

EREMITISM IN CHINA TO 220 A.D.

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CHAPTER FOUR

EREMITISM AT COURT

1. Dongfang Shuo and Yang Xiong

The idea of eremitism at court was an invention of the Han dynasty, and no account of Chinese eremitism could be complete without giving it careful consideration. The first person to claim to be a hermit at court seems to have been Dongfang Shuo, poet and courtier during the reign of Emperor Wu, and the initial formulation of the relevant concepts can with reasonable confidence be attributed to his irrepressible wit.

Professor Li Chi had characterised the notion of eremitism at court as involving a compromise, a compromise which is understandable enough in terms of the historical situation in which Chinese intellectuals found themselves, but nevertheless not particularly admirable:

...from as early as the Han there had developed for those who because of pressure or reluctance could not give up the world a theory of retiring while in one's official position. Such men may not rightly be called recluses since they do not seclude themselves from society; nevertheless they regarded themselves as yin because their attitude was basically opposed to that of other officials... Since dying for one's principles was folly and complete acceptance of the world was impossible, a compromise lay in seeking physical comfort while retaining a non-cooperative spirit.¹

It might be questioned whether the notion of being a hermit at court is necessarily as insincere or cynical as Professor Li assumes. After all, Zhuangzi had taught that a true sage hides himself among the people, that true eremitism is a state of mind, a matter of complete detachment from worldly things. This doctrine was earnestly expounded

and practised with complete sincerity by men such as Zhuang Zun and Li Hong. Could it be that the idea of eremitism at court was an extension of Zhuangzi's principle of eremitism in the market place?² Did Dongfang Shuo make a serious attempt to live according to Zhuangzi's ideals, or was he no more than a charlatan who said whatever suited his purpose?

Dongfang Shuo became the subject of a considerable corpus of folklore and legend which began to circulate even in his own lifetime.³ Even the earliest extant account of his life - that interpolated into the Shi ji by Chu Shaosun c. 55 B.C.⁴ - contains a lot of fanciful detail, most of which was rejected by Ban Gu when compiling the more sober account now included in the Han shu.⁵ However, as well as recording traditions as dubious as the one that Dongfang Shuo's application for an official post filled a whole cart and took the emperor two months to read, Chu Shaosun also mentions that when Dongfang Shuo's eccentric and unruly behaviour led his fellow courtiers to call him crazy, he replied, 'People like me are known as those who escape the world by taking it easy at court'. Chu Shaosun also states that once when Dongfang Shuo was lying drunk on the floor he sang:

Immerse yourself in the commonplace,
Escape the world through the Bronze Horse Gate.
In palace halls you can escape the world and preserve
yourself:
What need is there for deep mountains and thatched huts?⁶

However, the main source of information concerning Dongfang Shuo's ideas is his own writings. One of these, 'Reply to a Guest's Objection' (Da kenan 答客難) is paraphrased by Chu Shaosun and quoted in full by Ban Gu. In this piece Dongfang Shuo offers a witty explanation of how it is that a man of his outstanding ability came to

occupy a position no higher than that of Gentleman (lang 郎).⁷ The argument he produces was to be invoked repeatedly by later writers. Dongfang Shuo says that unlike the Warring States period, when a state's survival depended on its ability to attract and employ capable men in the face of fierce competition from other states, the empire now is at peace and all things are orderly and harmonious. There is therefore a glut of talented men, and all that remains open to a man such as he is to devote himself to self-cultivation. Yet the age is so enlightened as to make recluses anachronistic, and to try to emulate Xuyou or Jieyu would simply be to fail to adapt to the changing times.⁸ Even more direct and provocative is his 'Poem Admonishing His Son' (Jie zi shi 誡子詩):

Bright people stay in the world,
Esteeming nothing higher than the mean.
At ease, at leisure,
Follow along the Way.
The Shouyang affair was stupid,
Liuxia Hui was smart.
Eat your fill and walk in safety,
Replace farming with an official's duties.
Incline to eremitism but play along with the age,
Fool the times, and don't meet them head on.

Those who exhaust their talents put themselves in danger,
Those fond of fame win glory.
Life is burdensome when you are one of the crowd,
Harmony is lost when you have exceptional status.
Give away your surplus and there won't be a shortage,
Deplete your resources and shortcomings will be many.
The way of the sage
Is one with that of the dragon and snake:
His form may be seen but his spirit remains hidden,
He changes along with things,
Does what fits the times,
And has no fixed dwelling place.⁹

Superficial similarities notwithstanding, I believe it would be a mistake to regard sentiments such as these as a serious application or elaboration of Zhuangzi's ideas. Ultimately Dongfang Shuo did not take eremitism any more seriously than the responsibilities of office

or social conventions; he certainly did not have the perfect self-control essential to Zhuangzi's invisible hermit. Dongfang Shuo was a wit and eccentric, an inveterate jester who was almost too clever for his own good. His buffoonery and flamboyant disregard for propriety, as instanced in the way he almost lost his life through drunkenness and pissing in the palace - such things would have been regarded by Zhuangzi as suicidal self-indulgence. Dongfang Shuo may have been content with mediocrity, but only if it was comfortable, and clearly believed that desires should be satisfied rather than repressed. (It may be that experience of hardship in his youth had something to do with this).¹⁰ As far as his significance for the history of eremitism is concerned, it is difficult to fault the shrewd assessment by Yang Xiong:

When sagely speech and sagely conduct do not meet with the right time we have the eremitism of a sage. When worthy speech and worthy conduct do not meet with the right time we have the eremitism of a worthy. When jokes and pranks do not meet with the right time we have the eremitism of a clown.¹¹

Dongfang Shuo formulated the idea of eremitism at court without taking it very seriously. For him it was useful as a way of justifying the predilections he happened to have, and that was enough. If we are to look for an attempt to take up this idea seriously, it must be in the life and work of none other than Yang Xiong himself. I have already mentioned Yang Xiong's importance for our knowledge of eremitism in the Former Han dynasty; I would like now to consider the subtle and masterly way in which he put into practice some of the eremitic principles that held such a fascination for him.¹²

The account of Yang Xiong in the Han shu is drawn almost entirely from Yang Xiong's own writings, including his important 'Autobiographical Postface 自序'. In this he describes himself as

follows:

I am an unpretentious, easy-going sort of person. Because of a stammer I cannot speak fluently, am given to silence and fond of deep reflection, tranquility, nonaction, and the reduction of desires. I am neither anxious for wealth and prestige nor distressed by poverty and low status; nor have I erected a facade of purity in order to win fame from my contemporaries. Although my family's assets do not amount to more than ten gold pieces, and my house is in such want that we do not have so much as a measure of grain to fall back on, I am content. I set myself high standards, do not care for anything but the works of the sages, and, although it might bring wealth and status, will do nothing that goes against my beliefs.¹³

If this is indeed Yang Xiong's opinion of himself - or the image he wanted to project - to what extent is it to be regarded as accurate? An examination of the facts about his life and the opinions of those who knew him will show that, subject to certain important qualifications, this picture is reasonably fair. Before embarking on that examination, however, it is necessary to comment on one aspect of his autobiographical sketch. It gives a certain prominence to the fact that Yang Xiong suffered from a speech impediment, and implies that his preference for silence and tranquil reflection was partly the result of this. No doubt this makes good sense psychologically: it is to be expected that in a society which valued eloquence and persuasive speech highly, and especially in the environment of the imperial court, where a person's performance was expected to be invariably polished and elegant, someone with a speech problem would tend to avoid stressful situations. Speech difficulties do feature in the personal histories of other eremitic figures, and is not difficult to see how a decision to refuse an official post and remain in seclusion could follow from a fear of exposing oneself to ridicule or contempt. Moreover, a reluctance to speak could itself be given the most respectable of philosophical rationales. For did not Confucius

say that a gentleman desires to be 'hesitant in speech'; and is it not stated in Zhuangzi and Laozi that 'those who know do not speak, those who speak do not know'?¹⁴ It is especially interesting that in the Shi ji Sima Xiangru, the great poet from Chengdu whom Yang Xiong admired and emulated,¹⁵ is also said to have suffered from a speech defect. Nor only that, he is also said to have refused to become involved in high affairs of state, despite holding office, and not to have aspired to a position commanding noble rank.¹⁶ The similarity between these two great literary men from Shu, both of whom owed their relatively minor posts at court to their poetic abilities, may have been just coincidence, but it is also possible that Sima Xiangru's influence extended to Yang Xiong's lifestyle as well as to his poetic technique, that to some extent Yang Xiong modelled himself on this great predecessor with whom he could identify closely.

Yang Xiong did not leave Chengdu for the capital until he was over thirty.¹⁷ At court he was given the undistinguished position of Gentleman, and in this he remained for most of his life, despite obvious ability and the contacts and opportunity to rise to a more lucrative and influential position. He served beside Wang Mang before the future emperor of the Xin 新 dynasty began his rise to power, and was also a colleague of Dong Xian 董賢 (23-1 B.C.), who as Emperor Ai's homosexual partner enjoyed tremendous (if short-lived) influence. But even after Wang Mang took the throne in 9 A.D. Yang Xiong did not attempt to advance himself. It was only near the end of his life that, because of his seniority, he was given the modest post of Grandee. 'Such was his indifference', comments Ban Gu, 'to power and profit'.¹⁸

Wang Mang himself, who knew Yang Xiong well, believed him to be totally disinterested in power or personal advancement. In 11 A.D., when a number of young scholars - including Liu Xin's son Liu Fen 夔 - were arrested when they tried to counter Wang Mang's attempts to show that his rule had been divinely prefigured, Yang Xiong was implicated. On learning that the jailor was coming to take him into custody, Yang Xiong tried unsuccessfully to commit suicide by jumping from the tower in which he was working. Wang Mang was puzzled by the affair and asked for an investigation, commenting, 'It is not like Xiong to involve himself in affairs'.¹⁹ The idea that Yang Xiong might be involved in worldly matters obviously struck those who knew him as highly improbable. The investigation proved them right.

While this story confirms Yang Xiong's indifference to wealth and power, it also suggests that he was not nearly as 'easy-going' as he might have liked to be: he certainly had not reached the state of sublime indifference characteristic of Zhuangzi's sage, in which life and death, glory and ignominy all become equal. In other words, Yang Xiong was a complex and fallible human being, who struggled towards sagehood and in some respects came close to attaining it, but in others still had to fight to attain a measure of self-control. This was how he was perceived by his close friend and admirer Huan Tan 桓譚 (43 B.C.-28 A.D.). Huan Tan regarded him as the most outstanding figure of the whole of the Han period,²⁰ but nevertheless believed he had some very human failings, despite his great wisdom and understanding. He refers a number of times to Yang Xiong's poverty, but says that this was partly the result of Yang Xiong's failure to moderate his grief at the death of his two sons, which led him to the great expense of having their bodies taken back to Chengdu for burial.²¹ Thus while Yang Xiong had attained the Way of the sages

and understood life and death, he was unable to accept his sons' death with equanimity. This again is hardly the conduct of an 'easy-going nature'.²² Yet Huan Tan was convinced that his disregard for material things was sincere. Yang Xiong's grief left his family so poor that when he died there was no money for his funeral and his disciple Hou Ba 侯芭 had to bury him.²³ Commenting on this, Huan Tan says that his indifference to material things 'was the blindness of an intelligent man'.²⁴

So there is good reason to believe that Yang Xiong did his best to adopt the role of hermit at court. Does this mean he identified in any way with Dongfang Shuo? The answer is no. As we have already seen, he did not have a high opinion of Dongfang Shuo. He regarded Dongfang Shuo's love of notoriety with contempt and dismissed his writings and the stories about him as worthless. If Dongfang Shuo's behaviour had to be described in terms of eremitism, according to Yang Xiong it could only be as 'the eremitism of a clown'. 'Hermit' (yinzhe) was a term he refused to apply to Dongfang Shuo because of his total lack of exemplary speech or conduct. What is more, he refused to use the term even in relation to Liuxia Hui, despite the fact that the easy-going minister from Qi is praised in the Lunyu²⁵. Yang Xiong carefully detached from its original context the comment by Mencius that Liuxia Hui was 'not dignified enough'.²⁶ As far as the people of antiquity were concerned, Yang Xiong asserts, 'to starve conspicuously was lofty, to draw a salary in seclusion a low thing to do'.²⁷

There is more to Yang Xiong's protestation here than appears at first glance. Yang Xiong makes no reference to the fact that although in the Lunyu Confucius contrasts Liuxia Hui with Boyi, he does go on

to say that what Liuxia Hui said and did was appropriate to his particular situation. Likewise Yang Xiong skirts round the fact that, in the passage from Mencius to which he alludes, Mencius presents Liuxia Hui and Boyi as opposite extremes, both of whom lacked the flexibility of response which made Confucius the perfect sage.²⁸ For this Yang Xiong was strongly criticised by Wang Anshi (1021-1086), who said that by failing to distinguish between the one Way and the different actions by which it is manifested in different situations, Yang Xiong merely demonstrates the extent of his ignorance.²⁹ But Yang Xiong was being rather more subtle than Wang Anshi gives him credit for. It seems to me that he was perfectly well aware of what he was doing, and was counting on the fact that those who really knew him would be alert to his willful misreading of Mencius. While most of his contemporaries, just as Wang Anshi, will have taken his remark at face value, a few close friends will have construed it correctly, and known that he criticised the idea of being a salaried hermit precisely because that was how he regarded himself. To suggest that the author of Fa yan and Taixuan jing was blind to the need to fit action to the circumstances of the moment would be absurd. What his criticism of Liuxia Hui really amounts to is a clever attempt at camouflage, a case of the hermit at court covering his tracks.

Yang Xiong's sympathy for eremitism is evident at many points in Fa yan. He regarded it as something which was not only the result of meeting with bad times,³⁰ but also of having high moral standards. That was why Confucius found it impossible to serve in office when lesser men saw no impediment to doing so.³¹ What is crucial in Yang Xiong's eyes, however, is that whether he is in office or in retirement, a sage never loses his sense of social responsibility: 'Therefore he does not withdraw from his time or set himself apart

from the crowd. Could someone who withdraws or sets himself apart be a sage?³² Yang Xiong marries the ideas of Confucius and Zhuangzi. In adverse times the sage does not retire ostentatiously to the wilderness; he remains inconspicuously among the people, where through his teachings and personal example he continues to work for the transformation of the world:

In office a gentleman wants to put his righteousness into practice, in retirement he wants to spread his Way. He serves unwearingly, teaches untiringly, and in this way makes the most of the time he has.³³

There is every reason to think that Yang Xiong interpreted his own position in the light of these principles.

Nowhere is Yang Xiong's defence of eremitism more determined than in his discussion of Li Hong. As was pointed out in Chapter 2, Yang Xiong describes his former teacher in terms used in the Lunyu in relation to Confucius. This description leads on to the following exchange:

"If he is like you say he is, then why hasn't his fame spread?"

"If it wasn't for Zhongni [i.e. Confucius], how would we have ever heard of the fellow who starved on the western mountain, or that dismissed minister of the eastern state [i.e. Boyi and Liuxia Hui]?"

"Did Wang Ziyang [i.e. Wang Ji] or Gong Yu meet with a Zhongni (to spread their fame)?"

"Does a star look bright merely because of the intensity of its radiance (or because it also appears high in the night sky)?"

"In that case why didn't Li Hong put himself in a high position?"

"Radiance is a matter of the self, being placed in a high position is a matter of Heaven. Could you put yourself in a high position simply by wanting to?"³⁴

By insisting that it is ultimately a matter of Heaven or fate whether or not a virtuous man rises to a prominent position, Yang Xiong is clearly attempting to leave a way open for people such as Li

Hong (and himself) should they be uninterested in rising to prominence. It is most unlikely that he really believed that Li Hong was eager to obtain a high post but had not been lucky enough to be appointed. As we have already seen, according to Yang Xiong's own testimony Li Hong had little enthusiasm for an official career. Of course this was not something Yang Xiong could say to his imagined interlocutor in Fa yan, so it was expedient for him to introduce the concept of fate. Such a strategy leads easily into the type of argument used by Dongfang Shuo, that in enlightened times the number of deserving men far exceeds the number of posts available and even dedicated men have to be content with humble positions - an argument Yang Xiong develops at length in his 'Jie chao 解嘲', which was closely modelled on Dongfang Shuo's 'Da kenan'³⁵

My argument that Yang Xiong adopted the role of hermit at court, marrying the ideas of Zhuangzi and Confucius, leads naturally to the question of his attitude to fame. Zhuangzi's eremitism was essentially a matter of shunning fame: did Yang Xiong do likewise; could he do likewise, given the fact that he wrote poems and other works which he must have known would draw attention to himself and to his ideas?

Yang Xiong takes up the question of fame in Fa yan. There he rejects the suggestion that since, as Confucius says,³⁶ a gentleman is upset at the thought of leaving no name to posterity, he should make use of high rank to make a reputation for himself. The only type of reputation that matters for a gentleman is a reputation for uncompromising virtue - like that of Zheng Pu.³⁷ For Confucius it was more important to be worthy of such fame than to actually be famous; he believed that a gentleman should concentrate on

self-perfection rather than on advertising his sterling qualities to the world.³⁸ It would appear that Yang Xiong combined these ideas with those of Zhuangzi. Like Sima Qian, in accordance with his self-image as writer and teacher, Yang Xiong considered it an essential part of his task to draw the attention of his contemporaries to the inspiring example of those who, like Zheng Pu and Yang Xiong's own teachers in Chengdu, pursued self-perfection without giving any thought to fame. Fame might come to a hermit, according to Yang Xiong's view, but the hermit certainly must not set out to make himself famous. Fame, like high rank, is a matter which should be left to fate.

This view of fame is also evident in Yang Xiong's comments on Zhuang Zun. The remark in Fa yan that Zhuang Junping had no more desires than Xuyou or Boyi prompts Yang Xiong's interlocutor to comment that perhaps Xuyou is not the best of models, that when Yao wanted to cede the empire to Xuyou, Xuyou declared himself too ashamed to have anything to do with such a vile suggestion. Yang Xiong replies:

That is what someone fond of (a reputation for) greatness would do. Interpret it as a case of Xuyou not wanting anything from the world and that is that; but get a true understanding of Yao's abdication to Shun and you will see it is no less important than Xuyou's response. Those fond of a reputation for greatness try their utmost to outdo each other. Wasn't it appropriate for Chaofu to wash out his ears? Surely it was appropriate that the awesome matters of the Sanctuary of the Spirits were conducted under the cover of night?³⁹

This is a witty interpretation of the Xuyou legend indeed. It shows how sensitive Yang Xiong was to the whole business of 'hermits' posing elegantly or behaving flamboyantly in order to attract attention. Chaofu had to wash out his ears, Yang Xiong argues, not on

hearing about Yao's distasteful proposal, but after listening to Xuyou boasting about the fact that he had turned Yao down. If even Xuyou is not beyond suspicion of affectation, what is the likelihood that the eremitism of lesser men will be sincere? It should also be noted that the view that Yao, properly understood, is a figure as impressive as Xuyou, has some historical significance. During the Wei-Jin period, when the idea of eremitism at court gained some currency, Yao was hailed as a hermit greater than Xuyou because of his ability both to rule and to cede the empire without being affected by it.⁴⁰

Was Yang Xiong trying to win fame by means of his writings, despite his belief that a true hermit would never draw attention to himself? According to Ban Gu, Yang Xiong may have been indifferent to fame in his own lifetime, but he nevertheless hoped to win posthumous fame through his writings.⁴¹ I believe that while Yang Xiong clearly hoped to pass on his conception of the Way, he really seems to have been uninterested in popular acclaim, whether in his own time or after it. Ban Gu himself records the anecdote that once towards the end of Yang Xiong's life, when he was instructing Hou Ba in the Fa yan and Taixuan, he was visited by Liu Xin. Observing master and disciple at work, Liu Xin commented:

You are wearing yourself out for nothing. Nowadays, there are (professional) scholars who enjoy the advantage of a salary, yet even they are still unable to understand the Book of Changes, let alone your Taixuan. I'm afraid that in times to come men will use it as a cover for sauce jars.⁴²

Yang Xiong's only response to this was laughter. He cannot have been that concerned about fame.

It is in terms of his indifference to fame and his eremitism that the difficulty of Yang Xiong's later works is also to be understood. That the elliptical style and recondite vocabulary of Fa yan and

Taixuan represent a conscious attempt to be difficult is indisputable: Yang Xiong's correspondence, court compositions and other writings show he could write as clearly and smoothly as anyone. This intentional difficulty moved even so great a scholar as Su Shi 蘇軾 (1036-1096) to complain in a moment of exasperation:

Yang Xiong was fond of using words difficult to understand in order to dress up his shallow, facile ideas, realising that if he expressed them precisely everyone would recognise them for what they were. This is precisely what he refers to as "carving seals". That describes both his Taixuan and Fayan, and yet he had regrets only concerning his fu! To the end of his life he continued to carve seals, only he changed the phrasing and then went so far as to refer to his works as classics!⁴³

While it is almost inevitable that a modern reader will share Su Shi's exasperation from time to time, there is also reason to believe that here Su Shi fails to approach with sympathetic understanding someone very different to himself in both personality and outlook. Surely the point of Yang Xiong's opaque style is not so much to impress others as to keep them at a distance, to retain a measure of isolation for himself and to limit access to his conception of the Way to those who he believed would be genuinely able to understand what he had to say. The difficulty of Yang Xiong's work represents both an attempt to defend personal privacy while meeting public responsibilities, and to protect high ideals from being dragged in the mud by lip-service and popular acclaim. What we have in Taixuan and Fa yan, in other words, is not obscurantism but an eremitism of style.

2. The Later Han

It seems that Yang Xiong was not the only person at the end of the Former Han to take the idea of eremitism at court seriously. According to Ban Gu, the scholar Mang Rong cultivated himself, strove to realise his ideals, and refused to accept any post in the

bureaucracy higher than a six hundred picul position. (When Wang Mang came to power he resigned from office altogether).⁴⁴ Nevertheless, it was Yang Xiong's example which had the most influence. It was in no small measure due to the tremendous respect leading intellectuals of the Later Han felt for Yang Xiong that the idea of eremitism at court gained some currency during that period.

Undoubtedly the most important example of a Later Han scholar taking up the idea of eremitism at court is the man who could with some justification be called the greatest intellect of the time: the poet and philosopher, mathematician and inventor, Zhang Heng. I have already referred to Zhang Heng's lack of interest in worldly success in Chapter 3 (Section 4). Not only did he have the highest admiration for Yang Xiong's intellectual achievements - especially the Taixuan jing⁴⁵ - he also found inspiration in the lifestyle Yang Xiong had chosen. In imitation of Dongfang Shuo's 'Da ke nan' and Yang Xiong's 'Chao jie' he wrote 'Ying xian 應閑' to justify his lowly position in the eyes of the world. He too makes much of the fact that he lives in an age oversupplied with talented men, that high rank is a matter of fate and that all he can do is wait for it to come to him. Moreover, he alludes to 'a multitude' of men who have advocated this attitude, going right back to Laozi, 'the hermit at court who was librarian'.⁴⁶

Yet it would appear that Zhang Heng was not as serious as Yang Xiong about being a hermit at court. He allowed himself the liberty of memorialising the throne on the politically sensitive question of apocryphal texts and charts, which he regarded as superstitious and potentially dangerous nonsense. Eventually he rose to the position of Master of Writing before his death in 139. Nevertheless, he did try

to follow Laozi's example of taking a job as librarian. At the beginning of Emperor An's reign, when Liu Zhen 劉珍, Liu Taotu 劉陶騶 and their colleagues were at work in the Dongguan Library compiling and collating historical, philosophical and literary texts, they sought the emperor's permission for Zhang Heng to join them, but much to Zhang Heng's regret it was denied. Later, when the chief compilers had died without having been able to complete their task, Zhang Heng asked to be allowed to work in the library and devote all his time to carrying on this undertaking. Unfortunately permission was again denied.⁴⁷

Zhang Heng was not the only one to espouse the idea of eremitism at court at this time. Others also did, so much so that during Emperor An's reign the Dongguan Library was jocularly referred to as 'Mr Lao's Archive' and 'The Daoist's Penglai Mountain'.⁴⁸ Fan Ye alludes to this fact in his biography of Dou Zhang 竇章, who was given a position in the library precisely because of his combination of scholarly and eremitic leanings. Moreover, Dou Zhang was a friend of Ma Rong and Cui Yuan 崔瑗 (78-143), both of whom belonged to the circle of scholars centred around the court who espoused eremitic ideals. Ma Rong was appointed to the Dongguan Library in 110, not long after having rejected the life of a disengaged scholar as too precarious, and he remained in that relatively cloistered position for more than ten years, also returning to it towards the end of his life, after having run foul of both the Deng 鄧 and the Liang families.⁴⁹

Cui Yuan was a student of the leading Confucian scholar Jia Kui, and was widely respected for his learning. He never worked in the Dongguan Library, but he avoided taking an official post until he was over forty. Although he eventually rose to the position of Chancellor

of Jibei 濟北, this appears to have been in the face of genuine reluctance on his part. To the end of his life he lived very simply, and tried to ensure that this simplicity would continue even after his death by ordering his son to bury him with a minimum of fuss and expense.⁵⁰ Hence it may be said that, having been a disengaged scholar most of his life, when the time came to take an official position Cui Yuan tried to remain true to his former ideals by cultivating the detachment from worldly things essential to the concept of eremitism at court. Whether his position was at the court or in the provinces is of little significance. In fact this possibility is covered by Yang Xiong's alternative term for 'hermit at court: what he called being a 'salaried hermit'. I shall return to this point shortly when discussing the case of Wang Chong.

However, while on the subject of Zhang Heng, Ma Rong and their circle, I should also mention Wang Fu 王符, the author of Qianfu lun 潜夫论 (Discussions of a Man in Hiding). Finding cultivation of the personal connections and mutual recommendations on which advancement in office depended too distasteful, and being repulsed by the decadence and corruption which characterised life in the capital, Wang Fu firmly adopted the position with which his friends merely flirted. Throughout his life he remained in seclusion, vehemently criticising in his writings the many ills he observed in contemporary society.⁵¹

Although it was with the generation of Zhang Heng, Ma Rong and Cui Yuan that fascination with the concept of eremitism at court peaked, members of the previous generation had also been attracted to it, including the historian Ban Gu and Cui Yuan's father Cui Yin 崔駰 (d.92). Both of these men were strongly influenced by Yang Xiong.

Yang Xiong had been a friend of Ban Gu's grandfather Ban Zhi 班祿, and with his uncle Ban Si shared an interest in the teachings of Zhuangzi.⁵² Ban Gu himself drew extensively on Yang Xiong's work for both information and ideas, and despite being quite different in outlook and disposition found his 'Jie chao' sufficiently relevant to his own life to write his 'Bin xi 賓戲' in imitation. He composed it, he says, during the Yongping period (58-75), when he was criticised for having a position no higher than that of Gentleman and doing no more with his time than studying, writing, compiling and collating.⁵³ Nevertheless, what we know of Ban Gu indicates that while he certainly made scholarship his vocation, he was not nearly as indifferent as Yang Xiong to worldly success or the affairs of state. Certainly this is suggested by his relationship with Commander-in-Chief Dou Xian 竇憲 (d.92), which indirectly was to bring about his death.⁵⁴ Wang Chong argued that it was Yang Xiong's low position at court which left him free to write and study.⁵⁵ It would be wrong to ignore the deeper philosophical significance eremitism had for Yang Xiong, the seriousness with which he tried to come to grips with the problems of diminishing desires and escaping fame. In the case of Ban Gu, however, it would appear that interest in being a hermit at court amounted to little more than a wish to study unhindered.

Like Ban Gu, Cui Yin was a talented scholar with great literary ability. Having mastered the classics at an early age and developed a virtuosity in textual exegesis which embraced the principles of both the Old and the New Text schools, he continued to make scholarship rather than career advancement his major concern. When this resulted in his contemporaries criticising his 'Great Mystery quietude' (taixuan jing 太玄靜), he wrote 'Da zhi 達旨' in response.⁵⁶

In this piece Cui Yin elaborated the now well-established theme of having been fortunate enough to encounter an enlightened, peaceful age in which there was a surfeit of talented and worthy men. When 'disengaged scholars mass in mountains, students flow in streams, gowns and robes [of officials] cover the earth, and caps and canopies [of office] drift in clouds', what hope could he have of making a contribution to the running of the empire? Cui Yin says that the problem is not that he does not want to serve, but that he is not prepared to boast or advertise his talents in order to attract attention and gain promotion.⁵⁷ Like Ban Gu, Cui Yin became a protege of Dou Xian, who eventually found his earnest remonstrations annoying and got rid of him by having him promoted: Cui Yin was appointed prefect of a county in faraway Liaodong. However, rather than take up duties in such a distant region he went home in retirement and stayed there for the rest of his life.⁵⁸

The Cui family was one of those in which eremitism became a tradition passed on from generation to generation. Cui Yin's outlook was inherited by his son Cui Yuan, but Cui Yin must have been strongly influenced by his own father, Cui Yi 崔毅, who lived in seclusion all his life, though this appears to have been largely because of illness.⁵⁹ Moreover, Cui Yuan in turn passed on the eremitic ideal to his son Cui Shi 崔寔 (c.110-c.170). Although Cui Shi is best known for his espousal of Legalist ideas, especially in his work Zheng lun 政論,⁶⁰ his attitudes were not all of the harsh, austere variety associated with that school of thought. Certainly in his personal life he retained much of the outlook of a hermit at court. The expenses of his father's funeral reduced Cui Shi to poverty,⁶¹ yet nevertheless he ignored one summons to office after another, preferring to earn what little money he needed as brewer and peddler

rather than as an official. It was not until 151 that he too accepted a position in the Dongguan Library.⁶² Most likely it was prior to this that he composed his 'Da ji 答讖', in the mode transmitted from Yang Xiong to his grandfather Cui Yin, arguing against his 'guest':

You vainly look for happiness wearing brocade robes, you do not know the singular benefits of noble retirement. Unicorns hide in the remote wilderness and do not stray onto roads where there are traps; phoenixes soar in the vastness (of the sky). Therefore those who set their principles high are in a position to emulate them. Li Si 李斯 was roused to zeal and so lost his sense of proportion, [Wu Zi] 伍子胥 and [Wen] Zhong 文種 pursued merit and so had nowhere to dwell.

Consider the way men enter (official service) and exert themselves (in affairs), and it is not because they consider the self but because they are after a salary, not because they conclude (that it is the right) time but because they want (to seize) an opportunity. When it is a case of being confronted by evil and not encountering the right time, or having little knowledge but making big plans, (it requires only) the smallest mote, the minutest particle and the catastrophe is all-consuming. Where glory comes with the speed of lightning, humiliation is sure to fill the world. Therefore it is said: "Savour the bait and swallow the hook, and you'll regret it under the sacrificial knife". "That (an animal is) covered in finery and fed on grain (to fatten it) comes from its (beautiful) fur".

As to preserving tranquility and remaining in quietude, being utterly calm and seeking nothing, sinking one's line in a deep pool or nestling at rest on a high hill: although it does not bring fiery joys, neither does it bring burning anxieties. I presume to regard this as good. The multitude can follow their own counsel.⁶³

As an expression of eremitic sentiments this is much stronger than anything written by his forebears. It is interesting too that, of all the possible illustrations of men who came to grief because they became overly zealous, Cui Shi chooses Li Si, for it suggests that even when he wrote his piece he was attracted to Legalist ideas, yet apparently did not feel any conflict between those ideas and his life as a hermit of the Zhuangzi mode. When he did eventually accept

a position in the Dongguan Library, and so take up the role of salaried hermit, he cannot have remained there more than a few years. Soon he was taking an active part in provincial government, and it may be that his personal experience in administration further convinced him of the necessity of legalist measures for social and political stability.

Wang Chong (27-c.97) was of the same generation as Ban Gu and Cui Yin. It is he who is the best example of a scholar applying the idea of being a salaried hermit to a career in local government. Provincial posts could be non-stressful and safe compared with those at court, and so we might expect those without great worldly ambitions to prefer them. After all, had not Zhuangzi himself found a comfortable position in a lacquer garden? The problem with positions at a local level was that if the aim of the exercise was to retain freedom to pursue scholarly interests, county and commandery administrations could not supply the marvellous research facilities available at court. Nevertheless, Wang Chong seems to have managed very well despite this.

Wang Chong admired Yang Xiong immensely,⁶⁴ and both his writings and his lifestyle bear some similarity to those of his great predecessor. The model for the 'Autobiography 自紀' with which he concludes Lun heng was Yang Xiong's Autobiographical Postface; the personal traits and aspects of his career he draws to the reader's attention are very similar to the self-image presented by Yang Xiong. Wang Chong too says that he has a free and easy-going nature, that he has neither sought fame nor subordinated his life to the quest for profit,⁶⁵ that although he is so poor he does not have even one mou 畝 of land to keep him he is more free to pursue his aspirations than

a king or a duke, and although his rank is so low that he does not have a salary it is as if he enjoys a huge income. Like Liuxia Hui, he is indifferent to whether or not he has an official post, retaining his inner tranquility regardless of circumstances and devoting himself to study. 'I live alone in seclusion', he writes, 'investigating things and distinguishing truth from falsehood'.⁶⁶

Wang Chong clearly describes himself in terms of an eremitic ideal. Yet he did have an official career of sorts, even if it was not very distinguished. For a while he served as Assistant Merit Officer 掾功曹, and in 88 became Attendant Official at Headquarters 治中. But he only held the post for some two years before retiring and living in seclusion for the remainder of his life. While he says that he 'did not have good fortune' in his career and so 'merely' wrote books and his autobiography,⁶⁷ it is clear that he does not intend these comments to be taken at face value. Like Dongfang Shuo and Yang Xiong before him, he defends himself against the charge that by not rising to high office he has failed to make full use of his talents: neither did Confucius rise to high office, he argues, and dismisses it as a matter of fate.⁶⁸ The ideal towards which he aspires is quite different to that of the vulgar:

What lofty men regard as distinction does not correspond with what the vulgar regard as distinction, hence their names are not acclaimed by the age. Yet although their bodies may perish along with vegetable matter, their reputations will be spread along with the light of the sun and moon. To match Confucius in conduct, to be the equal of Yang Xiong in writing: that is what I would regard as glorious.⁶⁹

The terms in which Wang Chong describes the termination of his official career leave little doubt that he regarded it as no more than a hindrance to his literary work. He writes in reference to his

position as Attendant Official at Headquarters: 'My talents were small, my duties large; my responsibilities related to official correspondence. For years my longing to write had to remain unsatisfied'.⁷⁰

Freedom from official duties is the best option for those with literary ambitions. If they must hold office, Wang Chong argues, it can only be a minor post if they are to attain anything at all of their aspirations. Men caught up in high matters of state, such as King Wen and the Duke of Zhou 周公, have no time for leisure or creating the beauties of literature. Confucius was able to compile the Spring and Autumn Annals because he was not employed by the Zhou states; Sima Xiangru did not have responsibility for affairs of high office and so was able to compose his Zixu fu 子虚赋; Yang Xiong occupied the lowly post of Gentleman and so was able to complete his Taixuan jing: in all cases a senior post in government would have put paid to their literary work.⁷¹

Like Yang Xiong, Wang Chong was suspicious of those who made a great show of refusing office. In the past, he says, men accepted with equanimity whatever befell them, 'they did not sell their knowledge to seek a salary, they did not refuse noble rank in quest of fame'.⁷² He also rejects the idea that those who shun the world and keep themselves apart from the vulgar in order to remain pure and blameless in conduct may be called 'worthy' (xian). What is particularly interesting is that he goes on from this to argue that wealth and status are the normal objects of human desire, and that those who turn away from them to go into seclusion do so only because they have not encountered the right time or been able to fulfil their aspirations. Changju and Jieni (the hermits mentioned in the Lunyu)

may have shunned the world and lived in seclusion, Boyi and Chen Zhongzi may have refused high rank and contented themselves with low status, but 'it was not what they aspired to'.⁷³ Similarly, he rejects the suggestion that the term 'worthy' might be applied to the tranquil and desireless followers of Laozi, those whose aspirations do not relate to serving in office and want no more than to keep themselves alive and nourish their nature. Such men do not concern themselves about the world or helping the common people in their distress, in the way that Confucius and Mozi did, and it is this social indifference which disqualifies them from being classed as worthies.⁷⁴

Wang Chong's comments about Changju, Jieni, Boyi and Chen Zhongzi indicate a certain amount of ambivalence on his part. As we have seen, in his Autobiography he places considerable emphasis on his being indifferent to wealth and status, yet here he suggests that even the great eremitic figures mentioned were not as indifferent to these things as they might be thought to have been, that they resigned themselves to poor and lowly circumstances only when they had failed to realise their worldly ambitions. Is this to be read as an involuntary confession on the part of Wang Chong himself? That would probably be going too far. What it does suggest, however, is that Wang Chong found it difficult to reconcile his personal lack of enthusiasm for an official career with his sense of social responsibility. Although he was not interested in rising to high office, he did not regard himself as a follower of Laozi and was committed to working for the well-being of his contemporaries. Hence he made no attempt to help fate find him an important post, but endeavoured to discharge his moral debt to society through his writings. Wang Chong perhaps had himself in mind when he wrote:

In the world a worthy man is completely loyal. When he advances he advocates reforms in order to enlighten the court; when he retires he expounds and expostulates in order to bring to their senses the common people who have strayed from custom.⁷⁵

It appears that the vogue enjoyed by the concept of the salaried hermit diminished after the reign of Emperor Shun. The only major figure from the last part of the dynasty known to have made use of it was Cui Shi. Probably the changing political situation at this time is enough to account for its decline. After all, the idea of being a hermit at court presupposes a stable, orderly political situation and an abundant supply of talented, virtuous men to fill official posts, so it would not be surprising if it became hard to invoke as the Han dynasty staggered towards extinction. Nevertheless, we can deduce from the poet and statesman Cai Yong's (132-192) very explicit and courageous refutation of it, that the idea did remain current.

Cai Yong first attracted the attention of Emperor Huan's court through his virtuosity on the qin. He found it impossible to avoid attending court, but his dismay at the extent of the power of the eunuchs there soon led him to plead illness and return home, where he lived in retirement studying antiquity. However, lest his contemporaries might think that his refusal to remain at court was no more than self-indulgence, the result of a longing for a carefree life of scholarship, he composed 'Shi hui 釋誨', criticising the idea of eremitism at court and reaffirming the Confucian position that a refusal to serve in office could be justified only in terms of having encountered bad times. He did not want to be put in the same category as Yang Xiong, Ban Gu and Cui Yin, despite the fact that that was much safer than declaring oneself a critic of the status quo.⁷⁶ In the third year of Emperor Ling's reign (171) he began his official career

with the position of Compiler in the Dongguan Library. Unlike some of his predecessors in 'Mr Lao's Archive', however, Cai Yong continued to play an active role in politics until, caught up in the aftermath of Dong Zhuo's death, he died in prison in 192.⁷⁷

In the Wei-Jin period the ideas associated with being a hermit at court continued to be used, but for different purposes. The argument that one lived in an age so splendid that it was impossible to obtain a position commensurate with one's talents was naturally as convenient for those who held no position as for those who held a lowly one. As a justification for not taking part in affairs of state it was used to good effect by writers such as Huangfu Mi, Shu Xi and Ge Hong.⁷⁸ When politics turned nasty, as frequently happened in this time, it could even be invoked as a reason for accepting office despite an earlier espousal of eremitism. This was done by Xiang Xiu (c.221-c.300).⁷⁹ Thereafter the notion continued to surface from time to time, particularly in periods not conducive to ordinary varieties of eremitism.⁸⁰

NOTES

1. Li Chi, 'The Changing Concept of the Recluse in Chinese Literature', HJAS 24 (1962-63), 241-42.
2. Professor Li himself observes that hermits at court 'followed the advice of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu to abandon oneself to the tide of the times and avoid revealing one's difference from other men' (*ibid.*, 241).
3. Some of the material concerning Dongfang Shuo has been assembled in English by Lionel Giles, A Gallery of Chinese Immortals (London: John Murray, 1948), 47-51, and E.T.C. Werner, A Dictionary of Chinese Mythology (New York: Julian Press, 1961), 528-30.
4. SJ 126/3205-08.
5. HS 65/2841-74. The biography is translated by Burton Watson, Courtier and Commoner in Ancient China (Columbia U.P., 1974), 79-105.
6. SJ 126/3205. For the unlearned, Chu Shaosun adds a note that the Bronze Gate was the gate to the palace officials quarters, so named because of the bronze horse which stood beside it.
7. According to Yantie lun 4/9b, Dongfang Shuo claimed there was no-one who could match him for ability in persuasion, and boasted that his ability could dissolve hard substances and split stones. HS 65/2863 states that although Gentleman was his usual rank, he did briefly hold the higher position of Grand Palace Grandee 太中大夫 .
8. SJ 126/3207; HS 65/2864-67. Dongfang Shuo's other famous piece, 'Discussion of Master Nobody 非有先生論', HS 65/2868-72, is more conventional in its treatment of eremitism.
9. Dongfang dazhong ji 東方大中集, Baisan mingjia ji, ce 4/37a-b. Part of the poem is cited in FY 712 by Yang Xiong. It is also translated by Li Chi, *op.cit.*, 242.
10. In his application for office Dongfang Shuo stated that he lost his parents when young and did not begin study until his twelfth year, which is later than would be expected for a boy from a rich family. This and the other details concerning Dongfang Shuo's conduct are taken from HS 65/2841-74.
11. FY 711-12. As Yan Shigu 顏師古 points out in his commentary to the Han shu, Ban Gu's assessment of Dongfang Shuo consists largely of direct quotation from Fa yan. See HS 65/2873-74.
12. Xu Fuguan, Liang Han sixiang shi 兩漢思想史, Vol.2 (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1975), 321-26, 391-92, has discussed Yang Xiong's eremitic tendencies and likened him to Dongfang Shuo. He argues that the reason for Yang Xiong's reclusive behaviour was his wish to be free to devote himself to

- study (cf. Wang Chong, LH 28/9b, who argues that it was the fact that Yang Xiong held the lowly position of Gentleman which enabled him to complete his Taixuan jing). Following Xu Fuguan, Hong Anquan, 'Liang Han rushi de shiyin taidu' (Part 2), 231, 237-38, has labelled Yang Xiong a 'hermit at court'. But neither Xu nor Hong are able to relate this aspect of Yang Xiong's personality to his writings in a convincing way.
13. HS 87A/3514. That this passage and most of the remainder of the biography consists of Yang Xiong's own work is clear from HS 87A/3583 and Yan Shigu's commentary on it. For further argument that this is so, see David R. Knechtges' introduction, The Han shu Biography of Yang Xiong (Tempe, Arizona: Centre for Asian Studies, Arizona State U., 1982).
 14. LY 4.24, 13.27; ZZ 13/68, 22/7; Laozi 56. Well-known figures with eremitic leanings who had speech problems were Cheng Gongsui 成公綏 (231-273), Zuo Si 左思 (c.250-305) and Ge Hong (d.mid-4th century A.D.). See Jiu jia jiu Jin shu jiben 九家舊晉書輯本 (CSJC ed.), 158; JS 72/1911, 92/2376. A major counter-example is Han Feizi: see SJ 63/2146.
 15. HS 87A/3515.
 16. SJ 117/3053. Note that Xi Kang included Sima Xiangru in his Gaoshi zhuan (Xi Kang ji jiaozhu, 414)
 17. HS 87B/3583 says he was more than forty. This raises certain problems of chronology. Xu Fuguan, Liang Han sixiang shi, (Vol.2), 312-13 argues that 'over forty' is probably a mistake for 'over thirty'. See also David R. Knechtges, The Han Rhapsody: A Study of the Fu of Yang Hsiung (Cambridge U.P., 1976), 113-16.
 18. HS 87B/3583. In his letter to Liu Xin, Yang Xiong writes that in the year he received his appointment at court he sought the emperor's permission to devote himself to study for three years without drawing a salary. Permission was granted and Yang Xiong was supplied with the necessary resources, but without suspension of his salary. See Dai Zhen, Fang yan shuzheng, 13/19a-24a; Knechtges, 'The Liu Hsin/Yang Hsiung Correspondence', 316. Wang Chong, LH 20/8b, says that when Yang Xiong was writing Fa yan he was offered a large sum of money by a rich man who hoped this would result in his name being recorded in the work of the famous scholar. Yang Xiong declined his offer.
 19. HS 87B/3584. On these events and Yang Xiong's relations with Wang Mang see also David R. Knechtges, 'Uncovering the Sauce jar: A Literary Interpretation of Yang Hsiung's "Chu Ch'in Mei Hsin"', in David T. Roy and Tsuen-hsuein Tsien, Ancient China: Studies in Early Civilization (University of Chicago Press, 1978), 229-52.
 20. Huan Tan, Xin lun, cited in TPLYL 432/6b, 602/2a. See also Pokora, Hsin-lun, 173-74.
 21. Xin lun, cited in TPLYL 556/1b; Pokora, Hsin-lun, 106.
 22. HS 87/A/3514. It is likely that it was at least partly because of the difficulty he experienced in controlling emotion that Yang Xiong believed that it was impossible to eradicate desires and

feelings, but attached importance to diminishing them. See FY 137-38, 180, 205, 211, 272, 756, 758.

23. According to Yang Xiong jiadie 揚雄家諫 (cited in YWLJ 40/731; TPYL 558/6b-7a), Yang Xiong was buried by Hou Ba and Huan Tan, whom Yang Xiong had treated generously. It was Hou Ba who personally carried the soil to make his tumulus. See also Li Shan's commentary to Ren Fang 任昉, 'Liu xiansheng furen muzhi 劉先士夫人墓誌', WX 59/31B. Thus Yang Xiong's concluding comment in his fu 'Driving Out Poverty 逐貧賦' (Yang shilang ji 楊侍郎集, Baisan mingjia ji, ce 8/4a), that poverty remained his constant companion, was true in death as well as life.
24. Xin lun, cited by Kong Pingzhong 孔平仲 (c.1040-1105), Henghuang xin lun 珣頌新論 (CSJC ed.), 3/31; trans. Pokora, Hsin-lun, 216-17.
25. LY 15.14, 18.2, 18.8.
26. Mencius 2A.9.
27. FY 711-12. Xu Fuguan, Liang Han sixiang shi (Vol.2), 391-92, finds it impossible to reconcile Yang Xiong's attitude towards Dongfang Shuo and the notion of being a hermit at court with Yang Xiong's own life, and indulges in some rather futile speculation in an attempt to resolve the problem.
28. Mencius 2A.9; also 5B.1, 6B.6.
29. Wang Anshi, 'Lu yin 祿隱', Wang Linchuan ji, 69/1b-2a.
30. FY 296.
31. FY 251.
32. FY 451-52.
33. FY 386.
34. FY 722.
35. Baisan mingjia ji, ce 8/27a-30b. For a translation and discussion of this work see Knechtges, The Han Rhapsody, 97-103.
36. Ly 15.20.
37. FY 266.
38. LY 4.5, 12.20, 14.30, 15.19.
39. FY 311-12. In order to make his point Yang Xiong had to follow those versions of the story in which it is Chaofu, not Xuyou, who washes out his ears. This is the version used in GSZ A/2a-b. Xi Kang's Gaoshi zhuan appears to have contained both versions: in the passage on Chaofu, Xuyou washes his ears, while in the passage on Xuyou it is Chaofu who does so, only to be confronted by an angry Pool Keeper who accuses him of polluting the water (Xi Kang ji jiaozhu, 399). The Sanctuary of the Spirits was the place

where Yao's abdication to Shun is said to have occurred.

40. See for example the comments attributed to Xiang Xiu 向秀 (c.221-c.300) in JS 49/1375 and SXY 1A/19b-20a, and the Guo Xiang 郭象 (d.312) commentary to the passage concerning Yao and Xuyou in Zhuangzi (Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩, Zhuangzi jishi 莊子集釋 [Taipei: Huazheng shuju, 1980], 1A/22-24; also Richard B. Mather, 'The Controversy Over Conformity and Naturalness During the Six Dynasties', History of Religions, 9.2-3 (1969-1970), 168-71, and Mather, A New Account of Tales of the World, xx.
41. HS 87B/3583.
42. HS 87B/3585. According to Wang Chong, LH 29/5a, Hou Ba propagated the system of Taixuan jing after Yang Xiong created it.
43. Su Shi, 'Da Xie Minshi shu 答謝民師書', in Dongpo qiji 東坡七集 (SBBY ed.), Dongpo houji 後集, 14/10a. The expression 'carving seals' comes from Fa yan (FY 81), where Yang Xiong uses it to refer dismissively to his 'childish' habit of writing fu, meaning something painstaking and laborious but not worthy of the attention of a grown man because it is of no benefit to society.
44. HS 72/3083.
45. See HHS 59/1897; HHJ 19/6a.
46. HHS 59/1898-1908.
47. HHS 59/1940.
48. HHS 23/821-22. This has been pointed out by Jack Dull, 'The Confucian Origins of Neo-Taoism', (Paper delivered at the Second International Conference on Taoist Studies, Harvard University, 1-7 Sept., 1972). Dull's focus in that paper was the influence of Daoism on Later Han intellectuals, and he interprets these epithets as evidence of the strength of Daoist influences in court circles. While those influences were certainly significant, I believe that their eremitic connotations may be more important for understanding why they gained currency.
49. HHS 60A/1953, 1970-72, 80A/2617.
50. HHS 52/1722-24. See also Dull, 'Confucian Origins of Neo-Taoism', 22-24.
51. HHS 49/1630. For an attempt to fix the precise time that Wang Fu lived see Jin Fagen, 'Wang Fu shengzu niansui de kaozheng ji Qianfu lun xieding shijian de tuilun 王符生平年歲的考證及潛夫論寫定時間的推論', BIHP 40 (1969), 781-99. For Wang Fu's criticisms of the scholars of his time, see Qianfu lun (SBCK ed.), 1/10a-b, 2/4b-5a, 11b-12a, 14b-15a, 3/11b-12a, 8/2a-3b, 5b-6b.
52. HS 100A/4205. Ban Si finds a place in Xi Kang's Gaoshi zhuan: see Xi Kang ji jiaozhu, 415.

53. HS 100A/4225; also HHS 40B/1373. For 'Bin xi' see HS 100A/4225-31 and WX 45/12a-18a.
54. See HHS 40B/1385-86.
55. Wang Chong, LH 28/9b.
56. HHS 52/1708-09.
57. HHS 52/1709-16. Zhang Heng's 'Ying xian' appears to owe as much to Cui Yin's 'Da zhi' as it does to Yang Xiong's 'Jie chao'.
58. HHS 52/1718-22. See also Dull, 'Confucian Origins of Neo-Taoism', 17-22.
59. HHS 52/1708.
60. On this aspect of Cui Shi's thought see Balazs, 'Political Philosophy and Social Crisis', 205-13.
61. Cui Shi may have heeded his father's dying wish (HHS 52/1724) that the expense of taking his body back to their native place for burial be avoided, but he cannot have placed many other limits on expenditure for the funeral.
62. HHS 52/1725-31. As in the biographies of so many intellectuals of this period, it is difficult to know what to make of Cui Shi's 'poverty'. Certainly his family, the Cuis of Boling 勃陵, which was to be one of the great families during the Period of Division, already had considerable social and economic standing at this time (see Patricia Ebrey, The Aristocratic Families of Early Imperial China: A Case Study of the Po-ling Ts'ui Family [Cambridge U.P., 1978]). However, this does not mean that individual branches of the family could not have been relatively hard up. On Cui Shi see also Shi Shenghan 石聲漢, Simin yueling jiaozhu 四民月令校注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), 79-88, and Patricia Ebrey, 'Estate and Family Management in the Later Han as seen in the Monthly Instructions for the Four Classes of People', Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient, 17.2 (1974), esp.176-79.
63. YWLJ 25/460. On Li Si (d.208), the main architect of the Qin empire, see SJ 87/2539-63, and Derk Bodde, China's First Unifier (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1938). Wu Zixu and Wen Zhong were able ministers on opposing sides during the wars between Wu and Yue during the reign of King Goujian 句踐 of Yue (r.497-465 B.C.). Both committed suicide after being slandered and accused of treason. See SJ 41/1739-47, 66/2171-83; Guoyu jijie 19/1a-8b, 20/1a-6a.
64. See LH 28/9, 29/3a, 30/8b, 9b.
65. Certainly this is confirmed by his biography in HHS 49/1629-30, where we are told that his family was too poor to be able to afford books, so that when he went to Luoyang to study at the Imperial Academy (where his teacher was Ban Biao) he used to read the books on display at stalls in the market. Nevertheless he later ignored a special imperial summons from Emperor Zhang.

66. LH 30/2a.
67. LH 30/9b.
68. LH 30/8a. Elsewhere Wang Chong compares the situation of worthy scholars with that of large rocks in river rapids: the water swirls the smaller pebbles over them until they are completely lost from view. This is due to the failure of those in senior positions to recognise their qualities, and the result is that some withdraw and go to live in caves (14/2b).
69. LH 30/8b.
70. LH 30/9b. Wang Chong also refers to the fact that it was after he lost an earlier position that he had the opportunity to write his other major work, Jisu jieyi 識俗節義 (30/3a-b).
71. LH 28/9b.
72. LH 30/2b.
73. LH 27/7a; also 27/9a.
74. LH 27/7a.
75. LH 29/6a.
76. HHS 60B/1980-89.
77. HHS 60B/1990-2006; HHJ 27/2b-3a; SGZ 6/180.
78. See Huangfu Mi, 'Shi quan lun 釋勸論', JS 51/1411-15; Shu Xi, 'Xuan ju shi 玄居釋', JS 51/1428-30; Ge Hong, 'Yinyi 隱逸', Baopuzi, waipian 2.
79. See note 40 above. Wei Fengjuan 韋鳳娟, 'Shilun Wei Jin chaoyin zhi feng yu shanshui shi de xingqi 試論魏晉朝隱之風興山水詩的興起', Shehui kexue zhanxian 21 (1983), 275-83, indulges in Marxist fantasy by interpreting the concept of 'chaoyin' as a strategy by the ruling class for resolving its internal contradictions.
80. The Ming dynasty is a good example. Then the idea of 'chaoyin' was expressed by the term liyin 吏隱 or 'hermit-official'. The unorthodox Li Zhi makes considerable use of it in his Zang shu, provocatively applying the term even to that black sheep of Confucianism from the Five Dynasties period, Feng Dao 馮道 (Zang shu, 68/1140-42). On Feng Dao see Wang Gungwu, 'Feng Tao: An Essay on Confucian Loyalty', in Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett (eds.), Confucian Personalities (Stanford U.P., 1962).

CONCLUSION

Eremitism was a creation of the late Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, a product of the socio-political and intellectual changes which transformed the Chinese world at that time. There were certain ideas, practices and individuals before Confucius' lifetime that could be said to anticipate various aspects of eremitism, but these are best regarded as representing the prehistory of eremitism rather than an earlier tradition of the practice. It was only after Confucius that eremitism became a philosophical possibility; socially and politically its emergence was dependent on the existence of the multi-state polity of his time.

Confucius taught that a gentleman must retire from office if to remain in the employ of a given ruler would lead to moral compromise, that if necessary he had to withdraw from that state and travel from one domain to another until he found a ruler he could serve and still remain true to his ideals. After Confucius we see the appearance of scholars who travelled from state to state but refused to take office under any ruler and so become a 'subject'; these men tried to avoid the moral conflicts usually inherent in official duties by accepting only the informal role of 'friend' or 'teacher' to the ruler. However, there were others who believed that it was utterly pointless to travel from state to state because all rulers were equally bad, that casting oneself in the role of friend or teacher of a ruler was mere self-deception. Such men believed that the only way compromise of ideals could be avoided was by shunning public life altogether and devoting oneself to honest agricultural pursuits, perhaps even aiming at complete self-sufficiency in order to reduce contact with corrupt

society to a bare minimum. Eremitism of this sort was advocated by extremists such as Chen Zhongzi.

Fundamental to the types of eremitism just mentioned is the belief that eremitism is forced on the individual by the disparity between the corruptness of the world in which he lives and the loftiness of his ideals of personal conduct. In an ideal world, according to this view, there would be no hermits. Moreover, most of the exponents of these varieties of eremitism (even extremists such as of Cheng Zhongzi) believed that the influence of their personal example would help to bring that ideal world a little closer, and attached great importance to their reputation as men of uncompromising virtue as a way of spreading that influence.

In the type of eremitism advocated by Zhuangzi all these ideas were turned upside down. According to Zhuangzi, the aim of eremitism was precisely to avoid fame, and indeed all other conventional values; the ideal world, as he conceived it, would contain nothing but hermits. The goal for which the individual had to strive was complete identification with the principle of the cosmos, the order underlying the unending process of change. This could be achieved only by doing away with all notions of self, by making oneself completely invisible. This radical sort of eremitism did not depend on ostentatious withdrawal to some isolated mountain cave, but rather on the idea of ridding oneself of all distinguishing characteristics and personal conceptions, and living inconspicuously among the common people. Eremitism of this sort was primarily a state of mind. It was from Zhuangzi's philosophy that the ideas of the 'hermit in the marketplace' and the 'hermit at court' derived.

While Zhuangzi's ideal was the complete effacement of the self, he nevertheless advocated a more prosaic form of eremitism for those who had not yet attained that ideal. This involved keeping away from potentially dangerous situations (particularly political affairs), avoiding entanglement in worldly concerns, cultivating a simple life, accepting the unalterable conditions of human existence and finding joy in its necessities. These ideas, which obviously derive partly from the common folk custom of fleeing to remote places to escape danger, also occur in sections of the Zhuangzi text not written by Zhuangzi himself. In addition they feature in the Laozi, though in that text as in the Lüshi chunqiu eremitism is frequently invoked as a model for the conduct of the ruler and not for his people. Yet another variety of eremitism which was part of the broad stream of Daoist ideas was that which centred on the quest for immortality. It too involved withdrawing to remote places in the mountains and forests, and probably owed much to ancient shamanistic practices.

Thus by the end of the Warring States period an eremitic tradition had evolved which was remarkable for its sophistication and complexity. What is more, it was a tradition which lay near the heart of the socio-political culture of the time. It concerned the relation of the individual to his ruler and the wider society, an issue which was to remain a major preoccupation of Chinese intellectuals throughout history, and it is this political dimension of Chinese eremitism which is the major reason why hermits were so important in early China.

The Qin unification and the establishment of an enduring empire by Han brought many deep-seated social and political changes. What could not be changed was tradition. The Han empire inherited the

cultural legacy of the Warring States; its intellectuals had to adapt the repertoire of ideas they received to circumstances which in many ways differed drastically from the milieu in which those ideas had originated.

As has been shown, there is little evidence relating to eremitism in the first hundred years or so of the dynasty, yet what evidence there is suggests that most forms of eremitism continued to thrive. The only exception, perhaps, was the timely eremitism advocated by Confucius. The most famous Confucian scholars of the period seem to have believed that the times in which they lived were favourable for political action; they contrasted the relative peace and enlightened government of the Han with the harsh and turbulent centuries that had gone before. While it is difficult to know how representative these famous men were of the intellectuals of the period, due to the biased nature of the sources on which we have to rely, it is reasonable to assume that if there had been much timely eremitism in the first century of the Han it would not have gone unnoticed by Sima Qian and Ban Gu. It seems that the shift from the multi-state polity of the Warring States to the unified empire of Han was responsible for this relative lack of interest in timely eremitism in more ways than one. It is not simply that the empire brought relative peace and prosperity to its subjects, but also that it did away with one of the essential conditions on which the eremitic ideal as formulated by Confucius depended. In the unified empire it was no longer possible to do what Confucius had done and travel from one state to another in search of a ruler who would put lofty ideals into practice. The implications of timely eremitism under Han were different: a refusal to serve was tantamount to ending one's political involvement entirely. Accordingly, scholars who took their social and political

responsibilities seriously were much less inclined to take that step.

The fact that there was apparently little Confucian eremitism in the first part of the Han period merits some reflection, not least because that hundred years or so was also the time when the influence and prestige of Confucianism was slighter than at other times in the dynasty. On the face of it, it would appear that traditional accounts of eremitism in the Han, which trace the spread of eremitism to political decline and the growing influence of Daoism, are hard put to explain the fact that the only time when there was little Confucian eremitism was during those early reigns of the dynasty commonly decried because of the Daoist sentiments espoused by the political and intellectual leaders of the time. How can they account for the fact that it was only after Confucianism received imperial backing and was made the ideological basis of the state that Confucian eremitism became popular?

The evidence presented in this thesis shows that the spread of eremitism from approximately the middle of the Former Han dynasty cannot be understood unless we take into consideration the evolution of the scholarly culture generated by the educational endeavours of the empire and its recommendatory system for appointments to office. This culture was basically Confucian, but in the absence any strong insistence on doctrinal purity the influence of other schools of thought - including Daoism - was always strong. It was a culture which offered a considerable range of lifestyles, philosophies and ideals. The type of eremitism I have called exemplary eremitism was a product of that scholarly culture.

Exemplary eremitism was Confucian in inspiration. It was based on the idea, not so much of having encountered times so bad that to serve in office would result in moral compromise, as of having ideals of personal conduct so high that even participation in the relatively enlightened government of the present would make it impossible to remain true to those ideals. For an exemplary hermit fame was a most welcome thing. For those who were sincere it was the mechanism which would spread their moral influence afar and so enable them to be true to Confucius' idea of taking part in government by transforming customs through the force of personal example; for those who were less than sincere fame was the mechanism which led to a recommendation for an official position.

The existence of the official recommendatory system led to a social climate in which ideals of personal conduct were regarded as a serious matter and received a lot of attention from officialdom and intellectuals generally. It is this which accounts for the increase in the amount of information recorded about hermits from this time on, as well as the apparent increase in the number of hermits themselves. To determine how much eremitism spread in the Han period, or which varieties of eremitism became most prevalent is impossible. The philosophical and socio-political convictions of the authors of the major histories of the period - Ban Gu, Xun Yue, Yuan Hong and Fan Ye - made it inevitable that in the sources Confucian exemplary eremitism appears dominant. Yet, as far as historical reality is concerned, it is highly likely that in actuality too Confucian exemplary did become most prevalent. The Confucian focus of that recommendatory system which influenced so much of the lives of intellectuals at the time will have seen to that.

Of course the evolution of the Han scholarly culture did not occur independently of the political events of the period, and for the history of eremitism as for many other things the most significant political event was the rise and fall of Wang Mang, who was himself a product of the scholarly culture. Wang Mang was important for eremitism not only because his usurpation led to widespread withdrawal by idealistic scholars, as is emphasised in traditional accounts, but also because he lavished attention on hermits in order to demonstrate to the educated elite that he possessed the virtue Heaven demanded in an emperor. At times Wang Mang was even prepared to forego the services of a talented, virtuous scholar, if his acceptance of the scholar's sincere but 'misguided' refusal to serve could further enhance the legitimacy of his claim to the throne.

For Emperor Guangwu as for Wang Mang it was an urgent matter to demonstrate to the world the legitimacy of his claim to throne. He too was a product of the scholarly culture, and he had learned the lessons contained in Wang Mang's rise and fall. He made concerted efforts to win the support of the scholars, expanding the recommendatory system and extending imperial backing for Confucianism, as well as honouring the famous hermits of his day. The feting of such men and their dominance in the recommendatory system was to remain a prominent feature of the political life of the remainder of the Han period. Emperors Ming and Zhang carried on the policies of the founder of the Later Han, and the prestige and influence of disengaged scholars continued to grow. This applies also to the reigns of He and An, despite the fact that this period also witnessed a growth in the political influence of imperial relatives and eunuchs. After all, this makes good sense: those attempting to gain power by control over a young emperor had to do all they could to establish the

legitimacy of his - and hence their - government. The unprecedented honours Emperor Shun extended to virtuous and learned hermits elevated their standing still further, and helped to develop a fashion for eremitism which as perceptive a man as Li Gu could only regard with distrust and dismay, the common people with contempt and derision.

Fan Ye points out the political decline which set in after Zhang's reign provided a ready justification for all those who took up this fashionable eremitism, so much so that it became the expected thing for any scholar to do. This being so, it is extremely difficult to determine how much of the eremitism in the last part of the Han dynasty was a sincere protest against political corruption and disorder, and how much of it was decorous self-indulgence. There is no doubt whatever that many leading scholars did withdraw in protest against what they regarded as the corrupting interference of imperial relatives and eunuchs; some died as a result of their refusal to serve in a government in which such people held power. But in the histories we find reference to fantastic charlatans as well as to men of uncompromising virtue.

If we consider the famous scholars involved in the political proscriptions of the reigns of Huan and Ling we find that even in the conduct of the most earnest of men there seems to have been some element of 'trendiness'. But there is no question of the seriousness of their moral commitment in times of crisis. The glory of the proscribed scholars lived on in the following centuries, and their example brought greater prestige than ever to living in seclusion and remaining aloof from the world of public affairs.

Yet it would be a mistake to allow our view of the last part of the Han period to be too much influenced by the very partisan traditional interpretation of the proscriptions, which derives ultimately from the proscribed scholars themselves. It would be quite misleading to interpret the history of this period simply as an extended struggle for power between righteous scholars intent on preserving the Way of the sages on one hand, and evil imperial relatives and eunuchs intent on subverting it on the other. There were indeed power struggles, but in those struggles it was not possession of the scholarly culture and its ideals which marked the scholars off from their opponents. (As is argued in the Appendix to this thesis, there is every reason to believe that the imperial relatives and eunuchs were as much a part of the scholarly culture as their opponents; the differences among scholars were as important as the distinctions between the imperial relatives and eunuchs and the small minority of scholars who actively opposed them).

The scholarly culture of the last part of the Han period, as in earlier times, was tremendously varied. It was dominated by Confucianism, thanks partly to the imperial support Confucianism enjoyed, but was characterised by the easy interaction of doctrines of all the philosophical schools. Daoism flourished, and Legalism was again attracting considerable attention. The metaphysical systems of the Book of Changes and the Yin-yang school were utilised by everyone. Philosophical speculation shaded off into the occult arts, and interest in the arcane often went hand in hand with knowledge of classical texts. The primitivistic social ideals of the School of the Tillers also continued to find adherents, while Buddhist ideas were just beginning to circulate.

The complex interaction of all these schools of thought means that some caution is required when attempting to determine the relation between adherence to the teachings of any given school and a decision to become a hermit. Daoism is a case in point here. It has traditionally been held that as the Han dynasty declined, more and more scholars withdrew into self-centred Daoist escapism, and that it is the strong influence of Daoism under the Wei and Jin dynasties which accounts for the prevalence of eremitism among the intellectuals of that period. While there certainly is evidence that Daoism gained in popularity from the late Han on, and Daoist teachings do contain certain eremitic ideals, it is no more true that Daoism inevitably led to quietistic withdrawal than that Confucianism invariably led to idealistic participation in public affairs. Thus the long list of talented and influential men attracted by the concept of the hermit at court were able to square Daoist sympathies with socio-political responsibilities they refused to put aside, while many Confucian exemplary hermits found just as little difficulty in reconciling those responsibilities with their own disinclination to hold office. Much of the so-called 'Daoist' eremitism of the Wei-Jin period is in fact a continuation of the Confucian exemplary eremitism which developed during the Han period.

The conclusion to which this thesis leads is that by the end of the Han dynasty most of the major aspects of the Chinese eremitic tradition had already taken shape: the varieties of eremitism and their philosophical rationales, the place of eremitism in the scholarly culture and its integration in the imperial system, as well as the high social standing of hermits and their political influence, were all well established before the Han dynasty came to a close. What happened subsequently to that tradition could with some

justification be described as little more than a filling out followed by gradual atrophy. It may be useful to conclude with a few general comments about those subsequent developments.

We have seen that the existence of the official recommendatory system of the Han empire was crucial in determining the popularity eremitism enjoyed, the forms it took, and the prestige it commanded. Recommendatory systems continued to function, with certain modifications, until around the end of the Tang period. In the annals of the Tang emperors we still find edicts calling for the recommendation of virtuous hermits for office.¹ The social-political standing of hermits was such that under the Tang law code they and their descendants were guaranteed certain rights and privileges. For example, the descendants of a man who had been summoned to take up an official position but had declined in order to live as a hermit, could, on the basis of the offer having been made, claim the same rights as the descendants of regular officials.² If we contrast this with the situation during the Ming dynasty, when any scholar who refused to serve the emperor was liable to execution,³ it is obvious that in the interim a drastic change occurred in official attitudes towards hermits and what they represented. Many factors would need to be considered to account for that change. However, one major factor undoubtedly was the gradual phasing out of the recommendatory system in the Tang-Song period and its replacement with the examination system as the main instrument for the selection of officials. When this happened rulers and scholars alike had to reassess eremitism, and for quite dissimilar sets of reasons neither party found it as attractive as it had appeared before.

While eremitism lost its major institutional base with the dismantling of the recommendatory system, in the following centuries the socio-political situation of Chinese intellectuals remained basically unchanged, though the Mongol and Manchu conquests of China produced a new sort of moral dilemma. The ideals to which they tried to remain true also changed little, and genuine eremitism remained important as a way of realising those ideals.

NOTES

1. For some of the evidence, see Liu Xiangfei, 'Tangren yinyi fengqi ji qi yingxiang', 5-11, 16-21; also Shen Defu, Wanli yehuo bian, 858-59, and Ho Ping-ti, The Ladder of Success in Imperial China, 11.
2. See Tang lü shuyi 唐律疏議 (Suzhou: Jiangsu shuju, 1891), 2/7a-b; Wallace Johnson, The T'ang Code, Volume One: General Principles (Princeton U.P., 1979), 104-05.
3. See Frederick W. Mote, 'The Growth of Chinese Despotism', Oriens Extremus, 8 (1961), 36.

APPENDIX: SCHOLARS, IMPERIAL RELATIVES, EUNUCHS,
AND THE DECLINE OF THE HAN

Traditionally accounts of the Han period have emphasised what have been regarded as discontinuities: the irruption of Wang Mang's treasonable ambitions into a basically orderly system; the usurpation of power by imperial relatives and eunuchs following the enlightened, Confucian-inspired government of Guangwu, Ming and Zhang. The decline and ultimate collapse of the Han, according to this view, is to be understood in terms of the undermining of the imperial system by forces hostile and essentially alien to it, and the spread of eremitism is to be understood as protest by scholars against those hostile, alien forces.

However, it could be argued that far from being an explanation of dynastic decline, the arrogation of power by imperial relatives and eunuchs was actually a major aspect of that decline, and is itself something which has to be explained. In my account of the eremitism of the Han period I have stressed continuities rather than discontinuities: the continuous evolution and elaboration of the scholarly culture; imperial support for Confucianism; and the existence of the recommendatory system for official appointments. Here I will consider in more detail the view of the last part of the Han period as a three-way power struggle between the scholars, imperial relatives and eunuchs, in order to reveal more clearly the limitations of the account of the eremitism of the time in terms of scholars retiring to avoid moral defilement and mortal danger. I will focus my discussion on the fairly recent and very sophisticated restatement of this view by Yü Ying-shih in his article on what he

calls 'the new self-awareness of scholars' of the late Han and Wei-Jin periods.¹

Yü Ying-shih describes many of the social and intellectual developments of the later part of the Han period in terms of this new scholarly self-awareness, which he says entailed both communal and individual self-awareness. It was a phenomenon, he argues, which was closely tied up with their struggle against the influence and power of the imperial relatives on the one hand, and the eunuchs on the other. Particularly after the death of Emperor He in 105, that struggle became more intense, and the self-awareness of scholars as a group became sharper and more developed.² Sharing a common culture and political ideals, and usually a common socio-economic background, scholars naturally fraternised with each other extensively. It was this tendency that partly accounts for the charges of factionalism that were levelled against scholars, particularly during the reigns of Emperors Huan and Ling. This fraternisation further encouraged the development of distinctive attitudes and conduct - in other words, a distinctive identity.³ The scholars compared themselves with the shi of the Warring States period and took the welfare of the world to be their personal responsibility.⁴ Their communal self-awareness found expression in their veneration of their leaders and the way teachers were honoured by their disciples.⁵ The individual self-awareness of scholars of this period, Yü argues, was manifested in their preoccupation with exceptional conduct and personal fame. Fame came to be regarded as an end in itself, as the examples of disengaged scholars such as Guo Tai, Xu Zhi and Shentu Pan show.⁶ Individual self-awareness also lay behind the characteristic activity of the time of evaluating individuals, as exemplified by the so-called 'pure pronouncements 清議' of the students at the imperial university

in Luoyang (one of the major roots of the 'pure conversation' [qingtan] of the Wei-Jin period) and the writings of Guo Tai and Xu Shao.⁷

The developments Yü Ying-shih describes are all significant, but I fear that the theoretical framework in which he attempts to explain them is seriously inadequate. In general my objections are these: first, the 'self-awareness' Yü describes was not new in the mid Later Han period; second, the type of development he describes is simply too weighty and complex to be sustained by the idea of self-awareness; and third, the attitudes and values he outlines cannot be regarded as what distinguished scholars from imperial relatives and eunuchs because those attitudes and values were held by only a small proportion of the 'scholars' of this time. I shall consider each of these objections to Yü's argument in detail.

The 'newness' of the attitudes and values Yü Ying-shih discusses is obviously a most important issue, for if they in fact do not turn out to be new in the mid Later Han then they cannot be seen as a specific response to factors peculiar to that period. Now Yü Ying-shih himself at one point refers to the Spring and Autumn and Warring States period as the first occasion of self-awareness among Chinese scholars (as is shown among other things, by the way disciples honoured their teachers then).⁸ If scholars of that period did have that self-awareness - and Yü Ying-shih himself has done much to help us see that they did⁹ - in what sense was the self-awareness of intellectuals of the later part of the Han dynasty 'new'? If the answer is given that it is a matter of degree, I would reply that in relation to self-awareness the concept of degree is one which soon loses its usefulness, and that therefore it would be better describe

what is new in terms other than increasing self-awareness.

The scholars of the Warring States period were certainly conscious of themselves as having a distinctive social and intellectual role, an identity different, for example, to that of farmers, craftsmen or merchants. The scholars of the last part of the Han period did compare themselves with the scholars of the Zhou period, as Yü points out.¹⁰ But comparisons of this sort were frequently being drawn no later than the second half of the Former Han dynasty. In Chapter Two I emphasised the currency in the late Former Han of the ideal of 're-establishing antiquity', which produced such developments as official posts of 'Teacher' and 'Friend' to the emperor, as well as many of Wang Mang's reforms. The courting of virtuous hermits by men such as Wang Mang, Wei Ao and Liu Xiu, I have argued, has to be understood partly in terms of that ideal of re-establishing the customs and institutions of antiquity. When in 29 A.D. Emperor Guangwu compared the conduct of the hermit Zhou Dang to that of Boyi and Shuqi and implicitly cast himself in the role of King Wu,¹¹ he was not doing anything new. The aspiration of Han scholars to regain what was seen as the sublime order of the past made it inevitable that they would compare themselves to their Zhou predecessors.

Most of the other developments Yü Ying-shih describes as characteristic of the later part of the Later Han also had quite a long history before then. That scholars tended to share a common socio-economic background was, as far as we know, as true of the Former Han as of the Later Han, while the fact that they shared a common culture and political ideals is more or less true by definition (though it is easy to exaggerate the uniformity of scholars as a

social group, as will become clear below). So scholars throughout the Han period were always disposed to associate with each other and thereby lay themselves open to the charge of 'factionalism' by their enemies. Certainly the idea was current at the beginning of the Later Han. Thus when Guangwu's Minister Over the Masses Hou Ba wanted to yield his position to the famous hermit Wang Ba, who like him came from Taiyuan commandery, he was dissuaded from doing so when another official jeered that 'It is the habit of people from Taiyuan to form factions and [Wang] Ruzhong 魯仲 has something of that spirit'.¹² Nevertheless, it is certainly true that the problem of factionalism became more pronounced towards the end of the Later Han. As to the scholarly custom of students honouring their teachers, as Yü Ying-shih himself points out, this was very much in evidence in the Zhou period, though some of the forms it took towards the end of the Later Han, such as giving posthumous titles to teachers, may have been innovations by the scholars of that time.

Preoccupation with fame is another thing Yü believes to be peculiar to the scholars of the second half of the Later Han. But here again, although the ways in which fame could be acquired might have changed over the centuries - partly, as Yü recognises, as a result of the influence of the recommendatory system - I do not believe there is much ground for saying that scholars of the end of the Later Han were more obsessed with it than those of earlier periods. Nor do I believe that it is accurate to describe this concern with fame as fame for its own sake (though no doubt for many scholars fame represented something valuable in itself). As I have argued elsewhere, at least from the time of Confucius fame was valued as a way of spreading one's moral influence. If, as Confucius says in the Lunyu, 'A gentleman hates the thought of passing away and his name

dying with him',¹³ it is not because he wants public adulation, but because if his name dies with him so does his ability to influence those who come after him. This concern with fame as a way of spreading personal influence was inherited by scholars of the Former as well as the Later Han.¹⁴ Moreover, as Zhao Yi has argued, Han scholars also had to a large extent to rely on personal reputation as a way of securing an official career through the recommendatory system.¹⁵ When men such as Guo Tai, Xu Zhi and Shentu Pan pursued fame they were identifying with the long tradition that went back to Confucius himself. Guo Tai valued fame at least partly because he regarded the welfare of the world as his personal responsibility. The same can be said of Xu Zhi.

It is simply not true, as Yü Ying-shih claims,¹⁶ that Xu Zhi's outlook is representative of a decline in socio-political commitment among scholars after Guo Tai. For one thing, Xu Zhi was an exact contemporary of Guo Tai, so whatever attitudes he may be taken to represent were already current in Guo Tai's lifetime. More important, however, is the fact that Guo Tai himself always refused to take office too, but no-one would accuse him of being politically indifferent on those grounds alone. Yü Ying-shih bases his view of Xu Zhi largely on his remark that 'When a great tree is about to fall a single rope cannot hold it up'. But as I have argued in Chapter Three, there is good reason to believe that this comment is to be interpreted as a statement of concern over the welfare of Guo Tai rather than as an expression of selfish indifference on Xu Zhi's part. It would appear that Xu Zhi's sense of social responsibility was no less strong than that of Guo Tai, and it was precisely this which led him to value fame as a mechanism for spreading his personal influence among the people.

To understand the outlook of scholars of the second half of the Later Han dynasty, therefore, we have to consider the traditional aspect of their attitudes as well as what was new; we have to consider the protracted development, not so much of self-awareness on the part of scholars (and here I take up my second major criticism of Yü), as of the scholarly ethos or culture to which I have frequently referred. Moreover, to fully appreciate the nature of the scholarly culture of the second half of the Later Han we have to see it not only as the product of a long period of continuous evolution, but also in terms of attempts to recreate an idealised past in a socio-political environment which was very different to that past and in which the implications of what it was to be a shi had changed drastically.

The major factors shaping the scholarly ethos of the Han period, as I have already argued, were imperial sponsorship of what was ostensibly Confucian learning and the existence of an official recommendatory system which, at least in theory, applied Confucian criteria of selection. By the late Han period these factors had been operating for some three hundred years and were scarcely likely to generate a new type of 'self-awareness' among scholars. But just as imperial backing for scholarship increased in scope throughout most of the Han period, and the recommendatory system was gradually expanded, so too did the scholarly culture become ever more varied and complex.

My discussion in Chapter Three of the continuing influence of the 'Hundred Schools' will have given some idea of the variousness of the scholarly culture in the Later Han. But it is important to bear in mind also that even within what is called Confucianism there were fierce, protracted debates between opposing schools of thought (debates considered important enough, for example, to justify the

appointment of numerous Erudites to advise the emperor about varying interpretations of even one classic). Hence to talk blithely about 'the scholarly culture' is grossly misleading unless consideration is given to the fact that within that culture there was room for a great variety of intellectual positions, personal values and lifestyles. This leads to my third criticism of Yü Ying-shih, namely, that he attributes to all scholars a fairly specific set of ideals and values, and argues that it was the espousal of those particular ideals and values which enabled scholars as a social group to establish their self-identify in opposition to the imperial relatives and the eunuchs.

As Yü himself points out, the scholars of the later part of the Han period were very much aware of differences among themselves in terms of both regional background and personal merit.¹⁷ I will not discuss further the question of regional differences since they are of only minor significance here. But the distinctions scholars drew amongst one another in terms of personal merit raise some important questions. These distinctions (which, as Yü observes, were in part a byproduct of the recommendatory system and found expression in the 'pure pronouncements' of the time) show that the scholars themselves recognised sharp differences in the extent to which individuals lived up to scholarly ideals.

Yü mentions Zhao Qi's 趙岐 (108-211) criticism of his relation by marriage to Ma Rong (79-166). Zhao Qi, who eventually became famous both as scholar and statesman, took the role of disengaged scholar rather more seriously than Ma Rong, who appears to have maintained an eremitic position only as long as it caused him no hardship. In a letter to a friend Zhao Qi wrote: 'Although Ma Jichang 季長 is renowned among his contemporaries, he does not

hold firmly to the integrity of a scholar'.¹⁸ But again, contrary to what Yu claims, this sort of insistence on the ideals that a scholar should live up to does not indicate a new self-awareness on the part of scholars circa. 150. When Emperor Guangwu was trying to persuade Yan Guang to take office in 29 A.D., Yan Guang justified his refusal by reference to the fact that 'a scholar is bound to have ideals'.¹⁹

If we accept the idea that the only 'true' scholars are those who live up to the highest scholarly ideals and standards, it becomes clear that we will also have to accept somebody's definition of what 'the highest scholarly ideals and standards' were, and, furthermore, that the number of 'true scholars' so identified will inevitably be very small indeed. I believe that Yü Ying-shih, like most historians past and present, has fallen into the trap of accepting the judgements of the Pure Faction of the end of the Later Han as to what makes a true scholar, judgements which were canonised by the qingtan movement of the Wei-Jin period and which shaped the social and historical outlook recorded in many Southern Dynasties texts, including the Shishuo xingyu and Fan Ye's Hou Han shu. Yet many scholars of the late Han period may have held quite different views as to what a scholar's ideals and standards should be.

Xunzi had distinguished between 'great Confucians' (da ru 大儒) and 'vulgar scholars' (su shi 俗士) in the late Warring States period.²⁰ This distinction was taken over by Han writers commenting on their own time. In the reign of Emperor Shun, Wang Fu bitterly decried the vices and corrupt practices of the vulgar scholars of the day, their factionalism and the way they manipulated the recommendatory system for their own ends.²¹ During the Jian'an period (196-220) this theme was taken up by Xu Gan 徐幹 (170-217)

when reflecting on the causes of the Han dynasty's collapse.²² Naturally the proportion of great Confucians was always much smaller than that of vulgar scholars.²³ In this the last part of the Han dynasty cannot have been very different to any earlier period. During the reign of Emperor Huan many scholars may have had misgivings about the rightness of Liang Ji's stronghold on the government of the time, but few were prepared to make a stand against him; the majority of scholars and officials simply knuckled under and did whatever was necessary to protect their personal interests.²⁴ Similarly, the relative ease with which the eunuchs destroyed the threat of the Pure Faction in 168 indicates that the Pure Faction found very little in the way of active support from within the bureaucracy. As long as eunuchs had the power to make and break officials the bulk of the bureaucracy simply did as it was told. This in fact helps to explain why the students of the Imperial Academy were important in strengthening the anti-eunuch faction: they were not actually part of the bureaucracy, and having less to lose than those scholars actually holding official posts could afford to be more outspoken in their criticisms.

The conclusion to which this leads is that the scholars of the late Han were a rather heterogeneous social group: they did not necessarily share a common outlook; they did not share a common identity generated by an intense moral indignation against the political influence of imperial relatives and eunuchs; nor did they all try to live up to a given set of scholarly ideals and standards. Our picture of the political life of the last part of the Han period becomes more complicated still when we consider the fact that, contrary to the traditional view that imperial relatives and eunuchs were to be sharply distinguished from scholars because of their

wickedness and depravity, which contrasted with the high ideals and moral purity characteristic of the scholars, there is good reason to believe that the imperial relatives and eunuchs of the time were no less imbued with the scholarly ethos - including its political ideals - than anyone else.

Yü Ying-shih goes so far as to admit that the distinction between scholars and imperial relatives cannot be made absolute, giving Commander-in-Chief Dou Wu (d.168) as an example of a man who was both.²⁵ An even more important example, of course, was Wang Mang. But it is more than just a matter of a few isolated examples of imperial relatives who also happened to have scholarly interests. What must be avoided is baseless assumption that families who had a daughter fortunate enough to become an imperial concubine, or even empress, tended to be nouveau riche devoid of scholarly culture.²⁶ Evidence has yet to be produced that the families related to the Han emperors by marriage included fewer scholars than other families of comparable socio-economic background, and, leaving moral prejudice aside, it is reasonable to assume such evidence could never be produced. The majority of imperial relatives with scholarly pretensions may have been no more than 'vulgar scholars', but the same was true of scholars generally.

The distinction between eunuchs and scholars is just as difficult to maintain as that between scholars and imperial relatives. To assert that all eunuchs were of humble origin²⁷ is completely unwarranted. Positions in the palace - particularly those which entailed daily, intimate contact with the emperor - were not open to rude, illiterate country bumpkins; they required some measure of personal cultivation and sophistication. Although eunuchs could be

trained, and a school for eunuchs was established, it would be strange if in this as in other things there was no preference for people with the right background. What is more, it would be a grave error to assume that palace positions open only to eunuchs were not highly sought after, or that the 'right' families would necessarily consider such positions inappropriate for their sons. No-one could have been blind to the opportunities such positions could bring.²⁸

Sources for the Han period tell us very little about the social background of eunuchs (though at least one, Cao Jie 曹節, is said to have come from a family which for generations had included senior officials).²⁹ Han eunuchs, like those of later periods, will have come largely from two social groups: those downwardly mobile, from families reduced to slavery as a result of some crime or action arousing the emperor's displeasure, and who could therefore have had castration forced on them; and those upwardly mobile, coming from ambitious families whose aspirations for power and prominence had been thwarted in the normal channels (e.g., because of lack of wealth or the right connections finding themselves excluded by the factions within the bureaucracy, without hope of obtaining official recommendations for their sons), and therefore might choose castration for a boy in the hope that the Yellow Gate would open up an alternative road to the top. Both these downward and upwardly mobile groups were likely to be literate and very much at home in the scholarly culture.

That eunuchs might also be immersed in the scholarly culture and share its social and political ideals is an idea which has rarely been given serious consideration. One person who has done so is the remarkable Qing scholar Zhao Yi, who in his essay 'There Were Worthy

Eunuchs Too 宦官亦有賢者 '30 praises twelve eunuchs of the Later Han period for actions and accomplishments which indicate that they belonged completely to the scholarly milieu. They include the impressive Cai Lun 蔡倫, who invented a type of paper and was a scholar of such standing that, when in 110 Liu Zhen 劉珍 and Liang Shi 良史 were assigned to the Dongguan Library to collate documents and compile a history of the Han, it was Cai Lun who was ordered to oversee and check their work;³¹ Liang He 良賀, who when asked by Emperor Shun why he alone had not recommended anyone for office, replied that in the past Shang Yang had been introduced to the ruler of Qin by a eunuch, and lacking knowledge of scholars he did not want to be responsible for another disaster like that;³² Lü Qiang 呂強, who declined Emperor Ling's offer of a marquissate on the grounds that he did not consider it appropriate for a person in his position, and in his memorials to the throne articulated scholarly ideals;³³ and Wu Kang 吳伧, who, finding that his talents were ignored, pleaded illness and withdrew to his quarters to 'nourish his ideals' - in other words, becoming, as far as his position allowed him, a hermit.³⁴ Nevertheless, even Zhao Yi was still prepared to assert that nine out of ten Later Han eunuchs were bad, and to describe at length the evils they perpetrated.³⁵ Yet there is nothing to substantiate the claim that, in comparison with scholars, eunuchs as a group lacked moral sense or political idealism,³⁶ and unless we are prepared to identify the testicles as the seat of morality, there are no grounds for assuming it ever will be established that eunuchs were more prone than scholars to moral degeneracy.

Politics in the last part of the Han dynasty was indeed dominated by a three-way power struggle between scholar-officials, imperial relatives and eunuchs, and this struggle was a major factor in the

ultimate disintegration of the dynasty. As I suggested earlier, however, the growing power of the imperial relatives and eunuchs is better regarded as something to be explained than as an explanation of dynastic decline.

Central to any explanation of the political power of the imperial relatives and eunuchs must be the institution of imperial autocracy itself. The emperor was the supreme authority, the 'One Man', and as such could not help but be conscious that the various groups with access to him did their utmost to influence his decisions in order to further the interests and concerns they represented. It took a strong ruler to be able to neutralise these interest groups. Particularly when the emperor came to the throne as a minor, as was the case with every Later Han ruler after Emperor Zhang, the imperial relatives and eunuchs were able to increase their influence. One way of neutralising their power was to play them off against each other, supporting a weaker group to win it as an ally against the stronger. Thus Emperor Huan relied on the eunuchs to help him destroy the domination of the Liang family. Of course this could result in the newly powerful group becoming as much of a threat as the one it had overthrown.

The main motivation behind the quest for influence over the emperor and political power on the part of imperial relatives and eunuchs (as well as the majority of officials) was the protection and furtherance of their family interests. The conflict between family loyalties and duties toward the state is an element which recurs throughout Chinese history. Any adequate account of the role of the extended family in shaping that history would have to consider its significance both as an integrating and as a destabilising factor, its

role in determining both China's characteristic cultural resilience and her equally characteristic form of political fragility. Stress on family interests and loyalties was not a Confucian innovation, any more than was the basic religious institution of ancestor worship, but Confucian teachings did insist on the psychological and ethical priority of the individual's duties towards his family.³⁷ Hence one of the themes in philosophical works critical of Confucians was the need to eradicate partiality (si 私) or the pursuit of private interests, and to establish impartiality (gong 公) or public-mindedness.³⁸ This was especially true of the Legalists, and it is hardly surprising that a number of major thinkers of the Later Han concerned about the political decline they were witnessing were attracted by Legalist ideas.³⁹ If the families related to the Han emperors by marriage sometimes furthered their private interests in excessive and extravagant ways, this was not because members of those families as individuals tended to be more unscrupulous than the rest of the educated elite, but because their unique position in the socio-political structure enabled them to pursue those private interests further than other families. It was this which made them a potential threat to the stability of the empire.

Officials no less than other members of society had a tendency to pursue family interests at the expense of the interests of the state. Inevitably this undermined the bureaucracy's effectiveness and exacerbated many of the social and economic problems the government faced. But the bureaucracy's ability to function was further reduced by the problem of factionalism, a problem which steadily became more acute with time. Factionalism and the pursuit of family interests were closely related: factions were formed largely to protect and enhance family interests. But as a political concept factionalism

concerns the collusion of individuals holding public office in order to further private (family) and anti-government interests. As I have already indicated, there is considerable evidence that this was a major problem, so much so that it made a mockery of the recommendatory system and reduced the imperial bureaucracy to a mire of intrigue and corruption. When eunuchs brought charges of factionalism against officials they were not necessarily being malevolent; when emperors trusted eunuchs they knew personally in preference to officials they suspected of collusion, they were not necessarily being obtuse.

Paradoxically, there is some ground for believing that, as a concurring feature of Chinese political life, factionalism owed something to Confucius' attempts circumscribe the individual's duty towards his family with loftier, more universal ideals.

One important theme in the Lunyu which is rarely commented on is that of the importance of comrades or kindred spirits (you 友), friends who share the same ideals and work towards the same ends. Ultimately such colleagues matter more to a gentleman than his blood relations (though ideally the two categories are not mutually exclusive).⁴⁰ When Confucius said, 'The gentleman enters into associations but not cliques; the petty man enters into cliques but not associations',⁴¹ it was such comradeship that he had in mind. The trouble is that in politics inevitably it is always the opposition that forms 'cliques' or 'factions', while members of one's own party associate only for the best of reasons. There is no doubt whatever that scholars of the Later Han were much inclined to form alliances, which we may call 'associations' 'cliques' or 'factions', depending on how we feel about them, and that the webs of loyalties and interests these generated were frequently at odds with the purposes and lines of

authority in the bureaucracy.

To sum up: while the politics of this period was indeed dominated by the struggle for power and influence between scholars, imperial relatives and eunuchs, we must reject the 'explanation' of the decline of the Han in terms of an irruption of evil outsiders into an orderly, efficient bureaucracy, manned by idealistic scholars whose self-awareness crystallised out of their opposition to the evils they faced. What we have to emphasise, rather, is the uninterrupted evolution and elaboration of the scholarly and political culture, a culture which was to varying degrees shared by scholars, imperial relatives and eunuchs alike. That culture did contain high ideals, ideals which were seriously pursued by only a minority of imperial relatives and eunuchs as of scholars. But it also contained negative elements, including family-oriented partiality and factionalism, and these influenced the conduct of many scholars as well as imperial relatives and eunuchs.

Such an account is very different to that given Yü Ying-shih, and requires in particular a rejection of his idea of a new self-awareness developing among scholars of the late Han period. This in turn makes it necessary to reject his argument that this new self-awareness and the individualism it generated led to an upsurge of eremitism which carried on into the Wei-Jin period. 'That the reclusive thought of the end of the Han is in fact a reflection of the subjective aspect of individual self-awareness, and that the eremitic aspirations of the scholar-officials of the Wei-Jin period are largely to be understood in the same way, is beyond doubt', he claims.⁴² What truth there is in this idea of new self-awareness relates to the scholarly culture which developed in the Han, but this had begun to take shape as early

as the middle of former Han dynasty.

NOTES

1. Yü Ying-shih, Han Jin zhi ji shi zhi xin zijue yu xin sichao', in Zhongguo zhishi jieceng shilun, 205-327.
2. Yü, 206-07.
3. Yü, 211-12.
4. Yü, 213-14.
5. Yü, 215-20.
6. Yü, 231-34.
7. On this see Chen Yinke, Xiaoyao you Xiang-Guo yi ji Zhi Dun yi tanyuan 逍遙遊向郭義及支道義探源 (1937), rpt. Chen Yinke xiansheng wenshi lunji, 195; Tang Changru 唐長孺, 'Qingtán yu qingyi 清談與清議', in Wei Jin nanbeichao shi luncong 魏晉南北朝史論叢 (Beijing: Sanlian, 1955), 289-97; Tang Yongrong 湯用彤, 'Du Renwu zhi 讀人物志', in Wei Jin xuanxue lungao 魏晉玄學論稿 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1957), 16; Wang Zhongle 王仲學, Wei Jin nanbeichao shi 魏晉南北朝史 (Shanghai: Renmin chubanshe, 1980), 736-40; Yü Ying-shih, 'Han Jin zhi ji shi', 236-37.
8. Yü, 'Han Jin zhi ji shi', 219.
9. See particularly his article 'Gudai zhishi jieceng de xingqi yu fazhan', Zhongguo zhishi jieceng shilun, 1-108.
10. Yü gives only one example, that of the hermit Shentu Pan drawing a parallel between the scholars of his own period and those just before the final extinction of all trace of the Zhou dynasty by the forces of Qin Shihuang (HHS 53/1752). But others drew such parallels too. Thus one scholar from the time of Emperor Shun praised another as a latter day Yan Hui (53/1744), and compared himself with Confucius (83/2773), while the charlatan Xiang Xu went as far as to name his followers after Confucius' disciples (81/2693). At the end of the Han dynasty, Ying Shao, like many of his contemporaries, found the Spring and Autumn Period and its characteristic institutions (such as that of the Hegemon) particularly relevant to his own time. For an account of this aspect of Ying Shao's thought see Michael Nylan, 'Ying Shao's "Feng Su T'ung Yi": An Exploration of the Problems in Han Dynasty Political, Philosophical and Social Unity' (Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 1982).
11. HHS 83/2761; HHJ 5/8b-9b.
12. HHS 83/2762. Jin Fagen 'Dong Han danggu renwu de fenxi', 517, identifies a number of factors which encouraged 'factionalism' among Han scholars, including: shared scholarly interests; association in office; marital connections; the patronage involved in official recommendations and summonses; and being

fellow students of a given teacher. Obviously these things were just as characteristic of the early part as of the later part of the dynasty. It was not for nothing that Emperor Ming issued an edict in the first year as his reign ordering that abuses and manipulation of the recommendatory system be stopped (HHS 2/98). But this decree seems to have had little effect, for Emperor Zhang had to issue a very similar one soon after he came to the throne (HHS 3/133), and Wang Chong, writing during his reign, complained that it was connections and factions rather than personal merit that led to recommendation for office (LH 27/1b).

13. LY 15.20.
14. As suggested in Chapter One, note 121, possibly the best example was Sima Qian.
15. Zhao Yi, Nianer shi zhaji, 5/89.
16. Yü, 'Han Jin zhi ji shi', 217.
17. Yü, 'Han Jin zhi ji shi', 220-27.
18. Sanfu juelu zhu, cited in the commentary to HHS 64/2121. DGHJ 12/5b also makes this assessment of Ma Rong. On Ma Rong's rather opportunistic approach to eremitism see HHS 60A/1953 and HHJ 19/3b-4a. For an attempt to clear Ma Rong's name of this and other alleged improprieties, including the far more serious matter of his implication in Li Gu's death, see Wang Yong 王永, 'Ma Rong bian 馬融辨', Dalu zazhi 36.3 (1968), 87-91.
19. HHS 83/2763. In the HHJ 5/8b version Yan Guang emphasises the difference between men such as himself and ordinary scholars: 'There truly are scholars who retain their integrity'.
20. Xunzi 8/87, 90-94, 100.
21. Wang Fu, Qianfu lun 1/10a-b, 2/4b-5a, 11b-12a, 14b-15a, 3/11b-12a, 8/2a-3b, 5b-6b.
22. Xu Gan, Zhong lun 中論 (SBCK ed.) B/7a-14a.
23. Yü Ying-shih, who refers to Xu Gan's work on pp.211-12, is perfectly well aware of prevalence of 'vulgar scholars' in the Han period, yet in his account of the rise the supposedly new scholarly self-awareness they disappear from view, with the result that individual and group scholarly consciousness he describes pertains only to a small minority. On the other hand, the general lack of idealism among scholars of the late Han period is stressed by Chen Dongyuan, 'Dong Han zhi shiqi'.
24. On Liang Ji's control over scholars and officials, see particularly his biography in HHS 34/1178-87; also Rafe de Crespigny, 'Political Protest in Imperial China', and 'The Harem of Emperor Huan: A Study of Court Politics in Later Han', Papers in Far Eastern History, 12 (Sept. 1975), 3-18.
25. Yü, 'Han Jin zhi ji shi', 210.

26. See, for example, Yang Liansheng 楊聯陞, 'Dong Han de haozu
東漢的豪族', Qinghua xuebao, 11 (1936), 1007-63,
translated as 'Great Families of the Eastern Han', in Chun-shu
Chang, The Making of China (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.:
Prentice-Hall, 1975), esp. 131-32; Balazs, 'Political Philosophy
and Social Crisis at the End of the Han Dynasty', Chinese
Civilization and Bureaucracy, 188-89. This point is also taken up
by de Crespigny, 'Political Protest in Imperial China', 4-5 (note
1). Certainly there is no evidence in the chapters on empresses
in the Hou Han shu (juan 10A-B) that a significant number came
from vulgar stock.
27. Balazs makes this assertion in 'Political Philosophy and Social
Crisis at the End of the Han Dynasty', 189. In 'Two Songs by
Ts'ao Ts'ao', Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy, 174, he says
rather more cautiously that 'some' eunuchs were of 'plebian
origin'. His more sweeping assertion is questioned by Nylan,
'Ying Shao's "Feng Su T'ung Yi"', 234 (note 47).
28. On this and many other points regarding eunuchs, see Taisuke
Mitamura 三田村泰助, Kangan: sokkin sei-ji no kozo 宦
官: 側近政治の構造 (Tokyo: Chuo ko ronsha, 1963),
mutilated into English by Charles A. Pomeroy as Chinese Eunuchs:
The Structure of Intimate Politics (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E.
Tuttle, 1970).
29. HHS 78/2524. Three eunuchs of the Former Han known to have been
reduced to that status for real or alleged offences against the
law were Shi Xian, Hong Gong and Li Yannian 李延年
(HS 93/3725-26).
30. Zhao Yi, Nianer shi zhaji, 5/101-03.
31. HHS 78/2513-14. Cai Lun's invention of paper has been widely
discussed. For example, see Lao Gan, 'Lun Zhongguo zao zhi shu
zhi yuanshi 論中國造紙術之原始', and 'From Wooden
Slip to Paper', both reprinted in Lao Gan xueshu lunwen ji 勞幹
學術論文集 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1976), 687-98,
1021-37; Wang Ming 王明, 'Cai Lun yu Zhongguo zao zhi shu de
fazhan 蔡倫與中國造紙術的發展', Kaogu xuebao
考古學報 8 (1954), 213-21; Su Yinghui 蘇瑩輝, 'Zai
lun Cai Hou zhi 再論蔡侯紙', Dalu zazhi 49.3 (1974),
10-14.
32. HHS 78/2518.
33. HHS 78/2528.
34. HHS 78/2533-34.
35. Nianer shi zhaji, 5/93-101.
36. Balazs was prepared to make such wild generalisations as
'Naturally the greed of the eunuchs and their low moral standards
were in direct proportion to the opportunities available to them',
and to condemn 'the exactions, corruption, and veniality of the
eunuchs', but nevertheless had to admit they 'were by no means
entirely without culture' ('Political Philosophy and Social
Crisis', 190-91). Yang Liansheng, 'Great Families of Eastern

Han', 131, also makes much of the ignorance of eunuchs.

37. For example, see LY 1.2, 1.6, 1.9, 1.11, 1.13, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 4.18, 4.19, 4.20, 13.18.
38. For example, see Mozi 8/20-21; Han Feizi 2/2b, 4a, 19/4b-5a. Both the Moist doctrine of universal love and the Legalist notion of rule by law were of course both formulated in opposition to what was seen as Confucian 'partiality'. On the conflict between duty towards the family and duty to the emperor, see also Rafe de Crespigny, 'Politics and Philosophy Under the Government of Emperor Huan', 53.
39. For example, Wang Fu, Cui Shi, Zhongchang Tong 仲長統, and Xun Yue. See Balazs, 'Political Philosophy and Social Crisis', 198-225; Ch'en, Hsün Yüeh, 148-61; Fu Lecheng, 'Hanfa yu Hanru', 459-60.
40. The term you appears nineteen times in the Lunyu on its own and seven times in the compound pengyou 朋友.
41. LY 2.14.
42. Yü, 'Han Jin zhi ji shi', 255.

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