

Caixing Lun in Liu Shao's *Renwu Zhi* during the Wei-Jin Period

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Abstract: Liu Shao's *Renwu Zhi* is a classic work on the study of human talent in ancient China. Written during the tumultuous period of the end of the Eastern Han dynasty, Liu Shao recognized that the political problems of the time were rooted in issues related to human talent. Consequently, one of the primary purposes of his writing *Renwu Zhi* was to assist feudal dynasties in selecting and training talented individuals to address the political crisis. This paper explores Liu Shao's definition and characteristics of Caixing (talent and nature) in *Renwu Zhi*, which he accomplishes through the methods of Jiuzheng (nine criteria) and Baguan (eight observations), resulting in a systematic and elaborative classification of talented individuals. Moreover, the paper delves into the deeper meaning of Yingxiong (heroes). Through analysis of Liu Shao's ideas, this paper concludes that his definitions and training methods for talented individuals have practical significance and provide valuable insights for modern talent selection and training.

Keywords: Liu Shao; *Renwu Zhi*; temperament; talent

Introduction

The book *Renwu Zhi* consists of 12 chapters that offer a comprehensive analysis of the temperament, abilities, and classification of individuals. This paper focuses on the chapter titled "Caixing Lun" (On Nature and Talent) and examines how Liu Shao integrates Confucian concepts such as "Wuxing" (Five Elements) and "Wuchang" (Five Constant Virtues) into his analysis of human temperament. Specifically, this paper provides a detailed analysis of how different combinations and changes of the Five Elements, such as wood, metal, fire, earth, and water, form the different "temperaments" that give rise to the unique characteristics of individuals. For instance, Liu Shao posits that a person's blood and body are composed and determined by material elements such as Yuanqi (vital energy), Yin Yang, and Wuxing. He argues that Yuanqi generates a person's body through Wuxing, with different components of the body, such as bones, tendons, breath, muscles, and blood, being associated with different elements. Overall, this paper offers a clear and insightful analysis of how Liu Shao's "Caixing Lun" sheds light on the origins and expressions of human nature.

Liu Shao's talent classification system explicitly categorizes individuals into five levels, with "partial talents" considered the most flexible and useful. He further breaks down "partial talents" into 12 distinct categories. Additionally, he presents a standardized and systematic set of guidelines for talent selection and utilization, including the identification of talents suitable for government use and how to maximize their potential. The article provides a detailed listing and analysis of each of these levels.

Towards the end of the article, the author discusses the highest level of talent in Liu Shao's hierarchy—the "Ying Xiong" (hero)—and delves into the nuanced traits that constitute this type of personality. To be a "Ying Xiong" in Liu Shao's view, one must possess a combination of strategic foresight and acute perceptiveness, alongside exceptional martial arts abilities and unwavering courage and ambition. Only individuals who possess such a unique combination of skills can be regarded as talents at the highest level.

Methodology

This study provides a theoretical analysis and evaluation of Liu Shao's theory of talent in his work *Ren Wu Zhi*, taking into account its historical and cultural context. The article explores Liu's detailed analysis of the "nature" of individuals and the classification of talents, as well as his methods for observing and assessing them. The paper primarily uses a literature analysis approach, examining the original texts of *Ren Wu Zhi* and integrating contemporary research findings to construct its framework. The study systematically reviews relevant literature by searching electronic databases such as Google Scholar and China National Knowledge Infrastructure, as well as manually searching relevant books and journals in libraries. The article focuses on analyzing the "nature" of individuals in Liu's "Caixing Lun", talent classification, methods for observing talent, and the meaning of the term "Ying Xiong".

Findings and Discussion

1. The Historical Background of Liu Shao's Composition of *Renwu Zhi*

Renwu Zhi is a seminal work that played a key role in the transformation of academic thought from the Han Dynasty to the Wei and Jin Dynasties in China. It is also one of the most important theoretical works in Chinese history that systematically investigates the selection and utilization of talent. With the establishment of a comprehensive theoretical framework, it is considered the pinnacle of talent research. This period was marked by frequent changes of regime, foreign invasions, and transitions in the academic community, making it one of the most transformative periods in Chinese intellectual history (Tang, 2001). *Renwu Zhi* is a Chinese monograph that analyzes and critiques various figures. It was written during the reign of Emperor Ming of Cao Wei (227-239) by Liu Shao, also known as Kong Cai, a scholar and politician from Guangping Handan (now part of Handan city in Hebei Province) during the Three Kingdoms period. Liu Shao was erudite and well-versed in a variety of texts, and he served as a minister, intellectual, and statesman of Cao Wei. Liu Shao played a crucial role in the transition of Han studies to Wei-Jin Xuanxue, and his book *Renwuzhi* provided a theoretical basis and practical experience for the implementation and improvement of the Nine Ranks of Officials system during the Wei dynasty (Chen, 2020).

The author of *Renwu Zhi*, Liu Shao, spent his entire life serving three dynasties amidst the turmoil and witnessed various types of people. He attempted to understand the path to sagehood by analyzing people, which was not only Liu's pursuit but also a common theme among ancient Chinese literati. At the same time, during the Wei Dynasty, Emperor Wen of Wei, Cao Pi, accepted Chen Qun's suggestion to adopt the Nine Ranks of Officials system (During the Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties period, the system was an important system for selecting officials) for selecting talents. *Renwu Zhi* was written under the backdrop of this system, aiming to provide theoretical support and practical experience for the implementation and improvement of the Nine-rank system, and to assist rulers in maintaining political stability.

It also aimed to guide people on how to become talents and the values that should be considered in defining who is truly talented. For example, the literati of ancient China knew that "Zhi Ren" (zhì rén) is a term used by ancient Chinese literati to refer to individuals with exceptional intelligence and wisdom. It is often used to describe individuals who have both extensive knowledge and the ability to apply it effectively in their daily lives) was the standard for sages, but how to become knowledgeable about people has always been a challenge. This is because the temperament of individuals is constantly changing and difficult to grasp. However, Liu Shao believed that by observing people, one could understand the "unchanging" aspect of their temperament, which leads to a comprehension of their "nature", ultimately allowing one to gradually become a sage or identify the seed of a sage. Therefore, in *Renwu Zhi*, Liu Shao analyzes the quality and talent of people, their application, and the difficulties of assessing them. He attempts to understand the "unchanging" aspect of the changing individuals through a comprehensive understanding of these factors. After recognizing these "unchanging" qualities, he evaluates and summarizes the deeds and virtues of historical figures, hoping to cultivate people with both virtues and talents to contribute to governance. Through the characteristics of these "unchanging" qualities, he identifies various talents and provides a concise and effective method for selecting and employing talent that corresponds to an individual's temperament and official rank, providing a

unique set of operational processes and theories. This paper mainly analyzes and discusses how Liu Shao comprehends and selects talented individuals in *Renwu Zhi*.

2. Liu Shao's Analysis of Character "Nature" and Talent Classification

Renwu Zhi is a concise work consisting of three chapters and 12 sections, it is the author Liu Shao's summary and self-expression on people after experiencing social unrest and vicissitudes. The titles of these 12 articles are listed as follows: including Jiu Zheng, Ti Bie, Liu Ye, Cai Li, Cai Neng, Li Hai, Jie Shi, Ying Xiong, Ba Guan, Qi Miu, Xiao Nan and Shi Zheng (here are the titles of the 12 articles in *Renwu Zhi*). Each section is relatively short, ranging from a few hundred to over a thousand words, and mainly analyzes the classification and evaluation of people, including "Nine Signs" (examining the external characteristics of individuals from nine aspects to evaluate their talent and identify their differences) and eight observations (eight observation methods for identifying a person's talent and character) which clearly analyze the source of "nature" the talent categories of individuals, and how to use and select talent. It also presents Liu Shao's ideal personality. Liu Shao's concept of caixing refers to an innate, inherent ability possessed by individuals, which is independent of acquired skills or knowledge. In other words, caixing refers to the natural capacity or disposition that one is born with. Liu Shao argues that caixing is not just a natural endowment, but also a criterion for measuring human talents and moral qualities. He maintains that a person's caixing is a fundamental characteristic of their individuality, which cannot be altered or destroyed by external factors. Therefore, caixing is seen as a reflection of a person's nature, and is intimately connected to the concept of xing (human nature) in Confucian philosophy (Wu, 2021)

The Jiu Zheng (Nine Signs) section is the outline of *Renwu Zhi* and discusses three main issues. First, why do people have temperament. What is the most fundamental cause, and how can it be explored and discovered through specific methods or channels? Second, a person's temperament can be understood and analyzed by their behavior and speech. Third, through understanding a person's "nature" and their external behavior, applying the Ba Guan (eight observations) and other methods, one can distinguish between individuals' talents and select talent according to their temperament and official rank.

First of all, let's take a look at why humans have temperament and what is its most fundamental cause? Liu Shao, from a philosophical perspective, pointed out that "*Renwu zhi ben, chu hu xing qing*" (Liu,1955, Pinyin) (the essence of a person originates from temperament and although) "*Qing xing zhi li, shen wei er xuan*" (Liu,1955) (the principles of temperament are subtle and profound), they are still traceable. So where does human temperament come from specifically? Liu Shao gives the following answer: "*Fan you xue qi zhe, mo bu han yuan yi wei zhi, bing yinyang yi li xing, ti wuxing er zhu xing. Gou you xing zhi, you ke ji er qiu zhi*" (Liu,1955) (every living creature that has blood and qi contains the material of Yuan Yi, receives the Yin and Yang to establish its temperament, and conforms to the Five Elements to give shape to its form. If one has a physical form, it can be sought after. Here, it is evident that Liu Shao inherited the simple cosmogony of pre-Qin, believing that human blood and body are composed and determined by material elements such as Yuan Qi, Yin and Yang, and Five Elements. Yuan Qi generates the human form through the Five Elements (*Qi zai tiye, mugu, jinjin, huoqi, tuji, shuixue, wuwu zhi xiang ye*) (Liu,1955). In the body, bones are wood, tendons are metal, breath is fire, muscles are earth, blood is water, and these five things are the images of the Five Elements. The combination and changes of these five elements form different "temperaments" of individuals. If one understands a person's physical characteristics based on the Five Elements, then one can know his or her temperament. Later, he also mentioned that

"*Gu zhi er rou zhe,wei zhi hongyi;hongyi ye zhe,ren zhi zhi ye.Qi qing er lang zhe,wei zhi wen li;wen li ye zhe,li zhi ben ye.Ti duan er shi zhe,wei zhi zhen gu;zhen gu ye zhe,xin zhi ji ye.Jin jin er jing zhe,wei zhi yonggan;yonggan ye zhe,yi zhi jue ye.Se ping er chang zhe,wei zhi tong wei;tong wei ye zhe,zhi zhi yuan ye*" (Liu,1955). This means that those with straight and warm bones that are flexible, have a broad mind and are strong and enduring, have the potential for benevolence; those with clear and upright breath, who are brilliant and orderly, have the foundation for ritual. Those with a dignified and well-proportioned body, who are upright, steady and uphold principles, have the basis for trust. Those with strong and refined tendons, who are brave and decisive, have the standard of righteousness. Those with a harmonious and smooth skin tone, who are adept at understanding the reasons behind things and can see even the smallest details, have the origin of

intelligence. In conclusion, we can see that according to Liu Shao, a person must possess a solid physiological foundation in order to embody the qualities of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness. Conversely, one can also assess a person's physiological constitution to determine whether they possess these qualities. This is illustrated in the following Table 1 indicates that the relationship between physical constitution and the five elements theory.

Table 1. The relationship between physical constitution and the five elements theory

Body constitution	Qualities possessed	Five Constants
Straight and plump bones greatness	Strength of heart and mind humaneness	Ren
Even and smooth breathing orderliness	Elegance in speech and writing propriety	Li
Symmetrical and dignified physique honesty, stability	Adherence to principles faith	Xin
Strong and robust tendons and veins fearlessness, courage, decisiveness,	Resolution righteousness	Yi
Healthy and harmonious complexion insightful	Clear-minded wisdom	Zhi

These five qualities come from human nature and are unchangeable, thus they are called the Five Constants, and according to the different Constants, they are reflected as the Five Virtues: “*Wen zhi er rao yi, mu zhi de ye. Gang se er hongyi, jin zhi de ye. Yuan gong er li jing, shui zhi de ye. Kuan li er rou li, tu zhi de ye Jian chang er ming bian, huo zhe de ye*” (Liu,1955) (the general idea is that gentleness, honesty, amiability, and perseverance represent the virtues of wood, strength, solidity, generosity, and perseverance represent the virtues of metal, loyalty, honesty, respectfulness, and governance ability, as well as prudence and deference, represent the virtues of water, generosity, prudence, care, and gentle capability represent the virtues of Earth. Candor, straightness, simplicity, fluency, wisdom in reasoning, and skill in persuasion represent the virtues of Fire. Although human virtues and dispositions are endless, they are still based on the qualities of the Five Elements.) The correspondence between them is as follows- TABLE 2 which is the relationship between the five elements theory and physical constitution, five constants and five virtues.

Table 2. The relationship between the five elements theory and physical constitution, five constants and five virtues

Five Elements	Physical Attributes	Five Constants	Five Virtues
Wood	Bones	Benevolence	Warmth, straightness, obedience, perseverance
Metal	Tendons	Righteousness	Firmness, plenitude, generosity, perseverance
Fire	Qi (energy)	Propriety	Simplicity, clarity, directness, appropriateness
Earth	Flesh	Integrity	Tolerance, rigor, capacity, reliability
Water	Blood	Wisdom	Simplicity, modesty, malleability, adaptability

After establishing the correspondence between the Five Elements and the Five Constants and Five Virtues, Liu Shao explicitly stated that “*Fan ren zhi zhi liang, zhong he zui gui yi*” (Liu,1955) the highest quality of human nature is balance and harmony. That is, what kind of quality is the best? It is the quality of balance and harmony because “*Zhong he zhi zhi bi ping dan wu wei, gu neng tiao cheng wu cai, bian hua ying jie*” (Liu,1955) the quality of balance and harmony must be plain and tasteless, so it can be mixed with the Five Materials and adapt to changing circumstances. The quality of balance and harmony, because of its plainness and tastelessness, can reconcile yin and yang, harmonize the Five Elements, and respond to changes in a calm and peaceful manner. Through the theory that human beings possess the Yuan Yi of the Yin and

Yang and the Five Elements, Liu Shao connected the natural attributes of human beings with the social attributes of the Five Constants and Five Virtues. He ultimately realized the observation of characters by observing their behavior and actions to understand their true nature through the correspondence between external form and internal quality. In that era, Liu Shao's recognition that matter precedes spirit and that spirit relies on material form is worth acknowledging. In Jiuzheng he analyzed in detail the disparity and differences in people's fundamental properties, and combined the theory of Yin-Yang and the Five Elements with human physique to propose a relatively systematic theory of knowing the nature through the body.

Secondly, how can one understand and analyze a person's temperament based on their verbal and nonverbal behavior? Liu Shao explicitly proposed the Jiu Zheng (Nine Signs): "*Xing zhi suo jin, jiu zhi zhi zheng ye. Ping po zhi zhi zai yu shen, ming an zhi shi zai yu jing, yong que zhi shi zai yu jin, qiang ruo zhi zhi zai yu gu, zao jing zhi jue zai yu qi, can yi zhi qing zai yu se, shuai zheng zhi xing zai yu yi, tai du zhi dong zai yu rong, huan ji zhi zhuang zai yu yan*" (Liu, 1955). This passage means that virtue and evil are shown in one's demeanor; intelligence and foolishness are shown in the eyes; bravery and cowardice are shown in the tendons; strength and weakness are shown in the bones; restlessness and calmness are shown in the flow of Qi; melancholy and joy are shown in the facial expression; decline and propriety are shown in the bearing; attitude and bearing are shown in the countenance; and slowness and urgency are shown in the speech. The general idea is that we should discern the character of a person's inner nature by observing their external manifestations in nine aspects: spirit, essence, tendons, bones, *qi* (vital energy), complexion, manners, appearance, and speech. By analyzing a person's demeanor, brightness, courage, strength, restlessness, desolation, vitality, attitude, and pace, we can gain insight into their internal temperament. This is Liu Shao's advocated Jiu Zheng (Nine Signs), and he believes that by using these Jiu Zheng (Nine Signs), one can understand each individual's unique talents. This approach is more refined and comprehensive than the previous method of understanding a person's nature through the Five Elements, Five Virtues, and Five Constants. Furthermore, the Jiu Zheng (Nine Signs) can capture a person's appearance, bearing, spiritual state, and problem-solving approach intuitively, and by observing these details, we can understand and grasp a person's essence. Therefore, Liu Shao concluded that "*Shi gu guan ren cha zhi, bi xian cha qi ping dan, er hou qiu qi cong ming*" (Liu, 1955). This means that to understand a person's nature, one should first observe their everyday behavior, and then assess their intelligence level.

Finally, how did Liu Shao classify talent based on his understanding of a person's true nature and their external manifestations? Specifically, by Zhi and Wei, what is meant by Zhi and Wei? In the text, Jiu xing jie zhi (all Nine Signs reach the highest level) refers to a person possessing only one of the nine beautiful qualities, while Nine Reaches means possessing all nine beautiful qualities. If a person possesses all nine beautiful qualities, they are considered a sage. Wei means being contrary to one or more of the nine beautiful qualities. People can be classified into different talent levels based on their specific situation of Zhi or Wei according to the Jiu Zheng (Nine Signs). Liu Shao used this approach to divide people into five levels:

- i. The people of Jian De. The person who possesses both virtue and talent are called a "sage," who has a perfect personality and is the highest standard. "*Qi wei ren ye, zhi su ping dan, zhong rui wai lang, jin jin zhi gu, sheng qing se guai, yi zhengrong zhi, ze jiu zheng jie zhi, ze chui cui zhi de ye*" (Liu, 1955). In other words, if a person has all nine qualities, including a complete set of five virtues, as well as a peaceful and moderate temperament, they are a person who possesses both virtue and talent.
- ii. The people of Jian Cai. The person who possesses both talent and virtue are slightly different from the person who possesses both virtue and talent. Although they have both virtue and talent, they are not as perfect as the person who possesses both virtue and talent, and they may lack in some aspects.

The people of Pian Cai. The person who possesses talent but lacks in virtue is called a partial talent "*Piancai zhi xing, er zhi yi shang, ze zhi xiang fa er ling ming sheng yi*" (Liu, 1955). It means if they possess two or more different qualities, these different qualities will promote each other and give rise to beautiful names." For example, "*Shi gu gu zhi qi qing, ze xiu ming sheng yan. Qi qing li jin, ze lie ming sheng yan. Jin zhi jing li, ze neng ming sheng yan. Zhi zhi qiang fu, ze renming sheng yan*" (Liu, 1955) if a person has straight bones and clear air, they will have the quality of benevolence and propriety, and a beautiful name will arise.

If they have clear air and strong tendons, they will have the quality of righteousness and propriety, and a beautiful name of intelligence will arise. If they are strong and refined, wise and rational, they will have the qualities of righteousness and wisdom, and a beautiful name of courage will arise. If they are wise, upright, strong, and cautious, they will have the qualities of wisdom, benevolence, courage, and trustworthiness, and a beautiful name of a pillar of society will arise. Based on the different combinations of ZHI, Liu Shao detailed the analysis of partial talent in Ren Wu Zhi-Liu Ye Pian and classified them into 12 categories, which I have organized into a table below based on the original text. The advantages of partial talent and positions that can be handled is as follows in Table 3 which is positions that can be handled by individuals with 12 types of partial talents.

Table 3. Positions that can be handled by individuals with 12 types of partial talents

Category	Advantage	Suitable Position
Qing jie jia	High moral character	In charge of education
Fajia	Establishing laws, strengthening the country and enriching the people	In charge of criminal justice regulations
Shujia	Wise and skilled	In charge of planning and strategy planning
Guoti	Advantages of morality, of Imperial China law, and planning, Suitable for serving as the Any of the Officials	Sangong. The collective name for the three most prestigious official positions.
Qineng	Skilled in managing complex matters	Managing affairs of state
Zangpi	Serving as an advisor right from wrong	Distinguishing suitable
Jiliang	Skilled in craftsmanship	Minister of works
Zhiyi	Capable of understanding and adapting to change	An assistant to the minister of works
Wenzhang	Skilled in writing	Historian composing texts
Ruxue	Able to pass down of Education teachings of the sages and benefit the people	Minister of education teachings
Koubian	Quick-witted and responsive	Envoy or ambassador
Xiongjie	Brave and talented, outstanding strategic abilities.	General

Among the twelve types of individuals mentioned above, Liu Shao generally admires the people of Guoti, believing that such individuals are “*Neng yan neng xing, gu wei zhong cai zhijuan*” (Liu,1955) eloquent and capable, and therefore among the most talented.” They are fit for positions such as prime minister, where they can assist the emperor.

- i. The fourth type of person is the imitator, who appears to possess one of the nine qualifications but lacks its essential qualities. Liu Shao refers to this type as relying on appearances. He believes that such individuals are deceitful and lacking in virtue.
- ii. The fifth type is the mixed individual who is inconsistent and unpredictable. Liu Shao calls them neither here nor their individuals, as they are neither wholly virtuous nor wholly talented.

Liu Shao's main argument is that a person who possesses both moral character and talent can be considered as having the qualities of a sage, because the combination of these two qualities is necessary to become a sage. According to Liu Shao, those who are similar and lack distinctive qualities are considered to be of the lowest rank, and not worthy of much discussion. Conversely, individuals who possess multiple talents or excel in a particular area are deemed to be of the middle rank, which is the main point of Liu Shao's argument. In discussing the selection of talent based on their comprehensive and specialized abilities, Liu Shao believed that “*Liang neng shou guan, bu ke bu shen*” (Liu,1955) appointing officials according to their abilities must be carefully considered. Here, considered refers to the careful evaluation of a person's strengths and abilities when awarding an appropriate official position based on their abilities. If a person's strengths and

abilities are not recognized when appointing them, it could result in wasted talent. Therefore, considered is the key to the rational use of talent. It is essential to personally examine and evaluate individuals, but when doing so, the examiner must be mindful of subjectivity and partiality, as people's interests and strengths are different. Even if the examiner conducts a personal assessment, it is still challenging to remain unbiased. For instance, the examiner may be inclined to favor people who share similar interests and personalities while suppressing and rejecting those who have different interests and strengths.

Therefore, Liu Shao cautioned against the tendency to judge others based on one's own biases and preferences. Additionally, examiners must avoid being misled by superficial appearances and deceitful facades and should not believe in what they hear or see. Liu Shao pointed out that there are exceptionally delicate people who contain inner essence without outward adornment, and exceptionally hollow people who have splendid words and exquisite appearance but are inwardly false and contrary. If the examiner is beguiled by superficial appearances and falls prey to false impressions, it may lead to the selection of superficial talent instead of genuine talent, promoting the mediocre and demoting the talented. *Liu Shao believed that observing a person's moral character was the key to selecting talent* (Chen, 2018). Beyond these two aspects, Liu Shao also believed that when selecting talent, one should not rely on a person's wealth or social status. Instead, talent should be the sole criterion for selection, and opportunities for talented individuals should be widely available. After examining the specific talents of individuals, the goal should be to make the most of their abilities, enabling them to perform to their fullest potential and allowing their talents to be utilized in suitable positions.

3. Liu Shao's Analysis and View on Ying Xiong

Mr. Tang Yong believes in *Reading Renwu Zhi* that one of Liu Shao's characteristic thoughts is when creating great enterprises, heroes are valued, and when achieving peace and prosperity, sages are relied upon (Tang, 1983). To further explore the connotation of talents, Liu Shao specifically wrote the article Ying Xiong in his work *Renwu Zhi*, which thoroughly analyzed the connotative attributes of the noun. He divided the word "hero" into two parts and put forward unique insights. He said: "Those who are outstanding in mountains are called ying and those who are the leaders of the animals are called xiong". Therefore, people who are outstanding in literature and martial arts can be named after Ying Xiong (heroes). Those who are intelligent and outstanding are called ying, while those who are brave and have exceptional military skills are called xiong. This is the essential difference between ying and xiong in naming. He believed that anyone possessing the qualities of ying or xiong can be called talented. In his view, those who possess the quality of ying are intelligent and able to plan, wise and able to seize opportunities, and brave and able to make decisions. Those who possess the quality of xiong are having extraordinary physical strength, courageous to take action, and wise enough to make judgments.

However, those who are intelligent are divided into ying but without the courage of xiong, their proposals are difficult to implement. Similarly, those who are brave are divided into xiong, but without the wisdom of ying, they cannot achieve great things. Therefore, intelligence and courage must be combined to make ying capable of intelligent planning, wise judgment, and brave decision-making and xiong capable of extraordinary physical strength, courage to take action, and wisdom to make judgments. Otherwise, it may either be just talk and no action, or bravery without strategy, just an ordinary warrior. To illustrate the point, he compared the similarities and differences between Zhang Liang and Han Xin. Zhang Liang was more intelligent while Han Xin had more courage. Both had different titles of Ying Xiong, but they were both excellent talents who could shoulder the responsibility of a courtier. He believed that all the wise monarchs who could create a dynasty and achieve great feats in history possessed both the ying and xiong qualities. They were able to use both the ying and xiong talents and the monarchs who could achieve great things had more of the ying qualities. If there were less ying, qualities, the wise would leave. Xiang Yu was unparalleled in physical strength, wise enough to adopt change, but he could not listen to unusual advice, resulting in his defeat at Gaixia and suicide at Wujiang. Liu Bang, on the other hand, had more of the ying qualities. Therefore, many heroes submitted to him, and talented people returned to him, and he could use both. This enabled him to swallow Qin, destroy Chu, and have the world under his control. Therefore, in Liu Shao's view, as a higher level of talent, one must have both ying and xiong talents. Not only should one be intelligent, wise, courageous,

and strong, but also able to plan intelligently, wise to seize opportunities, courageous to take action, with extraordinary physical strength, one should be farsighted, with sharp vision, able to see the changes in things and adapt accordingly, while at the same time being able to possess great martial arts skills, courage, and magnanimity, and able to seize opportunities decisively. Liu Shao's view of heroism emphasizes that heroes should possess noble morals and a lofty spirit, rather than relying solely on martial arts or power to gain glory. He believes that heroes' images not only need outstanding achievements in history, but also need to demonstrate outstanding performance in morality and personality. In Liu Shao's view, heroism is not only a matter of external performance, but also a matter of inner nature. He believes that the heroic nature is the innate quality of a person, and it is not something that can be obtained through training or education. According to Liu Shao, the heroic nature is closely related to a person's innate moral character and spiritual quality. Only those who possess noble morals and lofty spirit can truly become heroes (Liu, 2019)

4. The Historical Significance of *Renwu Zhi*

In summary, Liu Shao wrote *Renwu Zhi* with the primary purpose of instructing feudal rulers on how to recognize talent and seek advice from capable individuals. He believed that the measure of a person's talent was based on their virtue and clearly outlined several criteria for identifying different types of talents. He emphasized the need to judge individuals based on their inner qualities, rather than being swayed by their external appearance or power and wealth. In Liu Shao's *Renwuzhi*, *caixing* is seen as a fundamental quality of human beings and is closely related to an individual's moral and intellectual qualities. According to Liu Shao, the standard for evaluating *caixing* is not based on one's social status, wealth, or family background, but on one's innate abilities and virtues. He believes that a person's *caixing* should be evaluated based on their ability to cultivate their moral character, to act according to the principles of benevolence, righteousness, and propriety, and to fulfill their social responsibilities. Thus, Liu Shao's evaluation criteria for *caixing* is based on a combination of innate talent and acquired moral cultivation (Liu, 2021). This was undoubtedly significant in the social context of the time. *Renwu Zhi* is one of the representative works of ancient Chinese biographical historiography and holds important values for the study of traditional Chinese culture and history. Liu Shao's selection of talents for *Renwu Zhi* holds significance in several ways.

Firstly, it provides a reference for the selection of officials. Through evaluating and selecting historical figures, Liu Shao provided a standard and method for assessing talent, which could be used as a basis for officials' selection. In ancient feudal society, there was no systematic and comprehensive talent selection system. However, the selection of officials was vital, and *Renwu Zhi* offered a new approach and method for this process, having significant historical importance. Secondly, it helped maintain social stability. In ancient society, social stability was crucial, and selecting suitable officials was an important means of maintaining it. The criteria and methods provided by *Renwu Zhi* helped officials select talented individuals with good moral character and abilities. This was advantageous in reducing corrupt practices, improving political stability, and promoting long-term social development. Thirdly, it contributed to the cultivation of a new generation of leaders. Liu Shao praised individuals in *Renwu Zhi* who possessed noble moral qualities and outstanding abilities. The promotion of such standards and methods could help cultivate a new generation of leaders, which would be beneficial for the country's long-term development.

Conclusion

Renwu Zhi as a reference standard and method for the selection of officials holds significant historical significance and practical value. Liu Shao's talent theory not only provided a new approach for selecting talents, but also had an important historical significance in promoting social mobility and cultivating the spirit of self-improvement in ancient China (Wang, 2016). It provides an important reference and basis for the study of traditional Chinese culture and history while offering a new perspective and approach to understanding ancient officials' selection. Furthermore, it elevates our recognition of human nature itself and prompts a perpetual inquiry into the very essence of humanity. This guidance leads individuals towards excavating their own potential and shaping their self-identity, facilitating an accurate and comprehensive perception of themselves. In doing so, it advances the ancient theories of character development into the realm of ontological

construction. As Li Zehou eloquently stated, self-awareness has become the unique spirit of Wei-Jin thought, and the ontological construction of personality is its most notable achievement (Li, 1999).

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