Born into Privilege: A Prosopographical Study of Princesses during the Western and Eastern Han Dynasties

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CONTENTS

Abstract

My thesis is a prosopographical study of the princesses of Han times (206 BCE – 220 CE) as a group. A “princess” was a rank conferred on the daughter of an emperor, and, despite numerous studies on Han women, Han princesses as a group have received little scholarly attention. The thesis has four chapters. The first chapter discusses the specific titles awarded to princesses and their ranking system. Drawing both on transmitted documents and the available archaeological evidence, the chapter discusses the sumptuary codes as they applied to the princesses and the extravagant lifestyles of the princesses. Chapter Two discusses the economic underpinnings of the princesses’ existence, and discusses their sources of income. Chapter Three analyzes how marriage practices were re-arranged to fit the exalted status of the Han princesses, and looks at some aspects of the family life of princesses. Lastly, the fourth chapter investigates how historians portray the princesses as a group and probes for the reasons why they were cast in a particular light.

Ma thèse se concentre sur une étude des princesses de l'ère de Han (206 AEC (Avant l'Ère Commune) à 220 EC) en tant qu'un groupe. Une «princesse» était la désignation pour les filles d'un empereur, et malgré les nombreuses études sur les femmes de l'ère de Han, les princesses de l'ère de Han en tant que groupe reçurent peu d'attention du point de vue académique. La thèse comprend quatre chapitres. Le premier chapitre décrit les titres spécifiques étant attribués aux princesses et leur système de classement. Se référant à la fois aux documents et données archéologiques disponibles, le chapitre aborde également les normes somptuaires telles qu'elles s'appliquèrent aux princesses et le mode de vie extravagant des princesses. Le chapitre deux discute sur les fondements économiques par rapport à la vie des princesses, ainsi que leurs sources de revenus. Le chapitre trois décrit les pratiques de mariage arrangées dans le

but de s'adapter au statut exalté des princesses de l'ère de Han ainsi que quelques aspects de la vie familiale des princesses. Enfin, le quatrième chapitre aborde comment les historiens illustrent les princesses en tant que groupe, incluant une analyse des raisons pour lesquelles elles furent jugées d'une façon particulière.

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Introduction

The Qin and Han period (221 BCE - 220 CE) was an important era of transition in Chinese history, as the segmented regional states consolidated into a unified empire under the reign of one ruler. The Qin and Han dynasties developed the basic institutions of the imperial system and perfected the art of centralized statecraft so as to cover an area of a size hitherto unseen. Historians tend to emphasize these processes of state formation that yielded the centralized empire and developed it to an unprecedented scale. However, in doing so, both past and present historians have often underestimated the contributions made by women of the early imperial period, and women were rarely in the spotlight.

Such neglect may be partly explained by the conviction that, given gender, labor, and social divisions, women simply played no role in state formation. Mencius, for one, formulated the classical ideal for gender work division in a household, with men working in the fields and women weaving in the house.[1] Briefly put, men should be in charge of outside business and women should take care of the household. Such a social division encouraged women to stay in the inner quarters of their households when men were engaging in other activities, including the most vaunted forms of occupation, such as scholarship, politics, and farming, activities women were excluded from. Men's labor could be accomplished with their minds, while women were expected only to perform manual labor, such as spinning, weaving and needlework.[2] This feminized labor was summarized as womanly work (*nügong* 女工) and

[1] Mann 2000, 19.

[2] *Ibid.*

became one of the "four virtues" respectable women must obtain.[3] The stratified labor division further aggravated these inequalities. Therefore, since women only performed manual labor in the inner quarters of the household, they did not acquire much significance in the political arena and were thus often omitted from the standard history.[4]

Ancient historians therefore tended to praise the achievements of men and oversimplify the story of women, often hardening the lines between the two sexes in order to provide guidance on wifely issues. Starting from the Late Western Han (206 BCE - 8 CE), there were some works, such as the biographies from Liu Xiang's (79-8 BCE) work, *Traditions on Outstanding Women* (*Lienü Zhuan* 列女傳); comments on and interpretation of the first eight *Odes* (*Shi* 詩) by Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127 – 200 CE); and Ban Zhao's 班昭 (45 - 114 CE) work, *Lessons for Women* (*Nüjie* 女誡) that sought to educate women and to justify the wife's position and to distinguish her from other women in the household.[5] Thus, the female figures in these works reflect the social expectations placed on women – to stay in the inner quarters to serve men, to be in charge of the housework, and not to express their personalities. The women in these texts are treated as stereotypes. Such representations create difficulties for the historians in the present as they unravel the life stories of real women of the early imperial period, since most of these works discuss only ideals. A study on women itself instead of their social function should be conducted.

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[3] *Ibid.*

The idea of "four virtues" was first canonized by Ban Zhao (d. 116 C.E.) in her work, "Lessons For Women."

[4] In her work, *Savage Exchange: Han imperialism, Chinese Literary style, and the Economic Imagination*, Tamara Chin argues that in the early part of Western Han, women perform womenly work (especially weaving) in state workshop or private sectors (Chin 2014, 213).

[5] Vankeerberghen 2014, 122.

Several modern historians, such as Bret Hinsch and Anne Behnke Kinney, have uncovered the stories of women in Early China. Anne Behnke Kinney gives a close reading of the moral education of women in Early China; in her work *Exemplary Women of Early China: The Lienü zhuan of Liu Xiang*, she explores how female features discussed in these collected biographies became a frequent feature of portrayals of women in dynastic and local histories.[6] In his work, *Women in Early Imperial China*, Hinsch focuses on women's participation in many important aspects of Han society, such as kinship, wealth and work, laws, government, learning, rituals and cosmology.[7] Hinsch argues that one cannot simply summarize women's lives either by gender or their social status.[8] Therefore, he places women in different scenarios and discusses their participation. These works by Western scholars provide us with a peek into women's lives in Han China and introduce their stories to Western readers.[9]

In my opinion, more studies on women in Early China are still needed. Women are important to society; without the study of the story of women, the history of Early China will remain incomplete. As Hinsch suggests, women played more than one social role in Han China. We cannot simply use one tag to categorize them—they are daughters, wives, mothers and may hold other social identities.[10] Hinsch's words are very insightful; we also need scholarship that focuses on specific groups of Early Chinese women rather than applying a general theory to women broadly. If we can focus on a well-definable sub-group of women, we can make more

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[6] Kinney 2014a, xv.

[7] Bret Hinsch 2010, vii.

[8] *Ibid*., 6.

[9] For a bibliography of Western scholarship on women in Chinese history, see Robin D.S Yates, *Women in China from Earliest Times to the Present: A Bibliography of Studies in Western Languages*. Leiden: Brill, 2009. This work not only includes published works, but also MA and PhD theses, which are very valuable secondary sources.

[10] *Ibid.*

detailed observations and thus acquire more information on women in Han China.

Such a sub-group can most easily be found among women of high social status. The lives of ordinary women were usually neglected and excluded from historical texts, and therefore cannot be traced. Their stories faded away; only from recently excavated legal texts can we shed some light on their lives. In contrast, women with higher social status, such as princesses who were members of the imperial house and were trusted by the emperor, did leave some traces in the standard histories. Princesses enjoyed various privileges – they had their courts and owned land and other properties. Some of these princesses were powerful at the time and they were active players in political decision-making. Their names and stories can be traced in historical narratives. Their precious life-stories allow us to delve into the lives of this particular group of women at the time and will also help to reconstruct a fuller picture of the past based on historical narratives.

Previous scholarly research on the Han princesses has shed some light on their roles. In 1928, Chen Dongyuan 陳東原 published his work, *A History of the Lives of Chinese Women* 中國婦女生活史. Chen's pioneering text provoked a discussion and opened a new scholarly field. Paul Ropp points out that Chen's work is monumental and was echoed by many intellectuals. [11] Chen's work encompasses the pre-historical era to the contemporary era. His work is divided into different chronological chapters that discuss a wide array of topics such as marriage, code of ethics, the virtue of women, prostitution, chastity, foot binding and feminist movements. Deeply influenced by the May Fourth Movement, which condemned traditional culture, Chen assessed how traditional culture and the old family system had mistreated and

[11] Ropp 2011,4.

suppressed women for thousands of years. In his prologue, Chen states, "From the very beginning of our history, females were devastated. The history of the lives of our women is only a history of devastated females... I just want to point out how this concept of 'patriarchal propriety' has been practiced and has devastated women, and such a history remains a burden on the shoulders of women in the present."[12] Chen's words are the main thesis of his argument. He condemns the old traditions in the patriarchal society and sees all women as victims no matter their identities. In the section on remarriage, Chen Dongyuan uses the case of the Elder Princess of Guantao and that of the Elder Princess of Eyi along with that of Xun Shuang's daughter 荀爽 (128 CE – 190 CE) and argues that in the Han, women enjoyed the freedom to remarry someone after their husbands had passed away.[13] Chen does not distinguish the princesses as a group from other women; his work is a general treatise on marriage in Chinese society.

In the early stages of Maoist China, influenced by communist culture, which criticizes the hierarchical system in the imperial period, scholars condemned the princesses as a privileged class. These works did not intend to delve into the lives of princesses, but denounced how the old society had persecuted the general public. In his work, *Liang Han shifeng zhidu* 兩漢的食封制度 and *Guanyu liang Han shifeng zhidu de jige wenti* 關於兩漢食封制度的幾個問題, Xie Zhongliang 謝忠樑 introduces the basic structure of the Han enfeoffment system and

[12] Chen Dongyuan 陳東原 1937, 18-19.「我们有史以来的女性，只是被摧残的女性，我们妇女生活的历史，只是一部被摧残的女性底历史… 我只想指示出來男尊女卑的觀念是怎樣的施演女性之摧殘是怎樣的增甚，還壓在現在女性之脊背上的是怎樣的歷史遺蛻。」

[13] *Ibid*., 1937, 57-58. Xun Shuang's daughter was married to Yin Yu 陰瑜 at the age of seventeen. She gave birth to a daughter when she turned nineteen. At the same year her husband passed away. Her father intended to remarry her to Guo Yi 郭奕 but she decided to stay chaste and commit suicide. Chen argues that though Xun Shuang's daughter did not marry Guo Yi 郭奕 and chose to end her life, such a case indicates that remarriage was not forbidden in Eastern Han. Also, another thing to be noted is that Chen used the case of the Elder Princess of Eyi and the Elder Princess Guantao to indicate that women can pursue their love and be enamoured with another man after their husbands passed away.

argues that, as members of the privileged class, the princesses suppressed and exploited people and profited from them.[14] In his work, he offers a specific analysis of the feudal relation between the landowners and their tenants.[15] His informative work has the distinctive mark of Maoist China.

In the late 1980s and 1990s, more scholars turned their attention to the story of women. They focused mainly on the marriage of the princesses and did not distinguish the princesses from other women. These works include Chen Guyuan's 陳顧遠 *Zhongguo gudai hunyin shi* 中國古代婚姻史, Dong Jiazun's 董家遵 *Zhongguo gudai hunyin shi yanjiu* 中國古代婚姻史研究, Shi Fengyi's 史鳳儀 *Zhongguo gudai hunyin yu jiating* 中國古代婚姻與家庭.[16] The works contain some stories of the Han princesses, such as the story of the Elder Princess of Guantao and Dong Yan 董偃, and the story of the Elder Princess of Eyi and Ding Wairen 丁外人.[17] By including these stories, we can get a glimpse of marriage in Han China among the upper-class women.

There are also some prosopographical studies of Han princesses available in Chinese. Zhong Yiming's 鐘一鳴 article, *Han dai gongzhu zhi shiyi yu qita* 漢代公主之食邑與其他, gives a detailed description on the prosopography of the Han princesses. Tang Mujun's thesis, *Liang Han gongzhu kaoshu* 兩漢公主考述 and Bai Lihong's白立紅 thesis, *Liang Han gongzhu kaoshu* 兩漢公主考述 provide more complete views on the sumptuary regulations for

[14] Xie Zhongliang 謝忠樑, 3(1959), 85.

[15] *Ibid.*, 92.

[16] Tang Mujun 唐穆君 2008, 2.

[17] Shi Fengyi's 史鳳儀 1987, 50.

the rank of the princesses, the size of their properties, the selection of husbands, and family lives after marriage; and thus readers can get a fuller picture of the Han princesses.

I will draw upon all these informative secondary sources to reexamine the primary sources at our disposal. In addition, I will offer some information on recent archeological excavations of objects and tombs related to Han princesses. I also hope to improve on existing studies of the Han princesses by offering a methodology that seeks to contextualize the lives of individual princesses. Most of the works referred to above sketch the history of the Han princesses in a vacuum and fail to place the princesses' lives in their proper social context.

Chapter 1 of my study is an introduction. I discuss the origin of the title "princess" (*gongzhu* 公主) and explain who can be called a "princess." I will also give a detailed description of the sumptuary regulations pertaining to princesses, combining this analysis with a discussion of the objects excavated from the tomb of the Elder Princess of Eyi (*Eyi zhang gongzhu* 鄂邑長公主) and the tomb of the Elder Princess of Yangxin (*Yangxin zhang gongzhu* 陽信長公主) in order to reveal their extravagant lives. Chapter 2 will focus on the three major sources of revenue that formed the economic base for the princesses' lifestyle: endowments from the emperor, income of their bathing towns and the private lands they obtained. In Chapter 3, I will discuss various questions relating to the marriages of princesses. Could they marry a husband of their own choosing? Who were their husbands? Did everyone want to marry a princess? In Chapter 4, I will follow the footprints the princesses left in the standard histories and assess if they were active players in the political arena. Princesses are often depicted as egotistic and apolitical. Supposedly, they never proposed any policies that had a long-term influence. Their involvement in politics was inconsistent and they never strayed from the affairs of the imperial household. So, historians did not emphasize the stories of the princesses; their stories

became anecdotes in standard history. Such marginalization of princesses in history has left large gaps in the stories of the princesses. Even though it may not be possible to fill those gaps, at such a remove in time, it is important to examine the specific biases of the historiography as regards to princesses.

Chapter 1 Han Princesses and their Ranking System

After the demise of Qin, the Western Han emperors established a new administrative structure. According to this administrative model, the central and western part of the territory, including the metropolitan area and fifteen commanderies (*jun* 郡) were under the control of governors (*shou* 守) who were appointed by the central government. Ten large kingdoms (*guo* 國) existed in the Eastern part of the Han empire. These kingdoms were placed under the control of members of the Liu imperial clan.[18] Even though, over time, the kingdoms diminished in size and power, this dual administrative structure remained in place throughout Western and Eastern Han. In terms of social ranking, beneath the emperor stood (1) the kings (*wang* 王), who, after 157 BCE always were members of the Liu imperial family, and (2) nobles (*hou* 候). A noble title was bestowed for various reasons, for example, to recognize meritorious service to the dynasty (*gongchen* 功臣) or to reward non-Chinese chiefs who had surrendered to the Han. The titles of king and noble were hereditary.[19] Bret Hinsch drew our attention to the fact that in Han times women too could receive titles, on the level of those of kings and nobles. He argues that, in most cases, a woman's aristocratic status was not determined by the rank of her husband, but by the degree of her relation to the emperor.[20] Imperial consorts and imperial family members thus received aristocratic titles that had equivalents in the male ranking system.[21] As members of a

[18] Loewe 2004, 280.

[19] *Ibid*., 7.

[20] Hinsch 2010, 96.

group of upper-class women who enjoyed close relationships with the emperor, princesses were also subjected to sumptuary rules equivalent to those governing kings and nobles.[22]

The title of princess (*gongzhu* 公主) was conferred upon daughters of the emperor in Han times. *Hanshu* indicates that Liu Bang (256 – 195 BCE) granted the title of the Princess of Luyuan 魯元公主 to his daughter.[23] The following passage from *Gongyang zhuan* 公羊傳 explains the etymology of the term, and implies that the use of the term "princess" (*gongzhu* 公主) to designate the daughters of a ruler was not an invention of the House of Liu, but was already in use in Zhou times.

> When the Son-of-Heaven marries his daughter to one of the various (*zhu*) lords (*hou*), his majesty does not himself preside (*zhu*) over the marriage, but must delegate that task to his clansmen. That is why they are called "princess" (*gongzhu* "presided over by a lord"). This must be a Zhou dynasty practice. 天子嫁女於诸侯，至尊不自主婚，必使同姓者主之，谓之公主。盖周事也.[24]

Gongyang zhuan 公羊傳 thus believes that the term princess refers to the daughters of the Son-of-Heaven as their marriage was "presided over (*zhu*) by a lord (*gong*)," i.e., by one of the

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[21] *Ibid*., 95. Men's peerage was in twenty orders. The order from the lowest to the highest is : 1. *gongshi* 公士, 2. *Shangzao* 上造, 3. *Zanniao* 簪裊 4. *Bugeng* 不更 5. *Dafu* 大夫, 6. *Guan dafu* 官大夫, 7.*Gong Dafu* 公大夫, 8. *Gongcheng* 公乘, 9. *Wu Dafu* 五大夫, 10. Zuo *Shuzhang* 左庶長, 11. *You shuzhang* 右庶長, 12. *Zuogeng* 左更, 13. *Zhonggeng* 中更, 14. *Yougeng* 右更, 15. *Shao shangzao* 少上造, 16. *Da Shangzao* 大上造, 17. *Siche shouzhang* 駟車庶長, 18. *Da Shuzhang* 大庶長, 19. Noble of the Interior (*Guannei hou* 關內侯, 20. *Chehou* 徹候 and from Wudi's reign *Liehou* 列侯 or *Tonghou* 通候, sometimes in abbrevation as noble(*hou* 候). Women's rank of title should comply with the same order.

[22] *Hou Hanshu* 10. 457.

[23] *Hanshu* 1. 4. Yan Shigu 顏師古(581 - 645 CE) commented that, "The princess is the sister of Emperor Hui(r. 195 -188BCE). Because she was the oldest [one among her siblings] she was called *Yuan* 元. 師古曰：「公主，惠帝之姊也，以其最長，故號曰元」."

[24] *Shiji* 12. 396.

clansmen of the Zhou ruler,[25] the etymology provided in *Gongyang zhuan,* of course, need not be taken at face value.

The Classification and Titles of *gongzhu* in the Han

In 221 BCE, after the First Emperor of Qin (*Qin shi huangdi* 秦始皇帝) had conquered the territories of other lords and proclaimed himself as emperor, he granted the title of *gongzhu* to his daughters. Henceforth his daughters were entitled as *gongzhu*, in other words, princesses. However, these princesses were brutally executed and their bodies were torn apart at Du 杜 shortly after the First Emperor's death.[26] The princesses of Qin did not have the opportunity to leave more marks in the course of history. Unlike the Qin princesses, the Han princesses had more exposure in historical narratives. The Western Han dynasty adapted and refined Qin's regulations on titles of rank for princesses. One clause of the *Statutes and Ordinances of the Second Year* (*Ernian lüling* 二年律令) reserves the title of princess to daughters of the emperor, when it states that, "A daughter of a Regional Lord [i.e., a king] may not be called 'princess'."[27] In the Western Han period, princesses were given one of three ranks, that of "Great Elder

[25] Another school of thought believes that the term '*gongzhu*' was it was high government officials rather than clansmen that arranged the marriages of the daughters of a ruler. In his work, *Chunqiu zhizhang* 春秋指掌, Li Jin 李瑾 (Tang, 618-971 CE) states, "Since the time of Qin and Han, the emperor who marry their daughters to a marquis must assign the Three *gong* [Ministers, which implies to Grand Master, Grand Tutor and the Grand Guardian] to hold the ceremony. Therefore [the daughters of the Emperor] is called as princesses (Bai Lihong 白立紅, 2008, 8)." Li Jin's definition of *gongzhu* was similar to the explanation given by *Gongyang zhuan* 公羊傳 in that the title was named after the arranger of the ceremony. The reference to Li Jin is also in another publication: Li Yonggu 李永禌 1994, 186. The original text from Li Jin cannot be found.

[26] Bai Lihong 白立紅 2008, 5.

[27] Barbieri-Low and Yates 2015, 654-655. One thing to be noted that during this clause became obsolete during the Eastern Han times (25 CE - 220 CE). the title of Elder Princess was preserved, but the title of *wengzhu* 翁主, which was usually bestowed to the daughters of the regional kings, became obsolete.

Princess" (*da zhang gongzhu* 大長公主), "Elder Princess" (*zhang gongzhu* 長公主) or "Princess" (*gongzhu* 公主), in descending order of honor and prestige.

The title of "Great Elder Princess," the highest title a daughter of an emperor could receive, was only awarded under exceptional circumstances to an honorable elder female family member of the imperial clan. In fact, we have only one example in the sources. The Elder Princess of Tangyi (*Tangyi zhang gongzhu* 堂邑長公主), Liu Piao 劉嫖, received such a title.[28]

The title of Elder Princess was bestowed under three circumstances. When an heir apparent became emperor, he often bestowed the title of Elder Princess on his sisters.[29] *Hou Hanshu* indicates that the sisters of a new ruler of Han could receive the promotion from princess to Elder Princess. The Princess of Pingyang for instance, was the elder sister of Emperor Wu. She received the title of the Elder Princess after he was enthroned. For example, after Emperor Ping (9 BCE - 6 CE) was enthroned, he bestowed all his three sisters the rank of Estate Lord 邑君 with the income of two thousand households in the same year he received the throne.[30]

Not only could the sisters of a reigning emperor, but also his eldest daughter receives this title. *Shiji* indicates,"A few months after Emperor Wen was empowered, the excellences and ministers petitioned that he set up an heir apparent. Since the son of Lady Dou 竇姬 was the eldest among all princes, [he was] chosen to be the imperial heir. Lady Dou

[28] *Shiji* 49. 1980. Also parallel in *Hanshu* 52. 2394, and *Hanshu* 55. 2472. In these primary sources, the title of the Great Elder Princess of Tangyi was mentioned but the reason why she received such promotion remained unknown.

[29] Qu Zhongrong 瞿中溶 1873, 81.

[30] *Hanshu* 12. 351, trans by. Homer H. Dubs, 69.

became empress and her daughter Piao became the Elder Princess of Guantao."[31] Yan Shigu 顏師古(581 – 645 CE) indicates that the Princess of Guantao received a higher title due to her seniority.[32]

The title of Elder Princess could also be given based on personal virtue and qualities. *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 states,

> The daughters of the emperor are all awarded the title of imperial princess (*xian gongzhu* 縣公主) in terms of procedure and dress, they are equivalent to Regional Kings. The honorable ones among them can be further bestowed the title of Elder Princess 皇女皆封縣公主，儀服同藩王，其尊崇者加號長公主.[33]

There were indeed cases where younger princesses received the title of Elder Princess. For example, during the Eastern Han period, all three daughters of Emperor Shun 順帝(r. 115 – 145 CE), were given the title of Elder Princess. Liu Chengnan 劉成男, the daughter of Emperor Shun, received the title of the Elder Princess of Guanjun 冠軍長公主 along with her older sister, Liu Sheng 劉生, who was given the title of Elder Princess of Wuyang 舞陽長公主 in 138 CE.[34] In 141 CE, Emperor Shun gave the title of the Elder Princess to his youngest daughter, Liu Guang 劉廣.[35] We no longer have the text of the edict that would have described the reasons for their

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[31] *Shiji* 49. 1972. 孝文帝立數月，公卿請立太子，而竇姬長男最長，立為太子。立竇姬為皇后，女嫖為長公主。

[32] *Ibid*.

[33] *Hou Hanshu* 10. 457. Yan Shigu commeneted on *Hou Hanshu* that, "All daughters of the emperor received the title of princess and the honorable ones recieved a further bestowment of title as the Elder Princess." 皇女皆封縣公主，儀服同藩王，其尊崇者加號長公主。

[34] *Hou Hanshu* 10. 460-462.

[35] *Ibid*. The Emperor's daughter Sheng 生 received the promotion of the Elder Princess of Wuyang 舞陽長公主 in

promotion, but we can speculate that since the three daughters of Emperor Shun received the title of Elder Princess neither because of their seniority in ages nor because they were Emperor Shun's siblings, such elevation of their title of rank may because they stood out among others.

In the cases of *heqin* 和親, which was to create a marriage allegiance between the Han and the nomads in order to maintain a friendly diplomatic relationship with the neighboring states, the daughter of imperial clansmen would receive the title of *gongzhu* as well. Interestingly, only the daughters of the clansmen were sent off on a single *heqin* mission. For example, Liu Xijun 劉細君 and Liu Jieyou 劉解憂 were the grand-daughters of Liu Wu 劉戊, the King of Chu 楚, and were married to a nomad tribe leader. They received the title of the Princess of Jiangdu 江都公主 and the Princess of Chu 楚公主 so they could be married off to a non-Chinese ruler. In total, during Western Han thirteen female members of the imperial clan received the title of *gongzhu* before their marriage to a non-Chinese king was arranged. The chart below tabulates the princesses who were married to various non-Chinese groups during the Western Han times.[36]

Ruler	**Father**	**Mother**	**Title**	**Name**	**Date of Birth and Death**	**Husband**	**Children**	**Date of marriage**
Emperor Gaozu 漢高祖	Imperial clansman, name unknown	Unknown 不詳	Princess 公主	Unknown 不詳	Unknown 不詳	Maodun Shanyu 冒頓單于		Married to Xiongnu in 200 BCE

the third year of Yonghe永和 (138 CE). Chengnan 成男 received the promotion to the Elder Princess of Guanjun 冠軍長公主 in the third year of Yonghe永和 (138 CE). 皇女生，永和三年封舞陽長公主。皇女成男，三年封冠軍長公主。皇女廣，永和六年封汝陽長公主。順帝三女。

[36] There were no records of the princesses who went on a peace marriage mission after 103 BCE.

	不詳							
Emperor Hui 漢惠帝	Imperial clansman, name unknown 不詳	Unknown 不詳	Princess 公主	Unknown 不詳	Unknown 不詳	Maodun Shanyu 冒頓單于		Married to Xiongnu in 192 BCE
Emperor Wen 漢文帝	Imperial clansman, name unknown 不詳	Unknown 不詳	Princess 公主	Unknown 不詳	Unknown 不詳	Maodun Shanyu 冒頓單于		Married to Xiongnu in 176 BCE
Emperor Wen 漢文帝	Imperial clansman, name unknown 不詳	Unknown 不詳	Princess 公主	Unknown 不詳	Unknown 不詳	Laoshang Shanyu 老上單于		Married to Xiongnu in 174 BCE
Emperor Wen 漢文帝	Imperial clansman, name unknown 不詳	Unknown 不詳	Princess 公主	Unknown 不詳	Unknown 不詳	Laoshang Shanyu 老上單于		Married to Xiongnu in 162 BCE
Emperor Wen 漢文帝	Imperial clansman, name unknown 不詳	Unknown 不詳	Princess 公主	Unknown 不詳	Unknown 不詳	Junchen Shanyu 軍臣單于		Married to Xiongnu in 160 BCE
Emperor Jing 漢景帝	Imperial clansman, name unknown 不詳	Unknown 不詳	Princess 公主	Unknown 不詳	Unknown 不詳	Junchen Shanyu 軍臣單于		Married to Xiongnu in 156 BCE
Emperor Jing 漢景帝	Imperial clansman, name unknown	Unknown 不詳	Princess 公主	Unknown 不詳	Unknown 不詳	Junchen Shanyu 軍臣單		Married to Xiongnu in 155 BCE

	不詳					于		
Emperor Jing 漢景帝	Imperial clansman, name unknown 不詳	Unknown 不詳	Princess 公主	Unknown 不詳	Unknown 不詳	Junchen Shanyu 軍臣單于		Married to Xiongnu in 152 BCE
Emperor Wu 漢武帝	Imperial clansman, name unknown 不詳	Unknown 不詳	Princess 公主	Unknown 不詳	Unknown 不詳	Junchen Shanyu 軍臣單于		Married to Xiongnu in 140 BCE
Emperor Wu 漢武帝	King of Jiangdu 江都王劉建	Unknown 不詳	Jiangdu Princess 江都公主	Liu Xijun 劉細君	？－102BCE	1.King of Wusun Lie Jiaomi 烏孫王獵驕靡 2.King of Wusun Junxumi 軍須靡		Married to Wusun in 108 BCE
Emperor Wu 漢武帝	Son of King of Chu 楚王劉戊之子	Unknown 不詳	Princess of Chu 楚公主	Liu Jieyou 劉解憂	Unknown 不詳	1.King of Wusun Weng Guimi 翁歸靡 2. King of Wusun Nimi 泥靡	Sons 1. Yuan Guimi 元貴靡 2. Wan Nian 萬年 3. Da Le 大樂 4. Chimi 鴟靡 Daughters 1.Dishi	Married to Wusun in 103 BCE

							弟史 2.Su Guang 素光	
Emperor Wu 漢武帝	Son of King of Chu 楚王劉戊之子	不詳	Younger Princess of Chu 楚少主	Liu Xiangfu 劉相夫	不詳			Daughter of Jieyou's younger brother. Planned to marry to Yuan Guimi, but the marriage was cancelled

Table 1 List of Han princesses who went on *Heqin* missions

In Eastern Han, there were some changes to the titles for princesses. The rank of *gongzhu* was differentiated into three types: "Princess Worth a County" (*Xian gongzhu* 縣公主) "Princess Worth a Precinct" (*Ting gongzhu* 亭公主) and "Princess Worth a District" (*Xiang gongzhu* 鄉公主). These titles replaced the title of *wengzhu* in vogue during Western Han, which made it possible for daughters of kings to become princesses and made the Zhangjiashan regulations obsolete. In the Eastern Han, there were also some changes in the title of the noble. Nobles were also classified into "Noble Worth a County" (Xian hou 縣候) "Noble Worth a Precinct" (Ting hou 亭候) and "Noble Worth a District" (Xiang hou 鄉候). "All daughters of the regional lords (i.e., the kings) became "Princess Worth A Precinct" and "Princess Worth A District," [their] sumptuary code are the same as the "Noble Worth a District" (*Xiang hou* 鄉候) and "Noble Worth a Precinct" (*Ting hou* 亭候*)* 諸王女皆封鄉、亭公主，儀服同鄉、亭侯."[37]

[37] *Hou Hanshu* 10. 457.

They enjoyed relatively smaller rights compared to princesses worth a county.[38]

To recognize a king's contributions to the central court, the rank of "Princess Worth a County" (*Xian gongzhu* 縣公主) could also be given to the daughter of a regional king, even though the rank was normally reserved for daughters of the emperor during Eastern Han times.[39] The King of Dongping Liu Cang 劉蒼(? - 83) for instance, was the son of Emperor Guangwu (r. 5-57). In 83, due to his excellence in assisting the emperor to restore the Han government and other achievements, Liu Cang received a special honor in Luoyang; he was invited to stay after other kings had left and his five daughters were endowed with the fief of counties while the daughters of the others only received bathing towns (*tangmu yi* 湯沐邑) the size of a district.[40]

These two cases indicate that titles during Eastern Han did not abide by the same regulations as those of Western Han; we cannot take the regulations of the Zhangjiashan legal strips as indicative of practices throughout the four centuries of the Han dynasty.

Toponyms in the Titles of the Han Princesses

Han princesses generally carried the name of their bathing town as part of their title. However, based on the bathing town named, one cannot always know which individual is meant, as over the course of the two Han dynasties, many princesses derived their income from the same bathing town. There were three Princesses of Guantao in the course of Han history. The daughter

[38] County, precinct and district were administrative units in Later Han.

[39] Tang Mu-jun 唐穆君 2008, 73.

[40] Crespigny 2007, 489.

of Emperor Wen 文帝, the daughter of Emperor Xuan 宣帝, and the daughter of Emperor Guangwu 光武帝 all had their bathing towns in Guantao, and hence all had the title of Princess of Guantao, even though they lived in different centuries. Sometimes, the title of a princess would change along with that of her husband. After the Yangxin princess 陽信公主 married the Noble of Pingyang 平陽侯, she went by the title of the Princess of Pingyang 平陽公主. The title of the sister of Emperor Zhao 昭帝 was "the Elder Princess of Eyi-Gai" 鄂邑蓋長公主 since her bathing town was in E 鄂, and she was married to the Noble of Gai 蓋.[41]

In the case of princesses who were sent to the frontier as part of the *heqin* policy, their titles, if known, were those of their father's domain. Among the fourteen princesses who married into non-Chinese tribes (see Table 1.1), are the Princess of Jiangsu, the Princess of Chu 楚公主 (*Chu gongzhu*) and the Younger Princess of Chu 楚少主 (*Chu shaozhu*).[42] In all three cases, their title was related to the name of their father's domain.

Sumptuary Rules and Rituals

As Wilkinson observes, almost without exception, starting with the Han, every new dynasty promulgated a new sumptuary code and new rituals.[43] This account from Jia Yi 贾誼 (200 BCE – 168 BCE) could probably provide the best explanation of the cause of editing such sumptuary codes,

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[41] *Hanshu* 68. 2934. 鄂邑，所食邑，為蓋侯所尚，故云蓋主也。

[42] The title of the Younger Princess only appeared once. It seems like an exception – to distinguish the Younger Princess of Chu from the Princess of Chu.

[43] Wilkinson 2013, 182.

> Different styles and patterns are applied to upper and lower and to differentiate the noble and the base… hence, the people can tell their status from their clothing and know their authority from their pattern, which will make people satisfied with their status and expression of their position
>
> 奇服文章，以等上下而差贵贱。是以天下见其服而知贵贱，望其章而知其势.[44]

For Western Han, we have no evidence of an explicit sumptuary code that would have regulated the use of clothing and carriages for individuals of different rank, even though such differentiations surely existed, and social hierarchies would be immediately apparent. This applies to princesses too, whose clothing and other privileges would have marked them as members of the imperial family, as distinct from commoners. However, it was not until Eastern Han, sometime around 58-75 CE, that a sumptuary code was issued that laid down the regulations governing dress and carriages.[45] This sumptuary code (or a later modification thereof) is preserved in the "Treatise on Carriages and Robes" (Yu fu zhi 輿服志) by Sima Biao 司馬彪 (? - 306 CE), now included in *Hou Hanshu*. This "Treatise on Carriages and Robes" includes some details on the sumptuary rules affecting princesses, in life and in death, and thus provides us with a fuller picture of their lives:

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[44] *Xinshu*, trans. by Wilkinson, 182.

[45] The sumptuary code on Carriages and Robes was neither in the records of *Shiji* nor *Hanshu*, it was first included by Sima Biao司馬彪(? - 306 CE) in his work, *Xu Hanshu*, trans. by B. J. Mansvelt Beck, 227). There were a couple authors who wrote on the same subject in Later Han. According to *Dongguan Hanji jiaozhu* 東觀漢記校注, these sumptuary codes were issued in the beginning of the early years of Yongping 永平. "At the beginning of the Years of yongping, [Emperor Ming] issued an edict to regulate the sumptuary code on the carriages and robes... from the regional kings to commoners, the wedding clothing and objects were all regulated by rank and peerage." 永平初，詔書下車服制度，中宮皇太子親服重繒厚練，浣已復御，率下以儉化起機。諸侯王以下至於士庶，嫁娶被服，各有秩品(Liu Zhen 劉珍 [? – 126 BCE] 2008,70). This text suggests that that before Emperor Ming (r. 58 - 75 CE) there was no standardized regulation on the sumptuary code, which matches with the historical records that there were no known documents on the usage of Carriages and Robes.

> The prescribed dress for a court audience includes, in the case of a Senior Princess, a [hair ornament named] "Shakes with Every Step" (*Buyao* 步搖), whereas a [regular] princess wears her hair up in a bun called "Big Hand" (*dashou* 大手). Senior princesses and regular princesses both wear hairpins and earrings, and in terms of clothing abide by the same regulations. Princesses who received a fief and those above them have a seal ribbon, and their sashes are composed of multicolored silk, of a color that matches that of their ribbon. Their belt has a golden apotropaic charm; the charm's head serves as the buckle of the sash, and it is decorated with white pearls
>
> 長公主見會衣服，加步搖，公主大手結，皆有簪珥，衣服同制。自公主封君以上皆帶綬，以采組為緄帶，各如其綬色。黃金辟邪，首為帶鐻，飾以白珠.[46]

The vivid description of the princesses' court attire reveals these women's high social status at the Han court. Their prestigious identity is reflected by the silk ribbon (*shou* 綬) that they wore. Han officials had a silk ribbon hanging from their waistbands, to which their seal was affixed.[47] The color and texture of these silk ribbons varied with rank. From high to low, the colors included gold, red, green purple, cyan (*qing* 青), black, yellow and dark purple. An Elder Princess was entitled to wear a red ribbon, a regular princess a purple one.[48] Similarly, a regional king wore a red ribbon and a noble to a purple one. These different colors were the indicator to distinguish the rank and title. The color of silk ribbon reflects that during the Han times, regulations on clothing were well-developed and matched the princesses' rankings.

Also, marriage was subjected to sumptuary rules; as specified in *Hou Hanzhi*,

> Princesses, Honored Ladies, Imperial Consorts and those ranked above them, upon their marriage, receive robes in brocade, open silk, and crepe–gauze; they are in twelve colors and consist of gowns with multiple hems

[46] *Hou Hanzhi* 30. 3677.

[47] Wilkinson 2013, 182.

[48] Bai Lihong 白立红 2008, 8-9.

公主、貴人、妃以上，嫁娶得服錦綺羅縠繒，采十二色，重緣袍.[49]

The luxurious bridal suit of a *gongzhu* not only presents the high technique at the time of Han but also reflects their high social status in the empire.

As to chariots, in Han China, nobles and princesses traveled in curtained carriages (*pianche* 軿車), a carriage with fully covered ceilings and four sides.[50] The style and decoration of the carriages for the rank of the Elder Princess and Princess were specifically listed by *Hou Hanzhi*,

> The Elder Princess uses a curtained carriage with red hangings. An Elder Honored Lady, an Honored Lady, a Princess, a Royal Consort, and an Enfeoffed Lady, uses a curtained carriage with oil paintings
> 長公主赤罽軿車。大貴人、貴人、公主、王妃、封君油畫軿車.[51]

The sumptuary codes of princesses indicate that, certainly by Eastern Han, the sumptuary regulations were well developed and carefully differentiated different ranks and titles. The carriage of a Princess was the same as those of Imperial Consorts, Enfeoffed Lady and Honored Lady. Judging from their carriages, an Elder Princess's rank was higher than that of the imperial consorts.

The Han Empire also had detailed regulations on the funerals and funerary objects.

> When a King, a Noble, an Honored Lady with an initial fief, or a Princess passes away, he or she will, by ordinance, be given a seal, and a jade burial suit with silver strings; in

[49] *Hou Hanzhi* 30. 3676.

[50] Sun Ji 孫機 2008, 24.

[51] *Hou Hanzhi* 30. 3647.

> the case of an Elder Honored Lady and an Elder Princess, the strings will be in copper. A king, an Honored Lady, a Princess, a Lord, a General, and a Specially Advanced are all given vessels, a total of twenty-four pieces from the palace. An envoy will prepare for the funeral… the hundred officials will attend their funerals in accordance with the regulations of old. A King, a Princess and an Honored Lady are all be buried in a coffin made of cypress wood, in red, with moving cloud motifs painted on it
> 諸侯王、列侯、始封貴人、公主薨，皆令贈印璽、玉柙銀縷；大貴人、長公主銅縷。諸侯王、貴人、公主、公、將軍、特進皆賜器，官中二十四物。使者治喪，穿作，柏椁，百官會送，如 故事。諸侯王、公主、貴人皆樟棺，洞朱，雲氣畫.[52]

This passage differentiates burial suits and funerary objects according to the rank the deceased held in life. In so doing, *Hou Hanzhi* provides us a picture on the procedure and items used in a burial ceremony for high rank aristocrats such as the princesses, regional kings, nobles, honored ladies with an initial fief, etc. As Michael Loewe observes, tombs of the prominent and wealthy members of the Han society featured extravagant funerary furnishings.[53] At the same time, the size and range of a tomb remain a major indicator of the rank and identity of the owner.

Archaeological Evidence

In 2009, an excavation was conducted of a tomb in the town of Huaxu 華胥 in Lantian 藍田, Shaanxi. The gigantic tomb with mound and funerary pits was later identified as the tomb of the Elder Princess of Eyi. According to the 1994 edition of Lantian's local history (*Lantian xianzhi* 藍田縣志), the tomb owner was identified as Jing Ke 荊軻 (? - 227 BCE), the famous assassin of the First Emperor of Qin (259 - 210 BCE). During the excavation, an adult female body was

[52] *Hou Hanzhi* 30. 3152.

[53] Loewe 1986, 9.

found and later she was identified as the owner of the tomb.[54] With all the evidence collected, researchers claim that the owner of this tomb should be a female member of the imperial family.[55] The tomb occupant should have a rank above that of the nobles judging from size of the tomb and tomb mound (as shown in figure 1), as well as the number and type of burial objects. The remaining mound has a height of ten meters and according to the *Lantian xianzhi* the original height of the mound was around eleven meters. For the tomb of the nobles, the mound should be 4 *zhang* 丈 tall. Since 1 *zhang* equals to 23.1 centimeters, the height of the mound of the Han nobles should not exceed 9.2 meters. As indicated earlier, the rank of the Elder Princess should be equivalent to that of the regional kings, who were in a higher rank in comparison to the nobles. Additionally, the objects found in the tomb dated this site to the Han Dynasty. Archaeologist Jiao Nanfeng 焦南峰 believes that the two eunuchs figurines (b and c) found at the site were believed to only belong to the imperial house of Liu. Only in rare cases, these eunuch figurines would be bestowed on favorite courtiers for their funerals.[56] These pottery eunuchs had narrowed down the scale of the tomb occupant to the imperial female family members.[57]

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[54] Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiu suo 中国社会科学院考古研究所，12 (2014).

[55] *Ibid.*

[56] *Ibid.*

[57] Since there were no records and evidence found along with the surrogate objects to prove any high ranked female outside the imperial family received such a special honor, we could imply that the tomb occupant belonged to the House of Liu.

Fig. 1(a) (b) (c)

Figure 1 is the excavation site of the tomb of the Elder Princess of Eyi. (a) is the remains of the tomb mound. It is ten meters in height and it shaped like an over-turned bushel (覆斗形); it contains a sacrificial pit, a feature not often seen at other Han tombs, because the mounds were often vandalized. (b) is eunuch figurines found in the excavation site. (c) is the re-constructed eunuch figurines. The height of the figurine is 55 centimeters tall. This standing eunuch figurine was painted and still has a vivid color—its skin is in a tangerine tone and its hair, eyebrows and eyes were painted in black color. Its facial feature is very vivid and well as the body's.

As the excavation advanced, the tomb occupant was identified as the Elder Princess of Eyi (? – 80BCE), the daughter of Emperor Wu of Han (157 - 87 BCE). She had once served and cared for the young Emperor Zhao (94 - 74BCE) and obtained the honor to move into the Inner Apartments of the imperial palace.[58] She obtained extraordinary favor from the emperor and the fief and bestowments she received cannot be compared with any other princesses in both the Western and Eastern Han.[59] In a horse-and-chariot pit to the north of her main chamber, terracotta models of cattle, sheep, horses as well as other objects were found along with the horses and chariots were found. Inside this pit, more than 3,000 pieces of bronze objects that

[58] *Hanshu* 12. 217., tran. by Dubs 1944, 151-152.

[59] I will give a detailed analysis on the scale of fortune of the Elder Princess in the next chapter.

were found. Eighty-five percent of these were the bronze horse-and-chariot sets.[60] Other objects such as tile with patterns of ropes (繩紋瓦片), as well as animal bones, bronze arrows and accessories were also found.[61]

Archaeological objects, too, can give us a hint of the lives of the Han princesses. To ensure a happy afterlife, musical instruments, precious objects such as objects made in jade, bronze, lacquer or terracotta were widely seen in Han tombs. Some objects used in everyday life, such as lamp stands, dishes and plates, weapons, exquisite toilet boxes or lacquer and etc. were also found in Han tombs.[62] These objects shed some light on the lives of the princesses and allow us to have an idea of how they lived their lives. In 1981, during the excavation of the tomb of the Elder Princess of Yangxin 陽信長公主 (the eldest daughter of Emperor Jing r. 157-141 B.C.E), an accompanying tomb (陪葬墓 *peizang mu*) of the Mao Mausoleum, a gilded bronze bamboo-shaped censer (fig. 2), used to repel mosquitoes and to spread an aromatic scent, were found and it was identified as a furniture that the Elder Princess of Yangxin obtained when she was alive.[63]

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[60] *Ibid*.

[61] *Ibid*. The article was the one report about the tomb in Lantian; it did not provide detailed information nor image for the items that were found in the sacrifice pit.

[62] Micheal Loewe 1986, 9.

[63] Maoling Museum 茂陵博物館 http://www.maoling.com/news_display.asp?keyno=174.

The tomb of the Elder Princess of Yangxin has a height of 15 meters; the length measuring from the north to the south is 114 meters and the width measuring from the west to the East is 54.57 meters.

Figure2 (a) (b)

(a) is a close shot of the gilded bronze bamboo-shaped censer and (b) is its full picture. The censer is 58 centimeters in height and gilded with gold and silver. The top lid was designed as a mountain peak and the rod of the censer is bamboo-shaped and decorated with two dragons with their eyes and claws gilded with silver. There were inscriptions carved on the rim the censer, which indicates its history of manufacture and ownership (as shown in Table 2 below).[64]

Location of Inscription	**Transcription**	**Translation**
Outer Rim of the Lid	內者未央尚臥，金黃塗竹節熏爐壹具，並重十斤十二兩，四年內宮造，五年十月輸，第初三。	The bedchamber of Palace Weiyang One piece of gilded bronze bamboo-shaped censer Combined weight 10 *jin* and 12 *liang* Made in the fourth year in the inner palace Put into usage in the tenth month of the fifth year Number 03

[64] Liu Tiewen 劉鐵文 11(2015).

Outer Rim of the Support	內者未央尚臥,金黃塗竹節熏爐壹具.並重十壹斤四 年寺工造五年十月輸,第初四。	The bedchambers of Palace Weiyang One piece of gilded bronze bamboo-shaped censer Combined weight 10 *jin* and 12 *liang* Made in the fourth year in the inner palace Put into usage in the tenth month of the fifth year Number 04

Table 2 Inscriptions on the gilded bronze bamboo-shaped censer

The inscription on its rim indicates that this bamboo-shaped censer was made by the inner palace to aromatize the bedchamber of Weiyang. The inscription itself does not explain why and how this censer was gifted to the Elder Princess of Yangxin and became part of her funerary endowment. Since this artifact was found along with another eighteen objects belonging to the elder princess of Yangxin in the same pit, which is 60 meters away from the main tomb; therefore, it was identified as a surrogate object of the Elder Princess.[65] The censer was one of the everyday objects that the princess might have used and thus gives us an idea of the extravagant lifestyle of the Han princesses.

Another gorgeous artistic piece believed to have belonged to the Elder Princess of Yangxin is the Changxin Palace lamp (fig. 3).

[65] *Ibid.,* And Maoling Museum, http://www.maoling.com/news_display.asp?keyno=174

Liu Tiewen did not mention the name and function of the other eighteen pieces of artifacts that were found along with the gilded bronze bamboo-shaped censer. But according to the description on the Maoling Museum official site these artifacts should be: gilded bronze horse, gilded bronze paper-weight, gilded bronze censor, bronze wine warmer and etc.

Fig. 3

The Changxin Palace lamp is nearly half a meter high and shaped as a kneeling palace servant holding a candlestick. The lamp has a projecting candle which was used to rotate the base to direct light to different directions to illuminate the room. On the base of the lamp, there are also two semi-cylindrical panels used to control the intensity of the light.[66] Other than its ingenious design of light controlling, the Changxin Palace lamp is also strikingly beautiful. The lamp took the shape of a kneeling palace lady whose spine is mostly erect and sits on the back of her heel.[67] As Barbieri-Low suggests, from her expression, one could see the beauty and pain through the model — her submissive and respectful attitude and her identity as a palace servant.[68]

Location of Inscription	**Transcription**	**Translation**
Underside of upper candlestick support	長信尚浴，容一升少半升，重六斤，百八十九，今內者臥	The Controller of the Imperial Bath of the Palace of Lasting Trust Capacity [for tallow candle] a little under 1.5 *sheng*(265ml) Weight: 6 *jin*(1.497kg) [Number] 189 Currently located in the bedchamber [supervised by] the Palace Servant Bureau

[66] Barbieri-Low 2007, 11-12.

[67] *Ibid*., 12.

[68]The inscription charts of the Changxin Palace Lamp is cited from Barbieri-Low 2007, 13.

outer rim of candlestick support	陽信家	The House of Yangxin
outer rotating sleeve	陽信家，並重二鈞十二斤，七年，第一。	The House of Yangxin Combined weight [of entire lamp]: 2 *jun* and 12 *jin* (15.78kg)
Inner rotating sleeve (left side)	陽信家	The House of Yangxin
Inner rotating sleeve (right side)	並重二斤二兩。	Combined weight [of both sleeves]: 2 *jin* and 2 *liang* (15.78kg)
Outer rim of candlestick pan	陽信家	The House of Yangxin
Right shoulder	陽信家	The House of Yangxin
Lower Corner of hem	今內者臥。	Currently located in the bedchamber [supervised by] the Palace Servant Bureau

Table 3 Inscriptions on the Changxin Palace lamp

The Changxin Palace lamp also had inscribed characters indicating its ownership (as shown in Table 3). As Barbieri-Low states, this masterpiece was possibly manufactured at an imperial atelier in Chang'an during the reign of Emperor Wen (r. 180 BCE- 157BCE) or early in Emperor Jing's reign (r. 156 BCE- 141 BCE) and later was bestowed on the Princess of Yangxin as a gift.[69] It was not a surrogate object of the Princess of Yangxin. It was found in the tomb of Dou Wan 竇綰, the wife of the King Jing of Zhongshan 中山靖王(? - 133 B.C.E).

As Barbieri-Low explains, there are two schools of thought on the history of ownership of this majestic piece. The first school believes that this lamp belonged to the Household of Liu Jie, the Noble of Yangxin 陽信 since 179 BCE. They argue that the lamp was excavated in the tomb of the Noble of Yangxin and therefore that he should be the first owner of

[69] Du Xiaoyu 杜小鈺 and Sun Kai 孫凱 1 (2015), 76 - 78.

this lamp. The second school believes that the inscription indicates that the ownership of the lamp belongs to the Elder Princess of Yangxin. Du Xiaoyu and Sun Kai state that based on the inscription one could ensure that this lamp was manufactured for the house of Yangxin. The Controller of the Imperial Bath of the Palace of Lasting Trust and the Palace Servant Bureau were the manufacturers. They argue that the Changxin Palace lamp is most likely manufactured based on the edict of Empress Dowager Dou in 150 BCE during Emperor Jing's reign as a gift to the Elder Princess of Yangxin.[70] These two objects were both made in the inner palace and were later bestowed on the princesses. The excavation of these pieces has an importance other than their aesthetic value — they provide us a chance to peek into the daily lives of the Han princesses and unravel the rich material and extravagant lives of Han times.

[70] Anthony J. Barbieri-Low 2007, 13 - 14.

Chapter 2 Properties and Bathing Towns

The Han sumptuary code, as described in the previous chapter, regulated the usage of clothing and carriages for special occasions and revealed the high social status of regular and elder princesses. This raises the question of the economic underpinnings of their status. How did they acquire the items of consumption appropriate to their status and defray those and other expenses? This chapter discusses the three major streams of income of princesses and elder princesses, and investigates how they managed their households.

As close family members of the reigning emperors, princesses had access to a large fortune. After the Elder Princess of Guantao 館陶公主 (second century BCE – 116 BCE) was widowed, she was enamored with Dong Yan 董偃 (fl. 192 BCE), who had humble beginnings as a pearl trader when he was young. She educated Dong Yan and made him her "recognized lover." In order to encourage Dong Yan to make friends in Chang'an city, Princess Guantao told her butler (*zhongfu* 中府), "The expenditure of Dong Yan per day is one hundred *jin* 斤(1 *jin* equivalent to 0.5kg) of gold, one million of cash and one bolt (*pi* 疋) of silk. [If his usage exceeds this amount] then report it to me."[71] This indicates that the Elder Princess was fully supporting Dong Yan and was willing and able to pay for such an extravagant expenditure.

The Elder Princess not only offered Dong Yan gifts and money to make friends with the officials in Chang'an, but also helped Dong Yan attain recognition from the reigning Emperor Wu. An anecdote in *Hanshu* illustrates how Dong Yan received the emperor's favor:

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[71] *Hanshu* 65. 2853.

> Yuan Shu of Anling was the son of Yuan Ang's elder brother. He was very friendly with Dong Yan, and said to him, "You are carrying on a secret alliance with a princess of the Han, a crime that could involve you in incalculable trouble! How do you propose to insure your safety?" Dong Yan, looking frightened, replied, "I have been worrying about this for a long time, but I don't know what to do!" Yuan Shu said, "the Gucheng ancestral temple is a long way from the capital and there is no palace in the vicinity where the emperor may spend the night when he visits there. Moreover, there are groves of catalpa and bamboo there, and the sacred field that the emperor plows in person. Why don't you suggest to the princess that she present her Long Gate Garden as a gift. It is precisely what the emperor wants, and when he learns that the idea originated with you, then you will be able to sleep easy at night and will not have anything to fear or fret about for a long time to come. But if you allow things to drag on without taking any action, then eventually the emperor will ask for the estate himself. Then what good will you get out of it? Dong Yan bowed his head and said, "I'm only too happy to follow your instructions." Then he went and told the princess of the plan, and she immediately submitted a letter to the throne making the presentation. The emperor was highly pleased and renamed the princess' garden estate, calling it the Long Gate Palace. The Princess, delighted, instructed Dong Yan to take a hundred catties of gold and present it to Yuan Shu as a birthday gift
> 安陵爰叔者，爰盎兄子也，與偃善，謂偃曰：「足下私侍漢主，挾不測之罪，將欲安處乎？」偃懼曰：「憂之久矣，不知所以。」爰叔曰：「顧城廟遠無宿宮，又有萩竹籍田，足下何不白主獻長門園？此上所欲也。如是，上知計出於足下也，則安枕而臥，長無慘怛之憂。久之不然，上且請之，於足下何如？」偃頓首曰：「敬奉教。」入言之主，主立奏書獻之。上大說，更名竇太主園為長門宮。主大喜，使偃以黃金百斤為爰叔壽.[72]

This story reflects Dong Yan's supreme influence over the princess, and indicates that sometimes the princesses were more resourceful than the emperor. Anticipating that his affair with the Elder Princess of Guantao might get him into trouble, Dong Yan listened to his friend's advice and persuaded the Elder Princess to offer Emperor Wu the Changmen Garden 長門園, which was a

[72] Ban Gu 70: 2853, trans. by Burton Watson, 1974, 89-90.

property that was attached to Wendi's shrine and in the southeast of Chang'an. Since the emperor had wished to obtain it for a long time, Dong Yan received recognition, appropriate status and imperial favor from the emperor;[73] due to the successful outcome of the gift, the Elder Princess of Guantao rewarded Yuan Shu, her lover's friend, with one hundred *jin* 斤 of gold. This bestowal to Yuan Shu also indicates that princesses were willing to spend money to get advice to curry the emperor's favor.

One might wonder about the sources of income in the Elder Princess of Guantao's household that would allow her to facilitate Dong Yan's extravagant lifestyle and make a bestowal of one hundred *jin* of gold to Yuan Shu. Perhaps her words included in *Hanshu* could unravel this puzzle. After Yuan Shu suggested presenting the Long Gate Garden as a gift to the emperor, he devised a further plan that would have the princess feign illness so that the emperor would visit her household in person. During Emperor Wu's visit, he asked the Princess what she wanted for as a bestowal, she stated,

> Because of the generosity and the kindness which Your Majesty has showered upon me," she said, "and because of the sacred memory of my brother, the late emperor, I have been allowed to pay my respects at court at the spring and autumn receptions and to fulfill the duties of a loyal subject. I have been ranked among the princesses of the imperial house, have received gifts, and enjoyed the revenue from a fief assigned to me. Loftier than Heaven, weightier than earth is the debt I owe, one that to reach my death I can never hope to repay. Now of one day I should become incapable of performing my womanly duties of sweeping and sprinkling, if I should precede you to my humble death, like a dog or horse tumbled in a ditch, I would, I confess, go with regret. For I have this irrepressible wish. I wish that Your Majesty, forgetting the ten thousand affairs of the state, would at time nourish your vitality and let your spirit wander free; that you would emerge from your private apartment, turn aside your carriage, follow this out-of-the-way road and come to look over my hills and forests, where I may offer you the wine cup, toast your health, and provide entertainment and diversion for those

[73] Loewe 2000, 69.

> attending you. If this were to come about before I die, then what regrets would I have?" "You must not worry about this," said the emperor. "Hopefully you will recover. But I'm afraid my officers and attendants will be too many and will put you to too much expense." The emperor returned to the capital, and shortly afterwards, the princess recovered from her illness, rose from her bed and went to call upon him. The emperor gave her ten million cash and expressed the desire to join with her in drinking
>
> 妾幸蒙陛下厚恩，先帝遺德，奉朝請之禮，備臣妾之儀， 列為公主，賞賜邑入， 隆天重地，死無以塞責。一日卒有不勝洒掃之職，先狗馬填溝壑，竊有所恨，不勝大願，願陛下時忘萬事，養精游神，從中掖庭回輿，枉路臨妾山林，得獻觴上壽，娛樂左右。如是而死，何恨之有! 上曰：「主何憂？幸得愈。恐羣臣從官多，大為主費。」上還。有頃，主疾愈，起謁，上以錢千萬從主飲.[74]

In her statement, the Elder Princess eulogized the emperor's virtue and stated that the only thing she wanted as a bestowal was the emperor's longevity and health. She offered the emperor to relax and ride a carriage to tour around her household and to view the scene in the forests and hills. The emperor told the Elder Princess that he was afraid that the cost of him and his officials and servants stay would be too much; therefore, when the emperor returned to the capital, he bestowed ten million cash on the Elder Princess. One could discover that the Elder Princess of Guantao lived an abundant life. Not only she had the spare money for Dong Yan to spend and a garden to give away to the emperor, but also, she possessed a private dwelling with beautiful scenery. To thank the Elder Princess for her hospitality and to make up for what he and his servants had cost her, the emperor generously bestowed ten million cash on the princess. In her speech to the emperor, the Elder Princess of Guantao explains how she came to possess such a large fortune, listing her major sources of income: the bestowals she received from the emperor and the income she collected from her bathing town(s).

[74] *Hanshu* 65. 2854, trans. by Burton Watson 1974, 90-91. Trans. modified from Burton Watson.

The Bestowed Gifts

Generally speaking, the bestowed gifts from emperors and empresses comprise a small portion of a princess' properties.[75] Bai Lihong has tabulated imperial bestowals on princesses in both Western and Eastern Han. Princesses would receive bestowals proportional with other groups, such as regional kings, nobles, honored ladies, ministers, generals, officials with a salary grade of 2000 bushels in accordance with their ranks.[76]

Time 時間	**Reason of Bestowal** **受賞原因**	**Bestowed Gift** **賞賜物品**	**References** **參考資料**
Shiyuan 4 始元四年(83 BCE)	Establishing an empress 立後	Money and *silk* 錢帛	*HS* 7.
Chuyuan 1 初元元年（48 BCE）	Death of Emperor Xuan 帝崩	Gold 黃金	*HS* 9
Yongyuan 2 永元二年 (42 BCE)	陰陽未調 Yin and Yang not in accord (climate disasters)	Gold 黃金	*Ibid.*
Jianshi 1 (32 BCE) 建始元年	Victory over the Xiongnu 大勝匈奴	Gold 黃金	*HS* 10
Hongjia 2 (32 BCE)	徙民守陵 Resettlement of people to guard	Cemeteries and dwellings 冢地、第宅	*Ibid.*

[75] Bai Lihong 白立紅 2008, 25-26.

[76] *Ibid*., 24.

鴻嘉二年	Changling		
Yongchu 3 (109 CE) 永初三年	帝加元服 The emperor held the capping ceremony	Gold and silk 金帛	*HHS* 5
Yongning 1 (120 CE) 永寧元年	立太子 Establishment of Heir Apparent	Gold and silk 金帛	*Ibid.*
Yongning 2 (120 CE) 永寧二年	太后寢病漸篤 Empress' worsening illness	Money and cloth 錢布	*HHS* 10
Jianguang 1 (121CE) 建光元年	征伐 Military campaigns	Money and cloth 錢布	*HHS* 5
Yongjian 4 永建四年 (129CE)	帝加元服 Capping ceremony	Gold and *silk* 金帛	*HHS* 6
Jianhe 2 建和二年 (148CE)	帝加元服 Capping ceremony	Gold and silk 金帛	*HHS 7*

Table 4 Selected imperial bestowals on the princesses in both Western and Eastern Han

This table was modified and translated from Bai Lihong's MA Thesis, *Liang Han gongzhu kaoshu* 兩漢公主考述, 2008, 24. It lists some bestow of goods included in *Hanshu* and *Hou Hanshu* on the princesses. These bestow accompanied major events affecting the imperial House of Liu. These events included the celebration of auspicious signs sent by Heaven, responses to climate disasters, military campaigns and victories, the commemoration of an Heir Apparent's capping ceremony, and mourning at the death of imperial relatives.

These texts suggest that the princesses received bestowals along with other important members of the court. Bai Lihong argues that since the events celebrated by the gifts had important political ramifications, the bestowals must have been abundant.[77] Even though the sources do not mention the exact amounts given to each rank, it is obvious that princesses are high on the scale: the rank of order of the princesses was equivalent to that of nobles, and of an Elder Princesses was equivalent to regional kings.

Besides commemorating and celebrating important political events, princesses could also receive gifts from the emperors not only at the occasion of an imperial event. For example, Emperor Zhao bestowed a personal gift on the Elder Princess of Eyi 鄂邑長公主, "In the Yuanfeng period, the first year, in the spring, [because] the Elder Princess, [the Princess of Eyi], had served and cared for [the young Emperor] and had toiled and suffered, the private estate of the Elder Princess was again increased [by the addition of Lantian County] 元鳳元年春，長公主共養勞苦，復以藍田益長公主湯沐邑."[78] The bestowal was only made to the Elder Princess of Eyi to compliment her for her care and service to the child emperor.

Another example of a private gift to a princess was the Elder Princess of Guantao who received the bequest of her mother, Empress Dowager Dou (? - 135 BCE). *Hanshu* documents, "The testament of [Empress Dowager Dou] bestows all the gold, money and other properties of the Eastern Palace to the Elder Princess Piao 遺詔盡以東宮金錢財物賜長公主嫖."[79] Such cases were special and these properties were given to the Elder Princess Piao only to abide by the

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[77] *Ibid*.

[78] *Hanshu* 7. 225, trans. by Dubs 1944, 151-152.

[79] *Hanshu* 97. 3945.

Empress Dowager's edict. The bestowal the Elder Princess of Guantao received from Emperor Wu or the Elder Princess Eyi from Emperor Zhao indicates the existence of such private bestowals.

Gifts could consist of gold, money, cloth, grain, dwellings and burial plots. Though the bestowed objects were varied, gold, silk and money feature prominently among the bestowed goods. During the Western Han, gold was more frequently listed as a bestowed object. The recent excavation of the tomb of the Noble of Haihun (*Haihun hou* 海昏侯) supports such a hypothesis. There were 378 pieces of gold with a total weight of over 80 kilograms found as surrogate objects in the tomb.[80] That gold figured so prominently among the imperial gifts to nobles, regional kings, and princesses in the Western Han may relate to the requirement that these groups had to present gold at Gaozu's shrine at set times. The gold, a tribute to the emperor, was called *zhuojin* 酎金.

The amount of ***zhuojin*** was calculated by the population in each regional kingdom and in noble's fiefs. For every thousand people, there was a charge of 4 *liang* of gold, and the gold was examined by the Lesser Treasury (*shaofu* 少府) and received by the emperor himself during the ceremony.[81] *Shiji* and *Hanshu* indicates that nobles did have the obligation to pay *zhuojin* to the emperor. In 106 BCE, Wei Buyi 衛不疑, the Noble of Yin'an 陰安侯 and Wei Deng 衛登, Noble of Fagan 發乾候 were charged with irregularities in the presentation of dues (paying

[80]Nanchang Han dai Haihun hou yizhi bowu guan 南昌漢代海昏侯國遺址博物館, Last modified April 1, 2016. http://www.hhhmuseum.com/colunm6/col3/261.html

[81] *Ibid.*

insufficient amount of *zhuojin*) to Emperor Wu and thus they were deprived of their ranks.[82] Nevertheless, there is no indication as to whether the princesses should pay for the *zhuojin* in any official record.

Du Jinsong 杜勁松 points out that during the Western Han, gold was usually given as tribute to the emperor and that the emperor then further bestowed the gold on his vassals. Such actions created a circular system that allowed gold to circulate, to centralize and to accumulate within the Western Han bureaucracy.[83] In other words, the central court had the control over the gold flow. However, the issuance of the new coinage system in 7 CE during the Xin Dynasty greatly undermined and devastated the gold circulating system.[84] Strongly influenced by the changes in the Xin Dynasty, gold was no longer a part of the circulating system. Since the Eastern Han bureaucracy did not have the revenue to collect gold and to initiate a new circulating system, gold was no longer a major part of bestowed goods.

Also frequent among bestowed goods were cloth and silks, valuable commodities during Han times. As indicated above, a princess would either receive bestowals during imperial ceremonies or receive it as a private gift; it was not a very stable and consistent revenue of income. Though the written sources do not provide an exact amount of the bestowal, the princesses could not live on the bestowed goods alone.

Bathing towns (湯沐邑 *tangmu yi*) were the major source of income of a princess. "*Tangmu* 湯沐*"* refers to a hot water bath. *Yi* (邑 town) is a specific term used in the Han (206

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[82] Loewe 2000, 570. More illustration in *Shiji* 111. 2925 and *Hanshu* 55. 2475.

[83] Du Jinsong 杜勁松 2003, 70.

[84] *Ibid*.

BCE - 220 CE) to designate the lands that provide economic support to female members of the imperial family.[85] *Hanshu* states, "[The fief of] Empress dowager, empresses and princesses is called *yi* (邑 fief)皇后、公主所食曰邑."[86] Only in rare cases were bathing towns assigned to males. Gaozu 高祖 assigned one to himself,

> From the time when I was governor of Pei, I went forth to punish the wicked and violent until at least the whole world is mine. It is my wish that Pei become my bathing town. I hereby exempt its people from all taxes. For generation after generation, nothing more shall be required of you.[87]

The reason why Gaozu created a bathing town in Pei was to remember the days before he became emperor, and because he wanted to give a tax exemption to the residents of Pei County. Pei was only nominally his "bathing town," and of a different nature from the bathing towns received by female members of the imperial household.

A bathing town was not managed directly by the person who received it. The bathing towns were managed by the central court, but the income they generated reverted to their nominal owners, having a double benefit: the central court retained control over its lands, while allowing specific beneficiaries a sustained source of economic support. As important members of the imperial clan, many Han princesses acquired bathing towns (see Chart 2.1 and 2.2 for a list of princesses and the bathing towns they received):

> Revenues from the natural resources of mountains, rivers, parks, and lakes, as well as those from the government market places and from other kinds of taxes, were all used for the private maintenance of the emperor or the regional lords or

[85] He Lihua 何麗華 2004:5, pp.28-30, 30.

[86] *Hanshu* 19. 742.

[87] *Hanshu* 1. 74, trans. by Watson 1961, 82.

> princesses from whose lands, they were collected and were not entered in the budget of the empire as a whole
> 而山川園池市井租稅之入，自天子以至于封君湯沐邑，皆各為私奉養焉，不領於天下之經費.[88]

This account implies that the bathing town system was the major source of income for the Han nobles (including the princesses) and that the nobles were not able to get any funds from the government. The clause implies that the nobles and princesses could enjoy the revenues from the natural resources of mountains, rivers, parks, and lakes, as well as those from the government market places and from other kinds of taxes. Nevertheless, it was only in early Western Han (206-154 BCE) that fief-holders could enjoy a wide array of income. Starting from Emperor Wen's times, the taxation system underwent rapid changes. Yan Shigu 顏師古 commented that, "After the King of Wu 吳 and Chu楚 were killed (154 BCE), the power of the nobles was undermined accordingly… Henceforth the nobles only received the cloth, food and the *zu* 租 (tax on the use of land) 自吳楚誅後，稍奪諸侯權……其後諸侯唯得衣食租稅."[89] From this point forward, the government collected tax based on a split-purse system, where the Lesser Treasury (*shaofu* 少府) collected a variety of taxes, such as the market taxes, tribute tax on nobles, poll tax on children and taxes on products of the mountains and marshes, and the Superintendent of Agriculture (*Zhisu neishi* 治粟內史, later *Da sinong*大司農) was in charge of the income collected from the arable land and poll taxes and managed the salaries of the bureaucracy, the infrastructure of the road system and the military defense of the empire.[90] These revenues,

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[88] *Shiji* 30. 1418; also parallel in *Hanshu* 24A.1127.

[89] *Hanshu* 38. 2002.

[90] Barbieri-Low and Yates 2015, 917, note 9. For a more specific discussion on the Han taxation system, please find in the section of measuring Princess' scale of property in page 24 - 25 in this chapter.

revenues from the natural resources of mountains, rivers, parks, and lakes, as well as those from the government market places, were collected by specially assigned officials but no longer by the Han nobles who were the nominal owners of the land. Aside from paying for the taxes that were collected by the central government, the tenants who lived in the land of the nobles were also obligated to pay cash and grain to their nominal land owners. This tribute to the nobles was collected by the officials inside these nobles' households.[91]

Like other aristocrats, princesses had various officials to manage their households. The "Statutes and Ordinances of the Second Year" documents that the salary grade of the Household Assistant (家丞 *jiacheng*) of Princess Li 李, Princess Shentu 申徒, Princess Rong 榮 and Princess Fu 傅 amounted to three hundred bushels (*shi* 石).[92] It indicates that there were officials distributed to princesses starting from the early Western Han. At the beginning, it seems as though the household attendants were in charge of all affairs in the princesses' households. The duties concerning princesses' properties were further specified in the Eastern Han. According to *Hanguan yi* 漢官儀, both an Elder Princess and a Princess Worth A County had individual officials to help them to manage their properties:

> An Elder Princess has a Tutor 傅, a chief officer of [her] Private Storehouses (私府長 *sifu zhang*), an officer of the Office of Food (食官 *shiguan*), an officer of the Long Lanes (永巷長 *Yongxiang zhang*) and a Director of Household (家令 *Jialing*) ; all are at a salary grade of six hundred bushels and are supported by clerks (員吏 *yuanli*). A Princess Worth A County has a Tutor, of a salary grade of 600 bushels, a servant (僕 *pu*), of a salary grade of six hundred bushels, a Household Attendant, with a salary grade of three hundred bushels
> 長公主傅一人，私府長一人，食官一人，永巷長一人，家令一人,秩皆六百石,各

[91] Feng Hui 馮輝 6 (1983): 82.

[92] Barbieri-Low and Yates, 2015, 980. 李公主、申徒公主、荣公主、傅公〔主〕家丞,秩各三百石。472 (C114)

有員吏。而鄉公主傅一人，秩六百石；僕一人，六百石；家丞一人， 三百石.[93]

Such descriptions indicate that in Eastern Han times, Elder Princesses had more properties in comparison to the properties of the Princess Worth a County since they were allowed to have more and higher ranked personnel to manage them. The historical texts do not provide explicit definitions of the duties of these officials, but one can still try to fathom the meanings behind the titles they carried. The Household Director was likely in charge of the management of the granary; the officer in charge of princesses' private dwelling was probably in charge of the income of bathing towns and the stockpile of sumptuary objects; the officer in charge of food was in all likelihood responsible for the supply of food and dining; and the household assistant responsible for other errands inside the household.[94] Based on the different functionality of the officials who worked for the princesses, one can imagine the considerable size and scale of the princesses' properties. This, however, leads to further questions—where were their properties located? Where exactly did the princesses reside?

Generally speaking, princesses had luxurious dwellings in the capital area (Chang'an for Western Han; Luoyang for Eastern Han). The Changmen Palace 長門宮 was the private estate of the Highness Elder Princess Guantao 館陶大長公主, who was the daughter of Emperor Wen. This palace was best known as the dwelling of Empress Chen after Emperor Wu dismissed her. Sima Xiangru's *fu*-poem on Changmen Palace (長門賦 "Changmen *fu*") eulogized the grandeur of the place,

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[93] Sun Xingyan 孫星衍(1753-1818 CE) and Zhou Tianyou 周天遊 1990. *Hanguan liuzhong* 漢官六種 is a collection of 6 different texts on the Han bureaucratic system, includes *Hanguan* 漢官, *Hanguan jiegu* 漢官解詁, *Hanguan jiu yi* 漢官舊儀, *Hanguan yi* 漢官儀, *Hanguan dianzhi yishi xuanyong* 漢官典職儀式選用 and *Han yi* 漢儀.

[94] Tang Mujun 唐穆君 2008, 14.

The main hall solitarily stretches to the sky,
Massively raising and arching upward…
Carved magnolia serves for the beams,
Engraved gingko wood for the rafters.
Standing in a row, lush and luxuriant, are floating uprights,
Latticed and interlaced, braced together.
Adorning them are brackets of rare timber, bunched long and short, hollow inside.
At times they vaguely resemble natural objects,
Just like the lofty heights of Piled Boulders.
Their multicolored glitter coruscates back and forth,
Bright and dazzling, shooting beams of light.
The compactly laid mosaic tiles of assorted stones,
Resemble the intricate patterns of tortoise shells.[95]

Though Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 may never have seen the majestic palace himself and his depiction of the palace may be exaggerated, his imagery of the palace still suggests that princesses lived in the most extravagant palaces one could ever think of. The Changmen Palace was the only dwelling of the princess of which we know the name.

So far no archaeological remains of such private estates have been found in the areas where the bathing towns were located. Nevertheless, *Hanshu* revealed that a majestic household that the Elder Princess of Guantao owned was located outside the capital. Based on an anecdote in *Hanshu*, Emperor Wu once went out of the capital to visit the Elder Princess, and she invited him to relax in her dwelling which was surrounded by hills and forest.[96] Though we do not know

[95] Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 (179-117 BCE), trans. by David R. Knechtges 1(1981), 56.

[96] The story itself can be found in also in *Hanshu*, 70: 2853, and can also be found at the beginning of this chapter.

where her estate was located, one could imagine the breathtaking scenery of her estate.

The Geographical Spread of the Bathing Towns

Table 5 and 6 indicate the bathing towns that were bestowed on the princesses in the Western and the Eastern Han times.

Father	Mother	Title	Location	Bathing Town(s)
Emperor Gaozu（256 BCE - 195 BCE）	Empress Lü （241 BCE - 180 BCE）	The Elder Princess of Luyuan 魯元長公主 ？- 187BCE	The Kingdom of Lu and the Commandery of Chengyang 魯國與城陽國	Kingdom of Lu 魯 and Chengyang Commandery 城陽郡
Emperor Wen (202 BCE -158 BCE)	Empress Dou （205 BCE - 135BCE）	The Elder Princess of Guantao/ The Highness Elder Princess of the Tang Estate 館陶長公主 / 館陶大長公主	Wei Commandery 魏郡	Guantao County 館陶縣
Emperor Jing (188 BCE -141 BCE)	Empress Wang(?-126 BCE)	Princess Pingyang/ Princess Yangxin 平陽公主 / 陽信公主	Bohai Commandery 勃海郡 and Hedong Commandery 河東郡	Yangxin County 陽信縣 and Pingyang County 平陽縣
Emperor Jing (188 BCE-141 BCE)	Empress Wang (?-126 BCE)	Princess Nangong 南宮公主	Kingdom of Xindu 信都國	Nangong county 南宮縣

Emperor Jing (188 BCE -141 BCE)	Empress Wang(? -126 BCE)	Princess Longlü 隆慮公主	河內郡 Henei Commandery	Longlü County 隆慮郡
Emperor Wu (156 BCE -87 BCE)	Empress Wei(? -91 BCE)	Elder Princess Wei/ Princess Dangli 衛長公主/當利公主	Donglai Commandery 東萊郡	黨利縣 Dangli County
Emperor Wu (156 BCE -87 BCE)	Empress Wei(? -91 BCE)	Princess Zhuyi 諸邑公主	Langya County 琅玡郡	諸縣 Zhu County
Emperor Wu (156 BCE -87 BCE)	Empress Wei(? -91 BCE)	Princess Yangshi 陽石公主	Donglai Commandery 東萊郡	Yangshi County 陽石縣
Emperor Wu (156 BCE -87 BCE)	Unknown	The Elder Princess of the E Estate/ The Elder Princess of Gai 鄂邑長公主/蓋長公主 （？－80BCE）	Jiaxia Commandery 江夏郡 and capital area 京兆	E county 鄂縣 and Lantian County 藍田縣
Emperor Wu (156 BCE -87 BCE)	Unknown	Princess Yi'an 夷安公主	Kingdom of Gaomi 高密國	Yi'an County 夷安縣
Emperor Xuan	Consort Hua	Princess Guantao	Wei Commandery	Guantao County

(91BCE - 49 BCE)	(婕妤 jieyu) 華婕妤	馆陶公主	魏郡	館陶縣
Emperor Xuan (91BCE - 49 BCE)	Unknown	Princess Jingwu 敬武公主 (? - 3CE)	巨鹿郡 Jülu Commandery	Jingwu County 敬武縣
Emperor Xuan (91BCE - 49 BCE)	Unknown	Princess of the Yang Estate 陽邑公主	太原郡 Taiyuan Commandery	Yangyi County 陽邑縣
Emperor Yuan (75 BCE – 33BCE)	傅昭仪	Princess of Pingdu 平都公主	上郡 Shang Commandery	Pingdu County 平都縣
Emperor Yuan (75 BCE – 33BCE)	卫婕妤	Princess of Pingyang/ Princess of Yang'a 平陽公主/ 陽阿公主	河東郡 Hedong Commandery	Pingyang County 平陽縣
Emperor Cheng (51 BCE - 7 CE)	Unknown	穎邑公主 Princess of the Ying Estate	潁川郡 Yingchuan Commandery	County of Ying 穎邑

Table 5 Princesses' Bathing Towns in the Western Han

Father	**Mother**	**Title**	**Location**	**Bathing town**
Liu Qin，Lord of Nandu, Father of Emperor Guangwu	Unknown	Elder Princess of Xinye 新野公主	Nanyang Commandery 南陽郡	Xinye County 新野縣

(? – 3CE) 南頓君劉欽				
Liu Qin，Lord of Nandun, Father of Emperor Guangwu (? – 3CE) 南頓君劉欽	Unknown	Elder Princess of Huyang 湖陽公主	Nanyang Commandery 南陽郡	Huyang County 湖陽縣
Liu Qin，Lord of Nandun, Father of Emperor Guangwu (? – 3CE) 南頓君劉欽	Unknown	Elder Princess of Ningping 寧平公主	Kingdom of Huaiyang 淮陽國	Ningping County 寧平縣
Emperor Guangwu (5 BCE - 57 CE)	Unknown	Elder Princess of Wuyang 舞陽長公主	Nanyang Commandery 南陽郡	Wuyang County 舞陽縣
Emperor Guangwu (5 BCE - 57 CE)	Unknown	Princess of Nieyang 涅阳公主	Nanyang Commandery 南陽郡	Nieyang County 涅阳縣
Emperor Guangwu (5 BCE - 57 CE)	Unknown	Princess of Guantao 馆陶公主	Wei Commandery 魏郡	Guantao County 館陶縣
Emperor Guangwu (5 BCE - 57 CE)	Unknown	Princess of Yuyang 淯陽公主	Nanyang Commandery 南陽郡	Yuyang County 淯阳縣
Emperor Guangwu (5 BCE - 57 CE)		Princess of Liyi 酈邑公主	Nanyang Commandery 南陽郡	County of Li 酈縣

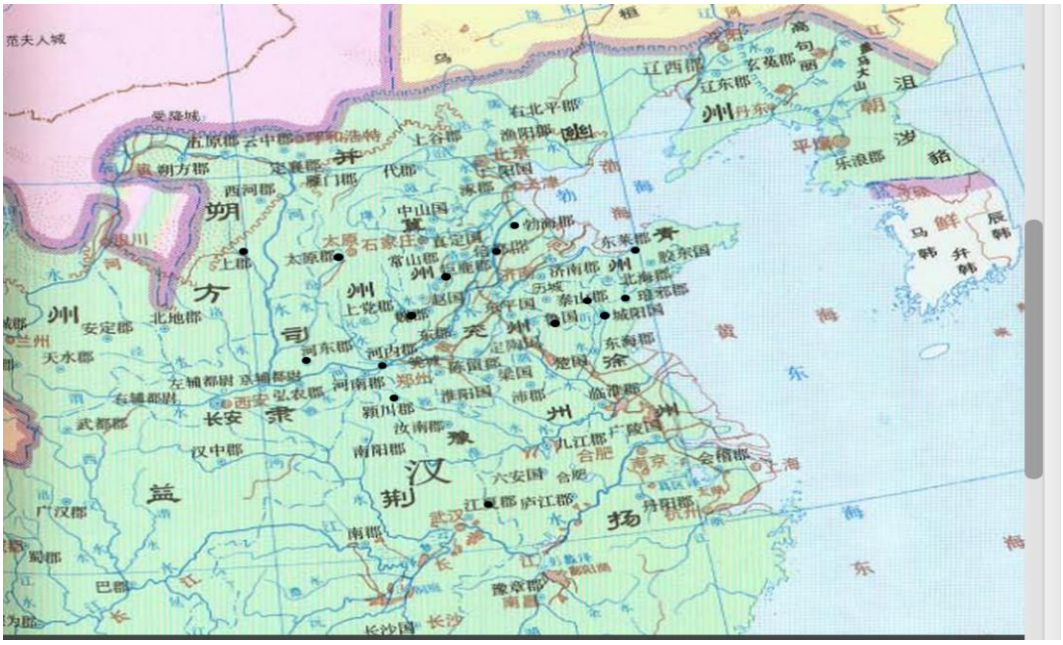
Liu Qiang, Gong King of Donghai 東海恭王劉強 (25 - 58 CE)		The Elder Princess of Biyang 沘陽長公主	Nanyang Commandery 南陽郡	Biyang County 沘陽縣
Liu Qiang, Gong King of Donghai 東海恭王劉強		Princess Neihuang 内黄公主	Wei Commandery 魏郡	Neihuang County 内黄縣
Emperor Ming (28 CE -75 CE)	Unknown	The Elder Princess of Huojia 获嘉長公主 / 平氏長公主	Henei Commandery 河內郡	Huojia County 獲嘉縣
Emperor Ming (28 CE -75 CE)	Consort Jia 賈貴人	Princess of Pingyang 平陽公主	Hedong Commandery 河東郡	Pingyang County 平陽縣
Emperor Ming (28 CE -75 CE)	Unknown	Princess of Longlü 隆虙公主	Hedong Commandery 河內郡	Longlü County 隆虙縣
Emperor Ming (28 CE -75 CE)	Unknown	Princess of Pingshi 平氏公主	Nanyang Commandery 南阳郡	Pingshi County 平氏縣
Emperor Ming (28 CE -75 CE)	Unknown	Princess of Qinshui 沁水公主	Henei Commandery 河內郡	Qinshui County 沁水縣
Emperor Ming (28 CE -75 CE)	Unknown	Princess of Pinggao 平皋公主	Henei Commandery 河內郡	Pinggao County 平皋縣
Emperor Ming (28 CE -75 CE)	Unknown	Princess of Junyi 浚儀公主	Chenliu Commandery 陳留郡	Junyi County 浚儀縣

Emperor Ming (28 CE -75 CE)	Unknown	Princess of Wu'an 武安公主	Wei Commandery 魏郡	Wu'an County 武安縣
Emperor Ming (28 CE -75 CE)	Unknown	Princess of Luyang 魯陽公主	Nanyang Commandery 南陽郡	Luyang County 魯陽縣
Emperor Ming (28 CE -75 CE)	Unknown	Princess of Leping 樂平公主	Dong Commandery 東郡	Leping County 樂平縣
Emperor Ming (28 CE -75 CE)	Unknown	Princess of Cheng'an 成安公主	Yingchuan Commandery 潁川郡	Cheng'an County 成安縣
Emperor Zhang (57 CE – 88 CE)	Unknown	Princess of Wude 武德公主	Henei Commandery 河內郡	Wude County 武德縣
Emperor Zhang (57 CE – 88 CE)	Unknown	Princess of Pingyi 平邑公主	Dai Commandery 代郡	Pingyi County 平邑縣
Emperor Zhang (57 CE – 88 CE)	Unknown	Princess of Yin'an 陰安公主	Wei Commandery 魏郡	Yin'an County 陰安縣
Emperor He (79 CE – 105 CE)	Unknown	Princess of Xiuwu 修武公主	Henei Commandery 河內郡	Xiuwu County 修武縣
Emperor He (79 CE – 105 CE)	Unknown	Princess of Gongyi 共邑公主	Henei Commandery 河內郡	County of Gong 共邑
Emperor He (79 CE – 105 CE)	Unknown	Princess of Linying 臨潁公主	Yingchuan Commandery 潁川郡	Linying County 臨潁縣
Emperor He (79 CE – 105 CE)	Unknown	Princess of Wenxi	Hedong Commandery	Wenxi County 聞喜

		聞喜公主	河東郡	縣
Liu Qing , The King of Qinghe (fl.) 清河王劉慶	Unknown	Princess of Wuyin 舞陰公主	Nanyang Commandery 南陽郡	Wuyin County 舞陰縣
Liu Qing , The King of Qinghe (fl.) 清河王劉慶	Unknown	Princess of Nieyang 涅陽公主	Nanyang Commandery 南陽郡	Nieyang County 涅陽縣
Emperor Shun (115 CE -144 CE)	Lady Yu 虞美人	The Elder Princess of Wuyang 舞陽長公主	Yingchuan Commandery 潁川郡	Wuyang County 舞陽邑
Emperor Shun (115 CE -144 CE)	Unknown	The Elder Princess of Guanjun 冠军長公主	Nanyang Commandery 南陽郡	Guanjun County 冠军縣
Emperor Shun (115 CE -144 CE)	Unknown	Princess of Ruyang 汝陽公主	Runan Commandery 汝南郡	Ruyang County 汝陽縣
Liu Yi, Noble of Liwu, Father of Emperor Huan, (fl.) 蠡吾侯劉翼	Unknown	Princess of Changshe 長社公主	Yingchuan Commandery 潁川郡	Changshe County 長社縣
Liu Yi, Noble of Liwu, Father of Emperor Huan, (fl.) 蠡吾侯劉翼	Unknown	Princess of Yiyang 益陽公主	Changsha Commandery 長沙郡	Yiyang County 益陽縣
Emperor Huan (132 CE – 168 CE)	Unknown	The Elder Pincess of Yang'an 陽安長公主	Runan Commandery	Yang'an County 陽安縣

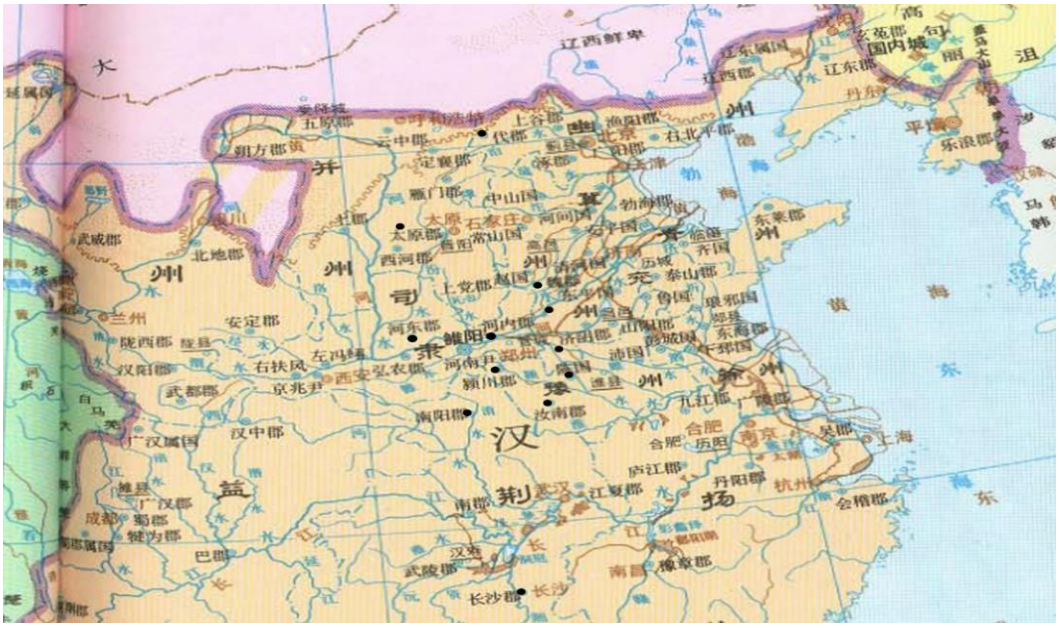
			汝南郡	
Emperor Huan (132 CE – 168 CE)	Unknown	Elder Princess of Yingyin 潁陰長公主	Yingyin Commandery 潁陰郡	Yingyin County 潁陰縣
Emperor Huan (132 CE – 168 CE)	Unknown	陽翟長公主 Elder Princess of Yangzhai	Yingchuan Commandery 潁川郡	Yangzhai County 陽翟縣
Emperor Ling (156 CE – 189 CE)	Unknown	Princess of Wannian 萬年公主	Yingchuan Commandery 潁川郡	Wannian County 萬年縣

Table 6 Princesses' Bathing Towns in the Eastern Han



Map 1 The geographical location of princesses' bathing towns in the Western Han

Maps 1 and 2 include the bathing towns in the Western and Eastern Han attested in the sources.[97] During Western Han (see Chart 2.1), the bathing towns were mainly located in the commanderies of Chengyang 城陽, Wei 魏, Bohai 勃海, Jiyin 濟陰, Henei 河內, Jiangxia 江夏, Langya 琅玡, Donglai 東萊, Julu 巨鹿, Shang 上, Hedong 河東 and Yingchuan 潁川. These commanderies are located in the plateau areas to the east of the Taihang 太行 Mountains and in the middle and lower ranges of the Yellow River,[98] all fertile areas with convenient sources of irrigation.



Map 2 The Geographical Location of Princesses' Bathing Towns in the Eastern Han

During Eastern Han (Chart 2.2.) princesses' bathing towns were mainly located in the commanderies of Henei 河內, Hedong 河東, Chenliu 陳留, Wei 魏, Nanyang 南陽, Dong 東, Yingchuan 潁川, and Runan 汝南, with most bathing towns were located either in Henei 河內 (18 %) or Nanyang 南陽 (30.8 %).

Some interesting trends may be observed regarding the location of the bathing towns. By Eastern Han, twelve bathing towns were in Nanyang Commandery, an area that during Western Han did not hold the same significance. The reason is threefold. First, Nanyang was close to the

[97] Bai Lihong 白立紅 2008, 17-19.

[98] Xue Ruize 薛瑞澤 2013, 101.

old capital Chang'an (around 424 km) and the new capital Luoyang (around 215 km); it had always been a place of military significance and been considered as an advantageous geographic location. According to the "Treatise on Geography" in *Hanshu*, Nanyang Commandery connects to the Wu Pass (武關 *Wuguan*) and Yun Pass (鄖關 *Yunguan*) and intersects with the Han River 漢水, Yangzi and Huai rivers 淮河; its capital city Wan was a metropolitan center.[99] Because of Nanyang's geographical significance, the emperor wanted the region not fall into danger. Perhaps the princesses received their bathing towns in Nanyang because the emperor trusted them and believed that they would not collude with the local powerful families and became a threat to the empire.

Second, Nanyang was known for its commercial atmosphere and prosperity. Sima Qian points out that many people in Nanyang were merchants.[100] *Hanshu* introduces the basic administration in seven major markets, and the capital city of Nanyang, Wan city, was one of them. *Hanshu* indicates that masters of markets for equalizing pricing (*wujun sishi shi* 五均司市師) were installed in Chang'an (both the east and the west market), Luoyang, Handan, Linzi, Wan and Chengdu.[101] Since this administration was installed only in a major market, Nanyang must have been commercially prosperous. One could infer that to reside in Nanyang, a princess had to be able to live an extravagant life. This may be a reason why Nanyang was a frequent and popular choice when the emperor arranged the bathing towns for the princesses. Third, such a phenomenon can be explained by the fact that the Eastern Han founder, Emperor Guangwu, was

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[99] *Shiji* 129. 3269. 南陽西通武關、鄖關，東南受漢、江、淮。宛亦一都會也。Mathematical data were generated based on Google maps. Since these cities were reconstructed. These data is provided only as a reference.

[100] Wang Zijin 王子今 1(2004); also in Shiji 129. 3269.

[101] *Hanshu* 24. 1132, trans by. Nancy Lee Swann 1950, 336. Translation modified from Swann.

from Nanyang.[102] It seems that the legacy of Emperor Guangwu became a family memory that was remembered by his descendants and such admiration and remembrance of Emperor Guangwu was connected to a specific geographical location.

Other than using the location of their bathing towns as a scale to predict the scale of their wealth, the size of the bathing town is another important element. The number of households within the bathing towns is indicative of the income the princesses could derive from their estates. In the Han Dynasty, there were two types of taxes: *fu* 賦, a head tax, and *shui* 稅, any tax levied in relation to the earnings by the use of land.[103] The income that the nobles and princesses collected was a tax on arable land (*tian shui* 田稅), levied at a rate of one-fifteenth of the output.[104] The tax on arable land was paid by the agricultural products at the beginning of the Western Han, but the grain may have been converted into a unit of money. In *Shiji*, Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca.145 BCE - 90 BCE) states that the owner of a fief received the income of the land, and the annual household tax was two hundred cash.[105] To analyze the policy on the tax on the arable land and combined with Sima Qian's words one can conclude that in Han China, *tian shui* was charged based on the total grain production and collected by the unit of household (戶 *hu*). Therefore, if one can attempt to extrapolate the number of households in a princess' bathing

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[102] Bai Lihong 2008, 17.

[103] Nancy Lee Swann 1950, 366. Also in *Hanshu* 24. 1127. To be more specific, the *fu* tax can categorized into three types: *suan fu* 算賦, *kou fu* 口賦 and *geng fu* 更賦(adult poll tax, tax on children and military and labor service commuted to a tax). The *shui* tax was consisted with five kinds—*shui* on the use of land (*tian shui* 田稅), *shui* on the product from the sea (*hai shui* 海稅), *zu* 租 on household (戶 *hu*) or ground tax, *zu* on business or on market place, *zu* on products from the mountain and from the marshes.

[104] *Ibid*., 369.

[105] Sima Qian, trans. by Burton Watson 1961, 447-448. "Each year he [a lord who possesses a fief lives offthe taxes] is allowed to collect 200 cash (per household) 封者食租稅，歲率戶二百. Also in *Shiji* 129: 3272.

town, one can estimate a princess' annual income. Sima Qian also mentions that the fief-holder was responsible for the expenses of his spring and autumn visits to the court and for paying the gifts in gold (*zhuojin* 酌金) presented to the emperor on those occasions.[106] They were also responsible for the salaries of the officials in their domain.[107] We do not know whether princesses were invited to the spring and autumn visits but they certainly were responsible for paying the salaries of the officials.

The Han court used both the size of a town or a specific number of households as a scale of bestowal to reward the nobles and regional kings. For example, the Elder Princess of Eyi, the King of Yan [Liu Dan], and the King of Guanglin [Liu Xu], each had received thirteen thousand households in the first year of Shiyuan (86 BCE).[108] She received additional enfeoffment in the first year of Yuanfeng (80 BCE) by the addition of the Lantian County.[109] It seems that there were no regulations on the measurement of the enfeoffment and the size of the domain. Since princess and a noble were at the same rank, one could access the number of households from the available data on that of the nobles.[110]

Liu Chunfan 柳春藩 argues that the average number of households in the domain of a noble amounted to 2142 households during Gaozu's reign (206 BCE – 195 BCE).[111] Zhong

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[106] *Ibid.*

[107] Feng Hui 馮輝 1983, 82.

[108] *Hanshu* 7. 219, trans by. Dubs 1944, 154.

Trans. modified from Dubs.

[109] *Ibid.*, 164.

[110] Since the nobles and the princesses enjoy the same rank, we can use the average household number of household in nobles' domains as a refernce to extrapolate that of the princesses.

[111] Liu Chunfan 柳春藩 1984, 18.

Yiming estimates that an average bathing town consisted, during Western Han, of around 2000 households. He bases himself on figures we have for Emperor Ping's (9 BCE - 6 CE) reign. *Hanshu* indicates that the three sisters of the Emperor Ping who held the rank of Estate Princess 邑君 with the income of two thousand households.[112] Zhong believes that the specific amount of bestowal that was listed should be parallel to the rank of a princess.[113] The number indicated in *Hanshu* was close to Liu Chunfan's speculation on the number of households that a princess might receive and thus adds some credibility to Liu's argument. Therefore, one could use Liu's data to roughly calculate the income that a princess could receive: 2142*200= 428,400 cash per year.

As Elder Princesses were at the same rank as the regional kings, their estates comprised more households than those of regular princesses. The Elder Princess of Eyi, for example, received more than one bathing town—she received both Gai County and Lantian County as her bathing towns and later another thirteen thousand households were added to those.[114] According to *Hanshu*'s "Treatise on Geography,"[115] Lantian County was one of twelve within the Capital

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According to the Table of the nobles who stand out for their recognize meritorious service to the dynasty, Emperor Gaozu enfiefed 137 nobles. There were 114 of them have a records on the number of the households they received. From the collected data one could extrapolate the average number of household that the nobles who stand out for their recognize meritorious service to the dynasty received was 2142 *hu*.

[112] Ban Gu, trans by. Homer H. Dubs, 69.

Also in *Hanshu* 12:351.

[113] Zhong Yiming 鐘一鳴 1988, 32.

[114] *Hanshu* 7. 217, 219 and 226-227, trans. by Homer H. Dubs, 151-152, 154 and 164. Trans. modified from Dubs.

[115] *Hanshu* 28. 1543, 1581.The data below was adapted from the "Treatise on Geography" in *Hanshu*, since we have no exact number on the number of households in each town, this data is a hypothetical number and may vary from the original situation. 京兆尹，元始二年戶十九萬五千七百二，口六十八萬二千四百六十八。縣十二：長安，新豐，船司空，藍田，華陰，鄭，湖，下邽，南陵，奉明，霸陵，杜陵。

Area (Jingzhao yin京兆尹), which had 195, 720 households in total in 2 CE. Therefore, each county would have had, on average, 195,720/12= 16,310 *hu*. Gai County was one of the twenty-four within Taishan Commandery, where the total number of households was 172,086. Therefore, the average number of households per county in Taishan Commandery was 172,086/24 = 7,179 *hu.* If we add those numbers, the total number of households that the Elder Princess obtained might be estimated at 16,310+7,179+13,000= 36,489 *hu*. At 200 cash per household, her yearly income from her bathing towns only would have been 36,489*200= 7,297,800 cash.

To get an idea of the scale of a princess's income, let us look at the income of commoners. Jia Yi 賈誼 (200 - 169 BCE) writes,

> Now at the present time out of farming families of five members those who are required to perform labor services are [on the average] at least two men, and those who are able to cultivate [are given] no more than one hundred *mu* acres [a family,] the yield of which is not more than one hundred *shi*
> 今農夫五口之家，其服役者不下二人，其能耕者不過百晦，百晦之收不過百石.[116]

Based on Jia Yi's comment, an avarage household held about 100 *mu*. Since the tax on arable land was at a rate of one-fifteenth of the total production, they paid 100*(1/15) = 6.67 *shi* to the fief owner. Other than paying the tax on the arable land, this household also needed to pay other taxes, including the *suanfu* 算賦, *koufu* 口賦 and *gengfu* 更賦, etc. In comparison to the princess, they could receive roughly 6.67* 2174= 14500 *shi.*[117] And the elder princess could

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泰山郡，戶十七萬二千八十六，口七十二萬六千六百四。縣二十四：奉高，博，茬，盧，肥成，蛇丘，剛，柴，蓋，梁父，東平陽，南武陽，萊蕪，鉅平，嬴，牟，蒙陰，華，寧陽，乘丘，富陽，桃山，桃鄉，式。

[116] *Hanshu* 24. 1132, trans. by Swann 1950, 162.

[117] The grain- money convertion rate was based on Sima Qian's convertion of grain and money. See note 36. The average household number was based on the household records on the Table of the noble's who stand out for their

receive even more grain. The huge income difference between commoner households and the households of princesses indicates how the income they derived from their bathing towns allowed the princesses to live extravagant lives.

There are several cases for the Western Han where a princess received more than the stipulated number of bathing towns. Such phenomenon may be because of repeated enfeoffment. For example, the daughter of Emperor Hui (210-188 BCE), the Luyuan Princess, owned several bathing towns.[118] In his work *Hanshu*, Ban Gu states that in the second year of Emperor Hui's reign (193 BCE), King Daohui of Qi 齊悼惠王 (210 - 189 BCE) made a pilgrimage to Chang'an and offered Chengyang Commendary to the Luyuan Princess. Since the Chengyang Commandery contained at least ten counties, according to Zhong Yiming the Luyuan Princess owned eleven bathing towns. Since Chengyang Commandery is not included in the "Treatise on Geography" in the *Hanshu*, Zhong Yiming 鐘一鳴 speculates that the Chengyang Commandery must have had ten counties or more based on the average numbers of counties in other Commanderies. [119] Moreover, Zhong used the thirty-three clay seals from Qi and Lu as supporting evidence. He believes the number of the seals of an estate assistant 邑丞 was belonged to the estate assistants who were attached to the bathing towns.[120] His estimates there were 110,000 households in the Luyuan Princess's bathing towns..[121]

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meritorious service to the dynasty. See note 42. The reason why I chose use the data based on Liu Chunfan's observation is because it is based on known data instead of bring based on some cases mentioned in the *Hanshu*.

[118] Zhong Yiming 鐘一鳴 03 (1988), 33.

[119] *Ibid.*

[120] *Ibid.*

[121] *Ibid.* Zhong Yiming did not explain how he comes to that number.

The Elder Princess of the Eyi also received more bathing towns than stipulated. She had first received E County as her bathing town, then she received one in Lantian County in recognition of her services to the younger Emperor Zhao.[122] In 86 BCE, the Elder Princess of Eyi further received an enfeoffment of thirteen thousand households.[123] Such enfeoffment indicates that many princesses received economic privileges based on the favor they curried, which exceeded the regulations. In Eastern Han, however, we find no such examples.

Many princesses in both Eastern Han and the Western Han have the name of their bathing town in their title. Rather than being passed on to their descendants, bathing towns tended to be redistributed to other princesses upon the death of an incumbent. The town of Guantao 館陶, for example, was first bestowed on the Elder Princess of Guantao 館陶長公主, the daughter of Emperor Wen (202 BCE-158 BCE) during the early era of the Western Han Dynasty. The town was later redistributed to Princess Guantao, who was the daughter of Emperor Xuan (91-49 BCE). In Eastern Han times, Guantao County was given to a daughter of Emperor Guangwu (5 BCE-57 CE). The towns of Pingyang 平陽 and Wuyang 舞陽 similarly served as bathing towns for several princesses.

Hou Hanshu documents the inheritance rules for the princesses bathing towns,

> [The Han laws claims that] the sons of the Emperor's daughters who received the title of princess can inherit their mother's rank and become a noble. The rank of 'Princess Worth A Precinct' and 'Princess Worth a District' cannot be inherited
> 其皇女封公主者，所生之子襲母封為列侯，皆傳國於後。鄉、亭之封，則不傳襲.[124]

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[122] *Hanshu* 7. 225, trans. by H.H. Dubs 1944, 162. Trans. modified from Dubs.

[123] *Ibid*., 154.

[124] *Hou Hanshu* 10. 457.

Therefore, generally speaking, the title of the rank of Elder princess and princess in the Western Han should be inheritable, and the rank of Elder princess and "Princess Worth a County" was inheritable in the Eastern Han times. Since most princesses were married to nobles, their heirs could only receive the rank and title of their fathers. Such circumstances were only known in the Eastern Han that there were no overlaps on bathing towns in the Eastern Han while there were repetitions of that in the Western Han suggests it is possible that the bathing towns were not inheritable.[125]

Aside from the bathing towns, princesses could also own private land. These private lands too would generate income. In both the Western and the Eastern Han, powerful persons tended to acquire many plots of land, either granted by the throne or seized from a private owner.[126] Nearly everyone who had a significant position at court or obtained imperial favor, such as the ranking courtiers, consort family members, eunuchs, favorite courtiers, imperial princes and princesses, would absorb that originally belonged to commoners.[127] Hsu Cho-yun argues that such phenomena were a reflection of the idea that land is wealth and one should use one's influence to acquire as much land as possible. Therefore the aristocrats seized land from either the government or from private small landholders.[128] Though there were no records of the princesses who seized land from the government or from the general public, an edict issued by Emperor Ai suggests that princesses were among those who utilized their power to acquire land,

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[125] Such observation was based on data in Chart 2.1 and 2.2.

[126] Hsu Cho-yun, ed. by Jack L. Dull 1980, 47.

[127] *Ibid.*

[128] *Ibid.*, 49.

> The high officials memorialized detailed [regulations as follows], "Let the regional kings and the nobles own fields [only] within their own fiefs, and let the land in counties and border circuits owned by the nobles of the empire who lived in Chang'an, and the princesses of the realm, [as well as] the lands owned by the Interior Nobles, government officials, and the people, in no case be more than three thousand mu [each]. Let regional kings have [no more than] two hundred slaves; let the nobles and imperial princess have [no more than] one hundred; and let the nobles within the passes, officials, and the people own [no more than thirty]. After a period of three years has been completed [for the law to be put into effect], let those who disobey [those regulations] be subjected to confiscation by the government."[129]

Such regulations on the holding of private land indicate that in Emperor Ai's time, princesses along with other aristocrats owned large amounts of private land and that these properties were usually located outside of their official domains. Aidi's policies were never implemented due to strong resistance from the powerful families themselves.[130] Throughout Western and Eastern Han small farmers sold their land to the powerful and the wealthy and became tenants, paying about one-half of their crop for rent, and performing heavy labor services to their new masters.[131] In Eastern Han times, many rich and powerful families rose to power because they had sided with Emperor Guangwu. including the Liang 梁, Dou 竇, Yin 陰, Guo 郭, Deng 鄧, Fu 伏, Kou 寇 and Jia 賈 families. These families monopolized land resources, leaving the commoners in straightened circumstances. The large landlords were mainly nobles, officials and merchants. The land was often in very extensive holdings and not registered or falsely registered in the governmental documents. Emperor Guangwu ordered surveys of the amount of arable land within his empire, but his order was never treated seriously -- the officials who were in charge of the business were lenient to the

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[129] *Hanshu* 11. 336, trans. by Dubs 1944, 21. Trans. modified from Dubs

[130] *Ibid*., 165, Also in Swann 1950, 200-204. Trans. modified from Dubs

[131] *Ibid*.

powerful and influential family members and were harsh on the commoners.[132] The unequal treatment towards the powerful and the public made the survey questionable and without effect. Unfortunately, the Eastern Han government was similar to the Western Han one, and failed to prevent land from falling into the hands of the powerful. Princesses likely were among the beneficiaries of this trend.

Princesses and other aristocrats enjoyed extraordinary wealth and could afford to live extravagantly — they had three major sources of income, that is, the goods bestowed by the emperor, the income from their bathing towns, and the private land they acquired from the commoners. By comparing the range of fortune of the princess and the commoner one can clearly see the huge gap. The large sums of wealth were able to support the princesses' daily expenses and to lavish on their lovers.

[132] T'ung-tsu Ch'ü 瞿同祖, ed. by Jack L. Dull 1873, 204.

Chapter 3 Marriage and Family

As in Ancient Greece and Rome, it was, in the Han upper classes, part of a father's obligations to find appropriate husbands for their daughters and to prepare their dowries. Situations in which a woman selected her husband at her own will existed, but were considered exceptional. Zhuo Wenjun 桌文君 (ca. 175BCE -121 BCE) for example, married Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 (ca. 179BCE -117BCE), a man from humble beginnings but with extraordinary talent in poetry and literature, on her own volition. Their love story, included by Sima Qian 司馬遷 and recognized as one of the most famous love stories in history, was later known as "The Phoenix Seeks a Mate" 鳳求凰.[133]

In the early years of the Western Han Dynasty (206 BCE – 8 CE), Sima Xiangru was a native of Shu 蜀 who did not hold any senior post at the central court and was relatively poor. During a visit to the house of Zhuo Wangsun 桌王孫, a wealthy local merchant, he was attracted by the recently widowed daughter of his host, Zhuo Wenjun, known for her beauty and talent. She fell in love with Sima Xiangru after she heard him playing a tune on his lute called "The Phoenix Seeks a Mate" at an evening banquet. Not long after the banquet, Wenjun ran to Sima Xiangru's lodge in Chengdu 成都 without notifying her father. Her father was enraged at the elopement and refused to provide them any financial aid. Zhuo Wangsun still hoped that his daughter could return to his household and seek an appropriate suitor, but Wenjun refused to bow to her father's command; instead, she and Sima Xiangru opened a wine shop and she

[133] *Shiji* 117. 3000-3001.

singlehandedly served their clients. Such behavior had put Zhuo Wangsun in a humiliating and abject circumstance. He had no choice but to eventually provide them with an appropriate dwelling and ensure they lived decent lives commensurate with his elevated social status. Later, Sima Xingru's poetic talents helped him to gain the favor of Emperor Wu and he became a well-known court figure. Their love story became famous and Wenjun received praise for her courage.

Such an anecdote reflects the social attitudes towards marriage. The idea of "an appropriate match" [門當戶對 *mendang hudui*] was the dominant concept at the time.[134] Such ideology required that the two families be comparable in terms of social status and wealth. Girls were expected to find "appropriate suitors" who received approval from their fathers or the head of their households. Though Wenjun was raised in a rich household, after her father disowned her, she could not support herself economically. She had to rely on her father. If Wenjun's father did not change his mind at the end of the story, she might have died in poverty. In other words, Wenjun could not survive independently after she was banished from her household for lack of economic support.

The princesses present a special case. Because they enjoyed certain financial privileges such as bestowed goods, incomes from their bathing towns and private lands, their material conditions allowed them to live independently and to pursue personal happiness without economic pressures. The Princess of Guantao 館陶公主, the daughter of Emperor Jing (188 BCE -141 BCE), who was almost a contemporary of Wenjun, pursued her love interests openly, gave her lover Dong Yan 董偃 extraordinary privileges and involved him in political decision-

[134] Liu Tseng-kuei 劉增貴 1981, 164-165.

making. In his early years, Dong Yan had been engaged with his mother in the trade in pearls. At the age of thirteen, he visited the household of Princess Guantao 館陶公主 and succeeded in winning her attention. The Princess of Guantao trained him in writing, accountancy and other skills.[135] After the age of eighteen he maintained an intimate relationship with the widowed princess.

As Princess of Guantao's "recognized" lover, Dong Yan received free entry to the court and the palaces. In *Sanfu huangtu* 三輔黃圖, Dong Yan was included in one of the anecdotes about the Cool Hall (*Qingliang dian* 清涼殿). The Cool Hall is where one resides during Summer times. Dong Yan was a frequent visitor to this place. The hall was decorated in a luxurious fashion.

> A patterned stone was used as the bed, and its patterns were like colorful silk brocades; purple glassy minerals were made into hanging screens, which had purple jade stones intermingled throughout and were made to look like a winding dragon, and all of these were decorated with various gems and precious stones. Once, as a servant was fanning Dong Yan from outside [of the screen, he said: "How would jade and stone require fanning in order for them to become cool?"... the servant proceeded and swatted the jade platter away and made it fall, both the ice and the jade shattered. These jade crystals were tribute from the state of Qiantu; Emperor Wu bestowed this on [Dong] Yan.[136]

The anecdote in the *Sanfu huangtu* affirms the statement from *Hanshu* that Dong Yan received the privilege to enter the palaces at will and he was treated as an honored guest who received services from the palace servant with no hesitation. From its extravagant decoration, one could infer that the Cool Hall was meant to serve the needs of the imperial family and a small circle of

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[135] Loewe 2000, 69.

[136] He Qinggu 何清谷, 2005, 156. I'm using the translationAllen Ho presented in Hist 512.

important courtiers. Nevertheless, that Dong Yan, who came from a humble background, could enjoy such privileges can only be explained by favor the Princess of Guantao herself enjoyed. The acceptance of Dong Yan in the Cool Hall asserts that he was recognized as the lover of the princess and thus he shared in the privileges of the princesses. It is also revealing of the princess' influence that when Dong Yan made a mistake and his servant smashed the tribute jade crystal, Emperor Wu did not punish him. Such descriptions, even if apocryphal, indicate the extraordinary position of the Princess of Guantao in the imperial family.

Dong Yan passed away at a young age. However, this did not stop the favors he received from the princess. When Princess Guantao passed away, she left a will that stated she wished to be buried along with Dong Yan at Ba Mausoleum 霸陵 so that they could be reunited in the afterlife. Her last wish became true. In his work *Shiji,* Sima Qian commented on her behavior that "Hereafter princesses and honored ladies always exceeded ritual regulations started with Dong Yan 是後，公主貴人多逾禮制，自董偃始."[137] Such a narrative indicates that the Princess of Guantao was the first but not the only one to publicly announce her lover in Han times.

The Elder Princess of Eyi was another example. She maintained an intimate relationship with her son's retainer, Ding Wairen 丁外人. After Emperor Zhao and Huo Guang 霍光 heard this news, they did not want to displease the princess. Therefore, Emperor Zhao issued an imperial edict that commanded Ding Wairen to take care of the Elder Princess of Eyi.[138] Both cases indicate that princesses enjoyed unique freedoms in their romantic pursuits. As Sima Qian

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[137] *Hanshu* 65. 2875.

[138] *Qian Hanji* 16. 277. 鄂邑蓋長公主。私近子客河間丁外人。上與大將軍聞之。不絕主驩。有詔外人付長主。

indicated, the love affairs of the princesses and their lovers who came from humble beginnings did not receive any condemnation.

Though princesses enjoyed certain freedoms in selecting a lover, their marriages were usually carefully arranged. As important members of the imperial family, their marriages were not only a bond between them and another individual, but also had a symbolic meaning, e.g., the union between the central regime and another influential local power. Fang Yuan argues that princesses' marriages were always characterized by an interesting duality: on the one hand, their marriage carried strong political meanings that trumped their personal happiness, on the other, they were in a relatively high position in marriage.[139]

A special term described the marriage between a princess and her suitors: *shangzhu* 尚主. Wei Zhao in a commentary to the *Records of the Grand Historian* explained, " '*Shang*' is to serve for (the princess). I did not dare to say marry. 尚，奉也。不敢言娶。."[140] Such a statement indicates that marrying a princess should be considered as an honor and therefore cannot be considered on a par with marrying an ordinary woman. In the *Book of Later Han*, there is another statement supporting such an argument. Gou Shuang 苟爽(128CE -190CE) criticized the custom of Qin and Han and he stated that,

> Now Han inherited the laws from Qin, and established the ceremony of '*shangzhu*.' Thus allowing the wife to control her husband, and the lowly to overpower the honorable, violates the way of *qian* and *kun*, and does away with the appropriateness of the base tone

[139] Fang Yuan 方原 1 (2007), 329.

[140] S*hiji* 57. 2072.

> 今漢承秦法，設尚主之儀，以妻制夫，以卑臨尊，違乾坤之道，失陽唱之義.[141]

That Gou Shuang voiced such accusations, aiming at the Han laws in existence indicates that in some circumstances, women were the superior partner in a marriage. These princesses received high rank of titles and enjoyed large sums of incomes from the bathing towns and therefore their superiority over the others was clearly shown.

Major Types of Suitor in the Western Han

As a prestigious member of the society, princess' marriages were prudently arranged. Their suitors were usually carefully picked and played important roles at court. Princesses always married nobles 列侯. The *Book of Han* concluded, "Established precedent in the House of Han prescribes that the one who marries a princess has to be a noble 漢家故事常以列侯尚主."[142] There were various categories of nobles in Western Han. Below a chart that parses out which groups of nobles married princesses the Western Han.[143]

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[141]*Hou Hanshu* 62. 2053.

[142] *Hanshu* 97. 3958.

[143] Liu Tseng-kuei 劉增貴 1980, 104 - 106. The tables below were adapted and modified from Liu Tseng-kuei's 劉增貴 work, *Han dai hunyin zhidu* 漢代婚姻制度. I made minor adjustments to his chart. In Liu's work, he put the noble of Ruyin 汝陰候, Xiahou Po 夏侯頗 as the suitor of Princess Pingyang, whose father remained unknown. In my chart, I put Xiahou Po as the second husband of Princess Pingyang, the daughter of Emperor Jing. The reason for the adjustment is that in *Shiji* Ranked biography 35, Sima Qian states that Xiahou Po was married to Princess Pingyang in the second year of Yuanding [*Yuanding ernian* 元鼎二年] (115BCE). And since Xiahou Po was the noble of Ruyin in 133BCE – 115BCE, it is reasonable that Xiahou Po was married to Princess Pingyang. Furthermore, the first husband of the princess passed away in 131 BCE, it is plausible that she was remarried to Xiahou Po a couple years later. Additionally, though in the Biography of Weiqing and Huo Qubing 衛青霍去病傳 in *Hanshu*, Ban Gu mentioned the anecdote that after the death of her first husband, Princess Pingyang was asking for advice of who should be her next suitor. Her attendant highly recommended Wei Qing. I believe the reason why

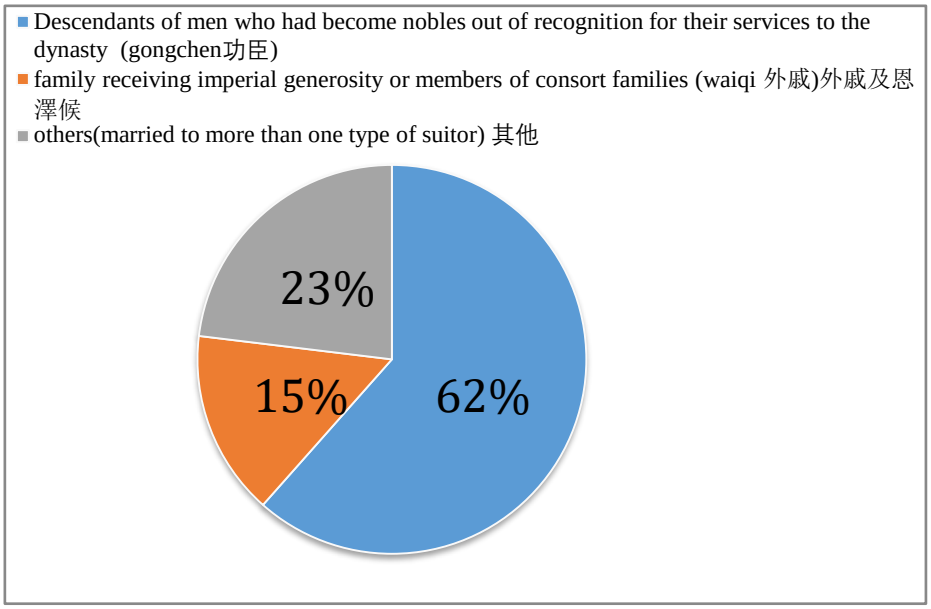

Fig. 4 Identities of the husbands of princesses in the Western Han(221 BCE – 24 CE)

This chart catagorized Western Han princesses' husbands into three groups: descendants of men who had become nobles out of recognition for their services to the dynasty(*gongchen* 功臣), family receiving imperial generosity or members of consort families (*waiqi* 外戚)外戚及恩澤候 and others(Married to more than one type of suitor). In a total of thirteen princesses, 8 were married to descendants of men who had become nobles out of recognition for their services to the dynasty, 2 were married to family receiving imperial generosity or members of consort families, and 3 married for more than one time and were married to both types.

Father	Title	Husband	Children	Notes

the marriage between Xiahou Po and the princesses was not mentioned by Ban Gu was because Xiahou Po passed away in 115 BCE. He committed adultery with his father's servant and thus was penalized. Since such a reason was very unpleasant, Ban Gu thus did not include the second marriage of the princess in *Hanshu*.

Emperor Gaozu（256 BCE-195BCE）	魯元長公主 The Elder Princess of Luyuan ？－187BCE	宣平侯張敖 The Noble of Xuanping, Zhang Ao	張偃及孝惠皇後張氏 Zhang Yan and Empress Zhang	Empress Zhang, Consort of Emperor Hui
Emperor Wen (202BCE-158BCE)	館陶大長公主 堂邑公主 The Elder Princess of Guantao/ The Princess of Tangyi	堂邑候陳午 Noble of Tangyi, Chen Wu	陳皇後，子陳蟜 Empress Chen and Chen Qiao	陳氏為武帝皇後， 陳蟜尚景帝女隆慮公主 Empress Chen, Consort of Emperor Wu Chen Qiao marries the Elder Princess of Longlü
Emperor Wen (202BCE-158BCE）	昌平公主 Princess of Changping	絳侯周勝之 Noble of Jiang, Zhou Shengzhi		
Emperor Jing (188BCE-141BCE)	平陽長公主/陽信長公主 Elder Princess of Pingyang/Elder Princess of Yagxin	1.平陽候曹時 The Noble of Pingyang, Cao Shi 2.汝陰候夏侯頗 Noble of Ruyin, Xiahou Po 3.長平侯衛青 The Noble of Changping, Wei Qing	曹襄 Cao Xiang	曹襄尚武帝女卫长公主 Cao Xiang married the Elder Princess of Wei

Emperor Jing (188BCE-141BCE)	南宮公主 Princess of Nangong	1.南宮候張坐 The Noble of Nangong, Zhang Zuo 2. 張候彭申 Noble of Zhang, Er Shen		
Emperor Jing (188BCE-141BCE)	隆慮公主 Princess of Longlü	隆慮侯陳蟜 Noble of Longlü, Chen Qiao	昭平君 Zapping jun	昭平君尚武帝女夷安公主 Zhaoping jun married Princess Yi'an
Emperor Wu (156BCE-87CE)	衛長公主/ 當利公主 The Elder Princess of Wei	1.平陽侯曹襄 Noble of Pingyang, Cao Xiang 2.樂通侯欒大 Noble of Le Tong, Luan Da	曹宗 Cao Zong	
Emperor Wu (156BCE-87CE)	鄂邑長公主/蓋長公主 The Elder Princess of Eyi/ The Elder Princess of Gai	蓋侯王受 The Noble of Gai, Wang Shou	王文信 Wang Wenbin	
Emperor Wu (156BCE-87CE)	夷安公主 Princess of Yi'an	Zhaoping Jun 昭平君		

Emperor Xuan (91-49 BCE)	館陶公主 Princess of Guantao	The Noble of Xiping, Yu Yong 西平侯於永	於恬 Yu Tian
Emperor Xuan (91-49 BCE)	敬武公主 Princess of Jingwu	1.富平侯張臨 The Noble of Fuping, Zhang Lin 2.臨平侯趙欽 Noble of Linping,Zhao Qin 3.高陽侯薛宣 Noble of Gaoyang, Xue Xuan	張放 Zhang Fang
Emperor Xuan (91-49 BCE)	陽邑公主 Princess of Yangyi	博成侯張建 The Noble of Bocheng, Zhang Jian	
Emperor Cheng (51-7 BCE)	潁邑公主 Princess of Yingyi	建平侯杜業 The Noble of Jianping, Du Ye	

Table 7 Princesses and Their Husbands in the Western Han (221 BCE – 24 CE)

From the available data, as summarized in Table 7 and Figure 4 above, one can conclude that in Western Han times the custom of “princesses marrying the nobles” was strictly

followed.[144] All thirteen princesses married nobles. There were four princesses who remarried after their first husband passed away. One thing to be noted is that such remarriage did not break the custom – their suitors had either inherited a noble title or received a noble title out of "imperial generosity."

Wei Qing 衛青(? - 106 CE), the third husband of Princess Pingyang 平陽公主 for example, was a shepherd before he rose to prominence. He showed extraordinary talent in various battles against the Xiongnu 匈奴. His campaigns were often highly successful and he was acclaimed as the foremost commander in Han times. In 129 BCE, he received the title of Noble of the Interior (*Guannei hou* 關內侯); later in 124 BCE, he was made Noble of Changping 長平 and all his three sons received nobilities.[145]

> At the time Princess Pingyang was widowed, it was the custom to let the nobles marry to a princess. The princess discussed with her servants which of the nobles in Chang'an could be her husband. All [the servants] said the General-in Chief, [Wei Qing]. The Princess laughed and said, "He was from my household and I used let him ride horses with me when I went out. How can he be my husband?" The servants around her said, "Now the sister of the General-in Chief is the empress, and his three sons are nobles. His fortunes and honors could shake the land under heaven. Why does the princess despise him?" Therefore, the Princess accepted. [The princess] spoke to the Queen and let her told the Emperor Wu. Thus [the emperor] edicted to marry Genral Wei and Princess Pingyang 是時平陽主寡居，當用列侯尚主。主與左右議長安中列侯可為夫者，皆言大將軍可。主笑曰：「此出吾家，常使令騎從我出入耳，柰何用為夫乎？」左右侍禦者曰：「今大將軍姊為皇后，三子為侯，

[144] Ma Menglong 馬孟龍, 2013. I am using Ma Menglong's categories and adapted the translation from Prof. Vankeerberghen: Nobles' domains were awarded to nobles (*liehou* 列侯) for a variety of reasons: as recognition of someone's meritorious service to the dynasty (*gongchen* 功臣), out of imperial generosity (*enze* 恩泽), to members of consort families (*waiqi* 外戚), to sons of kings (*wangzi* 王子), and to surrendered leaders of non-Chinese groups (*guiyi* 歸義).

[145] Loewe 2000, 574. One thing to be noted, the Noble of the Interior only granted an endowed land nominally. Like the princesses, the Noble of the Interior can only enjoy the income from their endowed land.

> 富貴振動天下，主何以易之乎？」於是主乃許之。言之皇后，令白之武帝，乃詔衛將軍尚平陽公主焉.[146]

Even though the historical texts did not provide us with a specific date when Wei Qing married Princess Pingyang such event must have taken place after he and his sons acquired noble titles in 124 BCE.

Luan Da 欒大(? – 112 BCE), the second husband of the Elder Wei Princess 衛長公主, had gained his noble title at the time of his marriage to a princess. As a *fangshi* 方士, Luan Da's charming appearance and miraculous tricks—he served as a spiritual intermediary between the immortals and living, persuaded the immortal powers to descend in the emperor's court, and produced gold out of thin air—had pleased Emperor Wu and he received the title of the General of Five Benefits (*wuli jiangjun* 五利將軍). In 113 BCE, he received advanced bestowal as Noble of Letong (*Letong hou* 樂通候) when he married the Elder Princess of Wei.[147] Since such bestowal was made in the same year as the marriage, we are safe to conclude that he received such promotion because of his marriage or to make the marriage possible.

To summarize, the Western Han princesses were married to nobles, following the rule that a princess' partner in marriage should always be a noble. Nevertheless, though these husbands all carried the title of noble, there was a paradigm shift in the composition of the nobles as a group. From Gaozu's reign to the reign of Emperor Jing, all husbands of princesses were the descendants of men who had become nobles out of recognition for their services of the dynasty (*gongchen* 功臣). However, from Emperor Wu's reign to Emperor Xuan's reign, most of the

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[146] *Shiji* 49. 1983. The estimation of dates was referred to an anecdote in the Listed Biography of the imperial relative. The marriage between Princess Pingyang and Wei Qing must be sometime later.

[147] Loewe 2000, 430.

suitors were imperial relatives (*waiqi* 外戚) or men who acquired a noble title out of imperial generosity (*enze hou* 恩澤候). The majority of nobles transformed from the founders of the Western Han and their descendants to imperial relatives and people who received bounties from the emperor.[148]

From the reign of Emperor Xuan onward, the husbands of the princesses were members of a new group of nobles, from either of two categories: meritorious servants of the dynasty and recipients of imperial generosity. Such changes may mainly be ascribed to the aftermath of "the Witchcraft Affair" (巫蠱之禍 *Wugu zhihuo*); that had created political turmoil among the aristocrats toward the end of Emperor Wu's reign, in 91 BCE.[149] A political vacuum and a succession crisis became obvious after Wudi's younger heir, Emperor Zhao, passed away with no appropriate heir in 74 BCE.

After the incident, the power and influence of the consort families and other powerful clans was greatly undermined. During Emperor Wu's reign, the descendants of Gaozu's meritorious officials took 20 percent of the high rank positions.[150] After Huo Guang received a testamentary edict from Wudi to act as assistant to the young ruler and rose to power, the power to hold high-rank and office was gradually transferred to the hands of a new group, including members of the consort family, someone who had meritorious achievement in administration and

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[148] Liu Tseng-kuei 劉增貴 1981,110. He argues that at the time the imperial relatives were nobles; and usually the nobles marry the princesses 時諸外家為列侯，列侯多尚公主.

[149] Loewe 1974, 37- 40. The Scourge of Witchcraft was a political persecution of the imperial heir of Emperor Wu, Liu Jü 劉據, and a clique of powerful courtesans. In November to December 92 BCE, Emperor Wu was in search of witchcraft objects and traitors. He was told that the imperial heir was practicing witchcraft with the support of a group of high ranking officers. In the end, the imperial heir Liu Jü committed suicide; and important members of the most powerful Clan, Gongsun 公孫 and Wei 衛 were put into prison and executed.

[150] Cai Liang 2014, 143.

on the battlefield. The family members of Gaozu's meritorious officials no longer were privileged when it came to landing high-rank offices.[151] In Emperor Xuan's reign, the new clique of meritorious courtiers was in power.[152] The two daughters of Emperor Xuan were both married to nobles of this new group. One of his daughters, Princess Guantao 館陶公主, was married to Yu Yong 于永, the son of Yu Dingguo 于定國, who had been ennobled in 51 BCE because of his excellent performance in administration.[153] His other daughter, the Princess of Jingwu 敬武公主, was married three times.

Her first marriage was to Zhang Lin, the Noble of Fuping 富平, and great grandson of Zhang Anshi 張安世(? – 62 BCE), an important official who had helped Huo Guang in bringing Xuandi to power; her second marriage was to a grandson of Zhao Chongguo 趙充國(137 BCE-52 BCE), who received the ennoblement due to his martial achievements; the third marriage was with Xue Xuan 薛宣, who achieved a title of nobility due to personal striving. Xue was promoted from a Superintendent of Trials (*tingwei* 廷尉) and later rose to be Chancellor, an office that always led to the bestowal of a noble title.[154] Such examples indicate that, by then, the consort families of Wudi's reign had lost their powers – in Xuandi's reign, they lost the favor of the emperor and were no longer marriage partners of the princesses.

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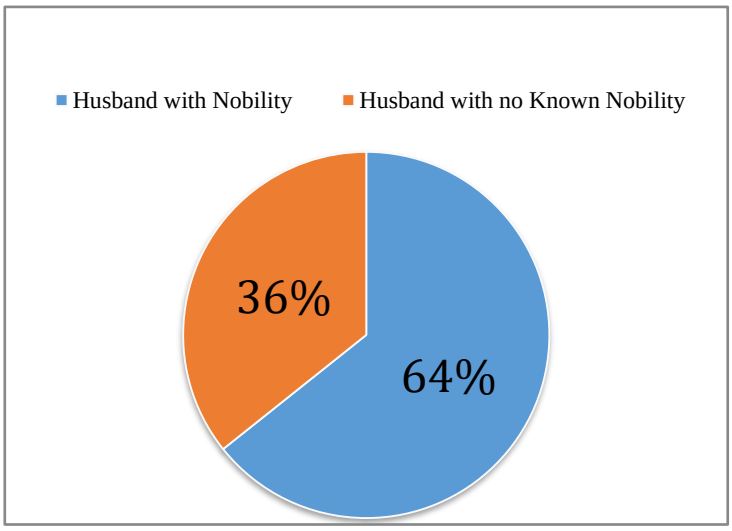
[151] *Ibid.*

[152] After Wudi's death, his youngest son, Liu Fuling 劉弗陵 was enthroned at a young age. Huo Guang 霍光, a member of the imperial relatives of Emperor Wu's court, had survived in the calamity in 91 BCE and became the regent of the young emperor. The young emperor never had the chance to achieve power; he died at the age of twenty-one in 74 BCE without an heir. Huo Guang thus enthroned Liu Xun 劉詢, the grandson of Liu Jü 劉據, the great grandson of Emperor Wu as the new emperor.

[153] *Shiji* 22. 1150.

[154] Liu Tseng-kuei 劉增貴 1981, 105.

The marriage patterns of the Western Han princesses thus provide a good indication of the court's disposition towards particular groups of nobles, and how this changed over time.



Major Types of Suitor in the Eastern Han (25 CE – 220 CE)

Fig. 5 Identities of the Husbands of Princesses in the Eastern Han (25 CE – 220 CE)

The chart above shows the precentage of princesses' husbands with or without a nobility in the Eastern Han. In a total number of twenty-eight princesses, the husbands of eighteen princesses with known nobility and that of ten princesses without a known nobility.

Father	Title	Husband	Children	Notes
劉欽 Liu Qin, Father of Emperor Guangwu（？ - 3 CE）	湖陽長公主 The Elder Princess of Huyang	騎都尉胡珍 Commandant of Cavalry, Hu Zhen		Proposed for remarriage but was refused by Song Hong 宋弘
Liu Qin, Father of Emperor Guangwu (? - 3 CE)	新野長公主 The Elder Princess of Xinye	西華候鄧晨 Noble of Xihua, Deng Chen	鄧泛、鄧棠，另有三女 Deng Fan, Deng Tang and three other daughters. Names Unknown.	killed along with the three daughters in warfare
Liu Qin, Father of Emperor Guangwu (? - 3 CE）	寧平公主 Princess of Ningping	固始侯李通 Noble of Gushi, Li Tong	李音 Li Yin	
Emperor Guangwu (5BCE - 57CE)	舞陰長公主 The Elder Princess of Wuyin	陵鄉侯梁松 Noble of Lingxiang, Liang Song	梁扈 Liang Hu	

Emperor Guangwu (5BCE - 57CE)	涅陽公主 Princess of Nieyang	顯親侯竇固 Noble of Xianqin, Dou Gu	窦彪 Dou Biao	
Emperor Guangwu (5BCE - 57CE)	馆陶公主 Princess of Guantao	駙馬都衛韓光 Commandant, Attendant Cavalry, Han Guang		
Emperor Guangwu (5BCE - 57CE)	淯陽公主 Princess of Yuyang	陽安侯郭璜 Noble of Yang'an, Guo Huang	郭舉 Guo Jü	
Emperor Guangwu (5BCE - 57CE)	郦邑公主 Princess of Liyi	新陽侯陰豐 Noble of Xinyang, Yin Feng		Killed by her husband
東海恭王劉強 King Gong of Donghai, Liu Qiang（25 CE－58 CE	沘陽長公主 The Elder Princess of Biyang	竇勛 Dou Xun Received a posthumous nobility	章德皇后竇氏、贵人竇氏、竇宪 Empress Dou, Honored Lady Dou and Dou Xian	Empress Dou, Consort of Emperor Zhang
Emperor Ming (28CE -75 CE)	獲嘉長公主 The Elder Princess of Huojia	楊邑侯 馮柱 Noble of Yangyi, Feng Zhu	馮石 Feng Shi	

Emperor Ming	平陽公主 Princess of Pingyang	大鴻臚馮順 Superintendent of State Visits, Feng Shun		
Emperor Ming	隆慮公主 Princess of Longlü	牟平侯耿襲 Noble of Muping,, Ding Xi		
Emperor Ming	沁水公主 Princess of Qinshui	高密侯 鄧乾 Noble of Gaomi, Deng Qian		
Emperor Ming	平皋公主 Princess of Ping'ao	昌安侯 鄧藩 Noble of Chang'an, Deng Fan		
Emperor Ming	浚儀公主 Princess of Junyi	輈侯王度 Noble of Yang, Wang Du		
Emperor Ming	武安公主 Princess of Wu'an	征羌侯來棱 Noble of Zhengqiang, Lai Ling		
King of Chu, Liu Ying 楚王劉英	敬鄉公主 Princess of Jingxiang	樊鮪子 Son of Fan Wei		

(?-71CE)				
Emperor Zhang (57 CE-88 CE)	平邑公主 Princess of Pingyi	黃門侍郎馮由 The Gentlemen at the Yellow Gate, Feng You		
Emperor He (79 CE-105 CE)	臨潁公主 Princess of Lingyin	即墨侯賈建 Noble of Jimo, Jia Jian		
清河王劉慶 King of Qinghe,Liu Qing (78 CE-107 CE)	陰城公主 Princess of Yincheng	定遠侯 班始 Noble of Dingyuan, Ban Shi		Killed by her husband
清河王劉慶 King of Qinghe,Liu Qing	舞陰公主 Princess of Wiyin	高密侯鄧褒 Noble of Gaomi, Deng Bao		
清河王劉慶 King of Qinghe,Liu Qing	濮陽公主 Princess of Puyang	好畤侯耿良 Noble of Haozhi, Di Liang		
清河王劉慶 King of Qinghe,Liu Qing	涅陽公主 Princess of Nieyang	舞陽侯岑熙 Noble of Wuyang, Chen Xi		

蠡吾侯劉翼 Noble of Liwu， Liu Yi (？－140 CE）	長社長公主 Elder Princess of Changshe	耿援 Di Yuan		Sister of Emperor Huan
蠡吾侯劉翼 Noble of Liwu， Liu Yi	益陽公主 Princess of Yiyang	寇榮從兄之子 Son of Kou Rong's cousin		
Emperor Huan (132CE-168CE)	陽安長公主 Princess of Yang'an	不其侯伏完 Noble of Buqi, Fu Wan	伏壽 Fu Shou/ Empress Fu	Empress Fu (Fu Shou), consort of Emperor
Unknown	內黃公主 Princess of Neihuang	竇穆，竇勛之父，竇融子 Dou Mu, Father of Dou Xun and Son of Dou Rong		
Unknown	高平公主 Princess of Gaoping	伏晨，伏湛曾孫 Fu Chen, grandson of Fu Zhan		

Table 8 Princesses and Their Husbands in the Eastern Han (25 CE – 220 CE)[155]

[155] Liu Tseng-kuei 劉增貴 1981, 107 - 109. The tables below were adapted and modified from Liu Tseng-kuei's 劉增貴 work, *Han dai hunyin zhidu* 漢代婚姻制度.

Compared to marital patterns in Western Han, the marital customs of princesses in Eastern Han were somewhat more complicated. Whereas most of the Eastern Han princesses' husbands were nobles, this was not always the case. However, they always came from the same social background, either from powerful families (*haozu* 豪族) or from families of men-of-service (*shi* 士).[156] Eighteen out of twenty-eight husbands held (inherited) noble titles; the other ten, however, had official titles but no known noble titles. And most of the husbands without a known noble title were members of powerful families.[157] These families were the Liang 梁 family, the Dou 竇 family, the Yin 陰 family, the Guo 郭 family, the Deng 鄧 family, the Fu 伏 family, the Kou 寇 family and the Jia 賈 family.

Such circumstances were due to the rise of powerful families during the Eastern Han period. These powerful families provided lots of support and assisted Emperor Guangwu in his struggles to conquer and pacify the realm. Qu Tongzu 瞿同祖 argues that like most of his followers, Liu Xiu (the future Emperor Guangwu) himself was a landlord. According to the narrative in *Hou Hanshu*, during the famine that took place in Nanyang 南陽 in 22CE, Liu Xiu was still able to sell grain, i.e., he had more than he could consume himself. His followers, such as the Yin 陰 and the Fan 樊 clans, each held seven hundred and three hundred *qing* of land

[156] The class of the men-in service came to the fore after the Cases of Witchcraft in 91BCE; it was one of the most important turning points in Han history. A political vacuum was created as its aftermath since many of influential families such as the Wei 衛 family, the Gongsun 公孫 family, the followers of the imperial heir and the heir himself were put into prison and executed. A lot of the important officials in the upper level were dismissed or downgraded from their offices. Such circumstances allowed the majority of the officers who were the men-in-service 士 from a humble upbringings to rise to power and fill in the vacancies in the upper level political infrastructure. Such political changes were reflected in the suitors' identities.

[157] Liu Tseng-kuei 劉增貴 1981, 111.

respectively.[158] After the Eastern Han Dynasty was established, these powerful families attained political powers and many of their members held important positions at court.

The powerful families colluded with local officials and used their powers to acquire more and more private lands. In 39 CE, when the Guangwu Emperor attempted to certify and to register the arable land within the empire, his campaign encountered much obstruction. The officers who were in charge of reconnaissance were lenient towards the local powerful families but harsh towards others.[159] As the decades passed, the wealth powerful families were able to accumulate was stunning: "The pillars in the house of the powerful families were over hundreds and connected with one another; fertile lands were spread out everywhere. Males and females slaves were over in groups of a thousand and followers could number up to ten thousands 豪人之室，連棟數百，膏田遍野，奴婢千群，徒附萬計."[160] Such a narrative vividly depicted the extravagant lives in the households of the powerful families and revealed the large sum of wealth they accumulated.

Moreover, thanks to the Recommendation System (*chajuzhi* 察舉制), most of the local official vacancies were filled by the members of the powerful families. This system required that local officials recommend candidates in the category of "filial and upright" to the emperor annually. Such a system allowed the powerful and influential families to recommend their own family members to hold office. According to Patricia Ebrey, phrases such as "a prominent family of the commandery," or a family, which had "produced officials for generations" frequently

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[158] Ch'ü T'un- tsu 瞿同祖 1967, 205.

[159] *Ibid.*

[160] *Ibid. Hou Hanshu* 49. 1648.

appeared in the biographies of the standard history as the tag of many of these officials.[161] Ebrey argues that "the Standard Histories give the impression that most men who did attain prominence came from families that had been locally established for several generations…over the 252 men given regular biographies, over a third were sons and grandsons of officials."[162] These statistics indicate that the recommendation system allowed many officers to recommend their own family members to the emperor. Therefore, in the time of the Eastern Han, in many cases, the families of men-in-service and the powerful families overlapped.

The majority of suitors belonged to both the families of the meritorious courtiers and families of the men-in service. The chart below presents a case how such marriages took place in the Eastern Han.

[161] Ebrey 1986, 635.

[162] *Ibid.*

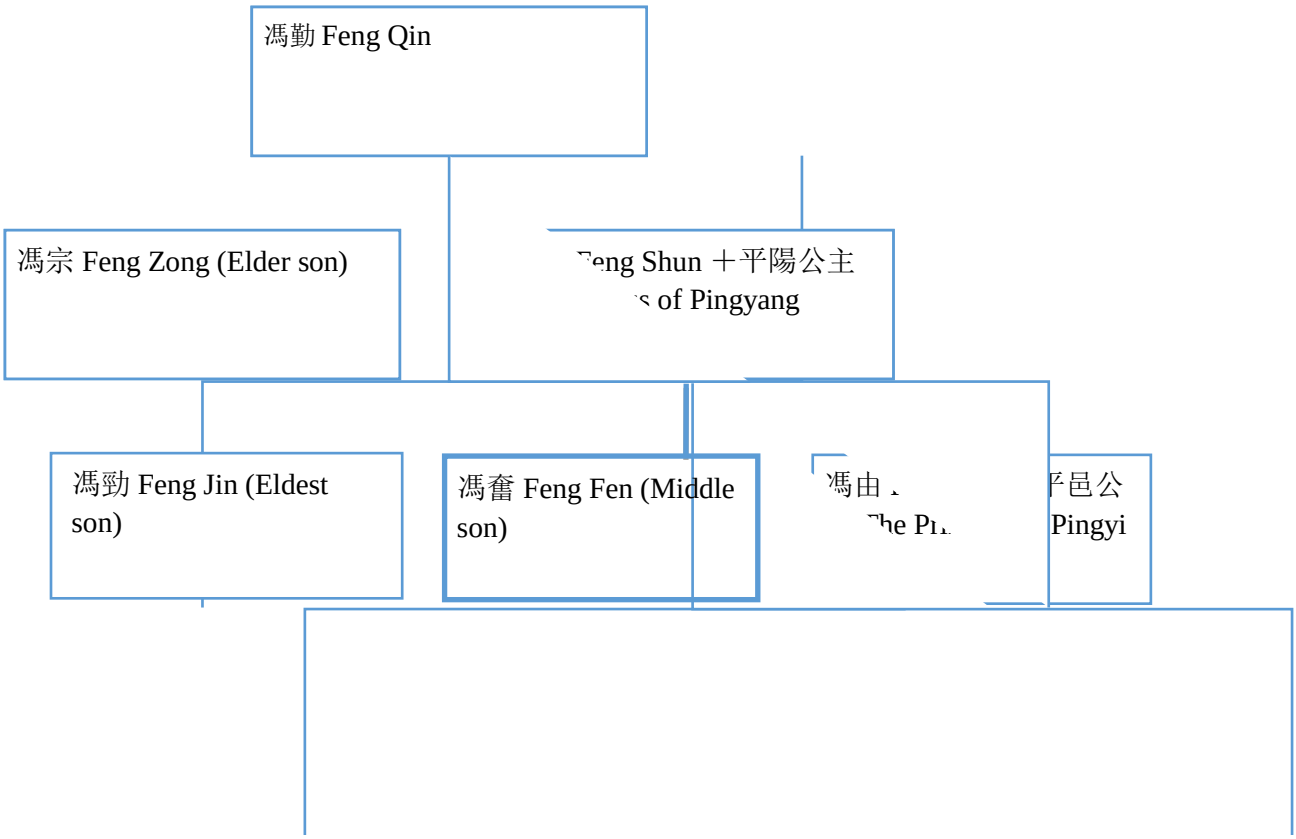

Fig. 6 Family Tree of the Feng Family

Princess Pingyi 平邑公主, the daughter of Emperor Zhang, was married to Feng You 馮由, a member of the influential Feng family who held the position of the Gentlemen at the Yellow Gate (黃門侍郎 *huangmen shilang*). The Feng family claimed that they descended of aristocrats from the Warring States period. At the time of the Xin Dynasty, the Feng family was one of the powerful families.[163]

One can observe that Feng You 馮由 was the youngest son of the noble of Yangyi 楊邑, Feng Shun 馮順. Shun was appointed to be the Superintendent of State Visits (*da honglu* 大鴻臚), and he married a Princess Pingyang 平陽公主.[164] Feng You's grandfather, Feng Qin 馮勤

[163] Liu Tseng-kuei 劉增貴 1981, 111.

[164] Princess Pingyang was the daughter of Emperor Ming (28 CE – 75 CE).

was a meritorious official in Emperor Guangwu's reign. Feng Qin was the Minister of Finance and was appointed Excellency over the Masses (司徒 *situ*) during Emperor Guangwu's reign. He was such an influential member at court that when his aged mother came to court, she was excused the kowtow and was escorted to a high place in the hall. Upon his death, Emperor Guangwu provided funerary items and paid generously for the ceremony.[165] The Feng family received great honor. Both Feng You's two brothers, Feng Jin and Feng Fen, had inherited titles of nobility.[166] Though we do not hold firm evidence that Feng You held any titles of nobility, his family background itself qualified him to be a princess' suitor.

A Comparison Between Princesses' Marriages in the Western Han and Eastern Han Period

To summarize, in both the Western and Eastern Han periods, princesses' suitors usually held noble titles. Thirty-two out of the forty-two princesses included in the chart above were married to a noble. The imperial marriage pattern reflects the importance of the dominant ideology of "an appropriate match" at the time. Since the noble was the highest title a man could ever obtain (unless he was a member of the imperial clan), they were considered to be the premium match. The identity of the suitor changed through time. In the Western Han, they were from the families of nobles out of recognition for their services to the dynasty (*gongchen* 功臣), families receiving imperial generosity and members of consort families; in the Eastern Han, the suitors were from

[165] De Crespigny 2007, 219.

[166] Feng You inherited the nobility of Yangyi from his father, and Feng Fen received the nobility of Pingyang from his mother, the Princess of Pingyang. This topic will be elaborated in the following section, "Descendants of the Princesses."

the powerful families, families of the imperial relatives and families of men-in-service. Such transitions were mainly due to the shift of power core in the court.

Nevertheless, noble rank was not the only standard for selecting an appropriate suitor for the princesses. Han Guang 韓廣 was a Commandant of Attendant Calvary (駙馬都尉 *fuma duwei*) in Emperor Guangwu's reign. He was married to Princess Guantao, the daughter of Emperor Guangwu. The historical records do not provide us any firm evidence stating he held a noble title or derived from an influential family; so perhaps his example indicates that other criteria governed the selection of a husband for a princess.

Another such criterion was personal excellence, characterized by extraordinary talents, outstanding skills, an attractive appearance, etc. This was especially emphasized in the Eastern Han. Yang Qiao 楊喬, an officer of the Imperial Secretariat (*Shangshu* 尚書), was chosen by Emperor Guangwu to be the suitor of his daughter because of Yang's good looks and his great ability.[167] Luan Da 欒大 was another example. He pleased the emperor with his magic and received a noble title so that he could become the husband of the Elder Wei Princess. Such examples indicate that in the Han imperial marriage, though a relatively equivalent social status was very essential, it is not mandatory; these suitors' personal excellence were also very important.

In some cases, princesses could appoint a suitor themselves. In *Hanshu,* Princess Pingyang was in want of a husband and asked her servants for advice. Her servants all recommended Wei Qing, the Grand General to be her suitor. *Hou Hanshu* includes an anecdote

[167] De Crespigny 2007, 958. Yang Qiao did not marry to a princess in the end. He refused and starved himself to death at his place.

regarding Song Hong 宋弘 and the Elder Princess Huyang 湖陽. The princess was recently widowed, and she once mentioned to Emperor Guangwu that she wanted to marry Song Hong.[168] These narratives indicate that in some cases princesses could choose their suitors themselves.[169]

Intermarriage between the nobles and the imperial family was a common occurence in both Western and Eastern Han. Princesses were married to nobles and after they had a daughter, their daughter was married back in the imperial family as an empress or high-rank consort.

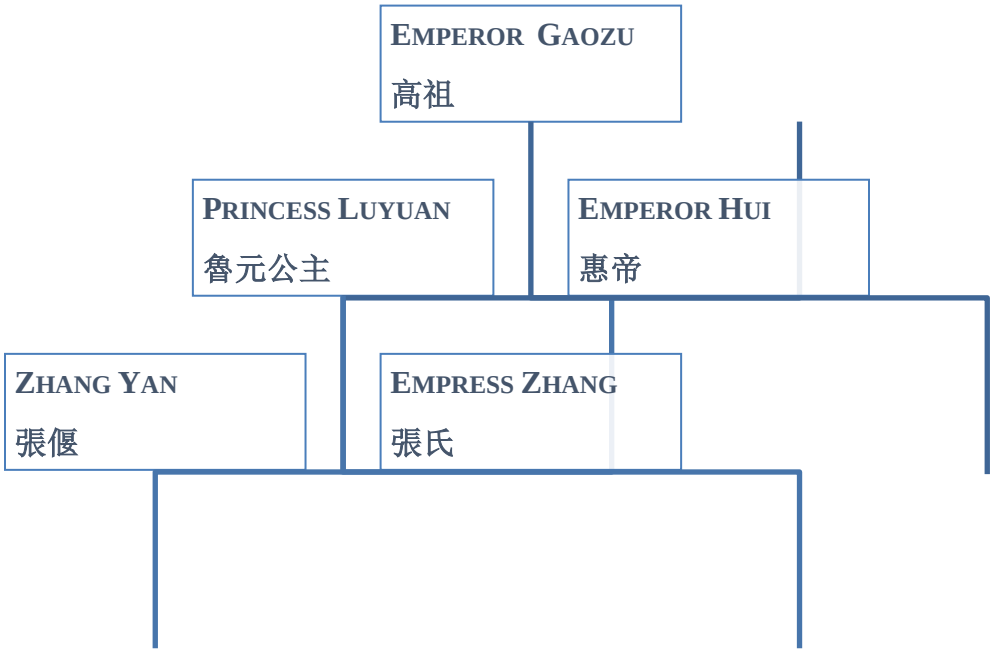

Fig. 7 Family Tree of Emperor Gaozu (257 BCE - 195 BCE)

The figure shows the family tree of Emperor Gaozu (257 BCE - 195 BCE) and indicates such a marriage pattern.

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[168] *Ibid.*, 753.

[169] One thing to be noted is that both Wei Qing and Song Hong had acquired a title of nobility and held official titles. Though Princesses could choose their suitors, it still seems that they needed to comply with the tradition of "a Perfect Match."

This family tree shows that Princess Luyuan 魯元 married to the Noble of Xuanping 宣平 and they had a daughter and a son. Their daughter was married to her brother, Emperor Hui.

Another example is the son of Princess Pingyang 平陽 and the noble of Pingyang 平陽, Cao Xiang 曹襄, who was married to the Elder Princess of Wei 衛長公主. The Princess Pingyang and Emperor Wu were siblings. Moreover, Princess Pingyang was married to Wei Qing, who was the younger brother of Emperor Wei, the mother of the Elder Princess Wei.

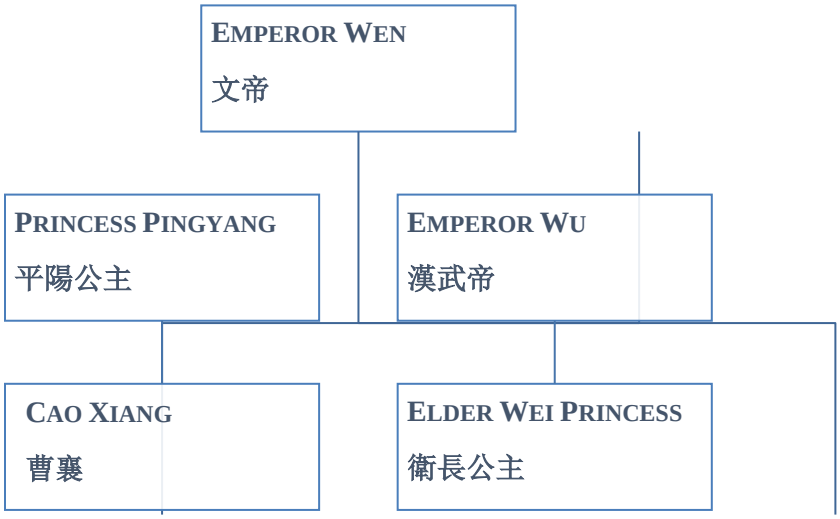

Fig. 8 Family Tree of Emperor Wen (202 BCE – 157 BCE)

In the Eastern Han, intermarriage was also prevalent. The Elder Biyang 泌陽 Princess and Dou Xun 竇勛 had two daughters, and they were married to Emperor Zhang, who was the princess's first cousin. Such intermarriage between the imperial relatives helped to reinforce the connections between the imperial relatives.

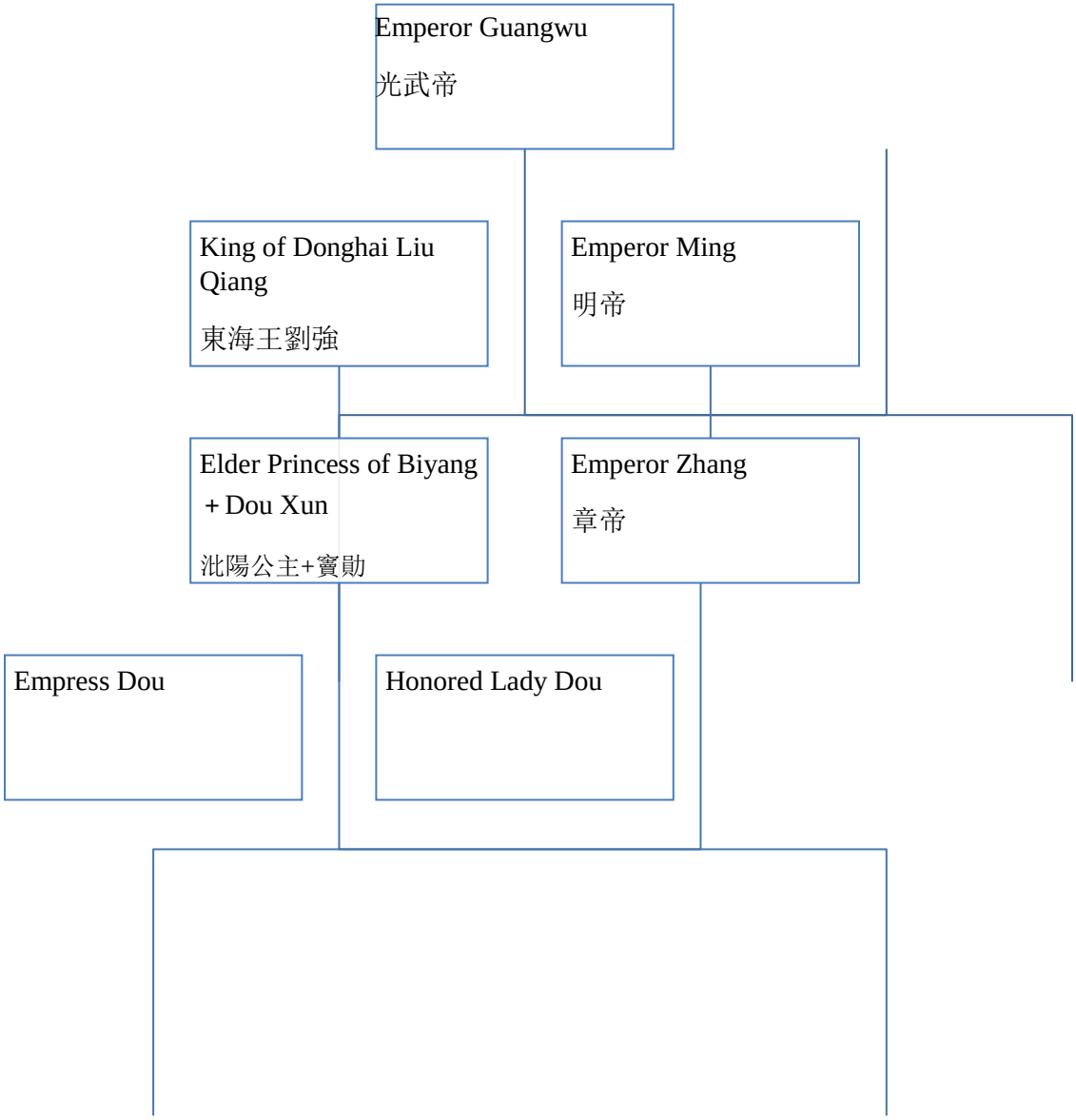

Fig. 9 Family tree of Emperor Guangwu (5 CE – 57 CE)

There are no known cases of divorce in either Western or Eastern Han. Such phenomena maybe due to the nature of marriage within the imperial family. Since the marriage between a princess and a noble usually had a strong political symbolic meaning that represents the allegiance and pledges of loyalty, it was not related to personal affections or feelings. Therefore, it was very difficult for princesses to divorce their husbands. Often the conflict between the

princess and her suitor could lead to severe outcomes. Princess Nangong 南宮 and her suitor, the Noble of Zhang 張 Er Shen 邴申 did not get along with each other. After her first husband, Zhang Zuo 張坐, passed away, Princess Nangong was married to Er Shen. Er Shen was not very happy about this marriage, and he constantly disrespected the princess. In 123 BCE, he was charged for his disrespectful manner towards his wife and deprived of his noble title.[170] The husband of the Princess Yangyi 陽邑, Zhang Jian 張建 also received such treatment when he committed adultery with a female slave (*bi* 婢) of the princess and got drunk and quarrelled with the princess several times. As a result he was deprived of his noble title.[171] In these cases, the princesses' marriage ended by the deprivation of the title of nobility of their husband. It seems there was no peaceful solution to solve their disputes.

Though the marriage pattern of princesses in the Western and Eastern Han share many commonalities, one thing to be noted is that, as far as our sources tell us, cases of remarriage only occurred in the Western Han. Such differences maybe associated with the changes of ideology at the time. After Emperor Xuan embraced Confucian ideologies, the idea that women were inferior and should show respect to their husbands became more prevalent, especially among the higher classes. In his work, the *Traditions on Outstanding Women (Lienü zhuan* 列女傳), Liu Xiang (79 BCE -8 CE) includes 125 biographical stories of exemplary women through history in order to give a moral education to women and to the Emperor Cheng. His work was the earliest text concerned about women's moral education. Models that represent the traditional

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[170] Loewe 2000, 89.

[171] *Hanshu* 17. 670.

坐尚陽邑公主與婢姦主旁，數醉罵主，免。

virtues such as maternal kindness, sympathy and wisdom, chastity and compliance, etc., were eulogized.[172] From this point on, more and more works focused on such topics and they gradually gained more influence. Ban Zhao's *Lessons for Women* (*Nü jie*) and Zheng Xuan's 鄭玄 (127CE-200CE) analysis of the first eight Odes (*shi* 詩) drew upon the classics and sought to educate and further specify the sexual order and the wifely roles.[173]

In the Eastern Han, a discourse on the sexual order and the wifely roles had emerged, that was tailored particularly to elite families, and was profoundly influential in the upper-class families.[174] As Vankeerberghen suggests, wives were encouraged to tone down their own jealousy and sexuality and actively seek for more benefits for her husband, including the maintenance of harmonious relationships with other women in the household. In return, these high rank women could obtain recognition for her virtue as, sanctioned by the classics.[175] This is a signal of the superiority of the husbands. To further implement such an order, it is possible that women were educated to stay chaste for their husband. In the *Traditions on Outstanding Women*, there is a section called "The Chaste and Compliant."[176] The princesses were imperceptibility influenced by such ideology. One possible hypothesis is that in the Eastern Han period, the princesses were encouraged to follow the behavior of the virtuous women and to stay chaste for their husband. Therefore, the princesses could choose if they wanted to remarry or not.

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[172] Kinney 2014a, xvi.

[173] Vankeerberghen 2014, 122.

[174] *Ibid.*, 121.

[175] *Ibid.*, 122.

[176] Kinney 2014a, ix.

There were also cases where a princess chose remarriage, even in the Eastern Han. As *Hou Hanshu* stated, the Elder Princess Huyang 湖陽長公主 once discussed with the Emperor Guangwu the issue of remarriage after her husband passed away. Such narratives indicate that at least since the beginning of the Eastern Han times, princesses were free to decide if they wanted to remarry or not. Therefore, remarriage was neither mandatory nor forbidden in the Eastern Han Period.[177]

The Benefits and Potential Loss of Marrying a Princess

Marrying a princess was an honor, but also frequently led to disaster. On the positive side, marrying a princess could help one to elevate one's status, bring honor to one's family and enhance one's power via marital ties with the imperial family. For example, Li Tong 李通 received special treatment from Emperor Guangwu because he was married to the Princess of Ningping 寧平. In 26 CE, when Princess Ningping attained the title of elder princess, Li Tong became a noble as well.[178] His marriage with a princess helped him to acquire title of nobility. Liang Song 梁松 was married to the Elder Princess of Wuyin 武陰 so that he received high regard from Emperor Guangwu and was generally treated with favor. Other courtiers dreaded

[177] In the case of marriage in the Western Han, which was more restricted in terms of suitor selections, the husband of the princess had to obtain a noble title. In other words, princesses could find lovers who were not a perfect match in terms of wealth and titles, but they could not marry their lovers. Therefore, the Great Elder Princess of Guantao could not marry Dong Yan and the Elder Princess of Eyi could not marry Ding Wairen.

[178] Crespigny 2007,426. *HHS* 15/5:573-76*; Bn 54:55, 102-108, Bn 59:186, Bn 76: 26, Bn 79:55, 60. Li Tong did not hold any official titles in Emperor Guangwu's court. He was married to the princess before the emperor succeeded to the throne. Therefore, he probably receive a title of nobility because he was married to a princess.

him.[179] These examples indicate that marrying a princess could allow one to receive the favor of the emperor and to enlarge his powers.

On the negative side, marrying a princess could bring calamity to one's household. Fan Wei 樊鮪 for example, was the younger son of Fan Hong and a cousin of Emperor Guangwu. In 66 CE, he asked Emperor Ming for permission so that his son Shang 尚 could marry the Princess of Jingxiang 敬鄉公主, the daughter of King Ying 英 of Chu 楚. His brother, Fan Shu 樊儵 warned him. Fan Shu argued, "During the Jianwu 建武 reign period (ca. 25 - 56 CE), our family received honor and favor [of the emperor]. Our one clan counted five nobles among its members. At the time, Fan Hong said that our women married regional kings and our men married princesses. But if the honor and favor were too much, it is going to lead to calamity, therefore you should not [let your son marry the princess]. 建武時，吾家並受榮寵，一宗五侯。時特進一言。女可以配王，男可以尚主，但以貴寵過盛，即為禍患，故不為也."[180] Fan Wei did not listen to his brother's advice. Fan Shu's prophecy came true. In 71 CE, Ying was accused of treason and many nobles and officials were involved in this incident and were persecuted. Emperor Ming learned of Fan Wei's cautious advice and thus announced amnesty for Wei's son. He escaped from the penalties.[181] Thus, marrying a princess might bring prosperity to a clan or cause disasters and destroy a powerful family.

Marrying a princess meant that the husband was in a somewhat inferior position in the household. The case studies of Princess of Nangong 南宮, Princess of Yangyi 陽邑 and Princess

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[179] Tang Mujun 唐穆君 2008, 28.

[180] *Hou Hanshu* 32. 1123. In the annotation, 宏為特進.

[181] Crespigny 2007, 204.

of Huyang 湖陽 reveal the fact that there were no tiny incidents in the households of the emperor — every incident was major. Since in many cases the princesses were the daughters of the Son-of-Heaven, bullying the daughter equaled disrespect and disdain for the emperor. Therefore, if a husband treated a princess in a rude and disrespect manner or betrayed the princess, he would be deprived immediately of his noble title. In some cases, harming a princess could cause horrendous scenes. The Noble of Dingyuan 定遠候, Ban Shi 班始, was the suitor of Princess Yincheng 陰城. Princess Yincheng was known for her arrogant and vicious nature. She did not get along with her husband and once she brought a lover into her bedroom and made Ban Shi watch them at the bedside. Ban Shi was enraged and stabbed the princess to death. Emperor Shun was shocked by such a tragedy and ordered the execution of all his brothers and sisters. His courtesan, Xue Qin, dissuaded and stopped him. As a result, the Ban family survived, but Ban Shi was executed and cut in half at the waist at the Horse Market in Luoyang.[182] These cases indicate that when someone married a princess, if he did not cautiously deal with his wife, he might fall into the danger of being deprived of his title and his life might get threatened.

There are also cases where a marriage to a princess was refused. Yang Qiao 楊喬 refused Huandi's request to marry an imperial princess and when he went back home, he closed his door and isolated himself from the others and starved himself to death.[183] Song Hong also refused Emperor Guangwu's proposal to marry his sister, the Elder Princess of Huyang. When the princess was widowed, she heard about Song Hong's great personality and talents. She proposed to the emperor to make Song Hong her husband. But Song Hong stated that he could not

[182] *Ibid.*, 7.

[183] *Ibid.*, 958.

abandon his wife and thus refused to marry the princess. These examples also indicate that on the one hand marrying a princess was a goal for many talented and outstanding nobles; nevertheless, on the others hand, there were also people who refused to marry princesses for a variety of reasons.

The Descendants of the Princesses

According to Han rules, the sons of imperial princesses could inherit their mother's title. In many cases, if the princess had two or more sons, her first son would inherit the nobility from his father and the second son would inherit the title from his mother. There were several cases indicating such a situation. The younger son of the Noble of Gaomi 高密 and the Elder Wuyin 武陰 Princess received the noble title of the Noble of Wuyin 武陰. The second son of Feng Shun 馮順 and Princess Pingyang 平陽 received the title of Noble of Pingyang.[184]

The female descendants of the princesses were not given much description in the historical texts. The known ones were often married into the imperial house. The daughter of the Elder Princess of Luyuan 魯元, Elder Princess of Guantao 館陶 and the Elder Princess of Biyang 泍陽 were married to the emperors. These girls often became the empress and held exceptional powers in the harem. Meanwhile, the identity of their daughter helped these princesses to distinguish themselves from the others. Princess Biyang, for example, received the enfeoffment of Elder Princess after her daughter became the dowager empress.

[184] Tang Mujun 唐穆君 2008, 28.

Conclusion

Han marriage was featured with the concept of "a Perfect Match". As an important member of the imperial house, princesses' marriages were usually carefully arranged and always carried symbolical meanings. Their suitors were carefully chosen and often represented the political power core, many princesses' suitors held important official titles in the court. In many cases, princesses could not divorce their husbands easily; but they could have lovers without any accusations. Such privilege was very exceptional throughout Chinese history. Their descendants were also treated with high honors and their male descendants could receive a title of nobility title from both sides and their daughters could be empresses and marry the emperors. Such circumstances allowed them to attain more political support in the political arena.

Chapter 4 Political Involvement of the Princesses, and Remaining Puzzles

In 193 BCE, Liu Fei 劉肥 , King Daohui of Qi 齊悼惠王 was in extreme peril. He paid a second visit to Emperor Hui's court and received a warm welcome from his half-brother. Such courtesy, however, was appropriate between family members but not between a sovereign and his subject. This manner in which the King of Qi interacted with the emperor angered the Empress Lü, who planned on poisoning him but gave up at the last minute. She was afraid that Emperor Hui would be poisoned at the same time. After Liu Fei learned of Empress Lü's plan, he was worried that he would not have the chance to leave Chang'an alive. In order to appease the enraged empress he offered land in Chengyang Commandery 城陽郡 to Empress Lü's only daughter, the Princess of Luyuan 魯元公主 and gave her the title "Queen (太后 Taihou) of Qi." His action mollified the anger of the Empress and he left Chang'an safely, dying in 188 BCE.[185] This anecdote shows that princesses did play some role in political struggles and, at that a princess' assistance could help one escape from hazardous circumstances. Liu Fei's case was not exceptional; many others who were ambitious and zealous to succeed, such as regional kings, imperial consorts and officers, looked for assistance from a princess to acquire support for their causes.

Major Factors for a Princess to Participate in Politics

As a member of the privileged class, princesses participated in political affairs more intensely during the Han than during later dynasties. This was due to four major factors. First, broadly

[185] Loewe 2000, 295.

speaking, in comparison to later dynasties, the dichotomy between the two genders in Han China was still relatively undefined. Women were not banned from participating in many activities, forbidden in later times. Second, the unique identity of princesses meant that they could serve as a liaison between the families of their husbands and the House of Liu. Such a social connection allowed them to easily access political affairs. Third, since they were from the same bloodline, the emperor tended to trust princesses and one even became guardian to the young imperial heir, exerting great influence on the child emperor. Fourth, ostentatious displays of wealth allowed them to make friends and collude with some influential officials.

Generally speaking, the society in the Western and Eastern Han was more lenient to women and such circumstances made Han exceptional. Unlike later times, where women received a name from infancy but were rarely known by others, in the Han Dynasty, many elite women's names were recorded in the same way as men's names. Wilkinson states, according to a research on women's names in Han China, Han was more gender neutral as there were 570 given names of women recorded in Han sources.[186] After the Han times, women were considered inferior in comparison to men. Endymion Wilkinson argues that many historical works did not properly cite women's names. For example, most women in the biographies of *Hou Hanshu* had their names properly cited; nonetheless, by the Tang Dynasty, only about one third of the 38 women in *Jinshu* 晉書 had full names. The rest were cited by their family name alone. These women in *Jinshu* were distinguished by their social roles as daughter, wife, widow or mother rather than by their given names.[187] Such circumstances indicate that Han society was more

[186] Wilkinson 2013, 174.

[187] *Ibid.*

prepared to see women as full members of society. They were at least identified by their own names instead of by their social roles.

Additionally, gender role division was not fully implemented in the Han dynasty. Women were allowed to participate in some social work, such as profitable trade, sorcery, medicine, and the performing arts etc.[188] This encouraged women, especially ones from the upper class, to free themselves from the work inside their household and to participate in politics. There are many examples of a princess trying to give advice on politics. The Elder Princess of Jingwu 敬武長公主, for example, criticized Wang Mang 王莽 (45BCE-23CE) before Emperor Xuan (r. 74 BCE - 49 BCE).[189] Her advice was taken and the emperor alienated Wang Mang over time. After Wang Mang's rise to power in 3 CE, the Empress Dowager sent the princess a dose of poison, forcing her to take her own life.[190] Her political proposal to undermine Wang Mang's power might be one of the reasons why she was forced to commit suicide. Therefore, princesses did have some influence in the political arena.

Emperors often trusted princesses. Princesses were not considered to be a major threat to the emperor because of their gender. Since only male members in the imperiak house could inherit the throne, the emperor was always more skeptical of the regional kings and would

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[188] T'ung-tsu Ch'ü 瞿同祖, ed. by Jack L. Dull, 1967, 54-56.

[189] Loewe 2000, 201.

[190] Bai Lihong 白立紅 2008, 28. Princess Jingwu was accused for conspiring with Lü Kuan 呂寬 for practicing witchcraft on Wang Mang. After Emperor Ping succeeded the throne, Wang Mang removed member of the imperial consort family from Chang'an to prevent them from exerting great influence on the new emperor. Wang Mang's eldest son, Wang Yu 王宇 was afraid that the Emperor Ping would be antipathy about such actions. Therefore, Wang Yu and his friend Wu Zhang 吳章 conspired that Lü Kuan smeared the gates of Wang Mang's estate with blood and practiced witchcraft on Wang Mang. Princess Jingwu was involved in the plot and thus was forced to commit suicide (Loewe 2000, 422-423). Nevertheless, the circumvented plot was created to eliminate the powerful relatives of Emperor Ping. Therefore, we can speculate that Princess of Jingwu's advice on alienating Wang Mang had made her end up in such circumstances.

monitor their marriages more carefully. The marriage partners of the regional kings were mainly daughters of imperial relatives and daughters of locally influential families in their kingdoms (*Guoren* 國人). Princesses, however, married influential husbands.[191] Such marriage patterns may have been due to two major concerns. On one hand, the regional kings needed to stabilize and to reinforce their power in their enfeoffed land through marriage ties. From the point of view of the emperor, marrying local women would also prevent the regional kings from colluding with powerful officials by marrying their daughters. Therefore, when it came to arranging marriages for the regional kings, the ruler always had to consider whether the marriage bond he created would threaten his power.

Princesses' marriages were political symbols of unification of the allegiance of the regime power and the powerful official families. Therefore, there were cases where the regional kings married daughters of elite families within their kingdoms, but there were no cases where princesses married a husband with no political background.[192] Princess' husbands were almost always family members of meritorious officials (*gongchen* 功臣), that of the consort's families and nobles out of imperial generosity. Additionally, many princesses' husbands themselves held high official titles. For example, the suitor of Princess of Pingyang in the Eastern Han, Feng Shun 馮順, was the Superintendent of State Visits (*da honglu* 大鴻臚); the husband of the Princess of Pingyang in the Western Han, Wei Qing 衛青, was the General in Chief (*da jiangjun*

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[191] Liu Tseng-kuei 劉增貴 1981,103.

Liu Tseng-kuei 劉增貴 listed all marriage partners of the regional kings and thus summarized that there were two main types of wedding partners of the regional kings.

[192] From Liu Tseng-kuei's 劉增貴 chart of the wives of the regional king in *Han dai hunyin zhidu* 漢代婚姻制度 we could observe that King Xiao of Zhongshan 中山孝王 married Lady Wei 衛, who was from Lunu 盧奴 of Zhongshan County 中山. King of 定陶 married Lady Ding 丁, who seems to have been a daughter of the local influential Ding family.

大將軍) and all male members in his household had received noble titles. These examples indicate that princess' husbands tended to be influential court members and their marriage allowed the princess access to more resources and more political capital.

Because princesses were members of the imperial family, when the emperor passed away with no mature heir to succeed the throne, a princess was entrusted with the care of the child emperor. After Emperor Wu decided on his heir to the throne (the future Zhaodi), he killed the mother of the young successor. An account in *Shiji* used the emperor's words to reveal the reason why he killed the mother of his heir:

> Once the Emperor asked someone in his entourage what other people commented on this incident. The man replied that, "People said, all well that he established his son as his heir, but why [would he] get rid of the mother?" The Emperor said, "Yes, neither young men nor fools can distinguish right from wrong. In the past, the reason why in the past imperial families experienced chaos was because the sovereign was young and the mother was in her prime years. There is no way to stop a female ruler who is arbitrary and arrogant, lascivious and debauched. Haven't you heard about Empress Lü's story?"
> 其後帝閑居，問左右曰：「人言云何？」左右對曰：人言且立其子，何去其母乎？」帝曰：「然。是非兒曹愚人所知也。往古國家所以亂也，由主少母壯也。女主獨居驕蹇，淫亂自恣，莫能禁也。女不聞呂后邪？」[193]

In his conversation with the servants, Emperor Wu expressed his worry that the regime would be in the hands of a consort family, rather than in those of his young successor. He used Empress Lü as the exemplar to support his case. Chu Shaosun 褚少孫 (105 BCE – 30 BCE) exclaimed that "therefore all [imperial consorts of] Emperor Wu who had given birth to children were put to death whether or not the child was a boy or a girl. How come such [behavior] is not considered

[193] *Shiji* 30. 1986. Since Sima Qian did not outlive Emperor Wu, the story must have been written by Chu Shaosun, a Western Han historian who helped Sima Qian to compile and to annotate his work.

as Saint deeds! [Emperor Wu] is looking ahead, making plans for future generations. Really, it is something that people who perceive things the shallow way and stupid *ru* cannot comprehend! [His] Posthumous name is Martial [*Wu* 武] is a well-earned reputation! 故諸為武帝生子者，無男女，其母無不譴死，豈可謂非賢聖哉！昭然遠見，為後世計慮，固非淺聞愚儒之所及也。謚為「武」，豈虛哉!"[194] Chu Shaosun's comment shows that from the early Han times until Emperor Wu's reign, the worry that a powerful Empress Dowager would take over the power to govern never faded away. Emperor Wu's behavior gained praise from the historian because he eliminated such hazards. Since the young emperor could not grow up without any family members around, his grown sisters took over the role of foster mother in this case.

When Emperor Zhao acceded to the throne at the age of eight, the Princess of Eyi 鄂邑公主 moved into the palace to act as foster mother to the young emperor. The trust of the emperor allowed the princess to participate in political decisions, and even to influence the young emperor. Later, the Princess of Eyi was bestowed the title of Elder Princess from Emperor Zhao. Her example indicates that princesses could receive a promotion as they gained the trust of an emperor.

The large sum of wealth that princesses owned also allowed them to obtain the emperor's favor. According to *Hanshu,* the Princess of Guantao followed Dong Yan's advice and persuaded the princess to offer Emperor Wu the Changmen Garden 長門園, which was a property that was attached to Wendi's shrine.[195] Since the emperor was very pleased with her

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[194] *Ibid.*

[195] *Hanshu* 70. 2853. The story of the Changmen Garden can be found in Chapter 2.

action, she awarded Yuan Shu a hundred *jin* 斤 of gold. Such bestowal to Yuan Shu also indicates that princesses were willing to spend money to curry favor.

The Main Characteristics of Princesses' Involvement in Politics

The main political battlefield for the princesses was in the harem. They rarely gave suggestions on politics but focused their energies on the imperial household. Many princesses introduced beauties such as Wei Zifu 衛子夫, Madam Li (Li Furen 李夫人) and Zhao Feiyan 趙飛燕 to the emperors in order to receive more privileges. In most cases, princesses invited the emperor to their households and introduced the beauties to the emperor.[196] Such "honey trap" was a very important yet often neglected way to help one acquire more favor from the emperor in the early imperial period. Since the princesses often tried to maintain a good relationship with the emperor, the emperor did not hesitate to go to their residences to be entertained.

In *Hanshu*, there is a passage on how the Empress Wei 衛 was introduced to Emperor Wu. Even though Emperor Wu had been on the imperial throne for years, he did not produce a son. The Princess of Pingyang had presented him with a number of girls from fine families, but he had paid no attention to them. But, while he visited the Princess of Pingyang's household, his eyes fell on Wei Zifu 衛子夫, who came from humble beginnings and was a singer in the princess' household.[197] An account in *Hanshu* describes the scene where the Princess of Pingyang sends Wei Zifu off to the imperial harem: "When Zifu got on the carriage, the princess

[196] In terms of Wei Zifu, the Elder Princess did not have the intention of introducing her to the emperor. But after a glimpse the emperor was interested in Wei Zifu and decided to take her to the palace.

[197] Loewe 2000, 295.

patted her on the back, saying, 'Off you go! Bon Appetit and take care. If one day you become honorable, do not forget me!'子夫上車，主拊其背曰：「行矣！ 強飯勉之。即貴，願無相忘！」"[198] From this passage, one could observe a possible reason why the Princess of Pingyang introduced Wei Zifu to the emperor. Her reminder to Wei Zifu shows that she wanted to make an allegiance with Wei Zifu if she won the favor of Emperor Wu and acquired a high position in the harem. Wei Zifu did not let the Princess of Pingyang down. She was later promoted to be the Empress and Princess Pinyang was married to her younger brother, Wei Qing, as a result. After Wei Zifu got older and no longer enjoyed the favor of the emperor, Princess Pingyang introduced Li Furen 李夫人, an accomplished singer, to Emperor Wu and she won the favor of the emperor.[199] For these two match-making successes, Princess Pingyang not only contributed to Emperor Wu's happiness, she was also given thousands *jin* of gold as a reward.[200]

The Princess of Yang'a 陽阿 is another example of someone who introduced a consort to the emperor. Zhao Feiyan 趙飛燕 was a slave in one of the palaces in Chang'an. She was assigned to the Princess of Yang'a. She was trained in singing and dancing skills and so skillful that she was given the name of Feiyan 飛燕, "flying swallow." She successfully seduced Emperor Cheng 成帝 during his visit to the household of Princess Yang'a. Chengdi was so taken with her that she was summoned to the imperial harem along with her sister.[201] The example of Zhao Feiyan further indicates that princesses were eager to please the emperor in order to obtain more favor.

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[198] *Han Shu* 70. 3949. Parallel in *Shiji* 49. 1978.

[199] Loewe 2000, 219.

[200] *Hanshu* 70. 3949.

[201] Loewe, 2000, 704.

It was only in the Western Han times that princesses introduced companions to the emperors. Such a phenomenon might have been caused by the different approaches in selecting empresses and imperial consorts in the Western and Eastern Han times. Liu Tseng-kuei 劉增貴 argues that during Western Han, there were no strict regulations on the selection of women for the harem. As a result, besides some women who came from more privileged households, such as Empress Zhang and Empress Chen, most imperial consorts and empresses were from humble backgrounds.[202] It seems that the most common way to become an empress was to gain favor. One's background tended to be less significant. In contrast, during Eastern Han, the imperial consorts ideally were "daughters of land-owning kings and nobles (wanghou youtu zhi nü 王侯有土之女)."[203] Therefore, the daughters of nobles and regional kings were the preferred candidates to become high-rank imperial consorts.

Princesses also played an important role in deciding who the appropriate heir to the throne was. Yang Lusheng 楊陸陞 points out that ninety percent of the empresses and Honored Ladies who were included in *Hou hanshu* were from powerful families.[204] It seems, therefore, that the new procedure of selecting an imperial consort, established in Eastern Han, hindered the princesses from introducing more women from humble upbringings to the emperor, and hence they no longer could benefit from the imperial good-will they thus earned.

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[202] Empress Zhang was the wife of Emperor Hui, she was a daughter of Princess of Luyuan 魯元 and the Noble of Xuanping 宣平. Empress Chen was first wife of Emperor Wu, whose mother was the Elder Princess of Guantao 館陶 and Noble of Tangyi 堂邑.

[203] Liu Tseng-kuei 劉增貴 1981, 81. In his work, Liu Tseng-kuei includes a chart of the marriage ties between the emperors and the consort's families. Such a conclusion was based on an analysis of the chart.

[204] *Ibid.*, 79.

Nevertheless, in both Western and Eastern Han, princesses participated in struggles inside the harem, such as deciding an Heir Apparent. During Emperor Zhang's 章帝 reign (75 CE -88 CE), the Princess of Biyang 比陽 and her daughter, Empress Dou 竇, managed to dismiss the first heir, Liu Qing, by disgracing his mother Lady Ma 馬 and her family. The struggle became very intense between the Dou Family and the Ma family. Since Empress Dou did not have any male offspring, they soon promoted the son of Lady Liang 梁 to be the new heir. But, he was discharged thereafter. In 88 CE, when the emperor passed away, the Princess of Biyang and Empress Dou promoted his youngest son, Liu Zhao, as the heir and eliminated his mother and her families.[205] At the end, Empress Dou enthroned the child emperor He 和帝 and, accompanied by her brother Dou Xian 竇憲, the Dou family controlled the court. After a princess married a member of a locally powerful family, she was inclined to help her husband's family to achieve more influence. This case indicates that princesses were able to collude with the women inside the harem and they were able to shape the decisions of who should be the next emperor.

In some cases, princesses used their privileges to shield people close to them who had broken the rules. A passage in *Hou Hanshu* includes a story of how the Princess of Huyang 湖陽 protected and hid her favorite slave and lover who killed a man in broad daylight. When Dong Xuan 董宣 was the Magistrate of Luoyang (*Luoyang ling* 洛陽令), he learned that a slave of the Princess of Huyang 湖陽 had killed someone and was enjoying the protection of the princess. Since he was staying in the household of the princess, there were no officials who dared to arrest

[205] Crespigny, 2007, xx.

and punish him. One day, when this slave accompanied the princess and came out of the household, Dong Xuan halted the princess's carriage and arrested him.[206] Dong Xuan used a sword to draw a circle on the ground, scolded the slave to get out of the carriage and killed him on the spot. Dong Xuan also rebuked the princess for several mistakes she had made.[207] The princess thus came to the palace and complained to her brother and expressed her anger. She asked the Guangwu Emperor to punish Dong Xuan for his deeds.[208] From the passage, one could observe that in some cases princesses used their privileges and political influence to hinder the judicial system and became the protector of criminals.

To summarize, according to the narratives in the standard history, we have observed that princesses were involved in politics in various ways. Just as Bai Lihong has suggested, some of the princesses participated in the struggles of the harem and others focused on pleasing the emperor to get more favor. In some cases, they were able to shield protégés who had committed a crime.[209] Bai's observation borne out in the historical narratives. However, seen on a larger scale, princesses were not in a position to propose policies, and hence have long-term influence. None of them held any official titles in the court. Thus, their involvement in politics was inconsistent and never strayed from the affairs of the imperial household. Their major influences were inside the harem and imperial family. Hence, they did not have a solid position from which to influence the political situation in the court. In general, there were few records that talk about

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[206] *Ibid*., 154.

[207] *Hou Hanshu* 80. 2490. 以刀畫地，大言數主之失，叱奴下車，因格殺之。

[208] Crespigny 2007,154. At the end, Dong Xuan refused to bow down and kowtow to the princess; he offered to kill himself, and asked the emperor if the slave could kill innocent men at will. Till his blood flowed he still refused to apologize to the princess. Emperor Guangwu admired Dong Xuan's behavior and awarded him with money, and he shared them with his junior officers.

[209] Bai Lihong 白立紅 2008, 38-41.

the princesses. Additionally, the majority of historians and officers were male; they did not care much about women and often tended to leave more space for the affairs of the imperial households. As a result, historians often neglected the princesses and their stories were rarely included in the standard history.

The Princess in Literary works

During the Late Western Han period (206 BCE - 8 CE), there were some works, such as the biographies from Liu Xiang's (79-8 BCE) work, *Traditions of Outstanding Women* (Lienü Zhuan 列女傳) compiled with an intention to establish models of ideal women who were loyal and stay chaste to her husband. Liu Xiang's work inspired many other writers, such as Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127 – 200 CE) who wrote commentaries on the first eight *Odes* (*Shi* 詩); Ban Zhao's 班昭 (45 - 114 CE) who compiled her work on *Lessons for Women* (*Nüjie* 女誡). All these works sought to educate women and to justify the wife's position and to distinguish her from other women in the household.[210] These texts were the featured works on Han women, who were described as stereotypes based on social expectations. Though princesses were not mentioned in these works, there were still two literary works produced during the Han and later may provide some insight into how princesses intervened in politics. Both the *Hanwu Gushi* 漢武故事(*The Tales of the Emperor Hanwu*) and *Feiyan Waizhuan* 飛燕外傳 (*The Outer Tradition of Zhao Feiyan*) include princesses in their stories. Moreover, these authors provides more details on their female characters in great detail.

[210] Vankeerberghen 2014, 122.

In *Hanwu Gushi*, the Princess of Guantao plays an important role. Her praise of the young Liu Che 劉徹 in front of his father, Emperor Jing, helps him to the position of imperial heir.[211]

> Empress Wang [the wife] of Emperor Jing of Han was brought into the palace of the heir apparent [i.e., the future the Emperor Jing] and gained his favor. She was pregnant and dreamed that a sun came into her chest. Emperor Jing also dreamed that Emperor Gao told him that, "The son of the Lady Wang can be named 'Zhi' 彘." When [the Lady Wang] gave birth to a boy, he acquired such name. This was Emperor Wu. Emperor Wu was born in the Palace of *Yilan* 猗蘭 on the 7th day of the 7th month in the Year of *Yiyou* 乙酉(157 BCE). At the age of four, [he] was granted the title of the King of Jiaodong 膠東. A few years later, the Elder Princess [of Guantao] held him on her knee and asked him, "Do you want to get married?" The King of Jiaodong said, "Yes, I want to get a wife." The Elder Princess pointed at the hundreds of servants around them, and [the King of Jiaodong] rejected marry any of them. At last the Elder Princess pointed at her daughter and asked, "what about A Jiao 阿嬌？" Therefore, the King delightedly replied, "Yes! If A Jiao can be my wife, I ought to use a house paved with gold to store her." The Elder Princess was extremely pleased. Therefore, she proposed to Emperor Jing and the King and A Jiao got married. At the time the Empress had no son, and the son of Lady Li (Li Ji 栗姬) was appointed to be the heir apparent. [Since] the Empress was disposed; Lady Li should be appointed to be the empress in turn. But the Elder Princess always complained about her. The Emperor attempted to talk to Lady Li about this, but Lady Li was enraged and refused to reply. And she scolded him [the Emperor], and calling him an old dog. The emperor was sad about this. The Elder Princess slandered the Lady Li daily. And because the Elder Princess admired the virtue of the son of the Lady Wang, the Emperor also thought him capable. The heir apparent was deposed and Lady Li commit to suicide. Therefore Lady Wang became the Empress
> 漢景皇帝王皇后內太子宮，得幸，有娠，夢日入其懷。帝又夢高祖謂己曰："王夫人生子，可名為彘。"及生男，因名焉。是為武帝。帝以乙酉年七月七日旦生於猗蘭殿。年四歲，立為膠東王。数歲，長公主嫖抱置膝上，問曰："兒欲得婦不？"膠東王曰："欲得婦。"長主指左右長御百餘人，皆云不用。末指其女問曰："阿嬌好不？"於是乃笑對曰："好！若得阿嬌作婦，當作金屋貯之也。"長主大悅，乃苦要上，遂成婚焉。是時皇后無子，立栗姬子為太子。皇后既廢，栗姬次應立，而長主伺其短，輒微白之。上嘗與栗姬語，栗姬怒弗肯應。又罵上老狗，上心銜

[211] *Hanwu Gushi* 漢武故事 is a work depicts the stories of the Emperor Wu of Han from his birth till his death and It is highly likely that Ban Gu 班固 was the author. This work belongs to the genre of "tales of the miraculous"(*zhiguai xiaoshuo* 志怪小說), and it was written in a whimsical manner and includes many supernatural anecdotes.

之。長主日譖之，因譽王夫人男之美，上亦賢之，廢太子為王，栗姬自殺，遂立王夫人為后.[212]

This passage from *The Tales of the Emperor Hanwu* illustrates the story how Emperor Wu the Great was chosen as the Heir Apparent. His childish words that he wanted to marry the daughter of the Elder Princess of Guantao was being treated seriously and thus he received the full support from the Elder Princess. The Emperor trusted the Elder Princess and her admiration of Liu Che was taken seriously. Additionally, the Elder Princess of Guantao helped Lady Wang receive the title of empress and to enthrone Liu Che. Her motives in doing so were less than altruistic. Her goal was to make her daughter the future empress so she could receive more political influence and privilege.

In comparison to the story included in *Shiji*, *Hanwu gushi* follows the trend of the story but making some alternations which made the role of the Elder Princess more important:

> Emperor Jing's oldest son was Liu Rong, whose mother was Lady Li, a native of Qi. It was he whom Emperor Jing first designated as heir apparent. The Elder Princess Piao had a daughter whom she wished to give to the heir apparent as a wife, but Lady Li was by nature jealous and, because all of Emperor Jing's other concubines, who far surpassed her in favor and honor, had obtained their positions in the palace through the Elder Princess, she grew more resentful each day and declined the Princess's offer of a bride for her son. The Elder Princess then offered her daughter to Madam Wang as a bride for her son, and Madam Wang consented to the match. The Elder Princess, angered at Lady Li's refusal, took every opportunity to talk viciously of her shortcomings to the emperor. "Whenever Lady Li meets any of the ladies of the inner palace who are more honored and favored than herself," she said, "she has her attendants utter curses and magic spells and spit behind their backs. She is practicing sorcery in an attempt to win your affection!" As a result of such talk Emperor Jing came to hate Lady Li… The Elder Princess daily praised the beauty of Madam Wang's son, and Emperor Jing also

[212] Ban Gu 班固(32 CE–92 CE), http://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&chapter=130088.

regarded him as a boy of unusual worth. In addition, there had been the auspicious sign of the sun which Madam Wang had seen in her dream. But as yet the emperor had no definite plans for making his heir apparent in place of Lady Li's son. Madam Wang knew that the emperor was annoyed with Lady Li and that his anger was not yet appeased, so she secretly sent someone to urge the high ministers to set up Lady Li as empress. When the grand messenger had finished reporting on other matters to the throne one day, he said, "A son is honored because of his mother, and a mother because of his son. Now the mother of the heir apparent has no title. It is fitting that Lady Li be given the title of empress." "What business have you to make such a proposal?" replied the emperor in a rage. Eventually he had the grand messenger investigated and punished, and deposed the heir apparent, Liu Rong, appointing him king of Linjiang instead. Lady Li's resentment grew more bitter than ever, but she was never again allowed to see the emperor and died of grief. In the end Madam Wang was set up as empress and her son became heir apparent

景帝長男榮，其母栗姬。栗姬，齊人也。立榮為太子。長公主嫖有女，欲予為妃。栗姬妒，而景帝諸美人皆因長公主見景帝，得貴幸，皆過栗姬，栗姬日怨怒，謝長公主，不許。長公主欲予王夫人，王夫人許之。長公主怒，而日譽栗姬短於景帝曰：「栗姬與諸貴夫人幸姬會，常使侍者祝唾其背，挾邪媚道。」景帝以故望之。長公主日譽王夫人男之美，景帝亦賢之，又有曩者所夢日符，計未有所定。長公主日譽王夫人男之美，景帝亦賢之，又有曩者所夢日符，計未有所定。王夫人知帝望栗姬，因怒未解，陰使人趣大臣立栗姬為皇后。大行奏事畢，曰：「『子以母貴，母以子貴』，今太子母無號，宜立為皇后。」景帝怒曰：「是而所宜言邪！」遂案誅大行，而廢太子為臨江王。栗姬愈恚恨，不得見，以憂死。卒立王夫人為皇后."[213]

This passage confirms a point that was made previously; the Elder Princesses played a very special role in the harem—she helped the imperial concubines to obtain a position in the harem and to gain the emperor's favor. Nevertheless, interestingly, in literature, more attention was paid to the Elder Princess and Madam Wang. The author composed interesting

[213] *Shiji* 49: 1976-1977, trans. by Burton Waston 1961, 330-331.

dialogues between these ladies. These were direct conversations between the princess and Lady Wang but in the standard history, they did not have any dialogue between them in literature. The only time that the Elder Princess of Guantao got to speak was when she was talking with a male, the emperor. Additionally, other than the dialogues between the female characters, the author was gives his female characters more emotions. In *Hanwu gushi*, there was a scene where the Elder Princess was delighted because the young future Emperor Wu said he wanted to marry her daughter. In *Shiji*, however, this scenario was introduced in brief words and the emotion of the Elder Princess was not described.

In *Feiyan waizhuan* 飛燕外傳, princesses play the role of training Zhao Feiyan in singing and dancing skills and send her to enter the palace.[214]

> [Zhao Feiyan] and the Household Director (*Jialing* 家令) of the Princess of Yang'a 陽阿公主, Zhao Lin 趙臨, lived in the same ward and village (*lixiang* 里巷). [Feiyan] was depending on [Zhao] Lin and always made patterns and embroideries and gave them to [Zhao] Lin. Lin received them with guilt. [Feiyan lived in Lin's household and considered herself as his daughter. Lin had a daughter who worked in the palace. [Lin's daughter] was sick in bed, and she returned home and passed away. Feiyan disguised herself to others as the dead [daughter of Lin]. Feiyan's sister and brother were the house guard (*shezhi* 舍直) of the Princess of Yang'a. [Feiyan] often learned singing and dancing secretly and carefully reviewed the skills she learned]. She [thought about it] all day and did not get any food … Feiyan was summoned to enter the palace and get the favor of the emperor because of her master [the Princess of Yang'a]
> 與陽阿主家令趙臨共里巷，托附臨，屢為組文刺繡，獻臨，臨愧受之。居臨家，稱臨女。臨常有女事宮省，被病，歸死。飛燕或稱死者。飛燕妹弟事陽阿主家為舍直(值)，常竊效歌舞，積思精切，聽至終日，不得食……飛燕緣主家大人得入宮召幸.[215]

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[214] *Feiyan Waizhuan* 飛燕外傳 is a short *Chuanqi* 傳奇 tale about the life of Zhao Feiyan, a well-known favorite consort of Emperor Cheng (r.33BCE-7CE). "直" is equivalent to "值." Therefore, *Shezhi* 舍值 is translated as house guard.

[215] Ling Xuan 伶玄(Tang 唐), http://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&chapter=508693.

This passage gives a description of how Zhao Feiyan got into the household of Princess Yang'a and how she later came to be at the Palace and meet the emperor. In this account, the Princess of Yang'a plays an essential role as well—she brings Feiyan into the palace. Though her intention was not included in this *Chuanqi* tale, one could still associate her behavior with being eager to please the emperor and to get more favor.

There was a similar passage on the story of Zhao Feiyan in *Hanshu*:

> Empress Zhao, the consort of Emperor Cheng, was originally a government slave of Chang-an. When she was born, her father and mother declined to pick her up, but when three days had passed she was still alive. When she grew up, she was attached to the household of Emperor Cheng's elder sister Princess Yang'a, where she learned singing and dancing and came to be called Fenyan or Flying Swallow.[216]

In the *Outer Tradition of Feiyan,* the author emphasizes the events before Feiyan entered the imperial palace. Also, the author includes Princess Yang'a, the owner of Feiyan, who presented her to the emperor. While in *Hanshu*, Princess Yang'a was only indicated as Fenyang's owner. The action that the Princess introduced Feiyan to the Emperor was omitted from the standard history.

The reasons why these literatures depict the princesses in a comparable way to the standard history may relate to the availability of the narratives on the Han princesses. Given how few lines there are on the princesses in the historical records, the authors were somewhat limited in how they could elaborate. Both works tend to match with or at least follow history—the stories involving the princesses were compatible to the historical records.[217] The authors may not

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[216] Watson 1974, 265. Trans. modified from Watson.

[217] The Elder Princess of Guantao first wanted to marry her daughter to Li Yi's son, who was the Heir Apparent at the time. But Li Ji rejected the princess because she helped other consorts to get Emperor Jing's favor. Li Ji refused

have been able to freely create a character of their own. After all, they were writing about the stories of previous emperors and his family members. They had to show some degree of respect to the imperial house of Han. Therefore, these literary works coincide with the narrative in standard history. Howver, these literatures pays more attention to women than the standard histry do. Such circumstances may relate to the trend starting from the Late Western Han that works about women tended to establish stereotypes based on social expectations. The tales however, were particularly interested in women who failed to meet these expectations.

Princesses—the Untold Stories and Remaining Puzzles

Though there were reasons why historians marginalized the role of princesses in politics and in history, some puzzles emerge when one closely reads the historical texts. The first puzzle is about the sudden treason of the Elder Princess of Eyi 鄂邑長公主. There were few lines introducing the life story of the Elder Princess of Eyi,

> [Consequently] when, in [the period] Houyuan, the second year, the second month, the Emperor was sick, he thereupon setup [the future] Emperor Zhao, who was in his eighth year, as his Heir-apparent. He made the Palace Attendant and Chief Commandant Custodian to Imperial Equipages, Huo Guang, the Commander-in-chief, and had [the latter] receive a testamentary edict [directing him] to act as assistant to the young ruler. On the next day, Emperor Wu died and, on [the day] *wuchen* 戊辰, the Heir-apparent took the imperial throne and was presented in the [ancestral] Temple of [Emperor] Gao. The [new] Emperor's eldest [half]-sister, the Princess of Eyi, [who was given the income of] additional private estates and became the Elder Princess, served and cared for [the young Emperor] in the Inner Apartments [of the imperial palace] … In [the period] of Shiyuan, the first year… He [The Emperor] increased the fiefs of the King of

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the princess's request. Then the princess turned to the Lady Wang and the matchmaking was successful. Later the princess vilified Li Ji to the emperor and accused her practicing sorcery against other consorts. Gradually the emperor was not satisfied with Li Ji. (*Hanshu* 97. 3946). This literature is differed from the historical records that the Empress Chen and Emperor Wu got married after Emperor Wu became the Heir Apparent but not beforehand.

> Yan, [Liu Dan], and of the King of Guanglin, [Liu Xu], together with [that of] the Elder Princess of Eyi, each by thirteen thousand households… In [the period] Yuanfeng, the first year, in the spring, [because] the Elder Princess, [the Princess of Eyi], had served and cared for [the young Emperor] and had toiled and suffered, the private estate of the Elder Princess was again increased [by the addition of Lantian County]…In the ninth month, the Elder Princess of Eyi and the King of Yan, [Liu] Dan, who had plotted rebellion with the General of the Left, Shangguan Jie, [with] the son of [Shangguan] Jie, the General of Agile Cavalry, Shangguan An, and with the Grandee Secretary, Sang Hongyang, all suffered execution
> 武帝末，戾太子敗，燕王旦、廣陵王胥行驕嫚，後元二年二月，上疾病，遂立昭帝為太子，年八歲。以侍中奉車都尉霍光為大司馬大將軍，受遺詔輔少主。明日，武帝崩。戊辰，太子即皇帝位，謁高廟。帝姊鄂邑公主益湯沐邑，為長公主，共養省中”；“（始元元年）益封燕王、廣陵王及鄂邑長公主各萬三千戶”；“元鳳元年春，長公主共養勞苦，復以藍田益長公主湯沐邑”；“（元鳳元年）九月，鄂邑長公主、燕王旦與左將軍上官桀、桀子票騎將軍安、御史大夫桑弘羊皆謀反，伏誅”.[218]

The account above was the major historical record in relation to the Elder Princess of Eyi. From the passage, we learn that when the emperor acceded to the throne at the age of 8 in 87 BCE, the Elder Princess had moved into the Inner Apartments in order to take care of the young emperor. In the same year (87 BCE), when the Elder Princess started to care for the young emperor, she received additional private estates. In the first year of Shiyuan 始元 (86 BCE) and the first year of Yanfeng 元鳳 (80 BCE), the princess received a further bestowals of thirteen thousand households and endowed land in Lantian 藍田. Such frequent bestowals were rarely seen throughout the history of the Western Han and Eastern Han. The major reason for these numerous bestowals was probably because of the toil and suffering she went through while taking care of the child emperor. A conclusion can be drawn that the princess obtained the trust and favor of the emperor. Nevertheless, such a statement provides no reason to support the fact

[218] *Hanshu* 7. 214, 217, 225-226, trans by. Dubs 1944, 151-152, 154 and 164. Trans. modified from Dubs.

that the Elder Princess of Eyi plotted the scheme and attempted to overthrow the emperor in the same year she received more endowed land. It seems that the emperor needed her and they maintained a good relationship. Soon, an edict was announced to explain the plot of such treason:

> In the Winter, the tenth month, an imperial edict said, "The General of the Left, the Marquis of Anyang, [Shangguan] Jie, the General of Agile Calvary, the Marquis of Sang-lo,[Shangguan] An, and the Grandee Secretary [Sang] Hongyang, have all sought several times to assist in the government with evil and crooked [intentions]; when the General-in-chief, [Huo Guang], did not listen [to them], they cherished grudges and discontentment against him. They communicated with plotted with the King of Yan, [Liu Tan], who sent Shou Xizhang, Sun Zongzhi, and others to bribe and offer presents to the Elder Princess [of Eyi], to the chief Clerk of the General-in-chief, Gongsun Yi, and to others. They interchanged secret letters and plotted together to have the Elder Princess [of Eyi] hold a feast [at which] soldiers should be ambushed, [with the purpose of] murdering the General-in-chief, [Huo] Guang, and summoning and setting up the King of Yan, [Liu Tan], as the Son of Heaven. It was Treason and an inhuman crime"
> 左將軍安陽侯桀、票騎將軍桑樂侯安、御史大夫弘羊皆數以邪枉干輔政，大將軍不聽，而懷怨望，與燕王通謀，置驛往來相約結。燕王遣壽西長、孫縱之等賂遺長公主、丁外人、謁者杜延年、大將軍長史公孫遺等，交通私書，共謀令長公主置酒，伏兵殺大將軍光，徵立燕王為天子，大逆毋道.[219]

This edict aims to give a reasonable accounting of the incident. However, I still find little evidence to explain why the princess betrayed the child emperor she took care of for seven years. If the princess can be bribed with presents, there should be no reason for her to overthrow the child emperor who made three huge bestowals of land and households to her within seven years. No present is more precious than the trust and esteem of the emperor; if she maintained a good relationship with him she could easily get anything that she wanted.

Additionally, in the tomb of the Elder Princess of Eyi, some clay seals (*fengni* 封泥) and pottery with ovoid bodies (*jianxing hu* 繭形壺) were found. These clay seals were inscribed with

[219] *Ibid.,* 165. Trans. modified from Dubs.

official titles such as *daguan* 大官, *chengyin* 丞印, *baoyin* 胞印 and the bedchamber magistrate (*Neizhe ling* 内者令).[220] These were the official titles in the Privy Treasury, or Lesser Treasury *(Shaofu* 少府), the secretary of the treasury of the emperor's privy purse.[221] Furthermore, the Emperor allowed her to maintain a certain degree of dignity in death. The objects in the Princess of Eyi's tomb indicate that she had an elaborate funeral that matched her rank and identity. This can be taken to mean that the emperor forgave her for the action of treason after she passed away, and he gave her the appropriate funeral. Such a generous action by the Emperor Zhao not only indicates that he still respected and revered the Princess of Eyi though she made a fatal mistake, but also proves that they ultimately had a friendly relationship. Therefore, since the Elder Princess of Eyi did participate in plotting the machination, there must be something other than the bribery at work under the surface.

Such an argument, however, is not in keeping with how princesses are depicted in the historical records. There a princess is portrayed profit-oriented and only focused on receiving more benefits by pleasing the emperor. Also, the idea that princesses were often focused on the struggles of the harem but not the court was disproved in this case. If we acquire some information on the horizontal social network of Princess Eyi, maybe we could find a plausible and convincing explanation to the question of why the princess decided to stand up against her brother.

The case of the Great Elder Princess of Guantao's attempted murder was another case that remained a puzzle. After Wei Zifu pregnancy in 139 BCE, Empress Chen was very jealous

[220] Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiu suo 中国社会科学院考古研究所, 12 (2014).

[221] Swann 1950, 267.

of Wei Zifu. The Empress's mother, the Great Elder Princess of Guantao, trapped Wei Qing and planned to kill him. His friend, Gongsun Ao公孫敖, saved him from the perilous circumstances. After the Emperor Wu learned about the story, Wei Qing was given an appointment in the Jianzhang 建章 Palace.[222] Wudi's action of bestowing an official title on Wei Qing was a gesture of resistance—the resistance to his empress and to the Great Elder Princess of Guantao. According to the Statutes on Assault in the *Statutes and Ordinances of the Second Year (Ernian lülin*g 二年律令*)*, "Conspiring to maliciously kill or injure others, and a killing has not yet been carried out: tattoo [the criminal] and make [him or her] a wall builder or a grain-pounder." [223] Such regulation indicates that if someone intended to murder someone, he or she would receive the punishment of having their face tattooed or participating in physical labor. Nonetheless, the standard history does not mention if the Great Elder Princess of Guantao received any punishment or paid for any fines.[224] From the narratives in *Shiji,* one could find out that the Emperor was on Wei Qing's side and he even offered Wei Qing an official title as compensation. According to the image we have about princesses, they often tended to please and maintain a good relationship with the emperor in order to maintain the favors they had received. The Great Elder Princess of Guantao, however, challenged the emperor and broke the laws. Many questions can be raised, such as whether the Great Elder Princess of Guantao received any punishment for

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[222] Loewe, 2000, 574.

[223] Barbieri-Low and Yates, 2015, 398, [22/C300].

[224] According to the Han laws, punishments should be measured in terms of the defendant's peerage. According to *the Statues on the Composition of Judgments* (*Jülü* 具律), criminals would be sentenced in accordance to their ranks, gender, or special status. In this case, their punishment would be mitigated or aggravated. (*Ibid*., 496.) Also, one could choose to pay a fine to avoid physical punishment: For an official or an ordinary person who is guilty of a crime that matches [a sentence of] being caned, and who requests 20 to pay a fine of one liǎng (approx. 15.5 g) of gold in order to match the caning: permit it. 吏、民有罪當笞，謁罰金一兩以當笞者：許之。 (Ibid., 498-499).

committing such a crime. If not, why did Emperor Wu fail to punish the Great Elder Princess of Guantao? How powerful was the Great Elder Princess of Guantao that she dared to challenge the emperor by plotting to kill someone he cared about? Because the standard history does not give any information for the aftermath of the plot, we cannot know what made the princess capable of standing up to the emperor. These questions, made this case became a remaining puzzle.

The textual evidence on the princesses is scant; therefore, we cannot get a full picture of the princesses at the time of Han. And, we cannot explain these puzzles in relation to the princesses based on the textual evidence we have. Maybe, in the future, with more excavations and findings in the fields of archeology and anthropology, we might find more traces of how the princesses lived at the time. We will be able to get more clues to help us to understand their horizontal social networks and their life stories.

Afterword

My thesis represents a first exploration of the history of Han princesses. In fact, by my knowledge, this is the first such study undertaken in a Western language. Even though the available textual and archaeological evidence remains limited, more work can be done. For one, it would be important to study the princesses not in isolation, but in their interrelations with other groups in early imperial China. The husbands of the princesses (mostly nobles) would be one such group worth studying. Indeed, the central court seems to have used the marriages of princesses to cement or strengthen ties with other groups, be they at the court or outside of it (e.g., non-Chinese groups at the frontiers). It would also be fruitful to study the princesses of Western and Eastern Han in comparison with princesses from other periods of Chinese history and even cross-culturally. Such a study would reveal unique features of the princesses during Han times, when, in part because of "bathing towns" assigned to them, they had both economic independence, and a great deal of political clout as they were the main nodes in gendered, horizontal networks of power.

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