

EREMITISM IN CHINA TO 220 A.D.

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June 1984

A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

of The Australian National University



CHAPTER THREE

THE LATER HAN

1. General Developments

In the preceding chapter I have shown that most of the varieties of eremitism which had arisen during the Warring States period continued to thrive in the socially and politically transformed world of the Han empire. Moreover, in later part of the Former Han the effects of the new order - especially of the imperial sponsorship of Confucianism and the operation of the recommendatory system for official appointments - began to manifest themselves in what is best regarded as a new sort of eremitism, which I have called exemplary eremitism. Exemplary eremitism was one of the ideals of personal conduct of the scholarly ethos which developed in the course of the Former Han. It continued to evolve in the Later Han and also the Wei-Jin period that followed. This ethos was basically Confucian, although Daoist and even Legalist influences sometimes became quite strong, and led to other forms of exemplary behaviour such as perfect filiality, formally correct mourning, yielding aristocratic rank, and honouring learned, virtuous men as teachers. Such eremitism was less a form of protest against political and social iniquity than an elaborate demonstration of lofty personal ideals designed to attract the world's attention.

The usurper Wang Mang was deeply influenced by the scholarly ethos that produced this sort of eremitism. Although the idea that a ruler can demonstrate his right to the throne by attracting worthy men to his court was an ancient one, and had been used by Han Gaozu among others, it was Wang Mang who exploited it to the full in his campaign

to win the throne through civil rather than military power. He did his utmost to establish his political legitimacy by winning virtuous hermits to his side with elaborate rites and ceremonial honours. Nevertheless, he failed to convince all the educated elite. The scholarly ethos which permeated much of his conduct and many of his reformist ideas also produced a strong protest against his usurpation, and many scholars withdrew into seclusion as a result. In orderly times the eremitism engendered by the scholarly ethos may have contained an element of affectation, but in times of crisis it literally became deadly in earnest.

The history of eremitism in the Later Han period - which was essentially two hundred years of proliferation and diffusion of eremitic ideals and practices - can be understood largely in terms of the continuing operation of the above mentioned factors. Emperor Guangwu, like the leaders he defeated in the battle for control of China, attached great importance to winning virtuous men to his side. So did the rulers who came after him - especially Emperors Ming (r.58-75) and Zhang ^章 (r.76-88). The imperial honours lavished on worthy men in seclusion enhanced their social standing and influence, and this further strengthened the role of eremitic ideals in the scholarly culture, which was becoming ever more elaborate and refined. Particularly in the second half of the Later Han period, exemplary eremitism was fashionable, and the compelling power of fashion combined with other factors to make eremitism at times almost obligatory. As the dynasty slumped further and further into corruption and chaos, socio-political circumstances provided ample grounds both for those who avoided involvement in public affairs on moral grounds and those who did so to stay out of danger.

2. Hermits and the Power Struggle After Wang Mang's Fall

The men who fought over the right to replace Wang Mang as ruler of the empire had obviously learned much from him concerning the potency of ideologically correct actions for winning the political support of the educated elite. Thus the Gengshi (23-25 A.D.) emperor Liu Xuan was aware of the need to attract worthy and capable men to his cause, both for the obvious reason of being able to employ their talents and the more subtle purpose of legitimising his claim to the throne. According to Ban Gu he imperially summoned Cao Jing, appointing him Prime Minister and enfeoffing him as marquis, in order 'to show he could attract worthy men and to restrain bandits and robbers'.¹

Liu Xuan's Commander-in-Chief Wei Ao 隗囂 was even more aware of the need to win over the educated elite. It was his reputation as a scholar which won him support when he was first put in command of Liu Xuan's forces. While in that position he summoned the disengaged scholar Fang Wang 方望 with gifts, and by following his advice was able to further establish his legitimacy in the eyes of the people by such strategies as proclaiming himself to be a loyal subject of Han and erecting a temple to Han Gaozu. When Wei Ao fell out with Liu Xuan in 24 A.D., and Liu Xuan was destroyed by power of the Red Eyebrows and Guangwu, all the old men and scholar officials of the Sanfu 三輔 region rushed to Wei Ao's side. 'Always having respected and loved scholars', he appointed many distinguished men to his staff.² He was described to Gongsun Shu 公孫述 as someone who regarded himself as a latter day King Wen, who 'honoured classical exegetists [zhangju 章句] and made them his teachers, retained disengaged scholars and made them his friends'.³ In the long run,

however, he could not retain the support of these men, and with his death in 33 A.D. his family failed to retain the sphere of influence he had established.

Gongsun Shu, the final obstacle to Guangwu's control of the West, was far less sophisticated than Wei Ao in his dealings with the educated elite, yet in the beginning he still managed to win considerable support. When he declared himself King of Shu in 24 A.D., scholars came to him from every direction in the hope that he would be able to put an end to the disorder of the times.⁴ When he was urged to assume the title of emperor (which he did the following year, naming his dynasty the Cheng 成, after his capital Chengdu 成都), one of the arguments used was that scholars of ambition were bereft and bewildered, and that by assuming the throne he would give them somewhere to turn. As 'emperor', he did in fact attract widespread support from the elite.⁵

Gongsun Shu may have been aware that he needed talented men on his side, but he was not as particular as either Wang Mang or Wei Ao about the means that got them there. How different his attitude towards virtuous hermits was is clearly shown by the case of Li Ye 李業, a scholar who in the Yuanshi 元始 period (1-5 A.D.) had been recommended as 'illuminating the classics' and appointed Palace Gentleman. When Wang Mang took the throne Li Ye resigned on grounds of illness, shut his gate and ignored the commands of the provincial and commandery authorities to go to the capital. Forced by the Grand Administrator to respond to a summons, Li Ye eventually did so by having himself carried there on a litter. Wang Mang did eventually appoint him to a position, but on grounds of illness he did not take up the post, going into hiding in the mountains instead. When Gongsun

Shu gained control of the western region, he too summoned Li Ye, and, when after several years he had not come, sent someone to present him with the choice of either coming to court and receiving a distinguished position or else taking poison. Li Ye chose the latter course.⁶ Very similar was the case of Wang Hao 王皓 and Wang Jia 王嘉. Both resigned their positions when Wang Mang took the throne, refused to respond to Gongsun Shu's summons, and committed suicide rather than give in to coercion.⁷

However, not all those who refused to serve Gongsun Shu came to a violent end. Qiao Xuan 譙玄 had been recommended to the court in 15 B.C., when a solar eclipse⁸ prompted an edict asking provincial and commandery administrations to each recommend one man who was 'honest and unaffected', 'self-effacing and deferential', or had shown 'exemplary conduct'. When Wang Mang took the throne he changed his name, returned home and went into seclusion. Having proclaimed himself emperor, Gongsun Shu repeatedly invited him with gifts to take office, and when he became angry at being refused presented Qiao Xuan too with the option of submitting or putting an end to himself. Luckily for Qiao Xuan, the Grand Administrator was sympathetic, and when Xuan's son pleaded to redeem his father for one million cash, intervened on his behalf. Qiao Xuan was pardoned and subsequently hid himself away in the country. He died in 35 A.D., the year before Guangwu gained control of Shu.⁹

By means of various ruses others were also able to survive. Ren Yong 任永 and Feng Xin 馮信 both pretended to be blind when summoned by Gongsun Shu,¹⁰ while Fei Yi 費貽 feigned madness. Fei Yi lived in the mountain forests for more than 10 years and survived to serve Guangwu; Ren Yong and Feng Xin had already died of

illness before the troubles ended.¹¹

Yü Ying-shih has pointed out the big contrast between Gongsun Shu's harsh treatment of hermits and Guangwu's tolerant and sympathetic attitude towards them, suggesting quite correctly that this difference provides insight into the reasons why Gongsun Shu was ultimately destroyed and Guangwu triumphed.¹² Guangwu, a man of scholarly background himself and hence sensitive to the values and attitudes of scholars, went to some lengths to win scholars to his side. It was Guangwu's ability to gain the support of the educated elite (and the major local powers, the great clans, from which the majority of scholars came) which was one of the most important factors behind his eventual success. It is quite clear, as Yü Ying-shih shows, that courting the educated elite was a conscious policy on Guangwu's part (just as it had been with Wang Mang). According to Yuan Hong's Hou Han ji, Guangwu made the observation: 'Now the empire is fragmented and in disorder, and armed opponents have sprung up everywhere. Those who obtain scholars will prosper, those who lose scholars will perish'.¹³ After overthrowing Gongsun Shu and gaining control of Shu, Guangwu's general Wu Han 吳漢 (d.44 A.D.) 'sought out hermits and bestowed posthumous honours on the loyal and righteous' in the emperor's name. Commemorative inscriptions were erected where the martyrs Wang Hao, Wang Jia and Li Ye had lived, while a special imperial summons was extended to those who, like Fei Yi, Ren Yong, and Feng Xin, had remained in seclusion while Gongsun Shu was in power.¹⁴ Such actions of public affirmation of the ideals of the educated elite were crucial in obtaining its support in newly conquered territory.

In the conclusion to his article on political power at the time of the restoration of the Han, Yü Ying-shih quotes the Later Han scholar Fu Gan 傅幹, who identifies as one of four reasons for Guangwu's rise to power his 'requiting of fidelity and fondness of scholars'.¹⁵ I believe this conclusion has been convincingly established, both by Yu and by the long list of virtuous and talented men Guangwu is known to have attempted - with only partial success - to draw into his service. These were listed in the notes to the previous chapter,¹⁶ so there is no need to discuss them further here. What I shall do now is to examine in detail Emperor Guangwu's favourable attitude towards hermits and the way that attitude was maintained by Emperors Ming and Zhang.

3. The Attitudes of Emperors Guangwu, Ming and Zhang

Like Wang Mang before him, Emperor Guangwu was careful as far as possible to make his conduct match the ideals of the scholarly elite. The respect he showed hermits and the liberties he allowed them reflect his desire to win capable and upright men into his service; they also show his sensitivity to the need to establish the legitimacy of his claim to the throne in the eyes of the elite. Furthermore, it appears that he felt a genuine sympathy and admiration for such men. At least one of his close friends was a hermit.¹⁷ This attitude towards eremitism on the part of the founder of the dynasty exercised considerable influence upon his successors, who in this as in other things tried to remain true to what he bequeathed.

In his chapter on men in retirement (yimin) in the Hou Han shu, Fan Ye says of the founder of the Later Han:

Emperor Guangwu received recluses [youren 幽人] informally, and if those he sought did not come to him he would (send envoys to) visit them in their caves, summoning

them with the honour of (ceremonial gifts of) fine silk and a carriage (with wheels padded) with rushes.... Having a host of methods and pursuing them all, his will set on (obtaining) scholars and his heart on benevolence - this is certainly what is meant by "raise up men in retirement and all the hearts of the empire will turn to you".¹⁸

Hence Fan Ye saw the political utility of Guangwu's respectful treatment of hermits quite clearly. Moreover, if his account is reliable, Guangwu's efforts to win hermits to his cause began long before his hold over the empire was assured. As early as the Gengshi period he tried to employ 'two old men of Yewang 野王二老', but was rebuffed.¹⁹

The biographies of some of the hermits who lived during Guangwu's reign contain interesting snippets of information about the emperor's attitude towards them. One such hermit was Zhou Dang 周黨, who was famous for his lofty conduct well before Guangwu won the empire.²⁰ He was duly summoned and appointed Gentleman Consultant 議郎, but resigned on grounds of illness and went to live in seclusion. He was again summoned, along with other distinguished men, and when it proved impossible to avoid going, went along dressed as a peasant with his hair tied back with haystalks. When the time came for his audience with the emperor he hid and refused to present himself, saying he wanted to remain true to his ideals. Guangwu gave his consent. When a court scholar memorialised the throne to complain of Zhou Dang's disrespect and ingratitude, calling him a mere charlatan in search of a reputation, Guangwu issued an edict saying:

Since antiquity, brilliant kings and sagely rulers have inevitably had scholars who would not serve as retainers. Boyi and Shuqi would not eat the grain of Zhou; Zhou Dang of Taiyuan 太原 would not accept the emolument We offered. In this each of them had their ideal. (Zhou Dang) shall be presented with forty bolts of silk.²¹

Guangwu was putting Zhou Dang in an exalted category, but he was doing

no less for himself. The rulers of the Zhou period who were famous for their patronage of scholars who cast themselves in the role of teacher or friend rather than subject, were clearly on Guangwu's mind. His use of the rather anachronistic expression 'scholars who would not serve as retainers 不賓之士' confirms this.

A similar point emerges from the account concerning Wang Ba 王霸, who, like Zhou Dang, was summoned to court on account of his lofty conduct. When he came into the presence of the Master of Writing 尚書, Wang Ba paid his respects by announcing his name, but did not refer to himself as 'His Majesty's subject 臣'. When asked the reason, he replied, paraphrasing the Book of Rites: 'The Son of Heaven has those who are not his subjects, the feudal lords have those who are not their friends'. But the reply did not get him into trouble. Quite the contrary, the Minister over the Masses 司徒, Hou Ba 侯霸, wanted to yield his position to him, and when Wang Ba returned to his humble life in seclusion the court continued to summon him repeatedly.²²

Most revealing of all the anecdotes concerning Emperor Guangwu's attitude towards hermits, however, is the case of Yan Guang 嚴光 (c.38 B.C.-41 A.D.), who not only had a great reputation for lofty conduct but was also an old friend of the emperor himself, having studied with him at the Imperial Academy.²³ When Guangwu took the throne, Yan Guang changed his name and went into hiding. So eager was Guangwu to have this worthy man beside him that he ordered the empire be searched for him. Eventually he was found and brought to the capital, and the emperor went in person to where he was staying. Yan Guang did not get up from where he was lying when the emperor came in, and the emperor went over to him, patted him on the belly, and

said, "Ah Ziling 子陵, couldn't you help me to do things according to principles?" To this Yan Guang replied: 'In times past when Yao made demands on his virtue, Chaofu washed out his ears. A scholar is bound to have ideals, so why come here to oppress me?' It is also recorded that once Yan Guang was invited to the palace to chat with the emperor about old times. It was an informal occasion, with the two men reclining beside each other, so Yan Guang made himself comfortable by resting his feet on the emperor's belly. The next day the Grand Historian (hence also the Court Astronomer) memorialised the throne to report that a strange star was encroaching severely on the imperial position. At this the emperor laughed, saying, 'It was my old friend Yan Ziling reclining together with me, that's all'.²⁴

I see no reason to disbelieve this account. (Even the report of the strange star makes good sense if we interpret it as a ploy by an outraged official speaking out against what he regarded as gross impropriety). Emperor Guangwu's friendship with Yan Guang underlines the fact that this emperor and his successors belonged very much to a milieu in which eremitic ideas flourished. Someone with a scholarly background like Guangwu would have been perfectly well acquainted with all the rationales for eremitism, and we would not expect him to change his ideas or his friends overnight on becoming emperor. Moreover, as has already been pointed out, there was considerable political advantage to be gained from a tolerant attitude towards hermits, and Guangwu was not blind to this. Whether it was out of friendship, admiration for his virtue, or for political gain, Guangwu continued to treat Yan Guang with the greatest respect until his death, despite the fact that he chose a simple farming life in preference to the distinguished position offered to him at court.²⁵

A further example of Emperor Guangwu's respect for and tolerant attitude towards hermits is to be found in one of the few stories concerning hermits and Emperor Ming. This concerns Xun Ren 荀恂 (d.c.59 A.D.),²⁶ who, having divided among his relatives the fortune he inherited at his father's death, lived in poverty in the wilderness during the reigns of Wang Mang and Guangwu. In the first year of Emperor Ming's reign (58 A.D.), however, he responded to a summons from King Cang of Dongping 東平蒼王, who had just been appointed General of Cavalry. Later, when they met at court, Emperor Ming asked Xun Ren playfully why he had responded to King Cang's summons after having refused Emperor Guangwu. Xun Ren replied: 'The former emperor kept to virtue to treat his underlings with kindness, therefore it was possible for me not to come. The General of Cavalry keeps to the law to make sure his underlings [obey], therefore not to go I did not dare'.²⁷

The anecdotes given above concern some of the most famous hermits of the time. There were, however, numerous others, some of whom have already been mentioned in connection with their refusal to serve both Wang Mang and Guangwu: at least twenty-nine men in all are referred to as having refused to take office in Guangwu's reign.²⁸ On the other hand, there is little mention of hermits during the reign of Emperor Ming, though some of the most striking figures from the previous reign lived throughout his reign and even later - Liang Hong 梁鴻 and Chunyu Hong 淳于洪 are the obvious examples. But this does not necessarily mean that there were no other hermits at that time. There is much less information available concerning all aspects of Emperor Ming's reign than that of Guangwu, not just hermits. Wang Fu 王扶 was one hermit greatly admired by Emperor Ming and summoned to court at the beginning of his reign; others from

the same period were Zhao Xiao 趙孝 and Wang Lin 王琳.²⁹ One indication that hermits continued to thrive at this time comes from Fan Ye's comments concerning a scholar called Liu Yi 劉毅. The image of Emperor Ming preserved in the histories is that of a great patron of learning who eagerly sought out talented and virtuous men. But that was certainly not the opinion of Liu Yi. According to Fan Ye, Liu Yi believed that Emperor Ming 'was not in earnest about seeking worthy men [and therefore] many scholars lived in seclusion', so he wrote a piece called 'Qi ji 七激' criticising this state of affairs.³⁰ Whether or not scholars remained in seclusion as a result of Emperor Ming's indifference to worthy men is debatable, but Liu Yi clearly believed that many of his contemporaries were opting for an eremitic life.

Perhaps Emperor Ming's attitude towards hermits was not all that it might have been, but there is no doubt that Emperor Zhang approached this matter seriously. His attitude is revealed in an edict issued in the fifth year of his reign (80 A.D.) calling for the recommendation of men who could speak frankly and remonstrate candidly. It ended with the direction: 'Men of the cliffs and caves should be given priority; do not select [those who are mere] empty show'.³¹ As examples of Emperor Zhang's respectful treatment of such men, Fan Ye mentions Zheng Jun 鄭均 and Gao Feng 高鳳.³²

Zheng Jun was one of the hermits Emperor Zhang succeeded in persuading to accept office: after being specially summoned with an easy carriage in 81, he was appointed Master of Writing, but retired not long after on grounds of illness. In 84 the administrations of the region where he lived were commanded to present him annually with meat and wine, and the following year the emperor did him the honour

of calling on him in person when passing through the district, granting him a Master of Writing's salary for the rest of his life (Zheng Jun died during the Yongyuan 永元 period [89-104]).³³ Other hermits of renown who took office under Emperor Zhang were Chunyu Hong (d.80), Sima Jun 司馬均 and Ru Yu 汝郢.³⁴

Nevertheless, not all hermits in Emperor Zhang's time proved to be so tractable. One of those who did not was Gao Feng. A man who became famous for his single-minded concentration on study as well as for his perfect sense of rightness and his acceptance of poverty and low status (his concentration was such that he was oblivious of heavy rain washing away the wheat his wife had laid out to dry in the courtyard and asked him to mind), Gao Feng was prepared to deviate from the truth in order to avoid having to take office. To make himself ineligible for official service he said that members of his family had been shamans, and further claimed that he had been involved in a legal squabble over land with a widow. When recommended for his frank speech in the Jianchu 建初 period (76-83) he pleaded illness, gave away his possessions and fled into seclusion.³⁵

An even more extreme character was Tai Tong 臺佟, who lived in seclusion in the mountains in a hole he had dug and gathered herbs to keep himself alive. He did not respond when summoned by the provincial authorities during the Jianchu period. When passing through the district on official business, the Circuit Inspector 刺史 went in person to see him, bearing gifts appropriate to a teacher. To the Inspector's comments concerning the extreme hardship in which he lived Tai Tong replied that this was nothing compared to burdens and dangers posed by His Excellency's official duties. After this he disappeared and was never seen again.³⁶

While Emperor Zhang was undoubtedly well disposed to hermits generally, there were limits to what he was prepared to tolerate from such men. What is more, those limits appear to have been set in terms of whether or not toleration was politically advantageous. This is evident from his response to Liang Hong, a man in whom utter disregard for worldly things led to condemnation of a political system which enslaved the common people to provide luxury for those at the top. When a poem by Liang Hong voicing these sentiments was brought to Emperor Zhang's attention (this was only a few months after the emperor had directed that priority be given to hermits in recommendations for office) he organised a search for Liang Hong to have him taken into custody and silenced. But Liang Hong had changed his name and gone into hiding.³⁷ (This incident is discussed in detail in section 9 below).

On the basis of the evidence presented in this section, the only possible conclusion is that the first three emperors of the Later Han were well disposed towards hermits, that they took very seriously their imperial duty of winning worthy men to court, understood the politically important role hermits could play in legitimising their claim to the throne, and appreciated the fact that the public estimation of their virtue rose even further if they respected the wishes of those who refused to serve rather than attempting to coerce them. As far as the hermits themselves are concerned, we must resist the temptation to lump them all together without considering the variety of values and ideals they espoused. Some were extremists who shunned society altogether; some dabbled in the occult arts, medicine, or the secrets of immortality; others chose to live inconspicuously among the common people, pursuing ordinary trades or farming for a living; while others again set out to transform customs

through the influence of their conspicuously virtuous conduct.

It would appear that once the shockwaves of the Wang Mang period had died away there was little reason for the Confucian eremitism of protest against improper or corrupt rule.³⁸ Nevertheless many of the hermits of the early part of the dynasty were Confucian scholars, and it is fairly clear that their behaviour represents a continuation of the Confucian exemplary eremitism which had developed in the last part of the Former Han. As we have seen, a considerable number had reputations for exemplary conduct and were eventually attracted to the court when treated with highest ceremonial honours. As was the case with the exemplary hermits of later part of the Former Han, the eremitism of these men is to be understood in terms of the loftiness of their ideals and their quest for perfection in conduct rather than in terms of social or political protest. This trend, as well as the tendency of the court to honour such men, was to grow still further in the reigns of the later emperors.

4. The Middle Reigns: A Turning Point?

Describing what happened after the reign of Emperor Zhang, Fan Ye says:

... imperial virtue declined and depravity filled the court. Disengaged scholars remained firm in their resolve and considered it shameful to rank among the high officials, or, if they did go (to court), zealously fought against (evil) without considering (anything else), and in their conduct many of them strayed from the mean.³⁹

In other words, Fan Ye believed that the corruption of the times provoked extreme responses of a sort which in ideal circumstances might be considered reprehensible, but in terms of the actual conditions of the time are all too understandable. It is the conduct of such men, he says, that he records in juan 83. But he regards them

as less than perfect models of behaviour, and like Ban Gu in his chapter on men of integrity (HS 72) alludes to the Han saying that 'men of the mountain forests go but are unable to turn back'.⁴⁰ Further, like Ban Gu, Fan Ye makes sure he presents his readers with a higher model of conduct. Hence juan 53 consists of the biographies of men he considered to have a better sense of when to come forward and when to withdraw, who avoided extremism and by the force of personal example transformed the customs of those around them.

Although Fan Ye relates the lack of moderation on the part of those whose conduct is recorded in juan 83 to the political decline of the dynasty after the reign of Emperor Zhang, some two-thirds of the major figures discussed in the chapter actually date from Zhang's reign or earlier, which suggests that fervent opposition to evil was not the only thing that led virtuous men to extreme positions. Other factors were important in the early part of the dynasty, as I have already argued, including the growing trend towards exemplary eremitism. But Fan Ye was not a historian given to simplistic explanations, and even when dealing with the period after the reign of Emperor Zhang he does not try to account for the rapid spread of eremitic sentiments solely in terms of the deteriorating political situation.

Part of the explanation for the ubiquity of eremitism in the later part of the dynasty, according to Fan Ye, lies in the fact that once these attitudes could be justified by reference to the declining situation at court they became fashionable, and having become fashionable they became virtually compulsory. At the end of his biography of Chen Shi 陳寔 (104-187), who was largely compelled by circumstances to adopt an eremitic lifestyle on encountering the

political proscriptions during the reigns of Emperors Huan 桓 (147-167) and Ling 靈 (168-188), Fan Ye comments:

From the middle of the (Later) Han on, eunuchs were in office, arrogating power and behaving unrestrainedly. Hence it subsequently became the custom to regard withdrawal from the world, "speaking out while remaining fastidiously pure" as lofty things. If there were scholars who did not discuss such things, farmers and herdboys took it upon themselves to ridicule them. Hence in times when the government was reduced to confusion this fashion spread even further. Only Master Chen's timeliness in advancing and retiring could invariably be taken as a model.⁴¹

Although Fan Ye does not pursue the point here, it could be argued that the fashion for eremitism, which had become a dominant feature of the scholarly culture, helped to undermine political stability. How did this fashionable eremitism come about? As we have seen, Fan Ye is inclined to overlook the evolving scholarly culture in the early part of the dynasty, with its tradition of exemplary eremitism going back well into the Former Han. In his comments at the end of juan 61 (the biographies of Zuo Xiong 左雄, Zhou Xie 周勰 and Huang Qiong 黄瓊) he traces the popularisation (and debasement) of eremitism to the expansion of the recommendatory system, the abuse of that system by transforming it into a weapon of factional politics, and indirectly also to the ceremonial honours Emperor Shun 順帝 (r.126-144) extended to hermits. These views deserve careful consideration.

In antiquity, says Fan Ye, the feudal lords were expected annually to contribute men for the running of the royal court. Those who were recommended were carefully screened and given probationary employment before receiving a salary, while those who recommended worthy men were rewarded and those whose recommendees turned out to be unworthy were punished. The introduction of the recommendatory system in the early Han period aimed to achieve the same results. At first the criteria under which men were to be recommended were limited, but

after the restoration of the Han there was a major expansion of the formal categories for recommendation. The results of this elaboration and expansion of the system were not all good:

Once the glorious road (to office) had been broadened, yearnings became hard to restrain. Henceforth there was a flood of name-stealing imposters wrangling (for positions) and supplicants surged to the gates of the powerful and those in prominent positions.⁴²

It was in an attempt to eliminate the abuses in the recommendatory system that Zuo Xiong was instrumental in 132 in persuading Emperor Shun to limit recommendation for office to those over forty years of age, and to require all candidates to be examined for their abilities.⁴³ Although these measures had a salutary short-term effect, they could not eradicate the factional intrigues at court, and these continued with increasing severity to subvert the recommendatory system, as 'those pursuing fame covered up their shortcomings and those [whose duty it was to] verify the recommendations manipulated the evidence'. But the habit of scholars to use the recommendatory system to advance members of their own faction does not by itself account for the popularisation of eremitic ideals. Equally important were the actions of Emperor Shun himself:

In the beginning, due to boyish weakness, Emperor Shun turned the administration upside-down, but he himself gave the orders, recognised ability and utilised his officials. Therefore scholars acquired the wish to be employed and the whole world echoed their sentiments. Hence the rites of dark crimson, jade and silk were perfected, to summon with gifts Fan Ying 樊英 of Nanyang 南陽. The Son of Heaven descended into the ancestral hall and made arrangements (as if) for a sacrifice; a Master of Writing met (Fan Ying) and led him inside, where he was received and consulted. (The emperor) attached urgency to the recommendation of worthies for promotion, abased himself to follow the rite of humility, and thereupon disengaged scholars and rustivating masters, forgetful of the narrowness of their learning, shook out their garments in anticipation of a summons with banners and carriages.⁴⁴

Emperor Shun may indeed have filled scholars with the desire to be in

official service, as Fan Ye argues, but in the process of doing so he paradoxically bestowed new prestige on the eremitic life and thereby provided further motivation for those who used it as a stepping stone to a well-paid, prestigious position.

So in relation to the popularisation and attendant debasement of eremitic ideals around the middle of the Later Han, Fan Ye identifies a number of causal factors. The political disorder and decay attributed to the interference in government by imperial relatives and eunuchs, which dominate all discussions of the period, is only one of these. Because it provided a moral justification for refusing office, this factor was indeed of central importance, and I shall discuss it in the following section. However, to correct the imbalance of traditional accounts it is necessary also to give due weight to the other factors mentioned by Fan Ye. One is the expansion of the recommendatory system, which resulted in greater opportunities for government appointments on the grounds of exemplary conduct. Associated with this was the subversion of the recommendatory system by faction fighting at court, with each faction recommending its own men, often in the guise of disengaged scholars. Also important was the imperial patronage of hermits, which was present from the beginning of the dynasty but reached new heights at the beginning of Shun's reign. Together these factors brought about the other development which Fan Ye does little more than hint at: eremitism became fashionable, and that fashion fed upon itself until it became the expected thing.

Considered individually, the factors identified by Fan Ye cannot be considered new in the middle of the Later Han period, but their mutually reinforcing effects at this time can be regarded as marking a

fresh stage of development in tendencies which had already been underway for some two hundred years.

The problem of political power being in the hands of eunuchs, and more especially in the hands of imperial relatives, was obviously not new at this time. It was a problem which had cropped up in the Former Han,⁴⁵ but it gradually became particularly acute in the Later Han - partly as a result of the fact that after Emperor Zhang each Later Han emperor came to the throne as a minor. The usurpation of power by imperial relatives and eunuchs has traditionally been identified as the root cause of the Han dynasty's collapse. To determine the amount of truth in this view is a task too complex to carry out here. However, because of its important bearing on the subject of eremitism, I shall examine a modern formulation of this view by Yü Ying-shih in the Appendix to this thesis. Here the observation must suffice that what 'newness' there was in the problem of power in the hands of imperial relatives and eunuchs was a newness of degree rather than type.

As to the elaboration of the recommendatory system, this had begun early in Guangwu's reign, while subversion of the system for private or factional ends was a problem from its inception, prompting ineffectual decrees that abuses of the system be stopped, for example, at the beginning of the reigns of Ming and Zhang.⁴⁶ Therefore as far as the effects of the recommendatory system in encouraging either genuine or spurious eremitism is concerned, there is every reason to believe that these had long been present, even if they had not always been so strong.

Emperor Shun's adulation of hermits, too, was no more than an intensification of what had gone before. As we have seen, Guangwu, Ming and Zhang all attached considerable importance to attracting worthy men to court, and though they did not go to the same ceremonial lengths as the young Emperor Shun, they did go to some trouble to fill scholars with 'the wish to be employed'. What is more, there is considerable evidence that the same was true of Emperors He 和帝 (r.89-105) and An 安帝 (r.107-125), despite the fact that their reigns witnessed a great increase in the political influence of imperial relatives and eunuchs. For the evolution of the scholarly culture which fostered the fascination with eremitism continued uninterrupted throughout the middle reigns of the dynasty. (As I argue in my Appendix, the gravest flaw of traditional interpretations of the dynasty's decline is their fundamental assumption that the outlook of imperial relatives and eunuchs was necessarily at odds with the ideals and values of scholars, that the influence of the former was inimical to the culture of the latter). It is to some of the evidence for this that I will now turn.

The respectful attitude of Guangwu, Ming and Zhang towards hermits, and the exemplary eremitism espoused by many of the hermits of their day, is not the only evidence of the pervasive influence of the scholarly ethos during the first part of the Later Han. I have already mentioned in the previous chapter Zhao Yi's discussion of the scholarly custom of ceding hereditary aristocratic rank, pointing out that this aspect of the scholarly culture went back at least to the case of Wei Xuancheng in 61 B.C. Of the six other examples listed by Zhao Yi, one dates from the reign of Emperor Guangwu, two from the beginning of Ming's reign, and one each from the reigns of Zhang, An and Shun.

Most interesting for my purposes here is the case of Liu Qi, who in 78 A.D. ceded the fief he inherited to his younger brother Xian. For this he was lauded by Jia Kui 賈逵 (30-101), perhaps the most important Confucian scholar at the court of Emperor He, who submitted a memorial comparing Liu Qi's integrity to that of Boyi. As a result Emperor He summoned him to court, where he came to be greatly admired and enjoyed a long and successful career, rising to the position of Grand Commandant 太尉.⁴⁷ In the course of that career he helped to further enhance the social and political standing of hermits: 'It was [Liu] Qi's nature to be true to (the values of) antiquity. He treasured disengaged scholars, and whenever men were to be summoned or recommended for office was sure to give priority to men of the cliffs and caves'.⁴⁸ In other words, honouring hermits was one way of being true to the values of antiquity, and seeking out hermits in order to employ them, like Wang Mang's reform programme, was part of the general scholarly wish to recreate in their own time the greatness of the (idealised) past.

This tendency developed further in the middle years of the dynasty. After Jia Kui and Liu Qi came men such as Zhang Ba 張霸, who when Grand Administrator of Kuaiji during the Yongyuan period (89-104) recommended a number of disengaged scholars for office, including Gu Feng 顧奉 and Gongsun Song 公孫松.⁴⁹ There was also Cen Xi 岑熙, Marquis of Xiyang 細陽侯 and brother-in-law to Emperor An, who when appointed Grand Administrator of Wei 魏 Commandery summoned hermits with gifts and consulted with them on government affairs.⁵⁰ Chen Zhong 陳忠 (d.125) was an influential figure at Emperor An's court who rose to the position of Prefect of the Masters of Writing 尚書令. He believed that for an emperor newly come to power it was particularly important to demonstrate his

intention to transform the world by summoning hermits and other outstanding individuals. Therefore he repeatedly recommended hermits and upright men, including Zhou Xie 周燮 and Feng Liang 馮良, and was instrumental in getting Emperor An to summon them with full ritual honours (though ultimately without success).⁵¹

At the beginning of Emperor Shun's reign there was no sudden leap in the number of hermits, despite the attention and ceremonial honours the young emperor lavished upon them. Rather, the middle reigns of the Later Han dynasty appear to have witnessed a steady growth in the popularity of eremitic ideals, especially the Confucian variety of exemplary eremitism.⁵² For not only were many men in the highest levels of government before the reign of Emperor Shun preoccupied with bringing hermits into official service, but also some of the most famous eremitic figures associated with the intellectual milieu of Emperor Shun's reign of necessity flourished in the reign of Emperor An as well. The best example of this is none other than Fan Ying himself, the man whose reception by Emperor Shun in Fan Ye's eyes constituted a major turning point in the social standing and influence of hermits. Fan Ying was knowledgeable about the classics as well as arcane matters such as divination, astrology, and interpretation of portents. Though he lived in seclusion his fame was such that students came from everywhere to study under him, and quite early he attracted the attention of the provincial and commandery authorities. In the reign of Emperor He he was recommended as 'worthy and good, proper and correct, and possessing the Way', but he did not respond when summoned. At the beginning of Emperor An's reign (107) he was imperially summoned to be made an Erudite, and in 121 he was again summoned, along with five other men. Of these six men, four - Fan Ying, Kong Qiao 孔嵩, Li Bing 李暹 and Wang Fu 王符 -

did not respond.⁵³ Hence by the time Emperor Shun managed to get Fan Ying to come to court and accept a position in 129, Fan Ying was already famous for the staunchness with which he stuck to his ideals, and imperial patronage of men like him was well established.

The same points emerge from the case of Yang Hou 楊侯 (72-153; his surname is sometimes given as Hou 后) who in 127 was summoned by Emperor Shun along with Fan Ying. Before this Yang Hou had already been recommended as 'proper and correct, possessing the Way' and had refused to respond to a special imperial summons by Emperor An.⁵⁴ Thus it could be argued that Emperor An was less successful than Emperor Shun in winning famous hermits to court, but not that he did not try to do so.

Zhang Heng 張衡 (78-139) is perhaps the greatest of all the intellectuals associated with the reign of Emperor Shun, and he also is important in the history of eremitism as a 'hermit at court' (see Chapter 4 below). But he had been recommended as 'filial and blameless' in the reign of Emperor He, and it was Emperor An who first issued a special imperial summons calling him to court, appointing him Grand Prefect Astrologer 太史令, the post to which Emperor Shun was to appoint him again five years later after he had retired.⁵⁵ Ma Rong 馬融 (78-166) was also regarded as one of the leading lights of Emperor Shun's reign, as a scholar and setter of fashions, but it was as a young man during the reigns of He and An that he studied under Zhi Xun 摯恂, a famous Confucian scholar who lived in seclusion and ignored the imperial invitations with gifts requesting him to come to court.⁵⁶

Further evidence of the importance Emperors He and An attached to winning hermits to court is to be found in the imperial edicts calling for the recommendation of worthy men. Thus in 94 Emperor He ordered his senior officials and Grand Administrators to recommend men who were worthy and good, proper and correct, able to speak frankly and remonstrate fearlessly, adding: 'Bring out into the light men of the cliffs and caves, bring out into the open those living in obscurity and seclusion. Send them to the Equerry Office 公車, so that We may listen attentively to them'.⁵⁷ In 115 Emperor An ordered the recommendation of men versed in the arts of the Way, the interpretation of portents, the laws of the yin and yang, and other branches of learning, stating that he wanted his officials 'everywhere to draw out those living in obscurity and seclusion'.⁵⁸ And in 106, when the 'Infant Emperor 幼帝' was on the throne following the death of Emperor He, an edict was issued ordering all officials of the two thousand picul rank and higher each to recommend one 'hermit and great Confucian 隱士大儒'.⁵⁹ Obviously the summoning of worthy men was not something which was done only by strong and enlightened rulers; it was a matter of particular importance for imperial relatives out to establish the political legitimacy of the infant on which their hopes for imperial power depended.

The conclusion which must be drawn from the evidence presented here is that patronage and public regard for eremitism was already very strong before the reign of Emperor Shun, and that Emperor Shun's self-abasing reception of Fan Ying was not as sharp a turning point as Fan Ye believed. The political and social standing of hermits had continued to rise in the preceding reigns. However, this is not to say that the elaborate honours with which Emperor Shun welcomed famous disengaged scholars did not raise their standing still further.

Certainly from the beginning of Emperor Shun's reign references to hermits of various sorts become increasingly frequent, and it is impossible not to notice the fashionable element mentioned by Fan Ye in many of those references. It is clear also that some people were acutely aware of the vogue for eremitism that was developing, and regarded it with mistrust and apprehension. One of these was the remarkable figure of Li Gu 李固 (94-147), who had himself been recommended to the court on the strength of his reputation as a disengaged scholar.⁶⁰ At one point Fan Ye comments that Li Gu 'believed that disengaged scholars were outright bandits with baseless reputations who had nothing to offer in employment, and that this was the reason they acted as they did.'⁶¹ He seems to attribute this view to Li Gu at least partly on the grounds of a letter Li Gu wrote in 127 to Huang Qiong (86-164), who was also a famous disengaged scholar of the time, urging him to put aside his doubts and hesitations and come to court to serve the emperor:⁶²

It is said that a gentleman holds that Boyi was too severe and that Liuxia Hui was not dignified enough, therefore the account says, "I am neither (Bo)yi nor (Luxia) Hui; [as far as I am concerned] a given action can or cannot be performed [according to circumstances]".⁶³ It is said that sageliness and worthiness are the things to be treasured in the self. If you are sincere, then to wish to live leisurely in the mountains and valleys, imitating Chaofu and Xuyou, is indeed permissible. If you are going to put yourself in a position to assist the government and aid the people, now is the time to do it. Ever since society began, good government has been scarce and disorderly practices plentiful, and if it were necessary to wait until there was a Yao or Shun on the throne, this would mean that ultimately for men with ideals it would never be the (right) time. One always hears it said, "Things delicately poised are easily broken, things spotlessly white are easily soiled". With a song (as refined as) Yangchun 陽春 those able to join in the chorus are sure to be few;⁶⁴ if one is preceded by a great reputation it is difficult to make reality square up to it. Recently when his honour Fan [Ying] of Luyang 魯陽 arrived after having been summoned, the court made preparations (as if) for a sacrifice; it was as if they were awaiting a god. Although there was nothing very exceptional about him, in speech and conduct he bore himself faultlessly. As to the slanders spread against him, which

diminished with time, were these not due to the fact that he aroused such great expectations, that his reputation was so grand? From the beginning, scholars summoned and invited with gifts, such as Hu Yuanan 胡元安, Xue Mengchang 薛孟常, Zhu Zhongzhao 朱仲昭 and Gu Jihong 顧季鴻, have accomplished nothing that might be singled out for attention. This is the reason when the common people discuss these things they all say that disengaged scholars are outright bandits with baseless reputations. I hope that you, sir, will dispell this preposterous falsehood, command the respect of the populace, and in one sweep erase this saying completely.⁶⁵

Li Gu's attitude towards disengaged scholars was obviously more complex than Fan Ye's comment suggests: it was the common people who regarded them as 'outright bandits with baseless reputations', not Li Gu, and he looked to Huang Qiong 胡頌 to erase that popular prejudice. There are genuine hermits and there are charlatans; the former are sincere in the values they hold and the lifestyle they adopt, the latter are not. Li Gu personally was not attracted to the type of eremitism epitomised by Chaofu and Xuyou, but he nevertheless recognised it as a position which could legitimately be adopted, provided that the individual concerned was genuinely committed to the reduction of desires and was indifferent to worldly affairs. What concerned Li Gu most was the attitude of those men who professed to draw their inspiration from Confucius and claimed to be awaiting the right time before participating in government. Since the present emperor had shown himself to be committed to good government and had gone to some trouble to invite worthy men to court with the appropriate ceremonial honours, what further reason could they have for refusing to come? Either they were setting their standards unrealistically high, or else they were adopting an eremitic pose for ulterior reasons, such as the desire for fame or the freedom to devote themselves to scholarship. Clearly the object of Li Gu's criticism is precisely the style of Confucian exemplary eremitism which, as I have argued, had been gaining in influence since approximately 80 B.C. and

was now becoming highly fashionable. Li Gu had come to the conclusion that exemplary eremitism of this sort made too much of personal cultivation at the expense the Confucian ideal of social and political commitment.

Yet Li Gu's opinion of men such as Fan Ying and Yang Hou was not totally negative, despite his belief that they had failed to live up to the expectations they aroused. In a memorial to Emperor Shun a decade or so later, after Yang Hou and others like him had retired on grounds of ill health, Li Gu commented that although in the performance of their duties they had not been outstanding, they had nevertheless been respectful and diligent. Now that they were gone the Palace Attendants were all young men, without one old scholar to be found among them. Therefore Li Gu considered it appropriate to recall Yang Hou and his peers, so that they might 'assist in the sacrifices to the spirits of heaven and earth 以副群望'.⁶⁶ According to Yang Hou's biography, while Yang Hou continued to live in retirement as a highly sought-after teacher of the doctrines of Huang-Lao, Li Gu repeatedly sang his praises at the court, with the result that in 146 during the brief reign of Emperor Zhi 質 he was again summoned with gifts.⁶⁷

Thus even as critical an observer as Li Gu did not believe that the political utility of hermits was to be evaluated solely in terms of their ability to provide sagely counsel or masterful policies; they could contribute in other ways. Fan Ye held a similar opinion, one which obviously owed a lot to Li Gu. As with Li Gu, it was reflection on the case of Fan Ying that led him to state his position:

The demeanour of those referred to in the Han period as famous scholars can be known. Although they were [concerned with the questions of being] in or out of service, employed or put aside, they were at times less than perfect. In

their control of emotion and refinement of bearing, their reliance on the Way and scholarship as a means of acquiring a reputation, there is nothing that could be extended to all things and methods, embrace all times and undertakings. When Fan Ying and Yang Hou were summoned it was as if the court was awaiting a god, but when they arrived there was nothing exceptional about them. Fan Ying's reputation was the greatest and he was severely vilified. Li Gu, Zhu Mu and others believed disengaged scholars to be outright bandits with baseless reputations who had nothing to offer in employment, and that this was the reason they acted as they did. Nevertheless new men emulated them in order to make a reputation for themselves, and the rulers of the age treated them with all due ceremony in order to win over the populace. Moreover, since originally their uselessness [non-employment] was the reason they were employed [used], their utility could be said to lie in their uselessness. Why do I say this? Though their writings are brilliant the age will not necessarily make use of them; though they ground themselves on ritual observances, in declining times their example will not necessarily be widely adopted. But consider the way they mould the scholar-officials and refine their natures, making others follow them without anyone being aware of it: is it not that the Way is remote from practical applications and conceals itself within concrete particulars? As to those who make light of the ground they do not tread on and dismiss the value of the useless, such people jeer in chorus at subtle arts, debasing and abusing (those who are) the glory of the state; they believe that force and trickery can put an end of social depravity, that codified regulations are enough to achieve peace and security, that investigating suspicious cases represents the limits of knowledge, and that the Way is coterminous with laws and directives. They may come to the aid of the myriad generations, but they are no different from barbarians.⁶⁸

5. Timely Withdrawal in a Violent Age

Fan Ye tells us that from the middle of the Later Han, scholars flocked into retirement in protest against the evils perpetrated by the eunuchs and imperial relatives. We know, too, that many steered clear of public office in order to avoid the dangers associated with the deteriorating political situation. Whether or not going into hiding to save one's life is really to be regarded as eremitism is something of a problem, as I have argued before, and one which needs further consideration. However, here I wish to forestall any attempt to cynically dismiss the idealism of the hermits of this period as mere high-sounding rationalisations of attempts to save their own

necks. While such cases did occur, this interpretation cannot be universally justified, if for no other reason than that refusing to take office frequently was no less dangerous than taking part in public affairs.

At the beginning of the Later Han period, the self-declared emperor of Shu, Gongsun Shu, had killed men who refused to have anything to do with him, such as Li Ye, Wang Hao and Wang Jia. In the second half of the Later Han the danger of sharing a similar fate was very real, particularly when power was in the hands of strongmen as ruthless as Liang Ji 梁冀 (d.159), Dong Zhuo 董卓 (d.192) and Cao Cao 曹操 (155-220). However, it was not only military dictators whose tolerance of hermits was limited. When the famous disengaged scholars Yang Bing 楊秉 and Wei Zhu 韋著 pleaded illness and failed to respond to an imperial summons circa.160, a number of officials wanted to impeach them for 'disrespect'. Fortunately others with some influence interceded on their behalf and asked Emperor Huan to give them the opportunity to demonstrate their reverence. Yang Bing did go to court in response to the further summons which ensued, but Wei Zhu had disappeared into the Yunyang 雲陽 Mountains.⁶⁹

Liang Ji's ruthlessness towards those who dared to defy him is obvious in his treatment of He Xie 郝絜 and Hu Wu 胡武, two friends from the beginning of Huan's reign. Both men had their minds set on lofty matters and were not interested in taking office. According to Ying Shao, He Xie's principles were so strict that even when in want he accepted nothing from others, surreptitiously left behind cash whenever he had a meal at his sister's house, and if he drank from a well while out walking invariably threw a coin into

it.⁷⁰ Resenting the failure of He Xie and Hu Wu to heed his summons, Liang Ji had Hu Wu and more than sixty members of his family killed, while He Xie was driven to suicide.⁷¹

When Dong Zhuo came to power following Emperor Ling's death in 188 even the most famous men had to tread carefully. Few had either the opportunity or the courage to refuse when summoned. Despite their disapproval of everything he stood for, men renowned for their lofty conduct such as Xun Shuang 荀爽 (128-190), Cai Yong 蔡邕 (132-192), Han Rong 韓融 (c.123-c.192) and Chen Ji 陳紀 (126-196) all failed to find a way out, and as a result many of them came to grief in the chaos Dong Zhuo unleashed. Typical was the case of Cai Yong, who tried to plead illness when summoned, only to find the local authorities under orders to take him to Dong Zhuo by force. Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127-200) was lucky enough to be able to use the excuse that he was prevented from coming because bandits had cut the roads. Only Shentu Pan remained unshaken in his resolve and refused to have anything to do with Dong Zhuo.⁷²

The respected scholar and statesman Lu Zhi 盧植 (d.192) was also fortunate enough to avoid death at the hands of Dong Zhuo, despite having bitterly opposed his rise to supreme power. When Dong Zhuo was dissuaded by Cai Yong and Peng Bo 彭伯 from killing Lu Zhi outright, Lu Zhi asked to be excused from further service because of age and ill health and returned home. Dong Zhuo sent someone after him to kill him, but the plot failed and Lu Zhi lived out the last few years of his life in seclusion in the mountains.⁷³

Cao Cao may have been a much more subtle, clever politician than Dong Zhuo, but he was impatient both with moralising scholars and with talented men who refused to put their talents at his disposal. This

is well demonstrated by his treatment of Hua Tuo 華佗 (also known as Hua Fu 馮), who was renowned as a scholar, healer and master of the arts of longevity, and was widely regarded by his contemporaries as an immortal. Although during Emperor Ling's reign he had ignored both a recommendation as 'filial and blameless' and an official summons, Hua Tuo found himself compelled to respond to Cao Cao's call. Cao Cao kept him constantly in attendance, valuing his abilities highly. However, when Hua Tuo expressed a wish to relinquish his position and return home, and had his wife feign illness as an excuse for doing so, Cao Cao had him thrown into jail and killed.⁷⁴

When the world of politics was as volatile as it was at the end of the Later Han, to refuse to get involved could be as dangerous as active participation. Xun Yue 荀悅 (147-209) experienced both. During Emperor Ling's reign he managed to remain aloof after pleading illness, but when Cao Cao came to power he too found himself compelled to play his part in public affairs.⁷⁵ While in office at the court of the puppet Emperor Xian he wrote his Shen jian 申鑒 and Han ji. In the latter, on the basis of his own experience and that of his relatives and friends, he felt compelled to express his doubts about eremitism as a way of staying out of trouble:

Men of exceptional wisdom are not tolerated by their age,
 men of exceptional conduct are not suffered by their time.
 This is the reason why in the past men went into retirement.
 [But it sometimes happened that] although they retired they
 were still unable to save themselves, therefore they left
 the world and went deep into hiding. Heaven was high yet
 they did not dare raise their heads; Earth was solid yet
 they did not dare stamp their feet. The Book of Songs says:

Though they say Heaven is high,
 Not too stoop I would not dare.
 Though they say Earth is solid,
 Not to tiptoe I would not dare.

I lament the men of today:
 Why are they such poisonous reptiles?

If men do not dare to take their place in society, how much less will they dare to take their place at court? If by keeping to themselves they are still unable to avoid disaster, how much less will they dare to involve themselves with the age? If despite being blameless they are still denounced and vilified, how much less will they dare [to open themselves up to] imputations of guilt? If despite keeping their mouths shut they are still slandered and abused, how much less will they dare to speak frankly? Although they live in seclusion and go deep into hiding, they will still not be able to save themselves. This is why Ningwuzi 寧武子 pretended he was stupid and Jieyu behaved like a madman: it was the extremes (in which they found themselves). Those without a plan for (feigning) madness or stupidity will not be able find safety in the world.⁷⁶

However, this passage should not be regarded as evidence that in Xun Yue's time the attempt to escape harm by going into seclusion was regarded as enough to make the individual concerned a hermit. As I have already argued, a distinction has to be maintained between hermits on the one hand, whose actions are linked to an articulated philosophical position and the attempt to realise certain ideals of personal conduct, and mere refugees or fugitives on the other, whose actions really do amount to nothing more than an attempt to stay alive. In Zhuangzi's philosophy of eremitism the principle of lying low and staying away from danger is of major importance, but it is only one element in a sophisticated philosophical theory which also incorporates the ideas of eradication of desires and the obliteration of personal identity.⁷⁷

Hermits who cultivated Zhuangzi's outlook did occur in the Later Han, but needless to say they were far fewer than the number of scholars who aspired to no more than putting as much distance between themselves and danger as possible. I have already referred to Tai Tong from the reign of Emperor Zhang, who lived in a hole in the mountains and was completely indifferent to worldly matters. In the later part of the dynasty there was Pang Gong 龐公. When the

Inspector of Jingzhou 荆州, Liu Biao 劉表 (this was c.190) attempted to persuade him to take office with the argument that it was better to save the empire than merely oneself, Pang Gong laughingly dismissed the suggestion that the empire was something which could be preserved. And when Liu Biao tried to argue that by refusing an official salary and persisting with his spartan life as a farmer he would have nothing to bequeath to his sons and grandsons, Pang Gong replied: 'My contemporaries all bequeath danger to their descendents; I alone bequeath safety to mine. Although what we bequeath to them is not the same, it is not as if I have nothing to bequeath'. Subsequently he took his family into the mountains and never returned.⁷⁸

When it comes to attributing the motive of wanting to avoid danger to the hermits of the late Han and Wei-Jin periods it is necessary to exercise caution. An instructive example in this regard is Wei Huan 魏桓, who during Emperor Huan's reign refused several times to respond to an imperial summons. In reply to his neighbours' urgings that he should accept a position, Wei Huan argued that even if he did he would be unable to bring about any improvements at court and the only likely outcome would be his own death, which would benefit no-one.⁷⁹ However, there is no reason to assume that Wei Huan cultivated the life of a disengaged scholar simply in order to keep out of trouble. Those imperially summoned tended to be men who had demonstrated their commitment to Confucian ideals of conduct rather than those whose outstanding characteristic was timidity. Wei Huan may have used the probability of a futile death as a reason for not heeding an imperial summons, but it was not that which won him the admiration and respect of his contemporaries.

These considerations become particularly relevant when we consider accounts of some of the famous hermits who during the civil wars at the end of the Han are described as fleeing from the disorders of the time. The most important account is that in the Sanguo zhi of the group of men centred around the distinguished figure of Guan Ning 管寧 (158-248), who sought refuge from the troubles by crossing the Bohai Gulf to Liaodong. This group included Guo Yuan 國淵, Bing Yuan 邴原 and Wang Lie 王烈, who were all renowned for their lofty conduct. Going to Liaodong had nothing more to do with establishing Guan Ning's reputation as a noble hermit than it did with Guo Yuan's subsequent successful career in Cao Cao's administration.⁸⁰ The political and social turmoil they encountered certainly must have convinced hermits such as Guan Ning, Bing Yuan and Wang Lie that they had encountered impropitious times and therefore strengthened their resolve to stay aloof from public affairs, but that leads us into philosophical and ethical considerations of an order quite distinct from the wish merely to survive.

In terms of long term significance for the history of eremitism, however, the general and ultimately unspecifiable effects of the prolonged social disorder of the times may have been less significant than the strongly emotional and ideologically charged reaction of scholars to them. This is particularly true of the political proscriptions of 167 and 169. It is those events and some of the figures involved in them which I shall now consider.⁸¹

6. The Political Proscriptions under Huan and Ling

The proscriptions may be considered an indirect outcome of the young Emperor Huan's destruction of Liang Ji and his family in 159, with the goal of destroying a power which constrained the emperor

himself, controlled the court, the government bureaucracy, and extended to all parts of the empire. For support in his move against his erstwhile relatives by marriage (Empress Liang had only just died when the attack began), Emperor Huan, like Emperors He and An before him, found he had to rely on the court eunuchs. The emperor subsequently rewarded his chief eunuch supporters with high posts as well as large estates, and his continued reliance on them to retain power over the great families which threatened the imperial prerogatives further alienated a proportion of the Confucian scholars, who were becoming increasingly critical of this and many other irregularities and iniquities in the administration. These scholars saw themselves, with some justice, as the defenders of Confucian ideals, and their opposition to the evils they observed around them did create some unity among them (to this extent Yu Ying-shih's comments concerning a scholarly communal identity in the later Han period, criticised in my Appendix, are justified). This 'Pure Faction', which had already begun to take shape before the sequence of events precipitated by Emperor Huan's move against the Liang family, centred around Commander-in-Chief Chen Fan 陳蕃 (killed in 168) and Colonel Director of Retainers Li Ying 李膺 (110-169) in the bureaucracy, and Guo Tai 郭太 (128-169) and Jia Biao 賈彪 among the students of the Imperial Academy. The eunuchs had to remove the threat presented by this group, and early in 167 succeeded in having Li Ying and many of his colleagues imprisoned on charges of factionalism and sedition. Some two hundred men were implicated, and while those imprisoned were released within a matter of months, the ones against whom the charges had been laid were proscribed from ever holding office again.

When Emperor Huan died a year later, the infant Emperor Ling was put in the throne by Empress-Dowager Dou 竇 and her father Dou Wu 武 (d.168). Dou Wu became Commander-in-Chief. Together with Chen Fan and Hu Guang 胡廣 (91-172) he recalled Li Ying and other victims of the first proscription to senior positions. But before they could carry out their planned drive against the eunuchs the eunuchs took the offensive. Chen Fan was killed and Dou Wu committed suicide. Then in 169 the eunuchs persuaded the young emperor to do away with the 'faction' altogether. Those involved in the first proscription were rearrested and many of them, including Li Ying, died in prison; a considerable number of other men were also persecuted, killed, or proscribed from holding office. The edict of proscription was not revoked until April 184, when the survival of the empire was threatened by the Yellow Turban uprisings.

In terms of the total size of the bureaucracy and the number of students at the Imperial Academy at the time, the number of victims in this protracted conflict was not large. Probably not much more than a hundred people died as a result, while the total number of those executed, exiled or proscribed is not likely to have been more than six or seven hundred.⁸² This, plus the apparent ease with which the eunuchs destroyed the political threat of the Pure Faction, indicates that only a small proportion of scholars and officials took their ideals seriously enough to regard themselves as the defenders of public morality and challenge the power of the eunuchs. Yet despite their relatively small number and their failure to find widespread support at the time, the influence these generally very courageous idealists were to have in later periods was tremendous. It is no accident that the Shishuo xinyu begins with anecdotes concerning men such as Chen Fan, Li Ying, Guo Tai and Chen Shi, for it was these

members of the Pure Faction who came to be regarded as the founders of the qingtan 清談 movement,⁸³ and their deeds and opinions were to be seen as exalted models by many leading scholars throughout the Wei-Jin and Southern Dynasties.

The significance of the proscribed faction for the history of eremitism is clear. Here was a considerable number of men, with some claim to being the moral and intellectual leaders of the time, who by imperial decree were prevented from holding office. In their case being in enforced retirement was clear confirmation of their moral integrity, just as voluntary retirement was in normal circumstances. A situation had arisen in which imperial fiat made compulsory what circumstances might have demanded anyway, and even had he wanted to a man of principle could not take part in public affairs. Moreover, great men had died for what they believed was right. This gave being out of office new significance, new status, more kudos. Normally being out of office implied a general moral judgement against the times; now it was evidence of opposition to specific, well-known evils.

As always, it is necessary to consider the individual personalities and outlooks of those involved in the general phenomenon. It is quite clear that the members of the proscribed faction varied widely in their attitudes towards holding office; if some of them grieved over being prevented from being able to actively serve the emperor, others were little troubled by the fact, while for yet others again the proscription came as a blessing in disguise. Chen Fan and Li Ying had long devoted their efforts to government, and had they survived the purge and been simply proscribed there is no doubt they would have fretted over not being able to continue doing

so. Yet in the chapter of biographies of the members of the proscribed faction there are few who survived the proscription and yet served in government after it was lifted. Of course, this is partly because Fan Ye picks out for discussion the more exceptional figures, many of whom were killed or committed suicide - men such as Du Mi 杜密, Wei Lang 魏郎 and Fan Pang 范滂 (137-169). One man who did survive the proscription and later took office was He Yong 何顥, who was highly regarded in the Imperial Academy and closely associated with both the government and student leaders of the faction. He survived by changing his name and living incognito until the proscription was lifted, but ultimately died in prison (in 190) after refusing to serve under Dong Zhuo.⁸⁴

Given the high ideals professed by the proscribed faction, it is to be expected that many of them would have been inclined to remain aloof from active participation in government anyway, so that the proscription did little more than resolve any moral conflict they may have experienced concerning virtuous withdrawal. Guo Tai, for example never held office before the proscription, and despite being one of the leaders of the faction managed to avoid persecution. He prudently retired to his home and devoted himself to teaching, dying of natural causes only a year after Chen Fan and Li Ying. Given his personal history, there is every reason to assume that being barred from office would not have troubled him in the slightest.⁸⁵ Liu Shu 劉淑 and Xia Fu 夏馥 also always studiously avoided direct political involvement, but they were nevertheless caught up in the persecution. Liu Shu committed suicide in prison, while Xia Fu managed to avoid a similar fate by going into hiding in the mountains, where he died before the proscription was lifted. It is quite likely that at least in personal terms both men would have welcomed proscription from

holding office. The same applies to Kong Yu 孔昱 and Tan Fu 檀敷, who likewise repeatedly declined official summonses and recommendations, but survived the proscription and subsequently continued to evince a distaste for official duties. Both served only briefly in government.⁸⁶

Perhaps the most famous of those for whom the proscription amounted to an official enforcement of personal inclinations was Chen Shi. Although in his youth Chen Shi had held minor positions in local government, he had high ideals and was fond of study and went to Luoyang to attend the Imperial Academy. When summoned again to be a clerk he went into seclusion in the mountains, but his family's poverty eventually forced him to accept a series of positions in local government, including that of county prefect. Implicated in the 'faction', he passed the duration of the proscription living contentedly in humble circumstances, still influencing those around him. When the proscription was lifted he was offered a number of senior positions, but excused himself by saying he had been cut off from affairs for too long. Ignoring an imperial summons, he remained in retirement until his death three years later.⁸⁷

Two major intellectuals of the period affected by the proscription were Xun Shuang and Zheng Xuan. Xun Shuang had only just received his first appointment as Palace Gentleman in 166 when he submitted a memorial criticising 'opportunism' and resigned. He went into seclusion when the faction troubles broke out and for over ten years devoted himself to literary pursuits. When the proscription was lifted in 184 Xun Shuang ignored both official summonses and Minister of Works 司空 Yuan Feng's 袁逢 recommendation of him as 'possessing the Way' (though he mourned Yuan Feng for three years

after his death). He was summoned by Commander-in-Chief He Jin 何進 in 189, but He Jin was ousted from power and killed the same year. After Emperor Xian 獻 (r.190-220) had been enthroned and Dong Zhuo was in power, he was again summoned. Reluctantly he responded. Within three days he was promoted to Minister of Works, and remained in office until his death later in the same year.⁸⁸

Zheng Xuan, it appears, was always more interested in study than official service. In his youth he resisted his father's irate attempts to force him to take a position as clerk in order to be able to spend all his time with his books. He attended the Imperial Academy for a while, then roamed the country for more than ten years, seeking out learned men everywhere. When the proscription was imposed and he was banned from holding office, Zheng Xuan lived in complete retirement, devoting all his energies to study of the classics. Although the proscription was disastrous for China's political stability, it could be said that it helped Zheng Xuan become the greatest scholar of the classics of his time by granting him some fifteen years of undisturbed study. After the proscription was lifted he was summoned by one strongman of the period after another. The first was He Jin. Zheng Xuan was compelled to go, but after only one night at court he left again. When Dong Zhuo made him Chancellor of Zhao, he was able to use the excuse that the road was cut by fighting and therefore he was unable to take up his duties. Next he was recommended as 'prolific talent' by Yuan Shao and appointed to a court position. These honours he likewise ignored. Then finally he was imperially summoned, made Grand Minister of Agriculture 大司農 and presented with an easy carriage. He excused himself on grounds of illness and returned home, dying in 200 as Yuan Shao and Cao Cao struggled against each other for political supremacy.⁸⁹

This brief survey of the political proscriptions of the reigns of Emperors Huan and Ling, and a consideration of the outlook of some of the major figures involved, is enough to show that for the history of eremitism the proscriptions were significant in more ways than one. In effect, the proscriptions led to a form of compulsory eremitism which brought new prestige and significance to being out of office. The victims of the proscriptions came to be identified (though not by everyone)⁹⁰ as moral heroes whose enforced retirement was direct evidence of their uncompromising opposition to political and social corruption, and whose standing was enhanced by the glory they shared with those who had died for their principles. For later generations they became symbols of an unwavering devotion to the highest ideals of personal conduct. Nevertheless there were significant differences among these men in their attitudes towards involvement in public affairs. A considerable number had previously avoided political involvement, and for them the proscriptions amounted to an official sanction which backed up their personal preference. For those of scholarly inclination the proscriptions presented, among other things, opportunities for extended periods of uninterrupted study. While the element of political protest was certainly very strong in the eremitism of the last part of the Han dynasty, it must not be assumed that other sorts of motivation and aspiration were lacking, even among Confucian scholars. Pushed along by the power of fashion, exemplary eremitism reached new heights, often appearing in an amalgam with the more politically earnest eremitism of protest. It is this particular mix of attitudes and ideals that I will discuss in the following section.

7. Confucian Exemplary Eremitism

The best example of the mix of attitudes which characterised Confucian eremitism of the last part of the Han period is Guo Tai, who as student-activist was one of the leaders of the Pure Faction, yet at the same time cultivated the role of a disengaged scholar. He was both a teacher and a trendsetter. Despite coming from a poor family and losing his father early in life, Guo Tai was never interested in an official career. When he was twelve sui his mother tried to persuade him to take a position with the county authorities, but he felt he was suited to greater things and said he wanted to study. To his mother's objection that they had no money he replied he would do it without money. Severe hardship did not deflect him from his purpose and three years later he was already widely accomplished. Some time later he made his way to Luoyang to attend the Imperial Academy, and there made an immediate impact thanks to his intelligence and learning, good looks and imposing build, eloquence and musical ability. Like everyone also, Li Ying, who was then Governor of Henan 河南, was deeply impressed by him, commenting: 'I have met many scholars, but never anyone like Guo Linzong 林宗'. They became close friends. Guo Tai obviously shared Li Ying's views concerning the political threat posed by the eunuchs and imperial relatives, but he knew when to keep his mouth shut and avoided dangerous talk, with the result that when open conflict erupted between the Pure Faction and the eunuchs he was able to stay out of trouble. 'He shut his gate and gave instruction, his disciples numbering in the thousands'. Nevertheless, when Li Ying and Chen Fan were killed by the eunuchs he was grief-stricken.⁹¹

Although officially summoned by Minister over the Masses Huang Qiong and recommended as 'possessing the Way', he always refused to accept a government position. In reply to an attempt to persuade him to change his mind he once said:

At night I consult the heavenly images [of the Book of Changes] and in the morning observe human affairs. What Heaven revokes cannot be retained. Right now it is the mingyi 明夷 hexagram which applies, whose lines form the image of the straight not being used, the time when remaining hidden brings success. I am afraid of being a fish in the raging green sea. I shall dwell among the cliffs and return to the [true] spirit, inhaling, and by inhaling the Original Breath cultivate the arts of Boyang 伯陽 and Pengzu 彭祖. Shall I worry or shall I wander? Without a care I shall end my years.⁹²

The attention Guo Tai attracted and the admiration he commanded are vividly communicated both by his biography in the Hou Han Shu and the account of him in the Hou Han ji (though Fan Ye appears to have been less sympathetically disposed towards him than was Yuan Hong, presenting him as much more of a dandy). Once when he was out travelling, Guo Tai was caught in the rain, which made one corner of his kerchief droop down. Immediately his contemporaries were folding down corners of their own in imitation of the 'Linzong Kerchief'. At a time when he left the capital, officials and scholars came by the thousands to see him off, and at his death in 169 at the early age of fortytwo sui thousands came to mourn him. His funeral inscription was composed by Cai Yong, the most distinguished poet of the age, who is recorded as having commented: 'I have composed many funeral inscriptions, and each time felt embarrassed; only in the case of Scholar Possessing the Way Guo can I do it without blushing.'⁹³

Not only was Guo Tai important as a moulder of public opinion and trend-setter, he was also famous for his knowledge of men, writing a major work on the subject and personally recommending many talented

and virtuous scholars for office. Appended to his biography are accounts of a number of these men, many of whom appear to have cultivated an eremitic lifestyle similar to his own. They include Meng Min 孟敏, Mao Rong 茅容, Yu Cheng 庾乘, Fu Rong 符融, Tian Sheng 田盛 and Xu Shao 許劭.⁹⁴

Even from the limited information contained in the Hou Han Shu and elsewhere, it is clear that Guo Tai was a complex figure who embodied many of the characteristics and attitudes of the scholars of his time. Some of his attitudes appear contradictory, yet even those apparent contradictions were very much part of the contemporary scholarly culture. He refused to take office, yet was deeply concerned politically; cultivated the lifestyle of a disengaged scholar, yet was on intimate terms with the leading political activists of his day; started fashions in personal deportment and dress, yet took the ideals of his culture seriously enough to strive for perfect filiality in mourning; invoked the inevitability of change and decline when refusing the offer of an official post, yet spent much of his time searching out men whom he judged to have the moral and intellectual requirements for office. To dismiss him as an elegant poser is out of the question, yet a carefully cultivated, self-conscious elegance was very much part of his character. It is this combination of moral seriousness and studied elegance in Guo Tai, I believe, which makes him the epitome of Confucian eremitism of the last hundred years of the Han.

There are numerous examples of this sort of eremitism recorded by Fan Ye. The ones he regarded most highly he collected together in juan 53 as a sort of pantheon of those who were perfect in their judgement of when to serve and when to remain in seclusion: men such

as Zhou Xie, Huang Xian 黃憲, Xu Zhi 徐擇, Jiang Gong 姜肱 and Shentu Pan 申屠蟠.

The case of Huang Xian is interesting not only because along with Chen Fan, Li Ying, Chen Shi and Guo Tai, he came to be one of the models for the qingtan movement (and hence appears at the beginning of Shishuo xinyu),⁹⁵ but also because it gives us some idea how a reputation for virtuous conduct could be acquired in this period. Huang Xian came from a poor, humble family in Shenyang 慎陽 in Runan; his father was a cow doctor. Once when Xun Shu 荀淑 (83-149) was passing through Shenyang he met Huang Xian at an inn. Although Huang Xian was only 14 sui at the time, he deeply impressed Xun Shu in conversation. Xun Shu himself was renowned in scholarly circles for his integrity (as well as for his eight virtuous sons, one of whom was Xun Shuang),⁹⁶ and when he praised Huang Xian as a veritable Yan Hui to Yuan Lang 袁闓, a disengaged scholar from the same district as Huang Xian who later accepted a position as Merit Officer,⁹⁷ the boy's reputation was assured. Once he had been 'discovered' by eminent men his fame spread quickly. In this as in so many other things the word of respected figures from the same district could prove to be crucial. Thus Huang Xian's reputation was greatly enhanced by men of the stature of Zhou Ju 周舉 and Chen Fan saying to each other, 'If a month goes by without seeing Master Huang, pettiness again sprouts in my heart'.⁹⁸ When Guo Tai visited Runan he called on both Yuan Lang and Huang Xian. In the case of Yuan Lang he did not bother to stay the night, while with Huang Xian he stayed several days before being able to tear himself away.⁹⁹

Praise by scholars who themselves had reputations for virtuous conduct, learning and knowledge of men, was the principal way in which a new reputation was formed. This mechanism was institutionalised in the recommendatory system. Huang Xian was recommended as 'filial and blameless' and was urged by his friends to go to Luoyang. He did not resist, but went to the capital only briefly and then came home again. Without ever having held office he died at the age of forty-eight. Fan Ye comments that no details of Huang Xian's opinions and demeanour were recorded, but all who met him were influenced by him, and echoes the opinion that Huang Xian's virtue was beyond words.¹⁰⁰

What is striking about Fan Ye's assessment of Huang Xian, and that of his contemporaries as well, is that his refusal to serve his ruler does not seem to have been a matter for consternation. While no doubt a refusal to take office at this time could have been easily justified by reference to the power of the imperial relatives and eunuchs, there is no suggestion in Huang Xian's biography either that he had a political reason for refusing to serve or that he was expected to have one. His perfectly correct conduct and its influence on others, it appears, was justification enough for his disengagement. Huang Xian, in other words, was the Confucian exemplary recluse par excellence: 'his peers all looked up to him as their standard'.¹⁰¹

Jiang Gong (96-173) was also widely acclaimed by his contemporaries, and like Huang Xian was included by Fan Ye in his chapter on exemplary disengaged scholars. He illustrates both the prestige such figures enjoyed and the lengths to which they went to make their conduct truly exemplary. According to Fan Ye, because of his wide knowledge of the classics and astrology, Jiang Gong attracted more than three thousand students. High officials competed to summon

him, but even in the case of an imperial summons with gifts neither he nor his two younger brothers responded.

It is recorded that once when Gong and one of his brothers were on their way to pay a call at the commandery offices, they were attacked by robbers who were going to kill them. However, each brother pleaded for the life of the other so earnestly that the robbers spared them both, making off only with their goods and clothes. When asked what had happened by the commandery authorities, Gong made no mention of the robbers. The robbers got to hear of this and, regretting the way they had treated such fine men, came to where they were staying, begged for an interview, kowtowed in apology, and tried to return the goods they had taken. Jiang Gong would not hear of taking the things back, however, and, after entertaining them with meat and wine, sent them on their way. According to another version of the story, when the robbers made off with the goods they had overlooked some money lying in the bottom of the carriage, so Jiang Gong sent someone after them to give them this also, and when the robbers refused to accept it he put it into their hands personally.¹⁰²

Is this story mere fantasy? I see no reason to assume that it could not be true. In terms of the mores of the times it is quite conceivable that a gentleman set on behaving in an exemplary fashion would use being robbed as an occasion for demonstrating his sublime indifference to material things - even to the extent of handing over to robbers things they had overlooked. That Jiang Gong was highly regarded for his rather flamboyant demonstration of indifference to the world is beyond dispute. When he failed to respond to an imperial summons, Emperor Huan decided to settle for second best and dispatched

an artist to obtain his portrait. However, Jiang Gong refused to cooperate even to that extent: claiming to be suffering from dizzy spells, he remained in a darkened room under a coverlet until the artist had departed.¹⁰³

The last illustration of Confucian exemplary eremitism from this period I would like to consider also features in Fan Ye's pantheon of disengaged scholars. This is the man who seems to have been the most highly regarded of them all: Xu Zhi (97-168). When in 159 Chen Fan was asked by Emperor Huan to rank in order of worthiness the 'five illustrious disengaged scholars of the world'¹⁰⁴ - Xu Zhi, Jiang Gong, Yuan Hong, Wei Zhu and Li Tan 李曇 - he replied:

'Yuan Hong was born in a noble family, has heard about the Way and gradually acquired some maxims. Wei Zhu grew up among Sanfu's righteous and proper commoners; he is the type of whom it is said that he stands upright unaided, refines himself without having to be worked on by others. As to Xu Zhi, he hails from the low-lying region of Jiangnan 江南 but stands out like an eminence. It is appropriate to rank him first'.¹⁰⁵

Unlike Yuan Hong and Jiang Gong, Xu Zhi did not come from a wealthy family. In the manner of some of the more rigorous hermits of the Warring States period, he would eat only what he had produced by his own efforts. Despite the hard farmer's life he led, however, he still found time for study, and was an authority on the Spring and Autumn Annals, Book of Documents and Book of Changes, as well as various forms of divination and the apocryphal texts. Greatly admired for his frugality and unflinching adherence to what was right, he was five times summoned by the local Grand Administrator, four times recommended as 'filial and blameless', and three times as 'prolific talent'. When Chen Fan was appointed Grand Administrator of Yuzhang 豫章 (c.156) one of his first actions was to invite Xu Zhi to

become his Merit Officer. Xu Zhi could not avoid accepting the invitation, but retired almost as soon as he arrived. Subsequently he was recommended as 'possessing the Way' and appointed Grand Administrator of Taiyuan, but did not respond to the imperial summons.¹⁰⁶

Huang Qiong was one of the senior officials who summoned Xu Zhi to office, and had also been his teacher. When Huang Qiong first accepted office Xu Zhi had broken off contact with him, but when he died (in 164) Xu Zhi went to his funeral, sacrificed at his grave and left without telling anyone his name. The accounts in the Hou Han shu and the Hou Han ji of what happened after this are very different. Fan Ye says that Guo Tai realised that the mourner at Huang Qiong's grave must have been Xu Zhi and sent Mao Rong after him, apparently to try to persuade him to take an active role in public affairs. This is supposed to have prompted the famous remark, 'When a great tree is about to fall...etc.' But Yuan Hong's version makes much better sense and indicates a very different relationship between Xu Zhi and Guo Tai; he does not telescope everything together into one incident as Fan Ye does. According to him the mourners selected Mao Rong to go after Xu Zhi to ask his opinion about political events. Returning without having managed to get Xu Zhi to discuss anything other than farming, Mao Rong criticised him in front of Guo Tai, who leapt to his defence. It was sometime after this that Xu Zhi, anxious at the risks Guo Tai was running through his political activism, wrote to dissuade him from actions as futile as they were dangerous: 'When a great tree is about to fall a single rope cannot hold it up. Why then scurry about instead of remaining peacefully at ease?' This remark brought Guo Tai to a new understanding, and he hailed it as the words of a master.¹⁰⁷

I will discuss the relationship between Guo Tai and Xu Zhi further in my Appendix. The important point here is that it appears that Xu Zhi's remark about the tree was not an expression of selfish unconcern, but rather stemmed from his worry that Guo Tai might become implicated in events he was powerless to control and die for nothing. As in the case of Huang Qiong, when the opportunity arose Xu Zhi showed his respect for Guo Tai, despite the fact that he did not share his political convictions. When Guo Tai's mother died - a poor woman of humble status - Xu Zhi went anonymously to mourn her, paying an eloquent compliment by laying fresh grass on her tomb in allusion to a poem in the Book of Songs.¹⁰⁸

At the beginning of his reign (168), Emperor Ling wanted to pay Xu Zhi the high honour of summoning him with gifts and easy carriage, but Xu Zhi died before it could be carried out. During the Yongan 永安 period (258-263) a pavilion was erected by his tomb in honour of his virtue, while during the Song dynasty, the year after he was appointed Grand Administrator of Yuzhang, Zeng Gong 曾巩 (1019-1093) erected a temple in his memory.¹⁰⁹

It would be possible to continue for some time to multiply examples of disengaged scholars from the last part of the Han dynasty, though few, inevitably, managed to rise to the exalted level of a Xu Zhi. Men such as Xu Zhi, Jiang Gong and Huang Xian were admired precisely because they were exceptional, because by force of personal example they reminded the common run of scholars that the highest ideals of their culture could and should be realised. At the opposite end of the scale, there were many charlatans. In fact, as Li Gu's letter to Huang Qiong shows, there was a disposition among the common people to believe that all disengaged scholars were charlatans.

Therefore to balance this discussion of exemplary eremitism in the last part of the Han I will conclude with a few examples of men who were somewhat less than sincere in their conduct.

In Fengsu tongyi, Ying Shao criticises Zhang Boda 張伯大 and Deng Zijing 鄧子敬 for posing as hermits in order to make a reputation which would win them all the trappings of worldly success they professed to disdain. They 'made a show of what was spurious and bragged of what was false, deceiving the age with a glorious name', he says.¹¹⁰ But of all the characters at the lighter end of the eremitism scale the most interesting is Xiang Xu 向栩, a descendant of the famous hermit Xiang Chang of Guangwu's reign. Xiang Xu was something of a madman as well as a student of Laozi, who went around with dishevelled hair hanging down to his shoulders, lived a spartan life and hid from visitors. He had a number of disciples whom he named after Confucius' great followers. Sometimes he went to market on an ass to beg, sometimes he would give away everything he had to another beggar, then take him home and provide him with good fare. Eventually he received a special imperial summons and was appointed Chancellor of Zhao. Everyone had great hopes about the transformation his lofty - if eccentric - example would bring about among the people of the region, but to their dismay on arriving at his post he began to ride about in a new carriage with splendid horses, and the suspicion took root that perhaps he had been a charlatan all along. Nevertheless, he managed to obtain a position at court, where he made himself unpopular by criticising others and offering facile counsel. In 184, when the Yellow Turban rebellion broke out under the leadership of Zhang Jue 張角, Xiang Xu proposed that the rebels be pacified by sending an envoy to recite the Book of Filial Piety at them! His unsympathetic colleagues denounced him as a Zhang Jue

sympathiser and had him put to death.¹¹¹

The exemplary eremitism discussed in this section was the most important variety of eremitism in the last part of the Han dynasty, by virtue of its fashionability and the attention it received from the scholars of the time, as well as its historical significance as the foundation for much of the eremitism of the Wei-Jin period and the Southern dynasties. I have called it 'Confucian exemplary eremitism' because it developed around the Confucian idea that in retirement a hermit can transform the customs of those around by the loftiness of his conduct, and the great majority of these exemplary hermits did strive to realise what were essentially Confucian ideals of conduct. However, this does not mean they did not also draw inspiration from other schools of thought. It is clear that Xu Zhi harked back to the doctrines of the School of the Tillers; the charlatan Xiang Xu made use of the doctrines of Laozi. In the next section I will consider the influence of some of these other schools of thought and the types of eremitism they engendered, not just in the final phase of the dynasty but throughout the whole of the Later Han.

8. The Influence of the Hundred Schools

A good history of Daoism in the Later Han period has yet to be written. Studies have been made of certain aspects of the development of Daoist thought in the period, but there has been no attempt at a comprehensive treatment. Here I shall raise only a few points directly relevant to the eremitism of the period. Of these, the main general point which needs to be stressed at the outset, as should be evident from the foregoing discussion, is that the spread of eremitism in the later part of the dynasty cannot be simply attributed to the growing influence of Daoism among the educated elite at the time.

While it does appear that Daoism gained in influence towards the end of the dynasty, and was associated with certain varieties of eremitism, it is not those varieties of eremitism which predominate in the surviving records concerning the outlook and attitudes of scholars of the time. Of course this is partly due to the biases of the sources, but what has to be emphasised here is that Confucianism did not necessarily lead to a determination to be actively involved in public affairs, any more that Daoism invariably led to socio-political aloofness and a refusal to take office.

Daoism influenced scholars in many different ways. One of the most important of these was the development of the concept of the 'hermit at court', which attracted some of the greatest intellectuals of the Han period. In this case, Daoism, far from leading to a refusal to hold office, was associated with an attitude of detachment from worldly concerns while in office. This will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. In the outlook of the hermits at court Daoist ideas blended happily with Confucian principles. This was also true of many other hermits. The charlatan Xiang Xu mentioned in the previous section was as insincere in the use he made of the teachings of Laozi as those of Confucius. Rather more impressive was the disengaged scholar Yang Hou (72-153), an expert on apocryphal texts and charts and the interpretation of omens and portents, who was recommended as 'proper and correct, possessing the Way', received a special imperial summons, and was highly honoured by Emperor Shun. He was allowed to retire on the pretext of ill-health after Liang Ji had tried to obtain an interview with him. Despite his very Confucian scruples against contact with Liang Ji and equally Confucian preoccupation with portents (which prompted numerous memorials to the throne), in retirement he 'cultivated [the teachings of] Huang-Lao'

and gave instruction to over three thousand students.¹¹²

In Yang Hou's case interest in the doctrines of Huang-Lao corresponded with withdrawal from public affairs. Other major figures from the last part of the dynasty who combined Confucian and Daoist ideas without taking office were Fa Zhen 法真 (100-188) and Shentu Pan. Fa Zhen is described by Fan Ye as 'fond of study but not associated with any particular school; his erudition embraced "inner" and "outer" texts, charts and documents, and he was a great Confucian of the lands west of the Pass'. His scholastic bent, however, went together with a 'quietistic nature and few desires', and an aloofness from social affairs. When recommended to the throne he was described both as 'embodying all four disciplines' (i.e. the Book of Songs, Documents, Rites and Music) and 'treading the lofty path of Master Lao'. He was imperially summoned four times, but to the end of his days remained in seclusion.¹¹³

Shentu Pan's outlook was quite different to that of Fa Zhen. He seems to have been an unusual mixture of stern Confucian scholar and Zhuangzi-style social hermit. From a poor family, he earned his living as a lacquer worker, but had a wide knowledge of the classics and apocryphal texts and charts, and in his conduct was so refined and dignified he amazed even the discerning Guo Tai. He ignored the whole series of imperial summonses, but at the same time disapproved of those who, while not in office, criticised and disputed government affairs. Student activists at the time of the proscriptions, such as Fan Pang, he believed to be in the wrong. He commented that the last time disengaged scholars had debated public affairs (in the Warring States period) it had ended with the burning of the books and burial of scholars by Qin Shihuang. So Shentu Pan withdrew completely from

affairs, living in a lean-to he made next to a tree and associating only with labourers. Even Dong Zhuo found it impossible to bully him into changing his mind.¹¹⁴

The influence of Zhuangzi was stronger, however, in the case of Wang Zun 王遵 (Jungong 君公), who lived anonymously among cattle dealers; the extremist Tai Tong, whom I have already discussed; and Han Kang 韓康, who found to his dismay that even selling herbs for a fixed low price in the market place was enough to establish an unlooked for reputation.¹¹⁵

One type of hermit who drew on aspects of Daoism was those who pursued the arts of longevity and immortality. The number of hermits from the Later Han referred to as practising these Daoist arts is surprisingly small. It includes Su Shun 蘇順, who flourished during the reigns of He and An, and of whom it is said that he 'was fond of the arts of nourishing life, and dwelt in seclusion in search of the Way'. Nevertheless he did serve in office late in life.¹¹⁶ Like Su Shun, Jiao Shen 矯慎 was a contemporary of Ma Rong, but was more firm in his commitment to eremitism. A student of Huang-Lao, he lived in seclusion in a mountain cave and practised the arts of longevity. After his death it was rumoured he had become an immortal, with reports that he had been seen out in the vicinity of Dunhuang 敦煌.¹¹⁷

But the mysterious arts of the time were by no means limited to those specifically identified as 'Daoist'. One can get some idea of the variety of the intellectual world of the Later Han - and therefore the complexity of what I have called the scholarly culture or ethos - by considering the chapters of biographies of 'masters of the occult' (fangshi 方士). In the accounts of these men the intermingling of

many different types of intellectual endeavour and schools of thought can be observed. Modern intellectuals might prefer to draw a sharp distinction between scholarship and knowledge of the occult, but in terms of the outlook of the men of the Later Han it was extremely difficult to separate the two. The cosmologies of even the most sceptical intellectuals still had to retain a place for the interaction and mutual influence of the human and nonhuman worlds.¹¹⁸ Thus many of the masters of the occult mentioned by Fan Ye - and they come from all phases of the dynasty - had reputations in fields of learning which may strike modern readers as rather disparate. Many of them lived in an eremitic manner, reconfirming the links between withdrawal into the natural world and occult practices which were part of the ancient tradition of shamanism.¹¹⁹ Not surprisingly, some of these occult hermits pursued the arts of immortality also.

The best example of a man who combined scholarly and occult knowledge is the recluse who was treated with self-abasing respect by Emperor Shun and yet turned out to be such a disappointment to those at court: that polymath of the arcane, Fan Ying. Fan Ying was an expert on Jing Fang's interpretation of the Book of Changes 京代易, as well as other Confucian classics. However, he was also skilled in such things as divination by the winds, astrology, apocryphal texts, and the interpretation of portents.¹²⁰ There was also Duan Yi 段翳 (he lived probably in the reign of Emperor Ming) who is said to have been skilled in the Book of Changes, divination by the winds, and always knew the names of those who came to consult him before they arrived. Unlike Fan Ying, he never took office.¹²¹

Liao Fu 廖扶 (fl. during the reigns of An and Shun) learned from his father's example the dangers of an official career. After his father (who was Grand Administrator of Beidi 北地) died in prison, Liao Fu espoused Laozi's principle that one's body is more important than fame, withdrew from the world and devoted himself to the study of a variety of fields, including classical texts, astronomy, apocryphal texts, divination by the winds, and other occult arts. He refused to become in any way involved with affairs, even to the extent of advising about portents.¹²²

Other masters of the occult were not so averse to political involvement. One, Fan Zhizhang 樊志張, is said to have used his occult skills to assist in defeating the western Jiang 西羌 rebels in 165.¹²³ Gongsha Mu 公沙穆 and Dong Fu 董扶 were both renowned for their knowledge of the occult and lived much of their lives in seclusion, but both also studied at the Imperial Academy and later took office.¹²⁴ Others turned their attention to medical matters. One was the Old Man of Fu River (Fu Weng 涪翁), who lived in obscurity by the Fu River in Sichuan and practised acupuncture (he is said to have written a treatise on the subject). His own disciple Cheng Gao 程高 also lived in seclusion, but Cheng Gao's student Guo Yu 郭玉 became Assistant Imperial Physician at the court of Emperor He.¹²⁵ Another famous healer was Hua Tuo, whom I have already discussed. He was regarded by his contemporaries as an immortal, but when Cao Cao forced him into public life he came to an untimely end.¹²⁶

Although expertise in matters such as divination and interpretation of portents was keenly sought after by the court and officialdom generally, occult arts and the claim to possess them were

nevertheless sometimes considered a threat to the public interest and political order. Such was the case with a certain Liu Gen 劉根, an expert in occult matters who lived on the holy Mount Song, and was called before the Grand Administrator on suspicion of being out to hoodwink the people. In response Liu Gen gave such an awesome demonstration of his ability to summon up ghosts that the official begged to be punished for his error.¹²⁷

Even more interesting is the example of Zhang Kai 張楷 (c.80-c.149), the son of Zhang Ba (Grand Administrator of Kuaiji in the Yongyuan period, 89-104). Zhang Kai had a reputation both for his knowledge of the classics and his proficiency in Daoist arts, so much so that crowds of would-be followers blocked the street where he lived and even people from the inner palace, imperial relatives and members of noble families came to live in adjacent lanes. To escape them he went into seclusion, in the mountains, making a living by selling medicinal herbs. Eventually his followers found him out, however, and the place where he lived literally became a marketplace. Nevertheless, he continued to ignore official recommendations and a special summons (in 142) from Emperor Shun. According to his biography one of his skills was being able to create a mist that spread for five li. A certain Bei You 裴優, who could only create a three li mist, came to learn his secret, but Zhang Kai would have nothing to do with him. At the beginning of Emperor Huan's reign (147) this Bei You was arrested after using his self-made mists as a cover for robberies. In the subsequent investigations he testified that he had been using techniques taught by Zhang Kai, with the result that Zhang Kai was jailed for two years before the matter was cleared up. (While in jail he put his time to good use, studying and writing a commentary on the Book of Documents).¹²⁸

In the previous chapter I mentioned a type of hermit in the Former Han who cast themselves in the role of 'friend and advisor' to the ruler and high officials, men who in the manner of some of the wandering scholars of the Warring States period refused to hold office but were not averse to providing advice and guidance to those with political power. In the Later Han there were a considerable number of such hermits. Like the 'free-lance' advisors of the last part of the Former Han (e.g. Mei Fu), they tended to give counsel in matters pertaining to portents and omens rather than military strategy or diplomacy. The widespread practice of earning a living through private teaching¹²⁹ made it virtually inevitable that there would be those who sought no less than to make a pupil of the emperor himself.

Lang Yi 郎顛 (from the reign of Emperor Shun) made the most of the opportunities presented by the recommendatory system for haranguing the emperor. Like his father Lang Zong 郎宗, Lang Yi was an expert on Jing Fang's interpretation of the Changes, divination by the winds, astrology, and various other methods for decoding the messages to man from Nature, but lived in seclusion. In 133, after there had been a rash of portents, Emperor Shun summoned Lang Yi, who had already been recommended as 'possessing the Way, proper and correct', to court. Lang Yi presented for the emperor's consideration three detailed submissions concerning the essentials of good government (which included honouring worthy hermits), the meaning of portents, and the basic principle that ultimately the restoration of cosmic order could be achieved only by the actions of the emperor himself. At the same time he recommended for office the disengaged scholars Li Gu and Huang Qiong. However, when a special proclamation was issued announcing a position at court for Lang Yi himself he pleaded illness and returned home.¹³⁰

Very similar was Xiang Kai 襄楷, who lived slightly later than Lang Yi. He is described as being fond of learning, with a wide knowledge of antiquity and skilled in astronomy and the arts of yin and yang. In 166, acting in a private capacity, he submitted two memorials expounding a whole range of portents. He bluntly insisted that it would be necessary for the emperor to rectify his personal conduct and put a stop to the power of the eunuchs if things were to improve. Not surprisingly, there were those who were displeased with this outspokenness. Xiang Kai was imprisoned, but because Emperor Huan was convinced of his sincerity in interpreting the portents he only had to serve a two year sentence. At the beginning of Emperor Ling's reign he was rehabilitated. Chen Fan recommended him as 'proper and correct', but he did not respond. Nor did he do so when he was imperially summoned as Erudite during the Zhongping 中平 period (184-89), and remained at home until his death.

What makes Xiang Kai especially interesting is the philosophical openness which went with his eremitic lifestyle. Not only does he refer to Confucian, yin-yang, and various astrological concepts in his memorials, but also has no hesitation in drawing on Daoist and Buddhist teachings to get his message across. He refers to the fact that Emperor Huan had initiated sacrifices to Laozi and the Buddha yet failed to give any serious consideration to their teachings.¹³¹ Xiang Kai is an example of the remarkable eclecticism of many Han intellectuals.

In the previous section I referred to the continuing influence of the ideas of the School of the Tillers in relation to the great hermit Xu Zhi. There is evidence of that influence in the attitudes of others of the period. Perhaps the best example is Xu Zhi's son Xu Yin

稼穡, who carried his father's ideals even further. When the period of mourning for his parents was over (they died when he was young), Xu Yin lived in seclusion in a forest, growing all his own food and for relaxation reading the classics. Despite the great hardship and deprivation he suffered, he resolutely stuck to his ideals and would not accept charity from others.¹³²

However, it was not always easy to reconcile the conflicting demands with regard to personal behaviour that the various philosophical schools made on the individual. Especially the ideals of the School of the Tillers could present problems in this way. A good example of this is Wang Ba, from the reign of Emperor Guangwu. Wang Ba chose a life of noble poverty, farming for a living, and his ideals were shared by his wife. One day a former friend who was now Chancellor of Chu sent his son (who was also an official) to deliver a letter to Wang Ba. When the distinguished visitor arrived, Wang Ba's own son, who had been ploughing in the fields, was so overawed by this correct, sophisticated figure that he could not look him in the face. Wang Ba was mortified, and after the visitor had departed asked his wife's forgiveness for what he, as father, had inflicted on their children: it was one thing to choose a life of rustic simplicity for oneself, it was quite another thereby to turn one's sons into dishevelled country bumpkins who knew nothing of rites and propriety.¹³³ Wang Ba's wife may have reassured him that he had done the right thing and should not feel guilty towards his children, but the moral dilemma was a very real one, and one might expect that moments of guilt and self-doubt continued to trouble Wang Ba. The same dilemma was to trouble Tao Yuanming (365-427), who in a final testament written for his sons was able to draw some solace from the words of Wang Ba's wife when facing up to the fact of the hardship he

imposed on his family by choosing to be a farmer rather than a government official.¹³⁴

If Wang Ba had difficulty in reconciling his commitment to a farmer's life with his duties towards his children, Zhou Xie (from Emperor Shun's reign) had difficulty reconciling it with his wish to be a filial son. He was an authority on the Book of Changes and the Rites, and transformed those around him with his exemplary conduct, but also insisted on being completely self-sufficient, eating nothing that he had not produced himself. Feeling that going off to dwell in isolation or forsaking the land of his parents was out of the question, he lived in a thatched hut built by an ancestor, on the crest of the ridge above his parents' fields, in which he laboured unceasingly.¹³⁵

Physical labour in agriculture, especially when it was motivated by the austere ideal of self-subsistence, was not considered demeaning for an idealistic scholar. However, to work in a junior capacity for the government, particularly at a local level, was considered to be so. This was partly because of the fact that a junior position subjected its incumbent to pressure from corrupt and inept superiors. As Zengzi 曾子 said, 'To shrug one's shoulders and smile obsequiously is more exhausting than working in a vegetable plot in summer'.¹³⁶ But it was also because the lowliness of the position did not match the image of loftiness and talent many scholars had of themselves. The most striking example of this is Feng Liang, a friend of Zhou Xie who was orphaned early and at the age of thirty sui was employed in a lowly capacity by the county authorities. One day when he had been sent out to welcome the Investigator 嗇郵, the ignominy of his position suddenly dawned on him. He threw off his official cap

and gown, overturned his carriage, killed the horse and made off. It was assumed that he had been killed by wild animals or bandits, and ten years passed before anyone heard of him again.¹³⁷ Less dramatic but quite as emphatic was the twelve sui old Guo Tai's response to his mother's attempt to get him to ease their financial difficulties by taking a position as county clerk: 'How could a man like me allow myself to be used as somebody else's lackey?'¹³⁸

Self-image and moral indignation could also operate in different ways. Thus Zhou Hsieh 周 璠 (111-160; the son of Zhou Ju 周 舉, not to be confused with the Zhou Xie 周 燮 of his father's generation) went into complete seclusion when a former clerk of his father's, despite his unseemly behaviour and abuse of the rites, was promoted and was much more highly regarded than Zhou Hsieh himself. This initial decision was reinforced by the fact that Liang Ji was now coming to the height of his power, and Zhou Hsieh lived in isolation for more than ten years, 'emulating Lao Dan's purity and quietude'. He opened his doors to guests only after having a premonition of Liang Ji's death.¹³⁹

The evidence presented in this section gives some indication of the complexity and variety of scholarly culture in the Later Han period, and the readiness with which scholars wove together ideas and attitudes from numerous philosophical schools. Generally speaking, the notion of doctrinal purity or strict adherence to the teachings of only one school seems to have been contrary to the intellectual trend of the times, though certainly dogmatists did occur. As far as eremitism is concerned, however, it should be clear from the preceding two sections that the philosophical positions which led individual scholars to espouse eremitism rarely were constructed from the

teachings of one school only. Certainly in the case of many, Confucian considerations were dominant, but frequently it makes little more sense to talk about 'Confucian hermits' than it does to talk about 'Daoist hermits', 'yin-yang hermits', 'Tiller hermits', or even 'Buddhist hermits'. All these streams of thought intermingled, and generalisations which attempt to reduce the ideals and motivations of individuals to a matter of allegiance to any given philosophical school are to be avoided.

By way of conclusion of this survey of eremitism in the Later Han, I would like to consider in slightly more detail a figure who to me seems to embody many of the finest characteristics of Han eremitism, and that is Liang Hong. What makes Liang Hong especially interesting is that a number of poems he wrote have survived. Those poems not only give moving expression to his efforts to remain true to high ideals in a hostile environment, they also given unique insight into the complexity of the motives and attitudes that led men to become hermits.

9. Liang Hong

Liang Hong, styled Boluan 伯鸞, came from Pingling 平陵 county in Fufeng 扶風 commandery.¹⁴⁰ His father was enfeoffed by Wang Mang for his services but died while Hong was still young. By the time Hong began to study at the Imperial Academy (which had been re-established by Guangwu in 29 A.D.) his family was very poor. A scholar of great ability and encyclopaedic knowledge, he was not interested in 'chapter and verse' exegesis of the classics.

At the completion of his studies, instead of embarking on an official career, he tended pigs in Shanglin 上林 Park. Fan Ye does not tell us the reason for this. Those of a sceptical turn of mind might look for political reasons, such as that his father's association with Wang Mang made it impossible for him to obtain a post under Guangwu. However, what evidence there is indicates that Guangwu had no objection to giving office to those who had personally served Wang Mang, let alone to their sons.¹⁴¹ The Qing scholar Wang Mingsheng believed that Hong never took office in order to erase his father's shame,¹⁴² but there is no evidence that Liang Hong considered his father's association with Wang Mang shameful. That he chose to take up the lowly occupation of pig farmer suggests that his reasons were quite different, that if his father's life and death had taught him anything it related to the dangers and false values of official life, and that this led him to pursue Zhuangzi's ideal of the sagely hermit living anonymously among the common people. This is confirmed by the statement in the Dongguan Han ji that when Liang Hong was a student at the Imperial Academy he and a friend swore they would never become officials under imperial authority. (When his friend eventually did accept a minor post, Hong wrote a letter reproaching him, and they went their separate ways).¹⁴³

Whether or not he was a successful pigkeeper is not recorded. However, one day Liang Hong made the mistake of letting a fire get away, with the result that some houses were burned. He gave away all his pigs in compensation, but this was still not enough, so he asked to be allowed to work off the remainder. This was permitted and Hong slaved at his tasks from morning till night. His behaviour convinced those who had lost their homes that this was no ordinary man. They began to show him the greatest respect and attempted to return his

pigs. Hong refused to accept them and returned to his native place.

Back in Pingling Liang Hong met a soulmate in Meng Guang 孟光, a woman who was neither young nor pretty, but strong, and just as committed as he himself to a simple life of hard work and virtuous endeavour.¹⁴⁴ When they were married it was she who reminded him of his ideals of 'living in seclusion to avoid disaster' and 'having no desires'.¹⁴⁵ At Meng Guang's urging they withdrew to the Baling 霸陵 Mountains, where they lived by farming and weaving, and amused themselves by reading and playing the qin.¹⁴⁶ Hong admired the noble hermits of bygone days and wrote eulogies for twenty-four of the most distinguished ones of the Han period. By so doing he served as an important model for that later hermit and recorder of the lives of lofty men, Huangfu Mi.¹⁴⁷

In spring 80 A.D., however, Liang Hong and Meng Guang moved east. The sight of Luoyang as they bypassed it inspired Hong to voice his disapproval of imperial extravagance and the exploitation of the common people on which it depended. The result was his song 'Five Exclamations':

I climbed that Beimang Hill
 Oh!
 Turned to gaze on the imperial city
 Oh!
 The towering peaks of palaces
 Oh!
 The hard labours of the people
 Oh!
 Stretch on forever without end
 Oh!

Such audacity could not be tolerated. Emperor Zhang tried to find Liang Hong in order to silence him, but he managed to avoid arrest by changing his name and hiding in the western Shandong region for a while before moving on to Wu.¹⁴⁸

The sentiments expressed in 'Five Exclamations' are all the more striking because they were uttered during the reign of an emperor widely regarded as an enlightened ruler concerned about the welfare of his subjects. Thus Liang Hong's song must be interpreted as a condemnation not of particular abuses of the political system, but of the system as such, a denunciation of the iniquity of a system which enslaved the common people in order to provide luxury and excess for those at the top. It is a type of political protest which owes more to the radical social ideas of Zhuangzi and the Tillers than to Confucian reformist sentiments.

Liang Hong stayed in Wu for the remainder of his life. He attached himself to the great family of Gao Botong 皋伯通, earning a living by husking rice. However, when Gao Botong observed the perfect respect which Meng Guang showed for her husband, he realised that he must be an exceptional man and lodged them in his own house. Thanks to this unlooked for security, Liang Hong was able to write a work of more than ten sections.¹⁴⁹ Eventually he became ill, and realising that death was imminent gave instructions that his wife and son should return to their native place after his funeral. He was buried near the tumulus of the ancient hero of Wu, Yaoli 要離,¹⁵⁰ because everyone believed that such a great patriot and a man of such integrity belonged together.

The picture which emerges from the material relating to Liang Hong is of a man who really did attempt to seek nothing but moral perfection, and had little more than the moral support of his wife to help make poverty and hardship bearable. We are fortunate in that one of his works which has survived is a poem he wrote when leaving the Lu - Qi region for Wu, for this poem communicates

something of the emotions and ideals which led this man to live the life he chose:

I am leaving this old state,
 Travelling far,
 To a distant destination,
 In the south-east.
 My heart is anxious,
 Downcast and distressed,
 My resolve is wavering,
 Now weak, now strong.
 Wanting a whip and carriage,
 To speed me on my way,
 I have the complaints of my vulgarity,
 The slanders against me.
 I fear the crooked have been raised up,
 And set above the straight,
 And all the former fine talk
 Was so much empty prattle.
 I certainly am free of shame,
 At standing on my own,
 But hope there in that other province
 They honour worthy men.
 Carefree I shall wander,
 And roam pleasantly,
 In the manner of Confucius,
 Travelling everywhere.
 Should I happen to see
 Something that delights me,
 I shall leave my cart
 And travel by water.
 I shall pass where Ji Zhai¹⁵¹ lived,
 There at Yanling
 And search for Lu Zhonglian,¹⁵²
 By the ocean shore.
 Though perhaps I shall not find
 The lustre of their features,
 With luck the power of their spirit
 Will abide with me.
 Now it is the last month of spring,
 The flowers are lush,
 The wheat is full and heavy,
 Growing luxuriantly.¹⁵³
 I lament that this time of abundance,
 Must soon pass away,
 And grieve that this fragrance
 Shall one day decay.
 What troubles my heart
 Cannot be stopped;
 From lasting anguish
 There is no respite.
 Mouths gossip and clamour,
 Spreading slander against me.
 Apprehension fills me:
 Who could remain here?

This poem reveals a mind which is far from having attained a sage-like mastery of the self and sublime indifference to the world. What it communicates, above all, is a sense of continuing moral effort, of Liang Hong's struggle to retain a hold on himself lest in an unheeded moment he might slip back into the grip of desires that he cannot eradicate. In other words, it enables us to see that purity and quietude were ideals precisely because they were things which did not come easily, that more often than not they represented only what men would have liked to be, not what they actually were.¹⁵⁴ But the poem expresses more than this unending struggle against human fallibility. There is also Liang Hong's sense of trepidation at what he is about to undertake, his sense of personal isolation in his quest for goodness - also expressed in his poem to his friend Gao Hui¹⁵⁵ - which here leads him to turn for support to the spirit of the great men of the past. There is his sense of the mutability of all worldly things, including fame, and also, of course, his political criticisms, which in this case owe more to Confucius than Zhuangzi.

Was Liang Hong a Confucian hermit, or was he a Daoist hermit? It is possible to think of contexts in which the question might be of significance. However, once we have gained some insight into the motivations and ideas of an individual such as Liang Hong, we realise that no straightforward enumeration of philosophical doctrines is likely to account for his behaviour. Although he was influenced by the teachings of various schools of thought, the final mix of ideas was his own, the product of his personality and circumstance as much as of intellectual endeavour. The same is true of the other hermits of the Han period, about whom, unfortunately, we usually know considerably less. But one group about whom we do know quite a lot is the very articulate group of intellectuals who chose to adopt the role

of hermit at court. These men will be discussed in the next chapter.

NOTES

1. HS 72/3096. For a detailed account of the rise and fall of Liu Xuan, see Hans Bielenstein, 'The Restoration of the Han Dynasty II', Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 31(1957), 11-112.
2. HHS 13/513, 521-22.
3. HHS 13/539; also 13/526. On Wei Ao's respectful treatment of scholars and hermits, see also Yü Ying-shih, 'Dong Han zhengquan zhi jianli', 145-46; on his political career see Bielenstein, 'Restoration of the Han Dynasty II', 159-98.
4. HHS 13/535.
5. HHS 13/535, 537.
6. HHS 81/2668-70; HHJ 3/3b; DGHJ 16/11b; HYGZ 10C/173-74.
7. HHS 81/2670; HYGZ 10A/138.
8. The eclipse is mentioned in HHS 10/321, but there is no indication of the order for the recommendation of worthy men.
9. HHS 81/2666-68.
10. HHS 81/2670; HYGZ 10B/147, 156.
11. HHS 81/2668; HYGZ 10B/156. On Gongsun Shu's treatment of hermits see also Yü Ying-shih, 'Dong Han zhengquan zhi jianli', 149-50.
12. 'Dong Han zhengquan zhi jianli', 183. Emperor Guangwu's reliance on the support of scholars to consolidate his hold over the empire is discussed by Zhao Yi, Nianer shi zhaji, 4/79-80.
13. HHJ 1/8b.
14. HYGZ 5/69.
15. Cited in YWLJ 10/190; Yu, 183.
16. Chapter 2, notes 169 and 180.
17. Bielenstein, 'The Restoration of the Han Dynasty IV', 31, makes the strange remark that 'Guangwu showed little interest in summoning scholars. He wooed recluses, but there met with spectacular failure'. Quite apart from the fact of the considerable evidence, already alluded to, that Guangwu attached great importance to winning scholars to his court, the implication in Bielenstein's remark that recluses as a social category were distinct from scholars is totally misleading. To woo hermits was precisely an attempt to win scholars to court - both the scholar-hermits themselves and other scholars who would hear of this courteous treatment of virtuous men.

18. HHS 83/2756-57. This is a good example of the fact that descriptions of hermits as 'men of the mountains and forests' or 'cliffs and caves' are not always to be taken literally. The famous hermits summoned by Guangwu were certainly not the type to be found living in caves. The citation is from LY 20.1. Fan ye also comments on the respect Guangwu had for hermits in HHS 67/2185.
19. HHS 83/2758. These two old men unsuccessfully tried to warn him off his ambitious undertaking.
20. Later scholars did not necessarily regard him with unqualified admiration. Thus Ying Shao, FSTY 4/2b, takes him to task for fighting a duel in his younger days with a district official who had publicly humiliated him.
21. HHS 83/2762; DGHJ 16/12b-13a. HHJ 5/8b-9b contains two edicts in Zhou Dang's defence, in which he is also likened to Xuyou, Chaofu and the Four Silverhairs.
22. HHS 83/2762; HHJ 5/9a; DGHJ 16/12b. According to the Li ji, 'There are Confucians who above do not (take the position of) subject of the Son of Heaven, and below do not serve the feudal lords' (Li ji zhengyi 59/443A).
23. According to HHS 83/2763, Yan Guang (styled Ziling 子陵) was also known by the personal name Zun 尊, and came from Yuyao 餘姚 in Kuaiji. As is pointed out by Wang Xianqian 王先謙 (1842-1917) in Hou Han shu jijie 集解 (Changsha, 1923), 83/5b-6a, the attribution of the name Zun to Yan Guang appears to be the result of him being confused either with Zhuang Zun (referred to as Yan Zun by Ban Gu), or Yan Zun (styled Wangsi 王叟) from Langzhong 閬中, who in fact served as Inspector of Yangzhou 揚州. This confusion also occurs in the commentary to WX 36/19a (but not to WX 39/22a-23a). The Kuaiji dianlu (cited in commentary to SGZ 57/1326) uses 'Yan Zun' when clearly referring to Yan Guang. On Yan Wangsi, as well as the texts mentioned in the Collected Commentaries to HHS, see HYGZ 12/218. Yan Guang and Emperor Guangwu as fellow students are discussed by Liu Lingyu 劉令猷, 'Guangwu Liu Xiu de taixue tongxue 光武劉秀的太學同學', Zhongyuan wenxian 中原文獻 6.7(1974), 29-30.
24. HHS 83/2763-64, also 48/1619; HHJ 5/8b; DGHJ 16/12a; QJHHS 663-64; GSZ C/1a-2a. The late Tang text Wunengzi B/27-29 provides an imaginative account of Yan Guang refusing Guangwu's overtures: Yan Guang puts his case so strongly that thereafter Guangwu 'did not dare' to attempt to make Yan Guang his subject.
25. HHS 83/2764.
26. HHJ 8/18b-19a and DGHJ 17/5b-6a both have 郗鑒.
27. HHS 53/1740; HHJ 8/18b-19a.
28. In addition to the eighteen mentioned in Chapter 2, note 180, there were:
 The two old men
 from Yewang 野王二老 HHS 83/2758

Jing Dan	井丹	HHS 83/2764-65; HHJ 7/10a
Gao Hui	高恢	HHS 83/2768
Gao Huo	高獲	HHS 82A/2711
Chunyu Hong	淳于洪	HHS 39/1301
Feng Zhou	馮冑	HHS 82A/2718
Zhou Ze	周澤	HHS 79B/2578
Liang Hong	梁鴻	HHS 83/2765-68
Niu Lao	牛牢	GSZ C/2a

The hermit by the eastern sea 東海隱者, GSZ C/2a-b.

29. See HHS 39/1298-1300. On Liang Hong and Chunyu Hong, see HHS 83/2765-68, 39/1301. Liang Hong I discuss at length in Section 9 below.
30. HHS 80B/2613. Liu Yi's opinion notwithstanding, Emperor Ming does appear to have made some effort to honour worthy men and had some success in persuading them to come to court. According to HHJ 8/18a-b, as soon as he ascended the throne he bestowed marquises on the senior officials Zhao Xi 趙熹, Li Xin 李新 and Feng Fang 馮芳 'because of what they had undergone in the mountain forests 以山林之勞'. Using King Cang as intermediary, Emperor Ming was able to persuade Wu Liang 吳良, a man of the strictest morality, to come to court; a little later the worthy Cheng Gong 承宮 (d.76 A.D.) also responded to a summons by easy carriage (HHS 27/942-45).
31. HHS 3/139 has 其以巖穴為先, 勿取浮華, while HHJ 11/13b reads: 巖穴之德為先, 勿取浮華.
32. HHS 83/2757.
33. HHS 27/945-46; DGHJ 18/4a.
34. Chunyu Hong was a student of the Laozi who throughout the reigns of Guangwu and Ming lived an exemplary life among the common people, withdrawing to secluded places in the mountains when summonses to office became too frequent and importunate. In 76, the first year of his reign, Emperor Zhang issued an edict commending his conduct and instructing the commandery authorities to present him with twenty bolts of silk. After this he was summoned, appointed Gentleman Consultant, honoured and promoted. He died in office in 80. (HHS 39/1301; DGHJ 18/8b records tales of his virtuous conduct but makes no mention of his holding office). Sima Jun and Ru Yu were both treated with the greatest courtesy by Emperor Zhang after being recommended for office by Jia Kui 賈逵 (30-101). When Sima Jun retired due to ill-health and old age after serving as Palace Attendant 侍中 the emperor bestowed a Grandee's salary upon him. Ru Yu rose to become Chancellor of Lu, where his influence was such, we are told, that eight or nine thousand families went to live there in order to be under his benign influence (HHS 36/1240; DGHJ 19/7b; QJHHS 478).
35. HHS 64/2106, 83/2768-69; DGHJ 18/9b; QJHHS 474-75. Fan Ye comments that his father (Fan Tai 范泰, Marquis of Xuan 宣), while generally critical of the excesses to which

hermits went, had the greatest admiration for Gao Feng's unwavering devotion to lofty principles and indifference to the mean circumstances in which he lived.

36. HHS 83/2770.
37. HHS 83/2765-67; HHJ 11/14b.
38. One exception which might be said to fall into this category is the case of Jing Dan 井丹. At the end of the Jianwu period (c.55 A.D.) five of Emperor Guangwu's sons who held the title of 'King' were living together in the Northern Palace and liked to keep retainers. Yin Jiu 陰就, a younger brother of Empress Guanglie 光烈, was able to persuade them that on their behalf he would be able to get Jing Dan, who was famous both for his scholarship and purity of conduct. The worthy hermit was unable to avoid coming, and when he arrived Yin Jiu amused himself by giving him real hermit fare to eat: boiled wheat and onion leaves. Later, when Yin Jiu got up to go and his attendants brought in a palanquin, it was Jing Dan's turn to laugh. 'I've been told that King Jie 桀 [of Xia 夏] rode in a carriage drawn by men', he commented. 'Is that what this is?' At this everyone present blanched. Jing Dan returned home to live in seclusion and never again had anything to do with public affairs (HHS 83/2764-65; HHJ 7/10a; DGHJ 16/13a). However, Jing Dan's objections obviously were not against the person occupying the throne so much as those who misused the power and influence they derived from him.
39. HHS 83/2757.
40. HHS 83/2757; cf. HS 72/3097.
41. HHS 62/2069. The phrase 'speaking out while remaining fastidiously pure' comes from LY 18.8.
42. HHS 61/2042.
43. On this see HHS 61/2020; de Crespigny, 'The Recruitment System of the Imperial Bureaucracy of Later Han', 76.
44. HHS 61/2042; HHJ 18/2a.
45. Wang Mang is the obvious example of excessive power in the hands of imperial relatives, but by no means the first. See Zhao Yi, Nianer shi zhaji, 3/59-60. An important case of excessive power in the hands of eunuchs is that of Shi Xian 石顯 and Hong Gong 弘恭, who in the reign of Emperor Yuan brought about the death of the great scholar and statesman Xiao Wangzhi 蕭望之 (d.47 B.C.) and had such influence that much of the bureaucracy was afraid of them. See HS 78/3286-88, 93/3726-30; also Zhao Yi, Nianer shi zhaji, 5/95.
46. See HHS 2/98, 3/133.

47. HHS 39/1306-10.
48. HHS 39/1307; see also DGHJ 17/2b.
49. HHS 36/1241.
50. HHS 17/663.
51. HHS 46/1556-57; HHJ 17/3a. On Feng Liang, see section 8 below. HHJ 18/4b-5a records an extremely interesting discussion concerning the role of the spiritual influence of the Central Holy Mountain, Mount Song, in causing Gui 貴 commandery to produce an exceptional number of outstanding virtuous men (including Xuyou and Chaofu). In the course of this discussion (which took place late in Emperor An's reign), Zhu Chong 朱寵, who was appointed Grand Commandant at the beginning of the reign of Emperor Shun, commented that none of the great worthies of Gui Commandery could compare with Zhou Dang of Taiyuan and Zhou Xie of Runan.
52. Some idea of the development of eremitism in the later half of the dynasty can be obtained from the number of hermits referred to in material pertaining to the reign of each emperor. I include here a list of the names of men mentioned as having reputations as hermits, whether or not they ultimately took office, according to the reign with which they are most closely identified. Such categorisation inevitably is somewhat arbitrary, as the majority of them lived under three or four emperors. Nor is the list intended to be exhaustive; it draws almost solely on Fan Ye's Hou Han shu (all references are to HHS unless stated otherwise). However, it does include those who adopted the role of 'hermit at court' and are discussed in Chapter 4.

Emperor He and the Infant Emperor (89-106)

Bao Ang	鮑昂	29/1023
Cui Yin	崔胤	52/1718-22
Gongsun Song	公孫松	36/1241
Gu Feng	顧奉	36/1241
Su Shun	蘇順	80A/2617

Emperor An (107-125)

Cui Yuan	崔瑗	52/1722-24
Dou Zhang	竇章	23/821-22
Fan Ying	樊英	82A/2721-24
Feng Liang	馮良	53/1741-43
Kong Qiao	孔高	82A/2722
Lang Zong	郎宗	30B/1053
Li Bing	李昂	82A/2722
Li Chong	李充	81/2684-85
Liao Fu	廖扶	82A/2719
Wang Fu	王輔	82A/2722
Xue Bao	薛苞	39/1294-95
Yang Zhen	楊震	54/1759-60
Zhi Xun	支旬	60A/1953
Zhou Xie	周燮	53/1741-43

Emperors Shun (126-144), Chong 冲 (145) and Zi 質 (146)

Dai Liang	戴良	83/2772
Dong Ban	董班	63/2088
Fa Zhen	法真	83/2774
Feng Hao	馮顥	HYGZ 10B/145
He Chun	賀純	36/2082, 61/2033
Huang Cuo	黃錯	61/2033
Huang Qiong	黃瓊	61/2032-38
Huang Xian	黃憲	53/1744-45
Lang Yi	郎顛	30B/1053-75
Li Gu	李固	63/2073-89
Ma Rong	馬融	60A/1953-73
Ren Tang	任棠	51/1689, 61/2033
Su Zhang	蘇章	83/2771
Wang Fu	王符	HHS 49/1630-43
Wang Wei	王維	HYGZ 10B/147
Xun Shu	荀淑	62/2049-50
Yang Hou	楊厚	30A/1047-50
Zhang Heng	張衡	59/1897-1941
Zhang Kai	張楷	36/1242-45
Zhao Kang	趙康	43/1463
Zhao Qi	趙岐	64/2121

Emperor Huan (147-167)

Chenliu laofu	陳留老父	83/2775-76
Cui Shi	崔寔	52/1725-31
Fan Zhizhang	樊志張	82B/2732
Fu Rong	符融	68/2232-33
Gongsha Mu	公沙穆	82A/2730-31
Guo Tai	郭太	68/2225-27
Han Kang	韓康	83/2770-71
Hanyin laofu	漢陰老父	83/2775
He Xie	赫轅	34/1184
Hu Wu	胡武	34/1184
Jiang Gong	姜肱	53/1749-50
Jiang Qi	姜岐	51/1695
Jiao Shen	矯慎	83/2771-72
Kong Yu	孔昱	67/2213
Li Tan	李曇	53/1748
Liu Shu	劉淑	67/2190
Lu Zhu	陸著	TSJC ce618/3a
Ma Yao	馬瑤	83/2772
Mao Rong	茅容	68/2228
Meng Min	孟敏	68/2229
Shentu Pan	申屠蟠	53/1750-52
Tan Fu	檀敷	67/2215
Tian Sheng	田盛	68/2233
Wei Huan	魏桓	53/1741
Wei Zhu	韋著	26/921, 53/1746-47
Xia Fu	夏馥	67/2201-02
Xiang Kai	襄楷	30B/1075-85
Xu Shao	許劭	68/2234-35
Xu Zhi	徐禕	53/1746-48
Yang Bing	楊秉	54/1769-73
Yang Ci	楊賜	54/1775-85
Yu Cheng	虞秉	68/2229
Yuan Hong	袁闕	45/1525-26

Yuan Hung	袁弘	45/1526
Yuan Lang	袁闓	53/1756
Zhong Dai	钟岱	56/1829
Zhong Hao	钟皓	62/2064-65
Zhong Hao	钟嵩	56/1826
Zhong Jin	钟璜	62/2068
Zhou Xie	周劔	61/2031
Zhou You	周瑒	TSJC ce 618/3a

Emperor Ling (168-188) and Early Jian'an Period

Bian Xiang	邊襄	80B/2647
Bing Yuan	邴原	SGZ 11/350-54
Cai Yong	蔡邕	60B/1979-2008
Chen Ji	陳紀	62/2067-68
Chen Shi	陳寔	62/2065-67
Dong Fu	董扶	82B/2734
Guan Ning	管寧	SGZ 11/354-60
Han Rong	韓融	53/1754, 62/2063
Hu Shao	胡昭	SGZ 11/362
Hua Tuo	華佗	82B/2736-39
Li Kai	李膺	HHJ 25/7a-b
Mi Heng	糜衡	80B/2653-58
Pang Gong	龐公	83/2776-77
Ren An	任安	79A/2551, 82B/2734
Wang Lie	王烈	SGZ 11/355-56
Wei Heng	衛衡	HYZ 10C/163
Xiang Xu	向栩	81/2673
Xu Yin	徐胤	53/1748
Xun Jing	荀靖	62/2050
Xun Shuang	荀爽	62/2050-57
Xun Yue	荀悅	62/2058-63
Yang Biao	楊彪	54/1786-89
Zhang Biao	張表	QJHHS 224
Zhang Feng	張奉	QJHHS 224
Zhang Xuan	張玄	36/1244
Zheng Xuan	鄭玄	35/1207-12
Zhongchang Tong	仲長統	49/1643-60

53. HHS 82A/2722; HHJ 18/2a-b. The commentary quotes Xie Cheng's 謝承 Hou Han shu concerning the men summoned together with Fan Ying. Kong Qiao lived in obscurity, cultivating his ideals and studying so enthusiastically that for a whole year he would not venture out of his gate. He ignored the imperial summons and died at home. Li Bing was also an eager scholar indifferent to wealth and fame. In his house people treated each other like honoured guests. The provincial and commandery authorities repeatedly invited him with all due ceremony, but he never responded; even when he was recommended as 'prolific talent' and appointed Grand Administrator of Shaoling 召陵 he did not go to take up his duties, and remained at home to the last. Wang Fu was slightly less unbending. He lived in seclusion in a hut in the wilderness, was recommended as 'possessing the Way', responded and became Gentleman Consultant thanks to his skill in interpreting portents and analysing the causes of good and bad fortune. But he retired on grounds of ill-health, and it was after this that Emperor An summoned him. However, he too remained at home until his death. Part of the text of

Emperor An's letter ordering that these worthies be summoned is included in Xie Cheng's passage concerning Lang Zong 郎宗, one of the two men who did respond to the summons. I include it here because it shows that while Emperor An may not have gone to the ceremonial extremes of the young Emperor Shun in feting hermits, he nevertheless did try to ensure that such men were treated with perfect ceremonial honour: 'When Lang Zong, Li Bing, Kong Qiao, et al., previously received the order summoning them they could not agree to lower their ideals. We fear that those responsible [for summoning them] carried out the order ineptly and that the ritual observances were not perfect, causing them to be men who found advancing difficult and retiring easy, hidden dragons who would not bow themselves down. Each is to be approached with fine rites and be escorted to the Equerry Office (公車), so that through them [the failings of] the state's government may be examined and repaired and Our deficiencies remedied'.

54. HHS 30A/1047-50; HHJ 18/2a.
55. HHS 59/1897-98.
56. HHS 60A/1953. According to the Sanfu jue lu zhu, cited in the commentary, it was from Zhi Xun that Ma Rong gained his wide literary knowledge, and Zhi Xun was so impressed by his student's ability that he gave him his daughter in marriage. On Zhi Xun see also GSZ C/5b.
57. HHS 4/178.
58. HHS 5/210. HHJ 19/7b, records an edict from Emperor Shun asking senior officials to 'bring out into the open those in hiding'. Another edict from the brief reign of Emperor Chong in 145 commands the recommendation of those who are 'worthy and good, proper and correct, scholars who live in seclusion cultivating the Way' (HHS 6/273).
59. HHS 81/2685; HJ 15/3a. The phrase 'hermit and great Confucian' probably derives from Xunzi. It was in response to this call that Li Chong 李充 was brought to court. Li Chong was a man of great rectitude who, despite his poverty, needed to be forced to accept a position in the local commandery administration and had refused to heed a summons from Emperor He. When he came to court and had been appointed Palace Attendant, he was approached one day during a feast by Commander-in-Chief Deng Zhi 鄧騭, who admired him greatly, to ask his advice as to how he could summon outstanding men for high level appointments. Li Chong began to express misgivings concerning 'scholars who dwelt in seclusion with their hearts set on the Way'. At this Deng Zhi tried to get him to eat something in order to keep him quiet, which prompted Li Chong to stalk out indignantly. When he was warned later that by criticising such men in front of Deng Zhi he was not exactly gathering blessings for his descendants, Li Chong retorted that the realisation of ideals had to come before the well-being of descendants (HHS 81/2684-85; HHJ 15/3a-b; see also DGHJ 19/7a-b).

60. Li Gu was recommended by Lang Yi 郎顛, who himself lived in seclusion by the sea and refused to accept official appointments despite being recommended as 'possessing the Way' and 'proper and correct' and also being summoned by Emperor Shun. (Lang Yi's father Lang Zong, referred to in note 53 above, had cultivated a similar lifestyle after briefly holding office; Zhen gao 14/4b-5a provides an account of his Daoist interests). A personal distaste for serving in office does not appear to have inhibited him from bringing other worthy men to the attention of officialdom, and in this he was like a number of his contemporaries. When recommending Li Gu to the throne he referred to him as 'the disengaged scholar Li Gu of Hanzhong 漢中' (HHS 30B/1070). Li Gu was forty years old at the time. On Li Gu see also HHJ 20/3b-4a, 21/2a-3a.
61. HHS 82B/2725. According to Fan Ye, Zhu Mu 朱穆 (100-163) was of the same opinion.
62. Huang Qiong was summoned by Emperor Shun in 127 along with two other disengaged scholars, He Chun 賀純 and Yang Hou 楊厚. According to Xie Cheng's Hou Han shu, cited in the commentary, HHS 36/2082, He Chun, styled Zhongzhen 仲真, came from Shanyin 山陰 in Kuaiji. He was summoned ten times by the Ducal Offices 公府, three times recommended as 'worthy and good, proper and correct', five times imperially summoned to become an Erudite, and four times imperially summoned by the Equerry Office, but refused each call. Later he did go to court however, where he interpreted portents and had some influence on the emperor, before being appointed as Grand Administrator of Jiangxia 江夏. Yang Hou is discussed further in section 8 below.
63. Paraphrase of LY 18.8.
64. The great poet Song Yu 宋玉 is recorded as having said to King Xiang of Chu 楚王襄 (r.295-263 B.C.) that unlike another song composed at his court, the chorus of which could be sung by thousands of people, there were only several hundred capable of joining in the chorus of Song Yu's Yangchun baixue 陽春白雪 because the tune was so lofty and refined. See Dui Chuwang wen 對楚王問, attributed to Song Yu, WX 45/1b-2b; Xiangyang qijiu zhuan 襄陽耆舊傳, cited in TPYL 572/2b.
65. HHS 61/2032. There is an intriguing confirmation of Fan Ying's uselessness in government in HYGZ 10C/163, where Wei Heng 衛衡, an ex-student of his, uses it as an argument against taking office himself: 'As to Fan Jiqi and Yang Zhonghuan 仲桓 [i.e. Yang Hou], although they responded to the summons and invitation with gifts, in what way did they benefit the age? When [Zhong] ni 仲尼 and [Meng] ke 孟軻 could do nothing they remained at rest. That is why [Zhuang] Junping and [Zheng] Zizhen refused to lower their ideals'. Little is known about the other disengaged scholars referred to in Li Gu's letter. Hu Yuanan and Zhu Zhongshao are not mentioned elsewhere. It is possible that Gu Jihong is the Gu Feng referred to in HHS 36/1241, 79B/2581. Xue Mengchang is Xue Bao 皐, who was

- renowned for his filial piety when mourning his mother. He received a special imperial summons in 121, was appointed Palace Attendant, but asked to be excused from service on the grounds of illness. Emperor An bestowed presents on him and sent him home, where he lived to a ripe old age of more than eighty (HHS 39/1294-95).
66. HHS 63/2081. This passage is not included in the version of the memorial given in HHJ 19/8b-9a.
67. HHS 30A/1050.
68. HHS 82A/2724-25. A view similar to that of Li Gu and Fan Ye was also put by Xu Tianlin (fl.1205), Dong Han huiyao 東漢會要 (Taipei: Shijie shuju 1960) 27/298. The idea of the usefulness of the useless is developed in Zhuangzi, to which Fan Ye alludes.
69. HHS 54/1771. Yang Bing came from a family which had a tradition of eremitism. His grandfather Yang Bao had refused to serve Emperors Ai and Ping as well as Wang Mang, while his father Yang Zhen 楊震 (known as 'the Confucius from the lands west of the Pass' because of his learning and integrity) managed to resist pressures to take office until fifty years old, then rising to the position of Grand Commandant (HHS 54/1758-69; DGHJ 20/1a-b; QJHHS 402-04, 538). Yang Bing himself had a stormy career. Over forty before he responded to an official summons, he repeatedly resigned in protest against wrongs. It is important for an understanding of the case against him and Wei Zhu that Yang Bing had only recently (in 160) resigned from his position of Grand Master of Ceremonies 太常 in protest against the execution of Li Yun 李雲, who had memorialised the throne against the declaration of the Lady Deng 鄧 as empress. (On Li Yun see HHS 57/1851-52; on Yang Bing see HHS 54/1769-75, HHJ 22/9a-b). Yang Bing's son Yang Ci 楊賜 (d.185) and grandson Yang Biao 楊彪 (142-225) carried on the family tradition of establishing an early reputation for lofty eremitism and then going on to have a distinguished official career (HHS 54/1775-89; DGHJ 20/1b-2a; QJHHS, 404-06). Wei Zhu, who had ignored numerous other calls to office, remained in seclusion for the remainder of Emperor Huan's reign. Early in Emperor Ling's reign, however, it proved impossible for him to avoid responding to a summons as Chancellor of Donghai 東海. This was unfortunate for him in more ways than one, because as a result of both his own conduct while in office and that of his wife, he lost his former reputation (HHS 26/921, 53/1746-47; HHJ 21/3b, 23/5a; FSTY 5/5a-b).
70. FSTY 3/3a. Ying Shao compares him to such extremists as Chen Zhongzi and Bao Qiao.
71. HHS 34/1184.
72. On the response of these men to Dong Zhuo see HHS 35/1209, 53/1754, 60B/2005-06, 62/2057-58. On Han Rong see HHS 9/370, 53/1754, 62/2063, 70/2281, 72/2326, 2340, 74A/2376; on Chen Ji (a son of Chen Shi) see HHS 62/2067-68. All had been summoned the previous year (188) by Emperor Ling, along with

- a number of others, but not one responded (HHS 53/1754, HHJ 25/7a). The Hou Han ji wrongly attributes to the summonses of 188 to Dong Zhuo. It also mentions that one of the men summoned that year was Li Kai 李楷, who was widely regarded for his learning and filial conduct; he lived in seclusion in the mountain wilds and to the end of his days refused to take office (HHJ 25/7a-b).
73. HHS 64/2119; HHJ 25/17b-18a.
74. HHS 82B/2736-39. Hua Tuo's case contrasts sharply with Cao Cao's treatment of the hermit Hu Shao 胡昭 (163-250). Hu Shao responded to Cao Cao's summons early in the Jian'an period, but pleaded that he was an insignificant rustic and asked to be allowed to go home. Cao Cao gave his permission and went as far as to say: 'Men each have their own ideals, and those who go out (into the world of affairs) and those who stay at home (in seclusion) pursue different things; it is right that those who strive to the death and those who are refined and lofty should not bend to each other'. It may be that Cao Cao's magnanimous sentiments on this occasion have something to do with the fact that Hu Shao had stressed that he was of 'no use in military or in state affairs' (SGZ 11/362). What happened to the talented poet Bian Xiang 邊裏 is rather more typical: when he refused to bow to Cao Cao's will after having resigned his position in the disorders of the Chuping 初平 period (190-194), Cao Cao ordered him to be put to death (HHS 80B/2647).
75. Chi-yün Ch'en, Hsün Yüeh (A.D. 148-209): The Life and Reflections of an Early Medieval Confucian (Cambridge U.P., 1975), 70, states that the comments in his biography indicate that Xun Yue 'was forced to lead an "underground" existence like many other anti-eunuch partisans' of the time. While it is quite likely this was the case, it is not what is indicated by his biography, which says that he 'pleaded illness and lived in seclusion', suggesting simply that he withdrew from affairs by choice.
76. Han ji 25/6b-7a. This passage is also translated by Ch'en, Hsün Yüeh, 72. The quotation is from the Book of Songs, Mao 192, 'Zheng yue 正月'. On Ningwuzi, see LY 5.21; Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu, Duke Xi 28, 30, 31. On Jieyu see above, Chapter 1, section 3.
77. See my discussion of Zhuangzi, Chapter 1, section 5.
78. HHS 83/2776-77; also GSZ C/10a-b. According to the Xiangyang ji 襄陽記, cited in the commentaries to both HHS 83/2777 and SGZ 37/953-54, his correct name was Pang Degong 儂公. See also Li Zhi 李贄 (1527-1602) Zang shu 藏書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 66/1099.
79. HHS 53/1741. See also Rafe de Crespigny, 'Politics and Philosophy Under the Government of Emperor Huan, 159-168 A.D.', T'oung Pao, 66.1-3 (1980), 54.

80. On these men see SGZ 11/339-40, 350-60. Liaodong of course was not the only extremity to which people fled to escape the ravages of the Yellow Turban uprisings and civil wars. The early Chinese Buddhist Mouzi 牟子 (Pingjin guan 平津館 congshu ed., 1885) 1/1a, comments that 'following the death of Emperor Ling the empire was in disorder. Only Jiao 交 province [in the far south] was comparatively peaceful, and the outstanding men from the North all went to live there'.
81. The major sources of information on the proscriptions are HHS juan 67 and HHJ juan 22-23. For more detailed discussion of the events and the figures involved see especially Jin Fagen 金發根, 'Dong Han danggu renwu de fenxi 東漢黨錮人物的分析', BIHP 34.2(1963), 505-58; Rafe de Crespigny, 'Political Protest in Imperial China: The Great Proscription of Later Han, 167-184', Papers in Far Eastern History, 11 (March 1975), 1-36.
82. HHS 67/2188; de Crespigny, 'Political Protest in Imperial China', 34.
83. This observation was first made by Chen Yinke, 'Tao Yuanming zhi sixiang yu qingtian zhi guanxi 陶淵明之思想與清談之關係', in Chen Yinke xiansheng wenshi lunji 陳寅恪先生文史論集 (Hong Kong: Wenwen chubanshe, 1972), 381-82.
84. HHS 67/2217-18. On He Yong see also Ch'en Chi-yün, Hsün Yüeh, 28-29.
85. HHS 68/2226. I discuss Guo Tai in more detail in section 7.
86. HHS 67/2213, 2215; HHJ 22/15a-b. There is some confusion concerning the case of Tan Fu. See de Crespigny, 'Political Protest in Imperial China', 29. On Xia Fu as a Daoist figure, see Zhen gao 12/11a.
87. HHS 62/2065-67; HHJ 23/14b-15a.
88. HHS 62/2050-57; HHJ 26/5a-b. For an extended discussion of Xun Shuang's political views see Ch'en Chi-yün, 'A Confucian Magnate's Idea of Political Violence: Hsün Shuang's Interpretation of the Book of Changes', T'oung Pao, 54.1-3 (1968), 73-115.
89. HHS 35/1207-12; HHJ 22/6b-7a.
90. For example, see Shentu Pan's criticisms of Fan Pang, Gen Zhi 岑暉 et al., HHS 53/1752 and HHJ 22/16a-b; Ying Shao's criticisms of Du Mi, FSTY 5/7a-b; and Ge Hong's criticisms of Guo Tai, Baopuzi, waipian 46/1a-3b.
91. HHS 68/2225-26; HHJ 23/8b-9a.
92. HHJ 23/12b. HHS 68/2225 cites only the first two sentences.

93. HHS 68/2227. Cai Yong's inscription, 'Guo youdao beiwen 郭有道碑文', is included in WX 58/9a-11b.
94. HHS 68/2229, 2232-35. On Fu Rong see also HHJ 23/9a, DGHJ 21/3b, QJHHS 225-27; on Meng Min see HHJ 23/10a and the commentary to SSXY 3B/23a-b; on Mao Rong see HHS 53/1747, 68/2228, HHJ 23/9b; on Xu Shao see QJHHS 128-29. Like Guo Tai, Xu Shao was famous for his knowledge of men and wrote a book on the subject. See Yü Ying-shih, 'Han Jin zhi ji shi zhi xin zijue yu xin sichao 漢晉之際士之新自覺 與新思潮', orig. published in Xinya xuebao (1958), rpt. in Yü, Zhongguo zhishi jieceng shilun, 236-43.
95. SSXY 1A/1b.
96. Xun Shu was summoned during Emperor An's reign, but served only briefly before retiring. Recommended as 'worthy and good, proper and correct', in 154 he again came to court, where he criticised Liang Ji. Liang Ji removed him by having him appointed Chancellor to the Marquis of Langling 郎陵侯. Xun Shu soon resigned, and lived at home in seclusion until his death. His eight sons included Jing 靖, who never held office, conducted himself with perfect propriety and was known as the Master of Profound Conduct. See HHS 62/2049-50; HHJ 21/8b; QJHHS 640-41; GSZ C/11a; SSXY 1A/2a; Ch'en, Hsün Yüeh, 24-28.
97. In the transmission of the Hou Han shu there has been some confusion between Yuan Lang 袁朗 and Yuan Hong 袁宏 (see textual notes, HHS 53/1756). Yuan Lang, styled Fenggao 奉高, several times ignored calls to office 'but did not cultivate exceptional principles'. He finally accepted a position as Merit Officer and was widely respected (HHS 56/1820; also SSXY 1A/1a-2a, 13a-b, 15a-b). On the other hand, Yuan Hong, styled Xiafu 夏甫 (128-184), was a man of extremely strict ideals who was one of the most famous hermits of the age. Renowned for his uncompromising integrity and the filial piety he showed in mourning his father, he ignored a series of imperial summonses and devoted himself to farming and study. When the struggle between the Pure Faction and the eunuchs turned nasty, he reconciled a desire to withdraw completely from society and his duty towards his mother by building a sod hut in the courtyard of their home and remaining in it for the last eighteen years of his life. In that time he refused to see even his brothers, wife and children, paying his respects daily only to his mother (HHS 45/1525-26, 53/1746, 68/2226; HHJ 22/3a, 22/15b-16a, 23/4a; QJHHS 66-77; GSZ C/8b). Ying Shao criticises Yuan Hong for his extremism in FSTY 3/3b-4a. Yuan Hong's brother Yuan Hung 袁弘, styled Shaofu 邵甫, likewise refused all his life to have anything to do with public affairs. Ashamed at coming from a rich and powerful family, he changed his name and went to live with his teacher (HHS 45/1526-27).
98. HHS 53/1744. Both HHJ 23/14a-b and SSXY 1A/1b attribute this remark to Zhou Cheng 周乘 (styled Ziju 子居), also a contemporary of Chen Fan (see HHS 61/2023; QJHHS 476).

99. HHS 53/1744; HHJ 23/10a-b; SSXY 1A/1b-2a.
100. HHS 53/1745. The Siku quanshu zongmu (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1969), 124/2a-3a lists Tianluge waishi 天祿閣外史 in eight juan, supposedly by Huang Xian, with a prefatory poem by Xie An 謝安 (320-385), the hermit and ultimately great statesman of Eastern Jin. That both the text and the poem are late forgeries is confirmed by Fan Ye's statement (some fifty years after Xie An's death) that nothing of Huang Xian's thought was recorded.
101. HHJ 23/14b. One of the people influenced by Huang Xian's noble conduct was Dai Liang 戴良, who came from the same county and took up the role of virtuous hermit very seriously indeed. As a young man he was given to boasting about his personal purity, which his mother attempted to stop by braying like a donkey each time he did so. Whenever he saw Huang Xian he was always proper and correct, but would come home deflated, looking as if he had lost something, so that his mother would ask, 'Have you been to see that cow doctor's son again?', and Dai Liang would have to confess that he was not Huang Xian's equal. Unfortunately, neither the influence of his mother nor of Huang Xian seems to have been permanent: when asked later with whom he would compare himself, Dai Liang could think only of Confucius and Yu the Great 大禹 (HHS 53/1744, 83/2772-73; HHJ 23/14b; SSXY 1A/1b).
102. HHS 53/1749. The incident concerning the money overlooked by robbers appears in Xie Cheng's Hou Han shu (cited in the commentary to Fan Ye) and HHJ 22/3a. See also QJHHS 83-85, 401.
103. During the political machinations which followed the death of Emperor Huan, Jiang Gong was summoned to be appointed Grand Administrator, but he ignored the call and went to live in seclusion by the coast. When summoned by the young Emperor Ling (who extended to him the honour of writing out the edict in his own hand) he disappeared completely, living incognito and practising divination for a living. When the edict was finally revoked his family had no idea where he was and it was not until a year later that he appeared again. See HHS 53/1750; HHJ 23/5a; FSTY 5/5a-b.
104. The phrase is from Xie Cheng's Hou Han shu, cited in the commentary to HHS 53/1748.
105. HHS 53/1746-47.
106. HHS 53/1746 (also Xie Cheng's Hou Han shu, cited in the commentary); SSXY 1A/1a-b; QJHHS 80-82, 389-99.
107. HHJ 22/2a-3a; contrast HHS 53/1747.
108. HHS 53/1747-48; HHJ 23/11b. The grass was an allusion to the Book of Songs, Mao 186: 'a bunch of fresh grass/its owner is like jade'.

109. HHS 53/1748. Zeng Gong's 'Xu Ruzi citang ji 徐孺子祠堂記' is included together with commemorative pieces on Xu Zhi by other famous figures by Yang Ximin 楊希閔 in his Xu Zhengshi nianpu 徐徵士年譜 (1877; rpt. Shiwu jia nianpu congshu 十五家年譜叢書, Yangzhou, n.d.), 1/7b-11a. Nevertheless, the praise for Xu Zhi was not universal: Ying Shao criticises his extreme behaviour in FSTY 3/4a-b.
110. FSTY 3/3b.
111. HHS 81/2693-94.
112. HHS 30A/1047-50; see also QJHHS 223-24; HHJ 18/2a.
113. HHS 83/2774; also 26/906, 44/1505; QJHHS 178. YWLJ 37/657 contains a funerary inscription for Fa Zhen attributed to Hu Guang. However, Hu Guang died in 172, sixteen years before Fa Zhen. In expression the inscription is very similar to the remarks attributed in HHS 83/2774 to Fa Zhen's friend Guo Zheng 郭正, who is further said to have engraved his eulogy on stone. Most likely, therefore, YWLJ gives a more complete version of Guo Zheng's eulogy.
114. HHS 53/1750-54; HHJ 22/16a-b, 25/7b-8a; QJHHS 85-86, 401-02.
115. See HHS 83/2760, 2770-71; GSZ C/3b-4a; Xi Kang's Gaoshi zhuan, 418; QJHHS 474.
116. HHS 80A/2617.
117. HHS 83/2771-72. The scarcity of such figures in the major historical texts is of course a reflection of the essentially Confucian perspective of their authors. This intellectual bias can to some extent be countered by an examination of Daoist texts such as Tao Hongjing's Zhen gao and Zhang Junfang's 張君房 (10th and 11th centuries) Yunji qiqian 雲笈七籤, which contain numerous accounts of Daoist adepts and masters. A considerable number of those said to have lived in the Han period are not mentioned in any of the histories. (See Zhen gao, juan 12-14, and Yunji qiqian [Daozang ed.], juan 203-16). To establish the historical veracity of these accounts would not be easy, and certainly the feats and accomplishments attributed to their subjects do not encourage much credence. However, it is unlikely that the people involved were purely fictitious, even if some of the things they are said to have done are improbable. Many are described as having gone to live in the mountains, but it is important to note that this in itself is not enough to warrant our regarding them as hermits. As I have argued in Chapter 1, shamans went into the mountains and forests in quest of spiritual powers, just as these Daoists are said to have done, but that did not make them hermits. Essential to eremitism is the idea of aloofness or detachment from a world believed to be corrupt, coupled with the aim of moral self-perfection. This is an idea to which a shaman or Daoist in quest of longevity might or might not subscribe.

118. The obvious example here is Wang Chong 王充 (27-c.97), author of Lun heng 論衡 (SBBY ed.; hereafter LH). Modern commentators make much of Wang Chong's 'scepticism', but it is important to realise that his scepticism was limited in focus: Wang Chong accepted the cosmology of Five Phase theory and the principle of the interaction of all things, with like influencing like. What he rejected was the idea that there was a moral force or agent (such as Heaven) which controlled or guided events towards moral ends.
119. See chapter 1, section 5. On the intellectual and political role of masters of the occult in Han times see Gu Jiegang, Qin Han de fangshi yu rusheng 秦漢的方士與儒生 (rpt. Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1978). Material relating to fangshi has been translated by Kenneth J. Dewoskin, Doctors, Diviners, and Magicians of Ancient China (Columbia U.P., 1983).
120. HHS 82A/2721.
121. HHS 82A/2719.
122. HHS 82A/2719-20.
123. HHS 82B/2732.
124. HHS 82B/2730-34.
125. HHS 82B/2735.
126. HHS 82B/2736-39.
127. HHS 82B/2746.
128. HHS 36/1242-43. This Zhang Kai (whose family came from Shu) is not to be confused with another Zhang Kai (from Henan) who at the beginning of Emperor Shun's reign was accused of plotting rebellion (HHS 48/1605).
129. See Chapter 2, note 38.
130. HHS 30B/1053-75.
131. HHS 30B/1075-85. On Xiang Kai and his ideas, see Rafe de Crespigny, Portents of Protest in the Later Han Dynasty: The Memorials of Hsiang K'ai to Emperor Huan (Canberra: Oriental Monograph No.19 of the Faculty of Asian Studies, ANU, 1976); also de Crespigny, 'Politics and Philosophy Under Emperor Huan', 65-68.
132. Xie Cheng's Hou Han shu, cited in commentary to HHS 53/1748.
133. HHS 84/2782-83.
134. Tao Yuanming, 'Yu zi Yan deng shu 與子儼等疏', Jingjie xiansheng ji 靖節先生集 (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), 7/1-4.

135. HHS 53/1742; also QJHHS 537-38.
136. Mencius 3B.7.
137. HHS 53/1743; HHJ 17/3a. Similar actions are attributed to Zhao Ye 趙彞 from the reign of Emperor Zhang (HHS 79B/2575).
138. HHS 68/2225. Such sentiments were also expressed by Feng Meng early in the Wang Mang period (HHS 83/2759).
139. HHS 61/2031.
140. Unless otherwise stated, all details concerning Liang Hong come from his biography in HHS 83/2765-68.
141. See Bielenstein, 'Restoration of the Han Dynasty IV', 30.
142. Wang Mingsheng, Shiqi shi shangjue 38/327.
143. DGHJ 18/9a. It is quite likely that Liang Hong's decision to become a pig farmer owes something to the fact that in the inner chapters of Zhuangzi Liezi is said to have tended pigs for three years, and thereby regained primordial simplicity (ZZ 7/29-31).
144. HHJ 11/15a refers to her ugliness but not her strength, and emphasises that because of her nobility of character she was highly sought after as a match.
145. HHJ 11/15b has Meng Guang saying 得無欲依頭就之邪, while HHS 83/2766 has 無乃欲依頭就之乎. The former seems to me to make better sense.
146. It appears that they quickly became known as the model couple with their hearts set on high ideals rather than material comfort and status. According to HHS 84/2796, Ma Rong's daughter Ma Lun 馬倫 referred to them as such in the course of an argument with her husband Yuan Wei 袁隗. This would have been some fifty or sixty years after Liang Hong's death. On the other hand, QJHHS 224 attributes the same remarks to Yuan Wei's daughter after her marriage to Zhang Feng 張奉, a hermit of last decades of the dynasty. Zhang Feng's younger brother Biao 表 shared his values and also had a reputation as hermit.
147. Of Liang Hong's work a fragment of only eight characters has survived in Li Shan's commentary to Shu Xi's 束皙, 'Shen wang shi 神亡詩', and Xie Lingyun's 謝靈運, 'Xue fu 雪賦', WX 19/17b and 13/12b. The fragment is from 'Anqiu Junping song 安丘君平頌', which as Yan Kejun (Quan Hou Han wen 32/9a) points out, must have been in praise of Anqiu Wangzhi and Zhuang Junping. See also Hou Han shu jijie 83/8b. Huangfu Mi refers to Liang Hong's work in his postface to Gaoshi zhuan. See also Yao Zhenzong, Bu Hou Han shu yiwenzhi 補後漢書藝文志 (1889, n.p., n.p.), 2/65a-b, 4/48a.

148. HHJ 11/14b dates 'Five Exclamations' from around the fifth month of the fifth year of Jianchu: June 80 A.D. It also states that after Emperor Zhang had failed to find him, Liang Hong fled to Kuaiji. Since the poem he wrote on the eve of his departure for Wu contains the line 'it is the last month of spring', it would appear that Liang Hong and Meng Guang remained in Shandong until April 81. Hou Han shu jijie 83/9a cites Hui Dong's 惠棟 observation that TPYL 572/2a and Sanfu juelu zhu (quoted by Guo Mouqian 郭茂倩 Yuefu shiji 樂府詩集 [Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979] 85/1193) record Emperor Zhang's response to the poem as being 'sorrow' (bei 悲) rather than 'condemnation' (fei 非) and that therefore the text of the Hou Han shu must have become corrupt. However, other than a wish to preserve Emperor Zhang's good name as a ruler who sought out virtuous and talented men, there is little that could lead to such a conclusion. If the emperor's reaction was indeed one of sorrow, it is difficult to see why he would instigate a search for Liang Hong or why Liang Hong would go into hiding. Besides, HHJ 11/14b also states that Emperor Zhang condemned the poem. The political outspokenness of Liang Hong's poem has helped it to win praise in the People's Republic. Thus in Han Wei nanbeichao shi xuanzhu 漢魏南北朝詩選 注, published by the Beijing Publishing Company in 1981, it is one of a mere dozen or so poems by identified Han poets selected for inclusion.
149. The bibliographical section of the Sui shu 隋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973) 35/1057 mentions Liang Hong ji 梁鴻集 in 2 juan, which presumably included his pieces in praise of earlier hermits. No trace of it has remained. See also Yao Zhenzong, Bu Hou Han shu yiwenzhi 2/65a-b, 4/48a.
150. On Yaoli see LSCQ 11/5b-6b; Shuo yuan 12/4a; Xin xu 3/10b. For his ruler, the King of Wu, he killed Prince Qingji 慶忌, then committed suicide because he regarded his action shameful and the king unjust and unrighteous.
151. On Ji Zha see Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhu, Duke Xiang 29, 31, and Shao 27; SJ 31/1449-75; Xin xu 7/2b-4a; Shuo yuan 7/21a-b, 8/2a, 14/2a-b, 19/5a. He was a younger brother of King Zhufan 諸樊 of Wu, whose position he is said to have declined. He was enfeoffed at Yanling (in modern Changzhou 常州 in Jiangsu).
152. On Lu Zhonglian see chapter 1, note 62.
153. There is some textual uncertainty about this couplet. Some commentators have argued that 惟季 is an error, but everyone appears to agree that 'spring 春' is correct. (See Beitang shuchao 北堂書鈔 [Guangzhou: Fuwen zhai, 1888], 154/3a). This is of some interest as it bears on the precise date of Liang Hong's departure for Wu. If it was indeed the last month of spring, it is difficult to see how wheat could have been ripening in western Shandong when he left (the last month of summer 季夏 would be more likely). On the other hand, setting the poem in the last month of spring would have given it a special poignancy for Liang Hong's readers, for that was the month in which the ruler was

supposed to summon worthy men to office (see Li ji zhengyi 15/135B). In general terms the poem owes a lot to the Chu ci: its theme of the unappreciated, slandered worthy, the motif of the journey, and its form (couplets of six syllable lines with the empty particle xi 兮 occupying the fourth place in each line). But it has a personal directness and emotional intensity unmatched by the Chu ci songs.

154. This has been eloquently argued by Lu Xun, "'Ti weiding" cao, qi 題未定草, 出', Lu Xun quanji, 6/339-45; trans. Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang, Selected Works of Lu Hsun, 4/229-35.
155. This poem was written after Liang Hong left Fufeng for the east:

Birds call to each other
 In times of friendship;
 Recalling your loftiness
 I am filled with yearning;
 I think of you Hui,
 And tenderness wells up in me.