand experience that they recognized the enormous treasures buried in this two-square-kilometer lineage burial

³⁹ KFDJN, 252-253

ground —gold, silver, jade, precious stones.... The image of treasures buried with the deceased bodies of their ancestors was seared in their memory. They saw members of the Qufu People's Bank and Cultural Relics Commission putting all the valuable funerary objects from the tomb of the seventy-sixth Yansheng Duke Kong Lingyi into a trunk. They also remembered the disappointing exhuming of Confucius's tomb that involved the use of dynamite but yielded nothing but yellow earth.⁴⁰ From all these experiences they learned something new: The state had abandoned Confucius and the Kong lineage and corpses meant wealth.

Zhang Fuhai and his fellow fortune-seekers realized that they were not only sitting on a goldmine, but they could probably also tap into it with impunity. They turned their thoughts into actions and saw the tombs for the late generations of Confucius's direct descendants as having the greatest promise. They started with the tomb for Kong Qingrong, the seventy-third Yansheng Duke since the last three tombs from the seventy-fourth through the seventy-sixth Yansheng Dukes had already been emptied during BNU Red Guards' operation in November. With no prior experience in gravedigging, the peasant fortune-seekers laboriously removed the entire top of the tomb in order to reach and open the coffin for valuable funerary objects. It was backbreaking work. They dug during the day and returned the next morning. Since it was the slack season in rural Shandong, they were able to work every day. And since they did not have any competition yet, they could afford to take their time to do a thorough job. Most important of all, there was no one to stop them. In the old days, the Confucius Mansion had a private security force to protect its properties. In 1929 when radical students in Qufu attacked the Kong lineage, lineage heads received help from the local branch of the semi-

⁴⁰ KFDJN, 185-187

martial and semi-religious “Red Spear Society.”⁴¹ During the postrevolutionary years, the Cultural Relics Commission managed the security of the Three Kong Sites. But with Tan’s visit to Qufu, all security mechanisms melted away and the Confucius Cemetery became, as it were, a no man’s land.

Soon, their hard work paid off. As the “earliest bird” in the gravedigging frenzy, Zhang Fuhai’s Southgate Brigade caught one of the “biggest worms.” The revenue from the sales of the unearthed spoils augmented their collective coffers and individual purses while the stones and bricks from the burial land of the dead feudal lords were used to build a Mao Zedong Thought School for the Southgate Brigade. “With a Mao Zedong Thought School,” Zhang told his fellow gravediggers, “no longer will we have to find a place to conduct our meetings anymore!”⁴²

Word about Southgate Brigade’s groundbreaking activities quickly spread across the neighboring brigades. On the eve of New Year’s Day 1967, peasants from seven brigades in the immediate vicinity of the Confucius Cemetery joined the action and started claiming their share. There were no blasting loudspeakers, no mass rallies, and no public announcements through the countywide wired broadcast network to mobilize the peasants, yet Qufu peasants were more mobilized and motivated than they had ever been. Indeed, no public indoctrination or moralizing was necessary to motivate Qufu peasantry because, to the poverty-stricken peasants now unfettered by any obligations to their cultural heritage, money talked louder than anything else. Finally, the peasants saw an opportunity where they could combine economic pursuits with a lofty political cause and they were not going to let it slip through their fingers. Teams of peasant gravediggers

⁴¹ Bensen Li, 32-33.

⁴² KFDJN, 263.

swarmed into the Confucius Cemetery from all directions to obtain their share of the fortune despite deep snow and freezing cold. They desecrated the tombs for the Yansheng Dukes, high-ranking officials, prominent Kong personalities, or just any impressive-looking tombs that promised great treasures.⁴³

Especially active were cadres and peasants from the Linqian Brigade, so named because the brigade was situated literally before the Confucius Cemetery and separated only by the cemetery wall. For countless generations, peasants in this nearby community developed a close bond with the Confucius Cemetery. As the Chinese saying goes, “Those living on a mountain live off the mountain; those living near the water live off the water.” The villagers living near the Confucius Cemetery had certainly lived off the Cemetery for centuries. They had benefited both socially and financially from the annual “Forest Gate Fair” or “Flower Market” routinely held before the main gate of the Cemetery.⁴⁴ In winter, they would also pick firewood in the Cemetery to stay warm. In the words of Linqian village cadre Li Baoming, “In summertime, we would enjoy the shade at the gate of the Confucius Cemetery, while in wintertime we would enjoy basking in the warmth of the winter sun against the Cemetery’s wall. This was why we did not agree with Red Guards’ attempt to smash the archway at the gate of Confucius Cemetery when they first arrived. We were attached to the Confucius Cemetery!”⁴⁵

No attachment, however, was strong enough for the Linqian villagers to resist the temptation of the gold rush. Once the tomb-robbing started, their fond attachment for the Confucius Cemetery gave way to their wanton desires for material possessions. In the words of the same village cadre Li Baoming, “Once the digging for gold, silver and other

⁴³ KFDJN, 263-265.

⁴⁴ Kong Demao, *In the Mansion of Confucius’s Descendants* (Beijing: New World Press, 1984), 180.

⁴⁵ KFDJN, 262.

precious objects started, everyone went digging. Why shouldn't we be a piece of the action? What's the big deal with digging anyway?"⁴⁶ Indeed, once the BNU Red Guards set the precedent and peasants from the Southgate Brigade followed suit, all their uneasiness and inhibitions about digging up the graves of their forefathers were gone. What remained of the Confucius Cemetery became fair game for anyone who cared to take the trouble to find the buried treasures. Since the law was not supposed to punish the majority, they felt they should all be safe joining the gravedigging crowds. Besides, they were not just any gravediggers, but peasant gravediggers exercising revolutionary justice against a much despised and vilified feudal establishment.

Once they had overcome their qualms, peasants from all five production teams of the Linqian Brigade leapt into action. Since many members from their community served as grave watchers of the Confucius Cemetery for generations or worked on the Cemetery's maintenance crew in the postrevolutionary years, they took advantage of their intimate knowledge of the Cemetery and quickly spotted the most promising tombs. The most coveted "cash cow tomb" that they grabbed before anyone else could was the one for the seventy-second Yansheng Duke Kong Xianpei and his wife. Buried inside this larger-than-average tomb were the two most prominent figures in the history of the Kong lineage. According to the 1937 edition of the genealogy for the Kong lineage, the wife of Kong Xianpei, known as Madame Yu, was the daughter of Qing Emperor Qianlong. They married in 1772 and became well known for their prestigious status and wealth.⁴⁷ Madame Yu's dowry reportedly included tax revenues from twenty villages and several

⁴⁶ KFDJN, 262.

⁴⁷ Manchus and Han were not supposed to be intermarried, but Madame Yu was supposed to be married to Kong Xianpei as the daughter of a Han official Yu Mingzhong. Hence the name Madame Yu.

thousand trunks of clothing and jewelry.⁴⁸ It was speculated that one of the reasons Emperor Qianlong made as many as nine pilgrimages to Qufu in his lifetime was because his daughter was married to a Yansheng Duke in Qufu. As Qianlong's son-in-law, Kong Xianpei was a frequent and favorite guest of Emperor Qianlong, who granted him large amounts of valuable gifts. It came as no surprise that, after the death of the couple, their tomb was among the most grandiose in the Confucius Cemetery.

Their assets became their liability, however, when the tomb-robbing frenzy took off. Those who used to view them in awe became the first ones to lay their hands on their tomb. Around New Year's Day 1967, Peasant Red Guards from the Fourth Production Team of the Linqian Brigade moved in on the tomb for Yansheng Duke Kong Xianpei and his wife. They dug open the rear side of the tomb, broke open the outer shell of the coffins, and then used thick ropes to drag them out of the tomb.⁴⁹ Once they pried open the coffin lids, they saw the couple tightly wrapped by nine layers of fabric and three layers of ropes. Both bodies were found to be well preserved. Kong Xianpei was dressed in a dragon robe with a jade belt at his waist.⁵⁰ In the words of Zhang Baozhong, a Linqian village peasant who participated in the act, Kong Xianpei "was dressed like he was on stage in costume."⁵¹

The peasants first sprayed alcohol on their bodies as disinfectant and then proceeded to remove their robes and clothes to search for valuable burial objects. Kong

⁴⁸ Kong Demao and Ke Lan, *The House of Confucius* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1988). 95.

⁴⁹ Outer shells that provided better protection and preservation of the coffins were available only to the wealthy who could afford them throughout Chinese history. A.C. Moule, "Chinese Music Instruments" *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 39-41 (1908): 62.

⁵⁰ A dragon robe was an official suit in classic times that only officials who had been awarded honor by the emperor were entitled to wear. This corresponded with Kong Xianpei's status in his lifetime. Sharon Yang, *Traditional Chinese Clothing: Costumes, Adornments, and Culture* (San Francisco: Long River Press, 2004), 20.

⁵¹ KFDJN, 257.

Xianpei was wearing a gold bracelet on his left hand and a gold thumb-ring on his right hand. His wife's coffin contained more valuable objects than her husband's. In it were found several sets of bracelets and rings in gold, jade and emerald. After removing the valuable burial objects, the peasants pushed the bodies back into the coffins which were then put back in the tomb but left uncovered. Unlike the ideologically and politically motivated gravedigging that often involved the mutilation of the exhumed corpses to make a political statement, the peasants were preoccupied with acquisitive vandalism and were more interested with what was buried with the dead bodies rather than the bodies themselves.

Peasants from the Second Production Team of Linqian Brigade were not as fortunate as their brethren from the Fourth Production Team who got Kong Xianpei's tomb. Still, they knew the Confucius Cemetery well enough to grab other prominent gravesites such as those for the wealthy brothers of Yansheng Dukes.⁵² They also focused on some promising Ming tombs. Funeral architecture from the Ming and Qing periods "reached its zenith." Among others, Ming tombs were especially deep, which created extra challenges for excavation.⁵³ Still, they worked hard to beat the other peasants to the promising tombs and the treasures within them. All male laborers from this production team of over 200 people worked their hardest around the clock to get the most out of this once in a lifetime event. They worked nonstop and dug up over a dozen

⁵² In 2008 and 2009, I interviewed Confucius Cemetery watcher Xun Zhaoyou, a villager from Lianqian village, who told me that his family worked as cemetery watchers since the Ming dynasty and he himself worked as a maintenance worker at the Cemetery before the Cultural Revolution erupted.

⁵³ David, J. Murphy, *Plunder and Preservation: Cultural Property Law and Practice in the People's Republic of China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 19.

tombs. Fortune did not smile on them, however, until they dug into a Ming tomb over 500 years old where they retrieved twelve valuable funerary objects.⁵⁴

The peasant gravediggers from the Linqian Brigade probably had not worked that tirelessly and uncomplainingly since collectivization started in rural China and took away their work incentive. Their high motivation clearly stemmed from the strong economic incentives and rewards they received. With the magic of gravedigging, just Linqian Brigade alone sold over RMB30,000's worth of burial objects, an astronomical figure considering the available cash for the entire brigade under normal circumstances was around RMB1,000-2,000 in total.⁵⁵ The gravedigging business became so lucrative that these catch slogans began to emerge: "Carve up the Confucius Cemetery" and "One night, one tractor," suggesting the money from one night's digging was enough to buy a tractor.⁵⁶

The sight of long lines of peasants at the Qufu Branch of People's Bank waiting to trade their loot for cash worked better than any rural wired broadcast network. Word traveled so fast from mouth to mouth, village to village, and county to county that, within two days, the Confucius Cemetery became the talk of the entire region and the trickle of gravediggers turned into a torrential flood. Teams of peasants with digging instruments converged on Qufu from all directions just as they did during the November 28 and 29 mass rallies, except this time they all came entirely by their own volition. At the height of the tomb-robbing frenzy during the first ten days of 1967, the number of gravediggers grew exponentially. First, it was just the Southgate Brigade. Then, seven additional brigades in the surrounding areas of the Cemetery joined the force, followed immediately

⁵⁴ KFDJN, 258-259.

⁵⁵ KFDJN, 271. Current USD/RMB exchange rate is about 1:6.5.

⁵⁶ KFDJN, 263.

by all fifty villages in Qufu. Finally, peasants from the entire region came for their share.⁵⁷

During the peak of the gravedigging frenzy, several thousand gravediggers packed the Confucius Cemetery. Most were organized by their production teams but some were just unaffiliated individuals or even siblings trying to make a killing out of the dead.⁵⁸ Also, gravediggers came not only for the buried wealth, but also for the materials above the ground. Practically anything that was of any conceivable use became fair target—tomb-stones, planks, copper nails on the doors, and bricks from the walls. The peasants turned the Confucius Cemetery into something of a construction site where people worked, ate and slept in the same place in order to get the most wealth in the shortest time possible. Having been so poor for so long, they relished every minute of this chance to make money for their own good.

Peasant Resourcefulness

As the number of gravediggers from outside Qufu grew, so did the tension between Qufu locals and outsiders. The local peasants considered Confucius Cemetery their sphere of interest and its underground wealth their exclusive asset. Consequently, they were resentful about “outsiders and non-Kong families” encroaching on their turf.⁵⁹ While the locals could not monopolize the buried treasures in the Confucius Cemetery and keep this money maker all to themselves, they could at least take comfort in the knowledge that they enjoyed considerable advantages over their competitors from afar. Unlike the out-of-towners who would often indiscriminately dig up any tomb they saw

⁵⁷ KFDJN, 271-272.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 254.

⁵⁹ Sang Ye and Geremie R. Barme, “Commemorating Confucius in 1966-67”(December 2009) <http://www.chinaheritageneewsletter.org> (accessed 3 July 2011).

because of their lack of familiarity with the Confucius Cemetery, the local peasants could locate the best gravesites and knew the landscape, which allowed them to receive better logistical support. For instance, some Linqian Brigade peasants were able to cook their food and rest at the residence of Kong Xianchang, a seventy-second generation descendant of Confucius who was both a fellow villager and a Cemetery staff member who resided in the Cemetery.

Such local advantages alone were not enough to be competitive in this particular environment and defeat others in the race for buried treasures. To do so, they must know effective gravedigging techniques. And yet, Qufu did not have a history of tomb-robbing, as neither the imperial rulers nor their communist counterparts tolerated tomb-robbing in Qufu.⁶⁰ The local culture was always against it too.⁶¹ Consequently, the peasant gravediggers had to learn effective gravedigging. Necessity, however, proved to be the mother of invention. In their efforts to cope with various new issues, Qufu peasants learned on the job and developed some effective and innovative techniques to improve their efficiency. For instance, they simplified the procedures to achieve top speed. Initially, they would spray alcohol on the corpses as disinfectant and put the bodies back to the graves after they had removed the valuable items from them, but they soon abandoned both to improve speed.

They also greatly improved their efficiency by simplifying the way they reached buried corpses. When peasants from the Southgate Brigade under Zhang Fuhai worked on the tomb for the seventy-third Yansheng Duke Kong Qingrong, they removed the

⁶⁰ Martin K. Whyte, "Death in the People's Republic" in *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, ed. James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1988), 297-299.

⁶¹ Susan Naquin, "Funerals in North China" in *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, ed. James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1988), 63.

entire top of the tomb, which was both time-consuming and ineffective. However, when peasants from the Fourth Production Team of Linqian Brigade tried to reach the bodies of the seventy-second Yansheng Duke Kong Xianpei and his wife Madame Yu, they had already improved the procedure by removing only the rear side of the tomb, thus cutting the workload almost by half.⁶² Although in both cases above the peasants would dig open the tombs, open the stone outer shells and then pull out the corpses, their quick-thinking fellow gravediggers soon discovered far more efficient ways to achieve the same result. They would simply open the outer shell, smash the coffin inside, and then send someone into the tomb who would then move the corpse out of the coffin to first search for the funerary objects on the floor of the coffin and then the corpse itself. Finally, they even abandoned that in favor of an even more time-saving approach. They would send someone down to the grave and into the coffin where this one person would search for funerary objects right inside the coffin without moving the corpse first.⁶³ The person who was best at it happened to be a woman from the Southgate Brigade who eventually had to be taken to the hospital for treatment of skin problems that resulted from excessive exposure to dead bodies.⁶⁴ Historically, women in Qufu tended to be low-key, moderate, and circumspect, but the Cultural Revolution as a rule-breaking social upheaval helped render this tradition obsolete.

The local peasants further improved their efficiency through learning from their mistakes and correcting wrong assumptions. At one point, they were under the impression that the larger the tombs, the more likely they would contain valuable funerary objects. After a few futile searches, however, they learned that the size of the

⁶² KFDJN, 257.

⁶³ KFDJN, 255.

⁶⁴ KFDJN, 268.

tomb was not the only determinant of fortune. On the contrary, they discovered that, whatever their sizes, those tombs that had a funerary pool in front of them would usually have a funerary table underneath the pool. This, as the peasants soon learned, would be where valuable funerary objects were most likely to be found.⁶⁵ In another example, local peasants learned that the official rank of the deceased per se had no direct bearing on the worth of the tomb. What mattered more was the sex of the deceased. Female corpses as a rule would carry far more valuable funerary objects than their male counterparts, as was the case with Madame Yu from whom the peasants retrieved far more objects than from her husband Yansheng Duke Kong Xianpei.

The innovative ideas that the local peasants unleashed also included the ironic use of former employees of the Confucius Mansion and educated people to help them identify lucrative gravesites. Once the promising tombs were all emptied, such as the tombs for the Yansheng Dukes of the Ming and Qing periods, gravediggers realized that they would have to depend on those with intimate knowledge of the Confucius Cemetery to locate the remaining “good sites” instead of digging up anything they saw and risk failures. They found two types of people particularly helpful in finding those sites. One type was the former employees of the Confucius Mansion who were able to pinpoint the good targets almost by reflex. The social status and prestige of the former employees and administrators of the Confucius Mansion dropped precipitously in the postrevolutionary years, but in the heat of the tomb-robbing mania, their status was briefly revived. The peasants treated them like “money gods” and invited these “experts” to the Confucius Cemetery where they showed the gravediggers the promising gravesites they knew.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ KFDJN, 261.

⁶⁶ KFDJN, 255.

For those peasants who could not get the assistance of the former Confucius Mansion employees, their solution was to find the educated and literate people in their communities who could read and identify the inscriptions on the tomb stones and tell the rank and social status of the deceased. The educated people in rural Qufu were few and far between and included ritual specialists, funeral specialists and feng shui masters. Their social status in the anti-intellectual and anti-superstitious postrevolutionary China was greatly diminished. In the rural Socialist Education Movement of 1964-65, ritual specialists were even struggled against as part of the “feudal and backward” forces.⁶⁷ But their old knowledge gave them a brief reversal of fortune in the heat of the tomb-robbing frenzy when they suddenly became the much sought-after experts.

However, the most creative and yet ironic innovation the peasants demonstrated was the black humor in the cynical use of the traditional class enemies known as “the four bad elements”(*sileifenzi*), namely, landlords, rich peasants, counterrevolutionaries, and bad elements (hereafter untouchables) to facilitate tomb-robbing and profit keeping.⁶⁸ Since so many valuable items were involved in the gravedigging process, some organizers took extra caution to make sure that no one was going to pocket the spoils at others’ expense. Therefore, every time a tomb was dug open, only those deemed most politically reliable were allowed to enter the tomb to search for valuable objects. The selfish among them would be automatically disqualified for the job. But even that was not enough of an embezzlement-proof mechanism for the heads of the gravedigging

⁶⁷ Martin K. Whyte, 299; The Socialist Education Movement was technically directed against corrupt rural cadres but the traditional class enemies in rural China, such as former landlords, were also affected.

⁶⁸ After the communist takeover in 1949, landlords, rich peasants, counterrevolutionaries, and bad elements became the “class enemies” and were frequently persecuted and discriminated against by the state.

teams, who adopted a “trust but verify” approach by searching the bodies of those who just searched the bodies of the deceased for treasures in order to prevent “theft.”⁶⁹

But those village organizers soon discovered that none of their theft-prevention mechanisms were reliable enough to completely eliminate theft. The temptation was too great no matter how trustworthy the chosen peasants initially seemed to be. This was the case with one peasant from the Linqian village who claimed to have found nothing upon exiting a tomb but was then stopped and found carrying a silver ingot.⁷⁰ Unable to find an effective solution to the problem, some production teams simply summoned the untouchables in their villages and made gravedigging their exclusive responsibility while the poor and lower-middle peasants would simply stand by and collect the funerary objects when the untouchables exited the tombs. The untouchables, they concluded, would not have the courage to pocket any valuable objects.

For once, organizers of gravedigging actually managed to stop the “theft” as the untouchables by 1966 had been so subdued by the ceaseless political campaigns against them that the last thing on their mind was to cheat on the peasants. One young woman from a landlord’s family recalled being forced to remove all her winter clothes in freezing cold before being sent down to a tomb just in her chemise to search for funerary objects. This was to deny her any place where she could hide any valuable items.⁷¹ To the poor and lower-middle peasants, the untouchables were lesser human beings and were therefore not supposed to disagree and disobey. Structural violence, a form of violence “by means of the institutions, practices, and structures of society,” had denied them the

⁶⁹ KFDJN, 263.

⁷⁰ KFDJN, 263.

⁷¹ KFDJN, 264.

right to refuse to act against their own conscience and turned them into involuntary participants in a crime against their own culture.⁷²

Return of Tradition

While it was a scathing irony that Qufu's "class enemies" were regarded as more reliable and trustworthy than the poor peasants, it was just one of the many ironies that informed this gravedigging frenzy. Some particularly noteworthy ones had to do with how traditional values and practices were reflected in the tomb-robbing frenzy.

Chinese society had especially frowned upon tomb-robbing and tomb desecration. The Confucian values upon which the Chinese society was built served as the bedrock of ancestor worship. Punishment for tomb robbers included "death by a thousand cuts," a tormented execution and "the most extreme form of bodily punishment a Chinese tribunal could impose."⁷³ Tomb robbery in Qufu was especially rare and considered sacrilegious in both traditional and modern China. This is what made the tomb-robbing frenzy in early 1967 in the Kong family cemetery such an extraordinary event.

Despite the appearance of a massive all-out anti-tradition tomb-robbing frenzy, the invisible but powerful dead hand of the past still gripped many tomb robbers who were driven by ignorance, superstition, greed, and hypocrisy. Scores of Kong clan members from the neighboring Wenshang county came to the Confucius Cemetery for the express purpose of finding a "gold head" that was supposed to be attached to the body of a Qing dynasty high official from their own county. Apparently, they believed the urban legend that, after this official was beheaded by an emperor for a certain offense, his

⁷² Jack David Eller, *Violence and Culture: a Cross-Cultural and Interdisciplinary Approach* (Belmont, California: Thomson Wadsworth, 2006), 140.

⁷³ Timothy Brooke, Jerome Bourgon, Gregory Blue, *Death by a Thousand Cuts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 55.

family attached a gold head to his body before burying him in the Confucius Cemetery. These peasants were determined to find this gold head not to protect or preserve it but to get the gold. They kept digging grave after grave in search of this phantom head. Gao Yongchun, head of Chengguan Commune, tried to explain the implausibility of this story to them, but to no avail. They dug up at least over a dozen tombs before finally giving up.⁷⁴

Some peasants even saved the quality coffin board that they took from the Confucius Cemetery to be used as their own coffin board. They had no problem with coffins, burials or tradition; they just wanted to have something for nothing and they had a rare opportunity to do so with impunity. When it came to gravedigging, no moral constraints mattered anymore. In the words of Tian Baotang, head of the Second Production Team of Linqian Brigade, “It was snowing when we were digging graves, but we couldn’t care less about snow. We just kept digging and digging to get rich! We seemed to be addicted to gravedigging!”⁷⁵

Ignorance and superstition also led peasants from Li Hua and Fang Jia villages to another bizarre situation. Some peasants from these two villages spotted some fungus that grew on some decayed caskets that looked like black wood ear fungus. Convinced that what they had found was a legendary panacea long believed to be particularly effective for treating sore throat and esophagus cancer, the excited peasants decided to make some money out of this discovery by cutting the fungus into thin slices and selling them for two yuan a piece, an exorbitant price at that time. However, people flocked to that village to buy this miracle herbal cure. It became such a talk of the town that local authorities

⁷⁴ KFDJN, 267-268.

⁷⁵ KFDJN, 261.

eventually purchased a slice and took it to some local doctors to determine the legitimacy of the claim. The doctors tested it in the lab and concluded that the claim was bogus. Not only did it have no medicinal effect, but it could actually harm people.⁷⁶

Associating death with medicinal effect has a long history in China. In his essay “Medicine” published in *The New Youth* in April 1919, writer Lu Xun describes how a man fed his son a steamed roll dipped in the blood of an executed revolutionary in hopes of curing his consumptive son.⁷⁷ It was Lu Xun’s scathing indictment of a traditional society plagued by ignorance and superstition. Yet, variations of the same theme occurred in the Confucius Cemetery in 1967, after the 1919 Chinese Enlightenment Movement (The May Fourth Movement), after the 1949 epoch-changing communist revolution, and in the middle of an unprecedented iconoclastic and anti-tradition Cultural Revolution. It was as if time had frozen for sixty-seven years. So much had changed, yet so much had stayed the same.

Peasant Defiance

The return and revenge of some seamy sides of Chinese tradition and society went hand in hand with the ever increasing chaos in the Confucius Cemetery during the frenzy. The first ten days of 1967 witnessed a scene of complete madness in the Cemetery. Ever since Zhang Fuhai and his peasant gravediggers turned the first shovel of earth in the Confucius Cemetery, the situation quickly deteriorated in ways no one could have ever imagined. The usually extremely serene sanctuary now looked like a “fairground” filled with gravediggers from every corner of the region. All the tombs for imperial officials

⁷⁶ KFDJN, 267-268.

⁷⁷ Jeremy Tambling, *Madman and Other Survivors: Reading Lu Xun’s Fiction* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2007), 40.

grade seven or higher were emptied, as were the tombs for all seventy-six generations of Yansheng Dukes.⁷⁸ Tombs in the entire northeast section of the Cemetery were completely destroyed. Naked corpses were scattered around the Cemetery. Some corpses were even tied to tree branches dangling to and fro making the Confucius Cemetery seem more like the netherworld than anything else.⁷⁹

While the Cemetery was crowded with people digging alongside countless red flags and wearing special arm bands for peasant Red Guard organizations, their true motives had little to do with what those visual iconography symbolized. No one seemed to be working hard to fulfill any revolutionary ideals or express any scorn for the Confucian establishment and values. Everyone had a clear-cut goal of getting buried treasures. To facilitate gravedigging, some production teams delivered liquor and meat to the Confucius Cemetery—a treat that they wouldn't afford most of the time. The peasants worked tirelessly and ceaselessly and turned the slack season for the peasants into the busiest and most exciting season they had ever experienced. Cheers of joy were heard when valuable objects were brought up, as were curses of disappointment when gravediggers came out empty-handed.

The sudden outbreak of the gravedigging frenzy completely blindsided Qufu's outgoing and incoming authorities and presented them with a major challenge. January 1967 happened to be a complex time that was unique “not only in Chinese political history but also in the history of mankind.”⁸⁰ This was because the left wing of the government, as represented by the CCRG and radical Red Guards, and members of the

⁷⁸ KFDJN, 271-272.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Hong Yung Lee, *The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: a Case Study*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978), 192.

old government, those disgraced but still functioning bureaucrats and party officials, coexisted and created a distinct parallel governing structure. Both sides had some power, but neither had full control. As a result, confusion became the order of the day. This national picture was mirrored in Qufu as well where the publicly repudiated old county officials who were still managing the daily operation of the government coexisted with the Liaison Station, the coalition of Red Guard organizations which had the blessings of the Maoist government but had no operational apparatus under its direct control. Thus, the incoming new government could not function without the operational and logistical support of the old government, while the outgoing old government could not get anything done without the consent or approval of the new government. Consequently, these two groups of mutually exclusive yet mutually dependent power holders formed a strange relationship where they clashed and collaborated from time to time.⁸¹

When the tomb-robbing frenzy erupted in the Confucius Cemetery, Wang Zhengxin as the head of the Liaison Station happened to be the most powerful person in Qufu, but he had to rely on the former Qufu officials to implement his plans. While the two camps did not agree on many things, both could be held accountable for not containing the tomb-robbing frenzy and both therefore agreed on one thing—the chaos in the Confucius Cemetery was unacceptable and must be stopped.

But stopping the frenzy was easier said than done. As Qufu's new chief, Wang suddenly faced an issue he had never anticipated, and a thorny and awkward one at that. For much of November 1966, BNU Red Guards and the Liaison Station kept calling on people to set the Confucius sites on fire and level Confucius's tomb. On November 30,

⁸¹ This situation eventually led to the "January Power Seizure" where Mao asked his followers to seize power from the incumbent government.

Red Guards and peasants dug up six graves in the Confucius Cemetery in front of the entire community and transferred large amounts of buried wealth from the graves to the waiting bank employees. Their peasant audience learned from this “public education event” that it was not only acceptable but actually commendable to dig up graves of prominent Kongs and it was legitimate to turn the buried treasure to the government bank for money. In many ways, the mass rally served as a gravedigging initiation event for the Qufu public when the “gravedigging genie” began to slowly crawl out of the bottle. Once it got out, pushing it back to the bottle proved to be an insurmountable task.

Local authorities, as represented by both the former officials and the Red Guards, reacted to the outburst of anarchistic tomb-robbing activities like a deer caught in the headlights. Their crisis management was ineffective and their response schizophrenic. At first they instructed the local branch of People’s Bank not to buy any unearthed funerary objects. Soon, they changed their mind and instructed banks to devote special personnel to handling the purchase of such objects, possibly out of their desire to keep the unearthed items in the possession of the state. The small local bank created a special fifteen-member purchasing task force to exclusively handle the large volume of transactions. Lacking expertise in evaluating unearthed funerary objects, they requested help from the Provincial Bank but never received any response. Consequently, bank employees improvised a solution and used the gold-testing stone (*shijinshi*), a pure black, smooth stone used to test alloys of silver and gold.⁸² Gold testing was extensively used during late imperial China, but this traditional, pre-industrial metal testing mechanism was revived on this particular occasion to solve a modern-day problem. The bank’s decision to buy unearthed items served as the government acquiescence to the legitimacy

⁸² KFDJN, 275.

of tomb robbery and an open invitation to even more of this activity. Soon, peasants filled the small standing-room-only local bank where employees had to work overtime to meet the demand.⁸³

As the schizophrenic local authorities ordered the Qufu bank to purchase the funerary objects, they also began to stop the massive tomb-robbery that produced these objects. The Liaison Station and the local government under its control worked together to bring this to an end. The wired broadcast network urged people across the county to stop this activity. But the appeals without any effective enforcement mechanism proved to be futile. Not only did the peasants ignore government's pleas, but they actually took it as a signal that they must hurry up before the government got serious and intervened.

Wang and the Red Guards leaders in the Liaison Station were frustrated by their ineffective intervention. Although they needed the former officials to help them contain the situation, they were in charge and their inability to halt the frenzy would reveal their incompetence. While the party central did not issue any directives banning such activities until March and May of 1967, Wang and Qufu officials knew that the chaos in the Confucius Cemetery had nothing to do with revolution but everything to do with greed. The futility of their intervention was at least in part due to the fact that the people they were trying to stop were not capitalist roaders or the untouchables, but flag-waving peasant Red Guards with strong revolutionary credentials.

Still, Wang and the Qufu government intensified their efforts to stop the ongoing anarchy in the Confucius Cemetery. In addition to issuing three public notices to stop the gravedigging, they also dispatched rural cadres and Red Guards to personally intervene. Deputy County Commissioner Ji Wenying required every commune to send a cadre to

⁸³ KFDJN, 275.

stop and bring back peasants from their own communes. The head of Chengguan Commune spent three days in the Confucius Cemetery trying to stop the tomb robbery, but no one bothered to heed the plea from a “quasi-capitalist-roader” like him.⁸⁴ The madness continued.

Even the threat of firearms was ignored. Chu Hongjiang, another cadre from Shuyuan Commune, was ordered to lead a team of People’s Militia to patrol the Confucius Cemetery and stop the tomb-robbing, but the gun-toting militia did not have any effect on the determined and defiant peasant fortune-seekers because it was an apparatus of the now discredited old Qufu government.⁸⁵ Without political legitimacy, the People’s Militia meant little to the peasants and their loaded guns wielded no real power. With the collapse of the old party establishment and repeated parading of party and government officials, the peasants did not even fear the superiors of the People’s Militia, namely, the old county officials whom they used to hold in high regard, let alone the militia itself. Instead, they taunted and mocked party official Chu Hongjiang by asking him, “Hey, Old Chu, since when have you become a loyal dog of Confucius?” Chu was so outraged that he felt like “mowing them all down with his gun,” but he dared not.⁸⁶

The peasants who mocked him actually had a point. In late November, Chu was put in charge of gathering 300 peasants to dig up the six most prominent tombs in the Confucius Cemetery and had a reputation for being a gravedigging pioneer. Now he was put in charge of leading the People’s Militia to stop the same type of activity that made him famous. Even Deputy County Commissioner Ji Wenying was repeatedly ignored by

⁸⁴ KFDJN, 267.

⁸⁵ People’s militia is the only militia organized and permitted by the Chinese government. During early PRC and Mao years, it was organized by the local and central government across the country and served the due purpose of maintaining social order and defending the country in times of war.

⁸⁶ KFDJN, 269.

the gravedigging peasants. Ji pleaded with the peasants, “Revolutionary poor and lower-middle peasant comrades, you cannot make money out of the state property!” His pleas fell on deaf ears. Instead, peasant gravediggers called him and his fellow cadres “watchdogs of Confucius.”⁸⁷ Frustrating and infuriating though his encounters with the gravediggers were, Ji’s experience was nothing compared with how the gravedigging peasants handled the Red Guards from the Liaison Station. Some peasants even beat up the Red Guards who tried to stop them. One Liaison Station student leader recalls that one peasant in particular almost killed a Red Guard with his shovel.⁸⁸ Eventually, even Wang Zhengxin, the indisputable paramount leader of Qufu, was snubbed by the peasants when he toured the Cemetery.⁸⁹ His charisma failed.

At this point, both the new government as represented by the Liaison Station and old Qufu government were at their wit’s end. Having failed every attempt to rectify the situation, Wang tried to seek help from the central government through the CCRG. He sent a telegram directly to Chen Boda and Mao’s wife Jiang Qing, the head and deputy head of the CCRG. It read, “With the encouragement of Qufu capitalist roaders, a tomb-robbing frenzy is unfolding in Qufu... State properties buried under the Confucius Cemetery are being robbed. We tried to stop it but to no avail. We ask you to please immediately respond with instructions on how to handle the situation.”⁹⁰ Wang waited for a reply from the CCRG but none came. He kept trying. His deputy Sun Guifang alone sent the same telegram five times, but no one responded.

⁸⁷ KFDJN, 266.

⁸⁸ KFDJN, 300.

⁸⁹ KFDJN, 266.

⁹⁰ KFDJN, 266.

Failing to get any response from the CCRG, Wang and a deputy county commissioner went to the provincial capital Jinan to seek help. The old rivals now joined hands in combating a new rival—the peasants. But the provincial authorities did not know how to handle it either and referred them to the central government. Wang and an official from the provincial Cultural Relics Commission tried to get to Beijing by train but couldn't do so because of the chaos at the train station caused by traveling Red Guards. They then wanted to fly to Beijing but did not have enough money for both to go. Since the characteristically cautious Wang refused to go to Beijing by himself, they abandoned the idea of going to Beijing.⁹¹ Meanwhile, in the Confucius Cemetery, utter anarchism went on unchecked and the Kong lineage burial grounds continued to be brutalized. Law and order collapsed in the face of the defiant peasants who for the first time in history could say no to anyone and willfully and gleefully continued their plundering with complete impunity.

Community Rivalry

Most historical events were started by people who did know or had no control of how they would end. This was certainly the case with both the Cultural Revolution and the gravedigging frenzy in the Confucius Cemetery. Peasant leader Zhang Fuhai and his peasant gravediggers started the event on New Year's Eve of 1967 and the Qufu masses turned it into a region-wide spectacle in the following weeks. All kinds of power players joined hands to stop the madness but the peasants ignored both persuasion and guns. Like the Red Guards in late 1966 who kept coming to Qufu from all directions and refused to leave until they had their way, the peasants poured into the Confucius Cemetery from all

⁹¹ KFDJN, 266.

directions and would not leave until they got what they came for. Like the Red Guards whom the local authorities had to handle with care, the peasant gravediggers with their recently elevated political status also had to be handled with extra care by anyone in power.

However, all historical events come to an end, as did the gravedigging frenzy in Qufu—but it ended with a bizarre twist of events. Towards the Chinese New Year (February 9, 1967), the mother of a cadre from the Daogou Village behind the Confucius Cemetery passed away. Since this village was practically an “all-Kong village” where everyone was surnamed Kong, this woman was entitled to burial in the Confucius Cemetery following Qufu’s centuries-old tradition, which somehow continued unabated even in the middle of the gravedigging frenzy. As soon as this peasant woman was laid to rest in a newly dug tomb, gravediggers from the neighboring Jiuxian community mistook it for another age-old tomb and began to dig this new tomb. Family members of this deceased woman explained to the gravediggers that this was a new tomb and should be left alone. The gravediggers stopped. However, when the woman’s family members returned the following morning, they were horrified to discover that this new tomb had been dug open by the same gravediggers the night before.⁹²

All residents from the Daogou Village were outraged. What happened was totally unacceptable to them. The gravedigging frenzy in the Confucius Cemetery had been continuing, but they were supposed to be digging up the graves of the rich and famous. The graves of the poor and lower-middle peasants were supposed to be left alone, not to mention there was really no buried wealth to be had from the grave of this poor rural woman anyway. However, all these reasonable considerations were disregarded by the

⁹² KFDJN, 267-268.

gravediggers, who at this point were digging indiscriminately. They had to get something. Going home empty-handed was not an option. As a result, some 200 peasants from the Daogou Village were immediately mobilized and marched to the Confucius Cemetery to settle the score with the perpetrators. A violent clash ensued in the Confucius Cemetery between peasants from two communities and blood began to fly.⁹³

Deputy County Commissioner Ji and some commune cadres had been patrolling the Confucius Cemetery. They immediately mediated and finally managed to break up the fight. The county and commune leaders took advantage of this unusual opportunity to bring the gravedigging frenzy to a halt. They used moral persuasion, “Look, even the graves of poor and lower-middle peasants have been dug up. You’d better stop digging and go home, or else more serious consequences may follow.”⁹⁴ Between the diminished underground wealth and the evidence of bloodshed between two groups of peasants, the peasant gravediggers finally halted the madness. It was also about the time for the Chinese New Year and a “harvest time” to distribute the wealth from the Confucius Cemetery and enjoy the “fruits of their labor.”

The conflict between these two rural communities was nothing less than a form of violent community feud (*xiedou*) that was entrenched in the traditional Chinese society for centuries.⁹⁵ As Martin Whyte notes, Chinese peasants continued to adhere to traditional customs regarding mortuary ritual despite all the political campaigns and indoctrination programs at eradicating old ideas and practices.⁹⁶ Indeed, tradition may at

⁹³ KFDJN, 267.

⁹⁴ KFDJN, 267.

⁹⁵ Harry J. Lamley, “Lineage feuding in Southern Fujian and Eastern Guangdong under Qing Rule” in *Violence in China: Essays in Culture and Counterculture*, ed. Jonathan N. Lipman and Stevan Harrell (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1990), 27-64.

⁹⁶ James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski, ed., *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1988), xiv.

times have to lay low and dormant, but it almost always returns, and sometimes does so with a vengeance.

The Aftermath

The loss of buried treasures is partially reflected in the local bank's accounting book. The Qufu branch of the People's Bank alone purchased over RMB110,000's worth of gold in the first twenty days of the frenzy.⁹⁷ By early April 1967 when the frenzy dwindled to its final close, Qufu's bank purchased over RMB290,000's worth of unearthed jewelry. This was close to the RMB348,000 famine relief fund Qufu government released to the entire county in 1959 when over 4,000 Qufu residents left Qufu to flee a devastating famine.⁹⁸ Besides the loss of buried treasures, several thousand trees were also cut down and removed from the Cemetery. Countless stone steles were pulled down and hauled away as well. The Liaison Station's own investigation report noted that as much as eighty-five percent of the steles in the Confucius Cemetery were taken away by peasants and used for their own construction projects, such as warehouses, meeting halls, and even pigsties.⁹⁹ In addition, five stretches of the cemetery wall were broken open and wall bricks were hauled away by peasants for their own construction projects as well.¹⁰⁰ The frenzy even spread to all other historical sites in Qufu, causing untold damage all over this historical area.

Along with material damage was nonmaterial damage which is hard to quantify but equally significant. Since time immemorial, people of Qufu were exemplary in

⁹⁷ XBHZL, 11386.

⁹⁸ Shandong sheng Qufu di fang zhi shi bian zuan wei yuan hui, *Qufu Shi Zhi* [Qufu City History] (Jinan: Qi lu shu she, 1993) 38.

⁹⁹ KFDJN, 271-272.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

following such well-known Confucian values as, “Serving the dead as if they were alive” (*shisi ru shisheng*), and “Let there be a careful attention to perform the funeral rites to parents, and let them be followed when long gone with the ceremonies of sacrifice” (*shenzhong zhuiyuan*).¹⁰¹ But this tradition was shattered during the frenzy when a community with over one-fifth of its population surnamed Kong dug up the graves of their own forefathers, tossed out their remains, and even hung already violated corpses on the trees as pranks. The Cemetery was scattered with human remains, but fear, guilt, and shame seemed to be the last things on the minds of the descendants of Confucius. To them, the once sacred bodies of their ancestors and forefathers were nothing more than physical materials where buried treasures resided, just as sand and gravel are where gold is extracted. Once the gold is retrieved, sand and gravel are discarded.

After the tomb-robbing frenzy, communist cadre Chu Hongjiang from the neighboring Shuyuan Commune returned to the Confucius Cemetery with some two dozen people from his commune to clean up the cemetery. As a rural cadre, Chu was always trying to do the right thing, although the definition of the “right thing” kept changing during the early Cultural Revolution. First, he was put in charge of organizing peasants to dig up Confucius’s tomb. Then he tried to stop the peasants from digging up tombs for money. And now, he returned to do some clean-up work, as the Confucius Cemetery, littered with human remains, was a bit too “unsightly.” Recognizing that this was going to be dirty work with no monetary reward, Chu and his fellow cadres brought with them some rural untouchables to do the dirty and unhealthy work. Those political untouchables and modern-day slaves were not supposed to disagree or disobey anyway.

¹⁰¹ Legge, *The Life and Teachings of Confucius*, 5.

The untouchables collected over thirty scattered corpses along with many scattered pieces of clothes removed from the corpses. They then put some coffin board in a pit, laid the collected corpses and clothes on the top, and set them afire. Those scattered bodies had no “homes” to return to and had to be “involuntarily cremated.” The fire from the dead bodies and rotten coffin board gave off such an unbearable odor that their handlers huddled by this “human bonfire,” where they found the odor to be least powerful. It was a cold night, and Chu recalled how they were able to “stay warm” by this bonfire of human remains.¹⁰² The descendants of Confucius desecrated their forefathers’ tombs, ransacked their contents, and threw out their bodies from their resting places, but their forefathers kept them warm with what was left of them.

As a result of the tumultuous events in late 1966 and early 1967, the pristine historical town of Qufu was reduced to a state of great wretchedness. Before the Cultural Revolution, there were 338 official cultural relic protection units in Qufu. After the Cultural Revolution, only eighty seven units remained.¹⁰³ In just a few months, seventy-four percent of the material representation of Qufu’s long and splendid history and culture permanently disappeared from its map. For over two thousand years, Qufu’s cultural treasures went through vicissitudes of many kinds and managed to survive unscathed, but they collapsed within eighteen years of state management. The cause of this cultural holocaust is at least partly attributable to what James Flath describes as “the contradictions inherent in the nationalization and management of a body of largely elitist historical relics by an ideologically populist state.”¹⁰⁴ Between an ideological campaign

¹⁰² KFDJN, 271.

¹⁰³ KFDJN, 276.

¹⁰⁴ James A. Flath, “Managing Historical Capital in Shandong: Museum, Monument, and Memory in Provincial China” *The Public Historian* 24 (2002): 57.

against the Four Olds and a manipulative power struggle in the top party echelon, the finest cultural institutions in Confucius's hometown received a devastating blow from which they would never be able to recover.

Conclusion

In the final analysis, the exceptionally violent pillaging of the Confucius Cemetery by Qufu mobs was the culmination of the tensions among three contesting authorities, namely, traditional authority, bureaucratic authority, and charismatic authority. For over 2,000 years, the hegemony of traditional authority in Qufu stood unmatched. The entire community of Qufu practically revolved around the Three Kong Sites and their guardians, the Kong lineage, controlled every aspect of the Qufu society. To Qufu locals, the Kong lineage symbolized absolute power which they both feared and revered. During late Qing and early republican periods, traditional authority began to lose its grip as the modern state began to penetrate traditional societies. But its impact on Qufu was limited, as reflected in the joy residents expressed at the birth of the Yansheng Duke Kong Decheng as well as their genuine sorrow at the funeral for the seventy-sixth Yansheng Duke Kong Lingyi in 1920.¹⁰⁵

With the arrival of the communist state in 1949 came the reconfiguration of the state-society relations. As the communist state established its control at every level of the society, traditional authority gave way to bureaucratic authority. Despite that, the early PRC remained a contested field where traditional authority stayed relevant in people's private life and the charismatic authority loomed large, especially after 1964 when Mao's

¹⁰⁵ Kong and Ke, *The House of Confucius*, 24. 28

personality cult began to gain additional momentum.¹⁰⁶ In other words, the early PRC is when three authorities coexisted with traditional authority in the background, bureaucratic authority in the public running the country, and Mao's charismatic authority gaining strength and gradually coming into conflict with the bureaucratic authority represented by the state machine of the PRC.

The Cultural Revolution was the watershed moment when Mao's charismatic authority reached its zenith. His Cultural Revolution doctrines in general and the campaign against the Four Olds in particular fatally undermined the traditional authority. His unique battle against the government he headed was not all smooth-sailing, however. Through a series of political maneuverings and gamesmanship in the second half of 1966, Mao called on the masses to overthrow the incumbent government and bureaucratic authority. While the bureaucrats facilitated Mao's obliteration of the traditional authority, they held their ground when their own existence was at stake. This was reflected in the Qufu bureaucrats' resistance to the Beijing Red Guards' attack on the Three Kong Sites in late August and early November, which directly threatened their authority. Drawing on the strengths of such bureaucratic characteristics as organization and efficiency that Max Weber describes, Qufu bureaucrats initially effectively neutralized Red Guards' attacks and guarded their turf.¹⁰⁷

But Mao was obsessed with toppling the bureaucrats in his own government. As he pressed on, the bureaucrats in their "iron cage" suffered from the inflexibility and rigidity of bureaucracy and began to lose their battle against the radical Maoists, who enjoyed the flexibility and rule-breaking power of charismatic mobilization. As the

¹⁰⁶ Maurice Meisner, *Mao's China and after: a History of the People's Republic* (New York: The Free Press, 1999), 281.

¹⁰⁷ Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 350.

radical wing of the government competed with the conservative wing of the government, a distinct form of transitional governing structure emerged in Qufu where the Red Guards gradually came into power and the entrenched bureaucrats gradually lost theirs. Neither, however, was fully capable of independently keeping the government running. A strange partnership between two rival power groups thus took shape. The new leadership as represented by the Liaison Station took advantage of the “bureaucratic efficiencies of the formal organizations,” while the remnants of the old government clung to the new leadership for survival and legitimacy.¹⁰⁸ The inherent conflicts within this partnership gave rise to frequent clashes between the two camps and created a dysfunctional government and a power vacuum.

The tension between the bureaucratic authority and the charismatic authority was not lost on the Qufu peasants, who not only recognized the complete abandonment of the traditional authority by the state and, hence, Confucianism that they had long revered, but also the imminent demise of the bureaucratic authority as represented by their own county officials, whose authority they had long respected. This power vacuum awakened the innate opportunism that happened to be rooted in the Chinese peasantry.”¹⁰⁹ The now politically empowered peasants saw and profited from an opportunity of a lifetime. In the name of the Cultural Revolution and collectivity, they turned an anti-tradition, iconoclastic movement into a most primitive, self-serving plundering of their ancestral lands.

¹⁰⁸ Joel Andreas, “The Structure of Charismatic Mobilization,” 454.

¹⁰⁹ James Gao, *Communist Takeover of Hangzhou*, 250.

Conclusion

This study has established the basic facts surrounding the spasms of violence against the Three Kong Sites, offered alternative interpretations of those events, and employed some relevant conceptual frameworks to analyze and understand the phenomenon of extreme violence in the birthplace of Confucius known for his emphasis on order, moderation, and harmony.

Setting the Record Straight

This study has provided some basic but important facts relative to the violence in Qufu that remain invisible in the existing scholarship. The following points summarize my findings concerning the factual background of this study.

First, three episodes of the campaign against the Four Olds took place in Qufu during the anti-Confucian movement of 1966-1967, contrary to the prevailing perception that only one episode took place.¹¹⁰ Each episode had its own distinct genesis, time, participants, target, modus operandi, and outcomes. The first episode that started about August 20, 1966 was initiated and spearheaded by Qufu Red Guards in response to the nationwide Anti-Four Olds frenzy. This episode culminated in a Qufu Red Guards attack on the Three Kong Sites, but ended with their defeat on August 26. The second episode occurred between September 5 and September 14 in the wake of Red Guards' August 26 debacle. Initiated by the local government and enforced by the Qufu bureaucratic apparatus, it targeted the Four Olds and traditional class enemies but left the Three Kong

¹¹⁰ See note 3 in Introduction.

Sites intact. The third episode was initiated and engineered in October in Beijing by members of Mao's inner circle, spearheaded by Beijing Red Guards, and carried out in Qufu in November 1966 by a coalition of outside and local Red Guards with the assistance of Qufu peasantry and local government. Other than the first episode that was a spontaneous local reaction to the nationwide campaign against the Four Olds, the other two episodes were both top-down, state-sponsored acts of violence, with one aiming to protect the Three Kong Sites and the other to destroy them.¹¹¹

Second, the Beijing Red Guards' Qufu mission, often characterized as a typical example of the campaign against the Four Olds, was, at best, a most unusual episode of this campaign. Evidence shows that the major campaign against the Four Olds and the Red Guards' Qufu mission were different at least in terms of time (August vs. November), participants (teenage Red Guards vs. college Red Guards), manner (random and chaotic vs. methodical and orderly), and primary target (Four Olds vs. political rivals). The important thing to keep in mind about the Beijing Red Guards' Qufu mission is that it meant different things to different actors: to the rank-and-file Red Guards, it was a typical episode of the campaign against the Four Olds and the continuation of the 1919 Chinese Enlightenment Movement; to its initiators and instigators, it was the politicization of the dead or, to use their own words, "to use the dead to attack the living."

Third, the Beijing Red Guards only contributed to part of the physical damage to the Three Kong Sites, contrary to the widely-held view that Beijing Red Guards were the only perpetrators.¹¹² The fact of the matter was that the more extensive and protracted

¹¹¹ My definition of the state includes all levels of the government from the Party Central to the government at the provincial, county, commune and brigade levels under either the old government or the CCRG.

¹¹² Joseph Esherick, et al, ed., *The Chinese Cultural Revolution as History*, 20; also see note 3 in Introduction.

violence against the Confucius Mansion and Confucius Temple was inflicted by the local Red Guards while the most destructive and thorough violence against the Confucius Cemetery was entirely initiated and committed by peasants from the greater Qufu area. The Beijing Red Guards were indeed instrumental in initiating the violence, hitting the most symbolic targets, and empowering the local rebel elements, but it was the local Red Guards and peasants who inflicted far greater damage to the Three Kong Sites independent of the Beijing Red Guards and the radical Maoists in Beijing. Ultimately, both the provincial and local governments were complicit in the violence against the Kong sites as well, for it was they who provided peasant labor, archeological experts, health workers, and bank employees to facilitate the excavation of graves, the processing of exhumed corpses, and the appraisal of the funerary objects. Consequently, the Beijing Red Guards should be “vindicated” and freed from the burden of being responsible for all the violence against the Three Kong Sites.

Fourth, it seems appropriate to reconsider the characterization of Qufu locals’ initial protection of the Three Kong Sites as deriving from their pride in their own cultural heritage. While there is some anecdotal evidence of a few individuals resisting Red Guards’ violence and questioning their motives, there is insufficient evidence to claim that the Qufu community as a whole resisted the violence out of their pride in their culture and history. In fact, the counterargument can be made that pride in local culture and heritage played an inconsequential role in resisting the attackers. The local officials made it abundantly clear that they protected the Three Kong Sites primarily to guard the state property under the protection of the State Council.¹¹³ As such, they were mostly performing their bureaucratic obligations. Indeed, their resistance melted away as soon

¹¹³ KFDJN, 15.

as the CCRG gave permission for the Red Guards to dig up Confucius's grave and burn his statue. Qufu peasants plundered the Confucius Cemetery without any encouragement from the state.

Finally, rural Cultural Revolution started in Qufu much earlier than the rest of rural China as a result of the violence against the Three Kong Sites. While December 15, 1966 is considered the official start of the Cultural Revolution in rural China and massive collective killings in the villages did not occur until 1967 and 1968, rural Qufu saw extreme violence much earlier.¹¹⁴ By December 15, Qufu had already witnessed most of the hallmarks of the Cultural Revolution, including mass mobilization of the rural population, marginalization of local officials, rise of revolutionary committees, mass rallies of 100,000 peasants, rise of radical peasant rebel organizations, and significant factional fighting among Red Guard organizations.

Qufu Exceptionalism

The single most important yet challenging task of this study is to make sense of the collective violence perpetrated on the birthplace of Confucius, the Model Teacher of All Ages, by both future teachers from China's very best teachers' university and members of a community with twenty percent of its residents as the direct descendants of Confucius. Yes, China's history is fraught with violence, but Confucius's birthplace, long known as a nonviolent community and a "tender place," had always been able to survive the seemingly unsurvivable. For over 2,000 years, Qufu's invulnerability to violence became so legendary that a special term "Qufu exceptionalism" is created and used in this

¹¹⁴ Su Yang, *Collective Killings in Rural China during the Cultural Revolution*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 26-27.

study to describe this exceptional phenomenon.¹¹⁵ The following segments will define Qufu exceptionalism, explain why it worked so well for so long, and explore the reasons for its demise during the Cultural Revolution.

Qufu exceptionalism, in a nutshell, refers to Qufu's unique ability to survive numerous crises in China's extraordinarily violent history. For over 2,000 years and across feudal, imperial, and republican China, Qufu and the prominent Confucian monuments there were subjected to numerous tumultuous dynastic and regime changes, foreign invasions, peasant revolts, iconoclastic outbursts, and revolutions. Any one of them could have easily erased the little town of Qufu from the map, but Qufu weathered them all. The Mongols devastated much of Northern China, but they spared Qufu; peasant leader Li Zicheng toppled the entire Ming dynasty, but he came to Qufu not to destroy it but to show respect; bandits robbed valuable items belonging to the Confucius Mansion, but they voluntarily returned them once they realized they belonged to the Sage's family.¹¹⁶

Especially noteworthy was Qufu's ability to survive multiple political convulsions during the early PRC period, such as the Land Reform and agricultural collectivization when the state confiscated land and turned private cemeteries to agricultural use. Qufu exceptionalism continued even during the most chaotic and violent phase of the Cultural Revolution. When the campaign against the Four Olds was in full swing in late August 1966 and Red Guards managed to destroy almost anything they wished to destroy across China, Qufu continued to be the exception to the rule—the Three Kong Sites remained completely intact despite its reputation as the “root of Four Olds.”

¹¹⁵ Here Qufu refers to both the general community of Qufu and the Three Kong Sites.

¹¹⁶ Mao Yingzhang, *tai ping tian guo shi mo zhi* [the beginning and the end of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom], 56;

But Qufu exceptionalism did not come out of thin air. Rather, it has a plethora of underlying causes. The most important reason why Qufu fared so well for so long stems from the elevation of Confucianism to the state creed during the Han dynasty. As a result, Qufu gradually acquired its reputation as China's holy land and Confucius's lineal descendants in Qufu over time acquired unparalleled power, wealth, and privilege. As the guardian of China's holy land, the Kong lineage became so powerful that it was allowed to run its own court, control the local bureaucracy and population, and communicate directly with emperors. Not only did the Kong lineage have its own private security force, but it also forged alliances with local militia groups, such as the "Red Spear Society" that helped the Kong lineage to handle threatened attacks from Kuomintang radicals in 1929.¹¹⁷ The wealth of the Kong lineage in Qufu was also unparalleled: the Qufu Kongs owned land in five provinces and had an army of servant households. The Kong lineage even operated its own bank and pawn shops.¹¹⁸

But it was the prestige that Qufu enjoyed that offered the best "insurance policy" for its safety. Not only did Qufu witness a succession of pilgrimages of emperors throughout history, but heads of the Kong lineage were given the privilege to "walk beside the emperor along the Imperial Way within the Imperial Palace and ride a horse inside the walls of the Purple Forbidden City."¹¹⁹ The ultimate symbol of the Kong lineage's privilege was the Three Kong Sites. The Confucius Temple, for instance, became the de facto state church and resembled Beijing's Imperial Palace in style. The

¹¹⁷ Bensen Li, 32-33.

¹¹⁸ Luo Chenglie et al., *kong fu dang an xuan* [selected documents from the archives of the Confucius Mansion], 5

¹¹⁹ Kong and Ke, *The House of Confucius*, 8.

administration of the Confucius Mansion was also modeled after that of the imperial court in that the former had six departments while the latter had six ministries.

Although Confucianism lost its orthodox status towards the end of imperial China, it continued to be supported and appropriated by various cultural, social and political forces and its birthplace continued to be respected. The Nationalist government under Chiang Kai-shek initially posed a threat to the Confucian establishment in Qufu, but it quickly turned around to embrace it. The Japanese occupied Qufu but left the Three Kong Sites largely undisturbed. The communist state also found both practical and ideological value in keeping the Three Kong Sites intact. It even appointed a descendant of Confucius as its first Qufu commissioner and Mao Zedong personally toured Qufu in 1952 in the middle of the Korean War. The communists handled both the Kong lineage and Confucian monuments with extra care, as shown in their classification of the Three Kong Sites as key cultural relic protection sites and in their efforts to reach out to the patriarch of the Kong lineage in Taiwan even on the eve of the Cultural Revolution. In short, the respect for and the cooption of Confucianism by various cultural, social and political forces as well as the power, wealth, and prestige of Confucius's descendants in Qufu collectively accounted for the remarkable phenomenon of Qufu exceptionalism.

However, Qufu exceptionalism succumbed to the Cultural Revolution. The causes of its failure are about as varied as the reasons for its success. They range from (1) early PRC policies and practices and their interactions with Qufu's historical and cultural conditions; (2) new policies and practices adopted during the Cultural Revolution and their interactions with the preexisting local conditions; and (3) other external and internal

factors that contribute to human violence. The following segments will be devoted to the discussion of these three areas.

The impact of early PRC policies and practices on the violence in Qufu was unmistakable. Top among them was the nationalization of the semi-religious Three Kong Sites by a secular state. Not only did the state remove their former residents and administrators with whom the Qufu public used to have a close relationship, but it also closed the Kong sites to the public, thus isolating the Three Kong Sites from the local population.¹²⁰ This created an erosion of Qufu locals' identification with the symbols of their own cultural heritage and made it easier for the locals to commit violence on their own cultural property later on. While Qufu's older generation remembered or knew about how the Kong lineage provided shelter and food in the Confucius Mansion to the Qufu public in times of war and famine, the younger generation were uninformed about their own cultural heritage and history. This policy-induced knowledge and experience gap helps to explain why the young Red Guards were far more enthusiastic and aggressive than the older Qufu residents in the destruction of Qufu's cultural properties.

Besides nationalization, the introduction of the dominant communist ideology as the new state orthodoxy further diminished the long-held respect for Confucian values and, by extension, the Kong lineage and the Three Kong Sites. Without the ideological and moral connections, the significance of the Three Kong Sites changed from a prominent symbol of Chinese culture and a source of local pride to just a cluster of imposing and mysterious buildings that produced more curiosity than awe. To make matters worse for the Confucian establishment, the introduction of the new ideology went

¹²⁰ When the Three Kong Sites was in private care, the public could visit them through the permission of the Kong lineage or some payment. As a result, Mao Zedong was able to visit the Three Kong Sites in 1919.

hand in hand with the sharp expansion and penetration of the new state in rural China at the expense of the local sources of authority where the Kong lineage had always played a dominant role.¹²¹ The breakdown of the traditional “cultural nexus of power” or “corps intermediaire” removed the intermediate entities standing between the state and the individuals and greatly facilitated the direct penetration of the state power into every fabric of the society. It fundamentally changed the state-society relations in Qufu and boded ill for the fate of the Three Kong Sites.

The Land Reform also contributed to the eventual demise of Qufu exceptionalism. While it freed Qufu peasants from their economic ties with the Kong lineage, it also severed their centuries-long close social and cultural interactions with the Three Kong Sites, making Qufu’s Confucian monuments even more remote and foreign to the local population. Ironically, the new government’s gentle handling of the landowning Kong lineage during the Land Reform delayed the redressing of peasants’ past grievances against the Kong lineage and left some old scores unsettled, creating the condition for the Red Guards to use the grievances to mobilize the rural population against the Kong lineage during the siege of Qufu.

Finally, the agricultural collectivization and the Great Leap Forward further exacerbated the already very difficult living conditions in Qufu and contributed to a social ecology conducive to the violence against the Three Kong Sites. The chronic poverty and the eventual cataclysmic famine of 1959-1961 that directly resulted from these two failed mass movements engendered the motivation and incentives for Qufu peasants to pillage the Three Kong Sites to alleviate their harsh living conditions. Indeed, in her study on peasant rebellions in North China, Elizabeth Perry also makes the

¹²¹ Duara. *Culture, Power, and the State: Rural North China, 1900-1942*, 5; 246-7

connection between peasants' living environment and their rebellions. Her ecological approach to violence clearly indicates the link between the two.¹²² Other research also indicates that, in times of revolution or regime change, people who have existed on a periphery and had been long denied an acceptable living situation tend to seize the opportunity to "act out their hatred of rival groups, a regime, the establishment in general, or civilization as a whole."¹²³

The Cultural Revolution and the Qufu Violence

It was the Cultural Revolution, however, that ended Qufu exceptionalism. Not only did it turn the aforementioned preexisting conditions into active agents for radical changes, but the new policies and practices adopted during the Cultural Revolution also created new conditions that quickened the steps towards the destruction of the Three Kong Sites. To begin with, the almost nonstop open, explicit, and vigorous promotion of violence by the state made violence not only acceptable but also commendable. As students and peasants chanted Mao's quotation "to rebel is justified," restraints of civilization were lifted and otherwise ordinary Chinese engaged in unprecedented violence without much hesitation.¹²⁴

The personality cult of Mao and the dominance of radical Maoism during the Cultural Revolution determined that all competing ideologies, active or dormant, must be eliminated. In this context, Confucianism, which survived the government's reconfiguration of the ideological and religious fields during the early PRC years, became

¹²² Elizabeth Perry, *Rebels and Revolutionaries in North China 1845-1945*, (Stanford, California, Stanford University Press, 1980), 3-11.

¹²³ Kunth, *Burning Books and Leveling Libraries*, 180

¹²⁴ Anne Thurston, "Urban Violence During the Cultural Revolution: Who Is to Blame?" in *Violence in China: Essays in Culture and Counterculture*, ed. Jonathan N. Lipman and Stevan Harrell (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1990), 151.

a natural target this time. Even Mao himself, who visited Qufu twice and named his two daughters after Confucian sayings, proclaimed that “One of the important tasks of the Cultural Revolution is to eradicate the influence of Confucius in all aspects of life.”¹²⁵ It was only natural for Mao to target Confucianism during the Cultural Revolution because Mao had by then accomplished what no ruler of China before him was able to do: he had gained complete control of political leadership, ideological legitimacy, and moral authority.”¹²⁶ Confucianism, whose tenets stood in sharp contrast with Maoism, became a natural target for eradication.

Intensified politicization of culture and history is another phenomenon during the Cultural Revolution that had consequential bearing on Qufu’s fate. Not only was it reflected in Mao’s use of the historical play *Hai Rui Dismissed* to create a political witch-hunt against Beijing’s cultural circles and eventually the entire party establishment, but it was also used in Qufu’s case where Chen Boda and Mao’s wife Jiang Qing—the director and deputy director of the CCRG—used the 1962 Confucius Forum to attack the cultural officials. Their ultra-radical aides Qi Benyu and Lin Jie turned their verbal attacks into a concrete plan to assault Qufu. Then the Red Guards and Qufu peasants put the plan into execution. Just as the Cultural Revolution started as a mere “cultural event” but ended as an unprecedented catastrophe in every aspect of Chinese society, the 1962 Confucius Forum started as a cultural and academic event but eventually served as one of the main pretexts for the politically motivated violence against the Three Kong Sites.

¹²⁵ Yao Wenyuan zhuan shu mao zhu xi li chi dui pikong de zhi shi [Yao Wenyuan relaying Chairman Mao’s past anti-Confucian remarks] (January 27, 1974), in ZWDGW.

¹²⁶ Tu Wei-ming, “Destructive Will and Ideological Holocaust: Maoism as a Source of Social Suffering in China” *The Wilson Quarterly* 125 (1996): 171.

But turning a nonevent into an event and an academic forum into a political witch-hunt and eventually a violent political campaign required extraordinary mobilization capabilities on the part of the radical leaders. This is where charismatic mobilization came in. The rise of Mao as a charismatic leader not only contributed to Mao's unprecedented power, but it also gave rise to charismatic mobilization characterized by Joel Andreas as an informal structure of mobilization that provides a "rule-breaking power that made it highly effective in undermining bureaucratic authority."¹²⁷ Based on Mao's charisma and mission, this mobilization structure allowed radical Cultural Revolutionaries to circumvent the bureaucratic hierarchy and mobilize the masses directly. It made it possible for Mao and the CCRG to use the Red Guards to attack the party establishment. It encouraged Maoist theorist Lin to get Red Guard chief Tan to spearhead the Qufu mission. It further enabled Tan to recruit Beijing Red Guards for the Qufu mission overnight and subsequently mobilize the Qufu rural population unimpeded. Indeed, the successful use of charismatic mobilization helped the arbitrary power, i.e., Mao and the CCRG, to gain an upper hand over the routine power, i.e., Beijing and Qufu bureaucrats, and contributed, in the end, to the demise of Qufu exceptionalism.

Two additional phenomena emerged during the Cultural Revolution and significantly contributed to the violence in Qufu, namely, "the demobilization of legal constraints" and "the demobilization of moral constraints." Both are used by sociologist Su Yang to help account for the collective killings in rural China during the Cultural Revolution and both are applicable to the Qufu case as well.¹²⁸ The arrival of the CCRG-

¹²⁷ Joel Andreas, "The Structure of Charismatic Mobilization," 434.

¹²⁸ Su Yang, *Collective Killings in Rural China during the Cultural Revolution*, 15-16.

backed Beijing Red Guards in November 1966 led to the breakdown of law and order in Qufu, while the relentless demonization of Confucianism as an evil ideology and the Kong lineage as a “bloodsucking” landlord clan contributed to the loss of moral and cultural constraints for Qufu residents. Consequently, the opportunistic Qufu peasants used the breakdown of the legal system and the power vacuum in the local government as their license for anarchy and committed wanton violence against those which they used to regard with utmost awe and reverence. All the moral constraints that made the Shandong outlaws voluntarily return robbed items to the Kong lineage in the past had now given way to the feverish desire to make a fortune from the dead through tomb-robbery.

One last, but not least, phenomenon of the Cultural Revolution that contributed to the Qufu violence is the paradox of state sponsorship and state failure.¹²⁹ This paradox describes a great many instances of violence during the Cultural Revolution where the state created the environment for or directly encouraged violence against certain types of people (e.g., teachers, scholars, or former landlords), but then failed to do anything when things got out of hand, such as when a little girl and her grandmother were buried alive by Red Guards or when neighbors massacred neighbors.¹³⁰ This paradox is also applicable to the Qufu situation in that the state initiated the violence against the Three Kong Sites and failed to stop the peasant violence spawned from the state-initiated violence. However, the state failure part of the paradox in Qufu’s case was even more serious than most other places, for the Qufu authorities did try to stop the peasant violence in the Confucius Cemetery and even used firearms to threaten the peasant tomb-

¹²⁹ This concept is introduced by Su Yang to determine the cause and responsible parties in his study on collective killings in rural China during the Cultural Revolution Su Yang, *Collective Killings in Rural China during the Cultural Revolution*, 249.

¹³⁰ MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, *Mao’s Last Revolution*, 129,

robbers, only to be mocked or violently pushed back by the peasants whom they had empowered and emboldened.

Thus, the state failure in Qufu's case was not only complete and thorough, but it also became one of the rare instances during the Cultural Revolution when the Maoist regime was actually unable to hold the violence in check when it wanted to and had to see it die down by itself. This is significant because much of the violence and chaos during the Cultural Revolution was either instigated or closely watched by the state, which could intervene and stop it when it wanted to, as was the case with Mao's sudden termination of the Red Guard movement in late 1968 when the Red Guards had outlived their usefulness for him.

In the final analysis, it was the juxtaposition of many factors, such as chronic poverty, a power vacuum, the empowerment of the peasants, and the demobilization of legal and moral constraints, that conspired to bring about the unprecedented attacks on the Three Kong Sites and the eventual demise of Qufu exceptionalism.

The Campaign against Lin Biao and Confucius

When it comes to the anti-Confucian movements during the Cultural Revolution, the 1966-67 anti-Confucian movement treated in this study has received far less attention than the campaign against Lin Biao and Confucius of 1973-1975. Consequently, a brief overview of the second campaign is provided here to identify the distinctions between the two anti-Confucian campaigns during the Cultural Revolution.

The second campaign began in 1973 after people discovered the use of Confucian quotes by Marshall Lin Biao, the disgraced former heir apparent of Mao, who died in a plane crash in Mongolia in 1971. In summer 1973, the campaign against Lin Biao and

Confucius got underway in earnest and some tenuous connections between Lin Biao and Confucius were made to discredit Lin Biao. However, by the time the campaign reached its peak in the first half of 1974, its main target had already switched from its nominal target Lin Biao to its more important target Zhou Enlai, who acquired significant power in 1972 and antagonized Mao and the left wing of the party. By June 1974, the focus of the campaign once again shifted to the struggle between Legalists and Confucians where the former was supposed to represent Mao's totalitarian ideology while the latter were supposed to represent the opponents of the Cultural Revolution. With a loose definition and shifting targets, the campaign was soon co-opted by various opportunistic political forces that turned their rivals into the target of the campaign. The campaign eventually moved so far away from its original aims that it led to armed conflicts and chaos across the country.¹³¹ In February 1975, it was replaced by a new campaign, but its reverberations continued to be felt till the end of the Cultural Revolution in late 1976."¹³²

While the 1966-67 campaign and the 1973-75 campaign were both anti-Confucian in name, they were far more different than they were similar. To begin with, the objectives of the two campaigns were worlds apart. The first campaign targeted the Four Olds and the incumbent party establishment and bureaucracy, but the second campaign changed its target from Lin Biao and Zhou Enlai to defending Mao's ideology. While Lin Biao was unconvincingly accused of being a "closet Confucian," Zhou Enlai was viewed by Mao as the latest "Khrushchev-like figure," a "symbol of Confucian virtue," and a "present-day Confucius" who attempted to reject the Cultural Revolution.¹³³

¹³¹ Kam Louie, *Critiques of Confucius in Contemporary China*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980), 107.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 107.

¹³³ Roderick Macfarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, 367; Gao Wenqian, Zhou Enlai: *The Last Perfect Revolutionary*, 252.

Besides, the scopes of the two campaigns were different too. The first campaign was mostly limited to the Qufu area while the second campaign was a nationwide campaign viewed by some as “nothing less than a second Cultural Revolution.”¹³⁴ Moreover, the organizers and participants in the two campaigns were different too. While the first campaign was engineered by Mao’s top lieutenants, spearheaded by college Red Guards, and perpetrated by Red Guards and peasants, the second campaign was directly orchestrated by Mao and the central authorities and implemented across the country at every level of the society. Furthermore, the method of each campaign differed from the others. The first campaign was dominated by physical violence, while the second one was an ideological campaign dominated by rhetorical violence and allegorical politics.¹³⁵ Finally, the outcomes of each campaign were different. The first campaign resulted in the massive destruction of the Kong Sites, while the second campaign led to confusion and chaos across the country.¹³⁶

The two campaigns did have three things in common: both deviated from their original goals; both served as vehicles for the politicization of culture and history; and both had Zhou Enlai as the true but undeclared target. The anti-Confucian movements were full of ironies too. Among the top CCP leaders who never chose to set foot in Qufu were Marshall Lin Biao and premier Zhou Enlai, yet it was precisely these two who were respectively accused as being a “closet Confucian” and “present-day Confucius.” Additionally, by the time of the second campaign, all backstage schemers and Red Guards leaders of the first campaign had already been either sent to Mao’s jails or investigated for anti-Cultural Revolution, anti-Mao activities. Their crime, ironically, was

¹³⁴ Gao Wenqian, *Zhou Enlai: The Last Perfect Revolutionary* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007), 249.

¹³⁵ Roderick Macfarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao’s Last Revolution*, 366.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 370.

not their involvement in the destruction of the Three Kong Sites. Rather, they were charged with using the destruction of the Three Kong Sites to attack Zhou Enlai.¹³⁷

Ultimately, the reappearance of Confucius and Confucianism on the political stage of the Cultural Revolution towards the end of the Cultural Revolution spoke volumes about how unsuccessful the 1966-67 anti-Confucian campaign was and how determined Mao and members of his inner circle were to appropriate a historical figure and his doctrine to serve present-day politics.

Qufu Violence and Its Implications

The extreme physical violence in and against the bedrock of the Chinese culture naturally raises the question about why such extraordinary violence took place in a predominantly cultural place like Qufu. The party state blames the Qufu violence on the Red Guards leader Tan Houlan, the CCRG, and the “Gang of Four.”¹³⁸ However, the underlying causes of the Qufu violence are far more complex and nuanced. One way to make sense of the violent events in Qufu is by understanding the relationship between political symbolism and nonpolitical institutions. Abner Cohen notes that “most of the symbols that are politically significant are overtly nonpolitical. Often, the less obviously political in form symbols are, the more efficacious politically they proved to be.”¹³⁹

Indeed, the Three Kong Sites, ostensibly prominent symbols of the splendid Chinese culture, have actually been rife with political symbolism. Their symbolic functions were consistently recognized and frequently appropriated, overtly or covertly,

¹³⁷ “Chen Wei guangyu qingcha wuyaoliu yunndong de jianghua” [Remarks by Chen Wei concerning the ferreting out of May 16 Elements] (June 30, 1971), in WGSJK.

¹³⁸ The “Gang of Four” refers to four members of Mao’s inner circle. After Mao’s death, the CCP held them responsible for all that went wrong during the Cultural Revolution. I read this poem during my field study.

¹³⁹ Abner Cohen, “Political Symbolism” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 8, (1979): 87.

throughout Chinese history. The Mongol rulers during China's Yuan dynasty put Confucians one step above beggars, but they subsidized the upkeep of the Three Kong Sites and turned the position of the Qufu district magistrate into a hereditary one for the Qufu Kongs only.¹⁴⁰ The Ming court even sponsored the relocation of the entire city of Qufu to protect the Confucius Temple, or their de facto "National Cathedral." Emperor Qianlong of the Qing dynasty visited Qufu nine times to do more than kowtow to Confucius; he wanted to send a political message to his Chinese subjects about the Manchu ruler's identification with the Han Chinese culture. The Japanese invaders committed egregious atrocities during China's war with Japan, but they maintained a cordial relationship with Qufu's Kong lineage and left the Three Kong Sites undisturbed to accentuate the "pan-Asian values" based on Confucian virtues. The Chinese communist government took meticulous care of the Three Kong Sites in the early PRC to send a strong message about how the new regime was a better guardian of the Chinese cultural heritage than its predecessors.

The advent of the Cultural Revolution drastically increased the symbolic significance and functions of the Three Kong Sites. The most popular of Mao's quotations during the Cultural Revolution was almost a point-by-point contrast of the differences between Maoism and Confucianism: "A revolution is not a dinner party...it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous. A revolution is...an act of violence by which one class overthrows another."¹⁴¹ As such, the Three Kong Sites conveyed new symbolic significance and provided new symbolic functions. To radical Maoists, the unbroken Three Kong Sites

¹⁴⁰ *Zhong gong Qufu difang shi*, 13-14

¹⁴¹ Michael Schoenhals, *China's Cultural Revolution, 1966-1969*, 106.

signified both the rejection of Maoism and the defiance of the targets of the Cultural Revolution. A successful raid on the Three Kong Sites would therefore serve as an ideal vehicle for sending multiple political messages and serving a number of political functions, including eradicating “the root of all Four Olds,” discrediting the “black gang” members who backed the 1962 Confucius Forum, and undermining the authority of the party establishment and the incumbent government at the central, provincial and local levels.¹⁴² Therefore, in the eyes of the radical Maoists, the violence against the Three Kong Sites during the Cultural Revolution became not only operationally necessary but also morally justified and ideologically imperative.

It is worth noting, however, that the methods that various political actors employed to realize the symbolic functions of the Three Kong Sites were drastically different from one another. The imperial patrons of the Three Kong Sites established their alliance with the state orthodoxy through their generous support for the Three Kong Sites. The competing dynasties of the twentieth-century China claimed their alliance with the Kong lineage through establishing their own Yansheng Dukes. The May Fourth iconoclasts viewed the Confucianism-based Chinese tradition as the source of China’s ills and used it to express their frustration with China’s backwardness, but they launched a “cultural revolution” as they distinguished Confucianism from the Three Kong Sites and left the material representation of Confucianism intact. However, their self-styled heirs, the Red Guards and the radical leaders behind them, resorted to physical violence against the Three Kong Sites to bring their symbolic functions into full play because of the unique political circumstances of the Cultural Revolution.

¹⁴² “Black gang” was a pejorative term used in the Cultural Revolution for denounced academics and party officials.

Finally, a study on such important events as the violent attacks on the Three Kong Sites would not be complete without an attempt to explore and identify some appropriate interpretative frameworks to understand the causes of radical behavior during the Cultural Revolution, with particular attention to the Qufu violence. Two contesting schools of thought are represented in the scholarly literature regarding Cultural Revolution participants' source of motivation: the irrationality model and the rational choice model. The irrationality model argues that people committed radical behavior out of true belief or blind faith in Mao and his revolutionary ideology.¹⁴³ On the other hand, the rational choice model contends that people's behavior stemmed from preexisting "social conflicts" or their "personal interests."¹⁴⁴ Neither model can adequately explain the highly complex Qufu situation as the irrationality model cannot explain the rational choices of the tomb-robbing peasants and the fact that some BNU Red Guards joined the Qufu mission also to embellish their political credentials. The rational choice model, on the other hand, cannot fully explain the zest and zeal of those Red Guards who chose to go to dull rural Qufu instead of more popular routes for "red tourism." Nor can it explain why quite a few Red Guards, who participated in the Qufu violence, remained unremorseful even many years after the Qufu violence.¹⁴⁵

The violence in Qufu was so complex and volatile with myriad actors, constant shifting of alliances, and a multitude of motives that additional explanations outside of the Cultural Revolution discourse are necessary to comprehend many unique dimensions of the Qufu violence. Aside from the general Cultural Revolution theories above, there

¹⁴³ Joel Andreas, *The Structure of Charismatic Mobilization*, 438; Andrew Walder, et al, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution as History*, 4.

¹⁴⁴ Shaoguang Wang, *Failure of Charisma*. (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1995), 274; Hong Yung Lee, *The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 347.

¹⁴⁵ KFDJN, 297; 301.

are those who employ the “state-policy model” or “regime-sponsored model” to explain violence in human events, which puts the blame squarely on the state or the regime in question.¹⁴⁶ While these models can help to explain such phenomena as the “Reign of Terror” during the French Revolution or the genocide under the reign of the Khmer Rouge, they fail to explain the fact that violence committed by the Qufu peasants was a bottom-up type initiated by the peasants. The state not only did not encourage the mass tomb-robbing frenzy, but it actually tried and failed to stop it.

Existing scholarship on causes of violence in general is rich but two models are particularly noteworthy and helpful to explain the Qufu violence. One is proposed by psychologist Philip Zimbardo, who underscores the role of external circumstances in causing good people to do bad things. Zimbardo introduces a set of contributing factors to violence. Each and every one of them is a good match for the Qufu situation.¹⁴⁷ There is “indoctrination into an ideology that legitimizes violence,” which applies to both the Red Guards and Qufu locals who embraced violence. There is the “dehumanization of the enemy or the victim,” as was the case throughout the Qufu campaign. There is also “obedience to authority with no opportunity for dissent,” which also explained why the Qufu bureaucrats became the reluctant collaborators with the Red Guards and why some Red Guards felt they were involved with the Qufu violence because they had to go with the “revolutionary flow of the moment.”¹⁴⁸ Another variable, the “anonymity and deindividuation,” helps explain the degree of ease and comfort with which many violent actors committed and viewed their violence. The last variable “gradual escalation of

¹⁴⁶ Su Yang, *Collective Killings in Rural China during the Cultural Revolution*, 7-11; Rebecca Knuth, *Libricide*, (West Port, Connecticut: Praeger, 2003).

¹⁴⁷ Phillip Zimbardo, “The Psychology of Evil” *Psi Chi* 5 (2000), 16-19.

¹⁴⁸ KFDJN, 303-304.

violence” was precisely what transpired in Qufu where violence started with the destruction of the Four Olds, followed by the smashing of the State Council protection steles, the leveling of tombs outside the Confucius Cemetery, the Red Guards-led massive destruction against the Three Kong Sites in late November, and finally the peasant-initiated violence in the Confucius Cemetery. Indeed, Zimbardo has identified the important elements that cause regular people to commit extreme deeds and provided good explanations for why future teachers would dig up the grave of China’s first and foremost teacher and Qufu residents would protect the Three Kong Sites one day and participate in cultural immolation a short while later.

Anthropologist David Eller’s theory on violence represents another helpful model in explaining the Qufu violence. It not only explains the building blocks of violence but also explores how they interact with one another. Eller notes, “Humans as individuals are quite violent. Humans in groups are more violent...Human groups with a group identity are more violent still, and human groups with ideologies and interests are the most violent of all.”¹⁴⁹ This model addresses the shortcomings of the aforementioned simplistic interest-based or ideology-based models and provides a most fitting explanation for how the Qufu peasants gradually changed from compliant, rule-abiding individuals who assisted the local authorities to repel the attackers to attackers themselves. The peasants worked as members of production teams (groups); they then became peasant Red Guards armed with a violent ideology (groups with ideology); and finally they found fortune in buried caskets and pounced on them without a moment’s hesitation (groups with identity, ideology, and interest).

¹⁴⁹Eller, *Violence and Culture*, xii-xiii.

The aforementioned models, though helpful in explaining many violent situations, still do not fully address the cultural aspect of violence in China, especially the Qufu violence. Two recent publications on violence in China have addressed the relationship between culture and violence in the Chinese context. In his *Crimson Rain*, social historian William Rowe traces the violence in one of the eight most violent communities in China to some elements of the community's popular culture and social ecology, such as respect for martial adventures and the practice of "muscular Confucianism."¹⁵⁰ Likewise, in his book addressing the collective killings in rural China during the Cultural Revolution, Su Yang also traces such killings to the preexisting rivalry between some clans in the two provinces in question and notes, "The more salient the traditional clan identities, the more severe the collective killings."¹⁵¹

These two studies have posed more challenges to the study on Qufu violence. While Macheng county in Hubei Province, the violent community in Rowe's study, is known as a famous "hotbed" of violence in Chinese history and the clan rivalries in Su's research happened in Guangxi and Guangdong Provinces with a history of a well-documented bloody clan rivalry behind them, Qufu presents an entirely opposite model in that it has long been known as a quiet and peaceful community with no history of clan rivalry or a reputation as an incubator of violence. The seventy-sixth Yansheng Duke Kong Lingyi was actually well known for the poem that he wrote in 1904, titled "Refraining from Litigations" which discourages lawsuits among fellow community members and advocates peaceful resolution of disputes.¹⁵² Given all these factors, why

¹⁵⁰ Rowe, *Crimson Rain*, 3-5.

¹⁵¹ Su Yang, *Collective Killings in Rural China during the Cultural Revolution*, 250

¹⁵² Luo Chenglie et al, *kong fu dang an xuan* [selected documents from the archives of the Confucius Mansion], 142.

then didn't the Confucian values of moderation, harmony and order prevail, or at least make an appreciable difference in the Qufu violence? How does the conflict-averse and harmony-promoting Qufu reconcile itself to violence?

In his study on violence in China, Steven Harrell raises the question about why Chinese society has been so prone to violence despite the dominance of an ostensibly conflict-averse orthodox/Confucian culture. He has provided some insights that are well worth borrowing for this study. Harrell divides violence in China into vertical violence and horizontal violence. Vertical violence involves "dominance by one group over another" and "the use of violence either from above or below." On the other hand, horizontal violence involves "disputes between equals."¹⁵³ Harrell's research indicates that Confucianism only frowns upon vertical violence from below, such as military challenges to the dynasty and rebellions, and horizontal violence, such as disputes among villagers. However, Confucianism does not reject vertical violence from above, such as suppression of rebellions or corporal punishment on children by their parents.¹⁵⁴

Harrell's model is very helpful for analyzing Confucianism and its relationship with violence, at least as it was practiced in Qufu throughout history. The Kong lineage had long exercised the top-down vertical violence against the servant households over whom it had almost unlimited judicial and penal power. The Kong lineage could try, punish, excommunicate, or deny fellow Kongs their burial space in the Confucius Cemetery. Indeed, there was no shortage of evidence of the hardships the Kong lineage inflicted on their tenants and servant households, which were more than adequately exposed and used by the Red Guards and publicly shared by the peasants during the siege

¹⁵³ Harrell, *Violence in China*, 3

¹⁵⁴ Harrell, *Violence in China*, 2-3

of Qufu. Meanwhile, the Kong lineage had never permitted bottom-up vertical violence, such as disrespect or insubordination from the mansion staff or servant households. The lineage also actively advised against horizontal violence and promoted harmony and peaceful coexistence among community members, as reflected in Kong Lingyi's anti-litigation poem.

Not only did Confucianism reject some types of violence and sanction some other types, but it actually never dominated all of Chinese society either, which is another finding of Harrell's research. He argues that not only has Chinese popular culture not been subject to the influence of Confucianism, but it happens to be violent in nature and often glorifies violent deeds.¹⁵⁵ Rowe puts it even more bluntly, "Grassroots China was... effectively a culture of violence."¹⁵⁶ In other words, Chinese society has been shaped by both a "conditionally nonviolent Confucianism" and a violence-prone popular culture.

This approach to Confucianism is very instrumental in explaining peasant violence against the Confucius Cemetery. Throughout history, Qufu peasants, like peasants elsewhere in China, were actually capable of violence at the grassroots level, but they were never able to extend their violence to the Kong lineage, as the traditional society dominated by the orthodoxy/Confucianism would not permit it. However, once the state orthodoxy changed from Confucianism to radical Maoism, which actually promoted and encouraged violence against the former orthodoxy, Qufu peasants buried all their qualms and began to view the Kong lineage and the Three Kong Sites as below them.

Consequently, they unleashed their violent attacks on the Confucian establishment and thoroughly plundered the Confucius Cemetery with little hesitation. In the final analysis,

¹⁵⁵ Harrell, *Violence in China*, 15.

¹⁵⁶ Rowe, *Crimson Rain*, 5.

Qufu violence was rooted not only in radicalism, iconoclasm, anarchism, communism and Maoism, but in Confucianism as well. After all, Confucianism, long known for its emphasis on harmony, moderation, order, and stability, contributed to the cultural origins of the Cultural Revolution and was not completely blameless for the violence against its own birthplace.

This study has established the basic facts about Qufu violence, addressed some misconceptions, ascertained the reasons for the failure of Qufu exceptionalism, and explored some relevant theoretical frameworks. Many more avenues of research concerning this topic remain to be explored. First, this study has focused on Qufu's rural community, but the connections and interactions between the urban and rural communities of Qufu during the Qufu violence are well worth exploring. Second, the relationship between the additional damage to the Three Kong Sites and the political developments, such as Red Guard factional fighting inside the Confucius Temple, is worth looking into.¹⁵⁷ Third, the ripple effect of the Qufu violence in other regions remains to be determined. There have been tales of people mimicking the Qufu events and spreading the tomb-robbing mania across the country after BNU Red Guards had left Qufu. Efforts can be made to determine if these claims are true and, if so, to what extent. Fourth, gender issues can be incorporated into future discussions as well, as the violence discussed here has revealed some important roles that women played, such as Tan Houlan as the leader of the Red Guards and the fearless female gravedigger. This is significant both symbolically and substantively in that women's status in the historically conservative Qufu had long been very low and Confucius has long been accused of

¹⁵⁷ The main divisions among Red Guard organizations involved in the factional fighting actually originated from the 1966-67 violence in Qufu.

having a low opinion of women, as shown in his famous saying “Women and people of low birth are hard to deal with.” Fifth, the highly complicated Red Guards factionalism and rivalries that played a significant role throughout the Qufu saga is well worth further investigations. The tensions among various Red Guard groups existed before the arrival of BNU Red Guards, intensified during their stay in Qufu, and continued long after their departure, all of which had considerable impact on the fate of the Three Kong Sites. Sixth, the legacy of the Qufu violence is well worth exploration too to both uncover how the former participants view their involvement in the Qufu violence and examine the possible connections between the 1966-67 anti-Confucian movement and today’s revival of Confucianism in the PRC. Seventh, an even more comprehensive account of the Qufu events that integrates the perspectives of the representatives of all participants of the Qufu violence, be they victims, tomb-robbers, officials, and the political untouchables, would help provide a full description of the calamity in Qufu. This study has started this process, but much more remains to be done.

Finally, the role of Zhou Enlai in the Qufu saga deserves some attention. Zhou has often been described as the patron saint of cultural relics and was said to have ordered Tan Houlan back to Beijing from Qufu.¹⁵⁸ However, under close scrutiny, none of the claims could be verified. Yet, Zhou was apparently a target of both anti-Confucian campaigns during the Cultural Revolution. During the campaign against the May 16 Counterrevolutionary Conspiratorial Clique in the early 1970s, which was widely believed to have Zhou’s involvement, many Red Guards involved in the Qufu violence were persecuted, not for their attacks on the Three Kong Sites, but for their alleged

¹⁵⁸ Fan Xiaoping, *Zhongguo Kongmiao* [Confucius Temples in China], (Chengdu: Sichuan wen yi chu ban she, 2004), 82-87.

attacks on Zhou Enlai.¹⁵⁹ This raises the question about what roles Zhou actually played in the Qufu events and to what extent, if any, he was involved with the investigations and persecution of those students.

It has been forty-five years since calamities befell Qufu. While the scars of the violence against the Three Kong Sites are still visible everywhere in today's Qufu, Confucius and Confucianism have once again been brought back to the mainstream life in China by the very same state that once sanctioned extreme violence against them.¹⁶⁰ To understand why the pendulum has swung back in favor of Confucius and Confucianism again, it would be helpful to trace and study the trajectory of Confucianism in Chinese history in general and in modern and contemporary Chinese history in particular. The issues discussed in this dissertation represent a step in this direction.

¹⁵⁹ The campaign against the May 16 Counterrevolutionary Clique was nationwide persecution of the former Red Guards and viewed as a retaliation of the Red Guards.

¹⁶⁰ In my recent trips to Qufu, I saw in the Confucius Temple the character "Keep" that Red Guards wrote on several monuments as well as a "Down with Confucius" slogan in the Confucius Cemetery.

Glossary

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|--|-------|
| <i>baohuangdang</i> | 保皇党 |
| Boxer Rebellion | 义和拳运动 |
| Cai Yuanpei | 蔡元培 |
| Chen Boda | 陈伯达 |
| Chen Duxiu | 陈独秀 |
| Chen Huanzhang | 陈焕章 |
| Chengguan Commune | 城关公社 |
| Chu Hongjiang | 楚共江 |
| Cixi | 慈禧 |
| Cui Xuyi | 崔都怡 |
| <i>Dachuanlian</i> | 大串联 |
| Dao Gou | 道沟 |
| Feng Shui | 风水 |
| Feng Youlan | 冯友兰 |
| Four Olds | 四旧 |
| Gao Keming | 高克明 |
| <i>Great Calamity in the Confucius Mansion</i> | 孔府大劫难 |
| Guan Feng | 关峰 |
| Guo Moruo | 郭沫若 |
| <i>Guangming Daily</i> | 光明日报 |
| <i>Hairui Dismissed from Office</i> | 海瑞罢官 |

| | |
|-------------------------|------|
| Han Fujū | 韩复榘 |
| Home-going Legions | 还乡团 |
| <i>jiu qian sui</i> | 九千岁 |
| Kang Sheng | 康生 |
| Kang Youwei | 康有为 |
| Kong Decheng | 孔德成 |
| Kong Lingyi | 孔令贻 |
| Kong Xianpei | 孔宪培 |
| <i>kongjiadian</i> | 孔家店 |
| Kong Yinzhi | 孔雍 植 |
| <i>kaopeng jie</i> | 考棚街 |
| Kuang Yaming | 匡亚明 |
| <i>laotouzi</i> | 老头子 |
| <i>Liberation Daily</i> | 解放日报 |
| Li Hongzhang | 李鸿章 |
| Li Zicheng | 李自成 |
| Liang Qichao | 梁启超 |
| Liao | 辽 |
| Lin Jie | 林杰 |
| Linqian Village | 林前村 |
| Lin Zexu | 林则徐 |
| Li Xiu | 李秀 |
| <i>li yi lian chi</i> | 礼义廉耻 |

| | |
|---------------------------|-------|
| Liu Shaoqi | 刘少奇 |
| <i>louxiang jie</i> | 陋巷街 |
| Lu Xun | 鲁迅 |
| Luzhongnan | 鲁中南 |
| May 16 Circular | 五一六通知 |
| <i>minbing</i> | 民兵 |
| Nie Yuanzi | 聂元梓 |
| One Hundred Days Reform | 百日维新 |
| <i>People's Daily</i> | 人民日报 |
| Qi Benyu | 戚本禹 |
| Qianlong | 乾隆 |
| Qin Shihuangdi | 秦始皇帝 |
| <i>queli jie</i> | 阙里街 |
| Qufu | 曲阜 |
| <i>ren</i> | 仁 |
| <i>santong</i> | 三同 |
| Shandong | 山东 |
| <i>shengjitu</i> | 圣迹图 |
| <i>shenzhong zhuiyuan</i> | 慎终追远 |
| <i>shijinshi</i> | 试金石 |
| <i>shiliutiao</i> | 十六条 |
| <i>shisi ru shisheng</i> | 事死如事生 |
| <i>sileifenzi</i> | 四类份子 |

| | |
|-------------------------|------|
| Tan Houlan | 谭厚澜 |
| <i>tao kong zhanbao</i> | 讨孔战报 |
| Three Kong Sites | 三孔 |
| Ti-Yong | 体用 |
| Wang Jingwei | 汪精卫 |
| Wang Zhengxin | 王正昕 |
| <i>wen</i> | 稳 |
| Wu Han | 吴晗 |
| <i>Xiedou</i> | 械斗 |
| Xixia | 西夏 |
| Xinzheng | 新政 |
| Yan Hui | 颜回 |
| Yansheng Duke | 衍圣公 |
| <i>yichengweimiao</i> | 移城卫庙 |
| Yongzheng | 雍正 |
| <i>youjiao wulei</i> | 有教无类 |
| Yuan Shikai | 袁世凯 |
| Zhang Daoying | 张道英 |
| Zhang Xun | 张勋 |
| Zhang Zongchang | 张宗昌 |
| Zhou Enlai | 周恩来 |

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WGSJK Song Yongyi, ed., *Zhongguo wenhua da geming wenku* [Chinese Cultural Revolution database] (Hong Kong: Xianggang Zhongwen daxue Zhongguo yanjiu fuwu zhongxin, 2002)

XBHZL Song Yongyi, ed., *Xin bian hongweibing ziliao*; English title: *A New Collection of Red Guard Publications, Part II, vo. 29* (Oakton, VA: Center for Chinese Research Materials, 2001)

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