

she, 1996). Secondary studies include Wai-ye Li, “*Shishuo xinyu* and the Emergence of Aesthetic Self-Consciousness in the Chinese Tradition,” in *Chinese Aesthetics: The Ordering of Literature, the Arts, and the Universe in the Six Dynasties*, ed. Zong-qi Cai (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2004), 237–76; Nanxiu Qian, *Spirit and Self in Medieval China: The Shih-shuo hsin-yü and Its Legacy* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2001); and Zhou Yiliang 周一良, “*Shishuo xinyu* he zuozhe Liu Yiqing shenshi de kaocha” 世說新語和作者劉義慶身世的考察, in *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi lunji xubian* 魏晉南北朝史論集續編 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1991).



LIU YIQING 劉義慶

Recent Anecdotes from the Talk of the Ages
(*Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語) (excerpts)

I. ON VIRTUOUS CONDUCT (DEXING 德行)

10. Hua Xin treated his sons and younger brothers with extreme meticulousness. Although they might be in the private chambers of their own house, he would be as strict as if he were following court ritual regulations. Chen Yuanfang [Chen Ji] and his younger brother Chen Chen embraced the path of unconstrained affection.²² Nevertheless, inside these two sets of gates, neither side lacked for harmonious delight and tranquillity.

11. Guan Ning and Hua Xin were together hoeing vegetables in the garden when they saw on the ground a piece of gold.²³ Guan continued hoeing as if the gold were no different from a tile or stone, but Hua picked it up and only then threw it away. On a different occasion, they were sharing a mat while reading when a distinguished personage riding in a lavish carriage passed by the gate. Ning continued reading as before, but Xin dropped his book and went out to see. Ning then cut the mat in half and said, “You are no longer my friend.”

12. Wang Lang was always extolling Hua Xin for his powers of understanding.²⁴ On the day of the Year-End Sacrifice, Xin had the custom of gathering his sons and nephews for a feast. Wang imitated him. Someone told this story to Zhang Hua, and Zhang said, “For Wang imitating Hua, it was always a matter of surface appearances, and thus Wang would just end up more unlike him than before.”²⁵

13. Hua Xin and Wang Lang were together sailing in a boat and fleeing the political upheavals. A person wanted to go with them, but Xin refused him. Lang said, “Fortunately, there is still room in the boat, so why couldn’t we let him join us?” Later, when the rebel troops were in pursuit and about to overtake them, Wang wanted to throw out the man they had picked up. Xin said,

"This is exactly why I originally had doubts about this. Since we have already given in to his pleading, how can we abandon him during an emergency?" And so they brought him along, rescuing him, just as before. Based on this, the world has evaluated the relative merits of Hua and Wang.

The question of judgment is inherent in the anecdotes of the collection, and even those who have the good judgment to admire the moral qualities of a friend may themselves be lacking. One of the most celebrated figures in *Recent Anecdotes from the Talk of the Ages* is Ruan Ji 阮籍 (210–263), byname Sizong 嗣宗. Ruan Ji was perhaps the greatest poet of the age as well as a talented musician. He was one of the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove and took a principled (as well as pragmatic) stance against involvement in the ruthless world of Jin politics. He makes nearly twenty appearances in the collection. Ruan Ji's first appearance is worth noting, as the passage thematizes and complicates the question of public recognition and reputation that runs throughout the pages of the book. He is the object of praise by a prince, and yet what he is being praised for is his own refusal to participate in the culture of appraisal.

15. Sima Zhao, Prince Wen of the Jin, praised Ruan Ji for his absolute discretion, saying that every time he spoke with him, Ruan's words were always mysterious and remote, never once praising or criticizing another's character.²⁶

The question of character evaluation can also be seen in the two anecdotes about Wang Rong 王戎 (234–305), the youngest of the Seven Sages. Wang suffers in reputation because of his later decision to serve Sima Zhao, becoming Director of State Affairs (*Shangshu ling* 尚書令) and, later, Minister of Education (*Situ* 司徒). In his biography in the *Jin shu*, Wang also was acclaimed for possessing "the ability to recognize human character types" (*renlun jianshi* 人倫鑑識).

16. Wang Rong once said, "I have dwelled with Xi Kang for twenty years, and never once have I seen on him an expression of either delight or vexation."²⁷

17. Wang Rong and He Qiao met with the "great bereavement" [the death of a parent] at the same time, and both were praised for their filiality.²⁸ Wang was reduced to "chicken bone"-like thinness and kept to his bed. He wept and cried while completing the ritual observances. Emperor Wu said to Liu Yi, "Have you been observing the behavior of Wang and He? I have heard that He's sorrow and suffering exceeds ritual observance, causing people to worry about him."²⁹ Yi said, "Although He Qiao he has completed all ritual observances, he has suffered no injury to spirit or health. Although Wang Rong did not complete the observances, his sorrow brought such devastation that his bones stick out. I consider that He Qiao exemplifies filiality while alive but that Wang Rong exemplifies filiality unto death. Your Majesty should not worry about Qiao but, instead, about Rong."

II. ON SPEECH (YANYU 言語)

It is said that *Recent Anecdotes from the Talk of the Ages* is the primary source for the practice of “pure conversation” (*qingtan* 清談), which developed out of the political practice of “pure criticism” (*qingyi* 清議) of the late Han. But whereas the practitioners of “pure criticism” sought to evaluate the moral character of potential candidates for office, those of “pure conversation” seemed to be engaged in a rarefied game of wit and skill. The stakes might be only one’s reputation or dignity, but these are not always low stakes.

1. Bian Rang appeared before Yuan Lang and seemed ill at ease.³⁰ Lang said, “In the past, when Yao summoned Xu You, Xu You betrayed no anxiety.³¹ Why are you, sir, ‘putting on your clothes upside down’?”³² Rang replied, “Your Excellency has just taken up the post, and the virtue of Yao has not yet been manifested. This is why this lowly person is ‘putting on his clothes upside down.’”

IV. ON LITERARY LEARNING (WENXUE 文學)

In many ways, the practice of “pure conversation” was agonistic, and the participants entered an exchange as if they were in combat. Here, two of the most famous figures in the “mysterious learning” (*xuanxue* 玄學) movement meet for the first time, with humiliating results for one.

6. He Yan was the Minister of Personnel and had much influence and prestige. Guests who came to converse with him often filled all the seats in his hall. Wang Bi, who was not yet of capping age [not yet twenty years], went to see him. Yan had heard of Bi’s reputation, and so he selected some of the successful theses from past conversations and said to Bi, “These theses I consider to be unsurpassable. Would you like to discuss them further?” Bi thereupon raised his disputations, and the entire audience considered that Yan had been defeated. At that point, Bi himself assumed the roles of both guest and host in argument, reversing roles for several bouts. This was something that no one in the audience could equal.

Despite the fluidity of Wang Bi’s performance, the position that one took in argument was not supposed to be completely divorced from one’s personal beliefs and views. Skill in argument was not supposed to be utter sophistry but was supposed to reflect the uniqueness of one’s ideas and abilities. The exigency of a triumphant performance, however, sometimes could take priority over originality of thought, as in the following anecdote about the rival Buddhist masters Yu Fakai 于法開 (ca. 310–370) and Zhi Dun 支遁 (314–366). It is useful to know that Yu Fakai came to be considered the head of the “School of Stored Consciousness” (*shihan zong* 識含宗), which argued

that phenomenal reality is like the stored images of dreaming but that true reality is emptiness. Zhi Dun, the creator of the “Matter as Such doctrine” (*jise yi* 即色義), argued that true reality is found in material phenomena, and thus there is no actual distinction between emptiness and material reality.

45. At the beginning, Yu Fakai competed over the primacy of his reputation with Zhi Dun, but later, public feeling gradually favored Zhi. In his heart, Yu was distressed and thereafter concealed his traces at the foot of the mountains of Shan Prefecture.³³ He sent a disciple to go to the capital, ordering him to pass through Kuaiji. At this time, Zhi was engaged in lecturing on the *Shorter Prajñāpāramitā Sutra*. Fakai prepared his disciple by saying, “When you arrive, Zhi Dun should be in the midst of discussing such-and-such a section in his lecture.” He accordingly instructed the disciple how to attack with disputations for several tens of bouts, saying, “In the past, these are the points for which Zhi’s arguments were not sound.” The disciple, as directed, went to pay a visit to Zhi Dun. Zhi was indeed engaged in lecturing on the particular passage, and so the disciple carefully proceeded to relate Fakai’s ideas. The argument went back and forth for quite some time, but in the end, Zhi was defeated. In a sharply bitter voice, Zhi cried, “Why should you, sir, have come here bearing another man’s commission?”

VI. ELEGANCE AND DIGNITY (YALIANG 雅量)

Although *Recent Anecdotes from the Talk of the Ages* is a categorized work, sorting historical anecdotes into typological traits, activities, and behaviors, it also is a work profoundly concerned with irreducible natures and personalities, anticipating the very idea of selfhood.

2. When Xi Kang was about to be executed in the Eastern Market, his spirits and manner did not change. Taking out his zither, he plucked its strings, playing “Guangling Melody.”³⁴ When the tune ended, he said, “Yuan Zhun once asked to learn this melody, but I was jealously stubborn and would not share it with him. On this day, ‘Guangling Melody’ will be lost forever!”³⁵ The three thousand students of the Grand Academy submitted petitions, pleading to make Xi Kang their teacher, but this was not granted. Not long after, Sima Zhao felt regret for this.

What often seems to be valued implicitly by the selection and narration of anecdotes is not only the rigidly unchanging character but also the one that is indifferent to the prospect of promotion, good fortune, and advantage. It has been remarked that much of “pure conversation” was concerned with explicating Daoist philosophy. The *Zhuangzi*, in particular, was valued for its advocacy of maintaining a natural equanimity regarding the vicissitudes of life. The intellectual argu-

ment would become an ethical one, a vision of how to live life. The following anecdote is about Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (309–ca. 365), the most famous calligrapher in Chinese history.

19. When Chief Defender Chi Jian was in Jingkou, he sent one of his trusted stewards to give a letter to Chief Counselor Wang Dao, asking for a son-in-law.³⁶ The counselor told Chi's messenger, "Go to the eastern wing and choose whom-ever you like." The steward returned and reported to Chi, saying, "All the young masters of the Wang household can be considered fine. When they heard that someone had come seeking a son-in-law, they all put on distinguished airs. Only one fellow lay on the eastern bed with his belly showing, as if he had not heard." Lord Chi said, "He's precisely the one I want!" When he paid his visit, it turned out to be Wang Xizhi, and he accordingly gave his daughter to him in marriage.

One of the most famous examples of this equanimity concerns Xie An 謝安 (320–385). At the time, Xie's nephew Xie Xuan 謝玄 (343–388) was in charge of defending the Eastern Jin against the invasion of Fu Jian 苻堅 (338–385), Emperor Xuanzhao 宣昭 (r. 357–385) of the Former Qin. Xie An's younger brother Xie Shi 謝石 (327–388) was also present. The Eastern Jin forces were massively outnumbered by those of Fu Jian, who had unified Northern China and was now seeking to annex the South.

35. Lord Xie was playing chess with someone when suddenly a letter arrived from Xie Xuan, who was at the Huai River. Xie glanced through the letter and, without a word, leisurely turned back to the chessboard. When his guests asked whether the news from the Huai River was good or bad, he replied, "My boys have crushed the thug." In expression and comportment, he acted no differently than usual.

VII. ON KNOWING AND EVALUATING (SHIJIAN 識鑒)

The power of recognizing human abilities and character traits has its own section in *Recent Anecdotes from the Talk of the Ages*. The following anecdote is an evaluation of the character of the great warlord Cao Cao 曹操 (155–220), though this differs from the famous version preserved in the *Record of the Three Kingdoms*.

In his youth, Lord Cao met with Qiao Xuan.³⁷ Xuan told him, "The empire is currently in disorder, and the throngs of heroes contend like tigers with one another. The one who will set things into rule and order—is that not you, sir? [Even though] you will truly be a hero in an age of disorder, [you will be] a treacherous thug in a well-governed one. I regret bitterly that I already am old and will not see you rise to wealth and power. I will entrust the welfare of my sons and grandsons to you."

VIII. APPRECIATION AND PRAISE (SHANGYU 賞譽)

In Qiao Xuan's evaluation of Cao Cao, there is still the Han interest in correlating moral character and public function. In the following example, Wang Rong characterizes (*mu* 目) the person of Shan Tao 山濤 (205–283), another of the Seven Sages, and one who, like Wang, eventually went to serve the Simas.

10. Wang Rong characterized Shan Tao as follows: “Like uncarved jade or unrefined gold, people all admire how precious he is, but no one knows how to name his capacity.”

Characterization may have sought to crystallize the essence of another person in a few well-chosen words, but the poetic nature of those words often indicated the virtuosic skill necessary both to make the characterization and to understand it. The following example deals with the monk Śrīmitra (Gaozuo daoren 高坐道人, fl. ca. 310–340).

48. People of the time wanted to characterize Śrīmitra but could not. Huan Yi asked Zhou Yi about it, and Marquis Zhou said, “He could be called ‘transcendent and bright.’”³⁸ Lord Huan said, “His spirit reveals itself from within the deep.”

IX. GRADATIONS OF EXCELLENCE (PINZAO 品藻)

While the most memorable character evaluations tended toward an aesthetic remove, some that also portray the reactions of those being evaluated point to the underlying differentials of power and prestige. Wen Qiao 溫嶠 (288–329), byname Taizhen 太真, was Governor of Jiang Province and a leading general of the Eastern Jin.

25. When the age evaluated Wen Qiao, he was ranked the highest of the second grade of men who crossed the Yangzi. When the famous fellows of the time came together to talk about personalities and were just about to finish with the first grade, Wen always turned pale.

XIV. APPEARANCE AND CONDUCT (RONGZHI 容止)

The ability to evaluate other people is grounded in the attempt to grasp the true nature of the person being evaluated, to see past appearances and to understand what is really taking place. Again, the act of evaluation is often reflective, demonstrating the worth of the subject as well as the virtuosity of the evaluator.

36. Xie Xuan said this of his uncle Xie An: “When roaming in leisure, he indeed has no need of high-toned chanting. He only need solemnly sit, pinch

his nose, and let his eyes drift all around, and then he naturally has the appearance of one dwelling in the hills and marshes.”

XXIII. THE FREE AND UNINHIBITED (RENDAN 任誕)

It has often been noted that the rise of individualism can be found in the Wei–Jin period, though often what is seen as evidence might be considered anticonventionalism rather than authentic individuality.

2. When Ruan Ji was mourning the death of his mother, he was among the guests of Prince Wen of Jin, helping himself to wine and meat. Metropolitan Commandant He Zeng was also present and said, “Your Lordship rules the empire through filial devotion, yet Ruan Ji, in a period of heavy mourning, appears among the lord’s guests drinking wine and eating meat—it would be appropriate to banish him beyond the seas in order to rectify the instruction of popular customs.”³⁹ Prince Wen said, “Ji, as emaciated and worn as he is—and you still are unable to empathize with him? Why is this? Moreover, to drink wine and eat meat when one is ill certainly accords with mourning observances!” Ji went on eating and drinking without pause, his spirits and expression entirely self-composed.

XXV. SCORNING AND SNEERING (PAITIAO 排調)

To be sure, even masters of self-possession may find themselves on the receiving end of a witticism and thus the momentary loser of a verbal exchange. Wang Rong’s response to Ruan Ji is significant not only as a snappy rejoinder but also as a double comment on both Ruan Ji’s lapse into conventionalism and the connoisseurly elitism inherent in regimes of wit.

4. Xi Kang, Ruan Ji, Shan Tao, and Liu Ling were in the bamboo grove drinking heavily.⁴⁰ Afterward, Wang Rong came over. Ruan Ji said, “That vulgar character has once again come to ruin a person’s mood.” Wang Rong laughed, saying, “You people’s mood—is it indeed something that can be ruined?”

XXXV. ON BESOTTED DELUSION (HUONI 惑溺)

Women make occasional appearances in the *Recent Anecdotes from the Talk of the Ages*, though they are far from prominently featured. This last passage takes up the interesting question of whether adherence to normative roles should take precedence over the expression of true feelings and intimacy. Its inclusion in the chapter “On Besotted Delusion” suggests one reading, yet the story itself remains ambiguous.

6. Wang Rong’s wife often addressed him with the familiar pronoun *qing*. Rong said, “For a wife to address her husband with *qing* is not reverent according

to ritual etiquette. In the future, don't do this again." His wife said, "I am intimate with you; I love you; this is why I call you [*qing*] *qing*. If I don't call you [*qing*] *qing*, who else would have the right to call you [*qing*] *qing*?" Thereafter, Wang let her do as she wanted.

[Yang Yong 楊勇, ed., *Shishuo xinyu jiaojian* 世說新語校箋, 4 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006)]

NOTES

1. In translating the title for *Shishuo xinyu*, I decided not to follow the now-conventional translation by Richard B. Mather, who rendered it as *Shih-shuo Hsin-yü: A New Account of the Tales of the World*, 2nd ed. (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 2002). The phrase *shishuo* is more accurately translated as "talk from successive ages," whereas *xinyu* is closer to "recent sayings." However, I have taken the liberty of rendering *yu* as "anecdotes," since "sayings" in English denote proverbs or adages rather than the kind of anecdotal literature found in the text. The last issue is whether the relationship between *shishuo* and *xinyu* should be coordinate ("and") or genitive ("of"). Although there is no definitive answer, I have chosen a genitive rendering based on the assumption that the phrase *shishuo* likely invoked the title of an earlier Han dynasty work, titled simply *Shishuo*, and that *xinyu* is used to distinguish this later work from the Han text.
2. Du You 杜佑, comp., *Tongdian* 通典, 5 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), 13.1.310.
3. *HS* 6.160, 167.
4. *HHS* 61.2042. For a discussion of this, see John Makeham, *Name and Actuality in Early Chinese Thought* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 100–103.
5. Note that Shao 劭 sometimes is written 邵.
6. For the biography of Liu Shao 劉劭, see *SGZ* 21.617–20. Liu's role in creating the metropolitan exams is mentioned also in *Tongdian* 14.327, 15.367.
7. *Sui shu* 34.1004.
8. The numbering is provided for the sake of clarity and is not in the original text.
9. Ji Zha 季札, a prince of Wu, lived during the Spring and Autumn period in the sixth century B.C.E. He declined the throne of Wu, as it would mean usurping the primogeniture of his elder brother, and instead traveled throughout the states. Yan Ying 晏嬰 (d. 493 B.C.E.) was a minister of Qi and traditionally considered the author of the *Spring and Autumn of Master Yan*. Both Ji and Yan were famed for their high moral standards and conduct.
10. Guan Zhong 管仲 (d. 645 B.C.E.) was the prime minister of Duke Huan of Qi 齊桓公 (r. 685–643 B.C.E.) during the Spring and Autumn period. Guan's political reforms reorganized the state by centralizing authority, and as a result, Duke Huan was able to become hegemon. Shang Yang 商鞅 (d. 338 B.C.E.) was a minister of Qin whose agricultural reforms and anti-merchant policies strengthened the state's control over the economy.

11. Fan Li 范蠡 served Goujian 勾踐 (r. 496–465 B.C.E.), King of Yue, at the end of the Spring and Autumn period and helped destroy the state of Wu, after which he retired. Zhang Liang 張良 (d. 187 B.C.E.) was the primary strategist of Liu Bang 劉邦 (256 or 247–195 B.C.E.), who reigned as Han Gaozu 漢高祖 (r. 202–195 B.C.E.).
12. Yi Yin 伊尹 was the great minister of Cheng Tang 成湯, king and founder of the Shang dynasty. Lü Wang 呂望 was an adviser to King Wu 武王 (r. 1046–1043 B.C.E.) of the Zhou dynasty during the conquest of the Shang.
13. Zichan 子產 (581–521 B.C.E.) was the prime minister in the state of Zheng, serving for more than forty years. Ximen Bao 西門豹 (fl. third century B.C.E.) was a magistrate during the Warring States period. He was famous for ending the cult of the River Earl 河伯, which required the regular sacrifice of maidens.
14. Zixia 子夏 (b. 507 B.C.E.), a famed disciple of Confucius, is traditionally credited with writing the *Gongyang Tradition* and the *Guliang Tradition*.
15. Zhang Chang 張敞 (d. 48 B.C.E.) was a famed official under Han Xuandi 漢宣帝 (r. 74–48 B.C.E.). He was appointed as governor of the capital region, holding the post for a remarkable nine years and suppressing violence and crime during his tenure. Zhao Guanghan 趙廣漢 (d. ca. 65 B.C.E.) was also famed for his long tenure as governor of the capital region under the reign of Han Xuandi. Zhao Guanghan was sentenced to death after attempting to impeach high-ranking government ministers and crossing members of the influential Huo family.
16. Chen Ping 陳平 (d. 178 B.C.E.) first served Xiang Yu 項羽 (232–202 B.C.E.) and then Liu Bang, becoming minister after the founding of the Han. He was famed for his cunning, and though he served under Empress Lü 呂后 (241–140 B.C.E.), he was instrumental in ensuring the defeat of her family's attempt to change the dynasty. Han Anguo 韓安國 (d. 127 B.C.E.) won notice for his participation in the pacification of Wu and Chu and later for his advocacy of maintaining treaties with the Xiongnu.
17. Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. 145–ca. 86 B.C.E.) completed the *Records of the Historian*, a project begun by his father. Ban Gu 班固 (d. 92) was the main author of the *Han shu*.
18. Master Mao 毛公 refers to Mao Heng 毛亨, the Western Han commentator of the *Classic of Poetry*. There was also a Master Mao the Younger, which refers to another *Poetry* specialist by the name of Mao Chang 毛萇. Master Guan 貫公 received instruction in the *Chunqiu Zuozhuan* 春秋左傳 from the famed writer and scholar Jia Yi 賈誼 (200–168 B.C.E.).
19. Yue Yi 樂毅 is best known as the general of Yan during the Warring States period who brought about the military defeat of Qi. Cao Qiusheng 曹丘生 was a skilled debater who lived during the reign of Han Wendi 漢文帝 (r. 180–157 B.C.E.).
20. Here, Liu Shao uses the phrase *xiaoxiong* 驍雄 instead of *xiongjie* 雄傑, the phrase he used in introducing the twelve categories. Bai Qi 白起 (d. 258 B.C.E.) was a general of Qin during the Warring States noted for both his skill with weaponry and his homicidal tendencies. Han Xin 韓信 (d. 196 B.C.E.) was the chief general of Liu Bang's army and famed for his strategic abilities. Both Bai Qi and Han Xin were eventually put to death by the regimes they served.
21. See, for example, *Sui shu* 29.1011.

22. Chen Ji 陳紀 (ca. 130–200), byname Yuanfang 元方; his younger brother Chen Chen 陳謚; and their father, Chen Shi 陳寔 (104–187), were known as the “Three Gentlemen” (*sanjun* 三君) and were famed for their high standards of morality.
23. Guan Ning 管寧 (158–241) traced his lineage back to the famed Spring and Autumn minister Guan Zhong 管仲. He fled the tumult at the end of the Han dynasty and refused to accept office under the Wei, despite the entreaties of both Wendi and Mingdi.
24. Wang Lang 王朗 (d. 228) was the Governor of Kuaiji under the Eastern Han, and after the founding of the Wei, he served in a number of high-ranking positions in the central government.
25. Zhang Hua 張華 (232–300) was a leading figure in both Jin politics and letters. His strategies helped Jin Wudi conquer Wu, and afterward he served in a number of influential positions in the court.
26. Sima Zhao 司馬昭 (211–265) was the second son of Sima Yi 司馬懿 (179–251) and the enfeoffed prince of Jin. He was responsible for the death of Cao Mao 曹髦 (241–260), the Wei puppet-ruler set on the throne by the Sima clan. Sima Zhao intended to take the throne himself but died before realizing his plan.
27. Xi Kang 嵇康 (223–262) is, with Ruan Ji 阮籍, the most prominent of the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove. He had close ties through marriage to the Wei royal house and thus devoted himself to literary pursuits and Daoist self-cultivation techniques after the rise of the Sima clan. He was famed for his poetry, musical abilities, and philosophical essays.
28. He Qiao 和嶠 (d. 292) began in the employment of Emperor Wu while the emperor was still crown prince, and rose to become Director of the Secretariat. His biography in the *Jin shu* notes that He Qiao possessed the ability “to evaluate human categories” (*li renlun* 理人倫).
29. Liu Yi 劉毅 (ca. 210–285), byname Zhongxiong 仲雄, was descended from the Han imperial clan. He served in the Secretariat and as Chancellor of the National University (*Guozhi jijiu* 國子祭酒) and was valued by Wudi for his unyielding criticisms and honesty.
30. Bian Rang 邊讓 (d. ca. 196–220), byname Wenli 文禮, served as the Governor of Jiujiang but quit his post during the tumult of the Han’s last decades. He was a literary writer known for his rhapsodies, one of which is included in his biography in the *Hou Han shu*. In the end, he was killed for slandering Cao Cao 曹操. Yuan Lang 袁閭 (fl. second century), byname Fenggao 奉高, does not seem to have ever held a high official position. The *Hou Han shu* notes only that Yuan served in the Labor Section (*gongcao* 功曹) of Runan.
31. The allusion is to the sage-king Yao, who sought to offer the throne to the moral exemplar Xu You 許由. But Xu You, upon hearing of this, fled and went into hiding.
32. This is a quotation from “The East Is Not Yet Bright” 東方未明 (no. 100) in the *Classic of Poetry*, a poem that describes the haste of an official summoned to morning court.
33. This refers to Mount Sheng 嵯 in modern Zhejiang Prefecture.
34. “Guangling Melody” dates back to the Han dynasty. In his “Rhapsody on the Qin” 琴賦, Xi Kang mentions the title.

35. Yuan Zhun 袁準 (fl. 265–274), byname Xiaoni 孝泥, held only low official posts throughout his life, devoting himself to other pursuits. He was famed for his moral rectitude.
36. Chi Jian 郗鑒 (269–339) and Wang Dao 王導 (276–339) were two of the most influential men of the early Eastern Jin.
37. Qiao Xuan 橋玄 (fl. second century), famed for his scholarship on the *Record of Rites*, held such prestigious offices as Minister of Works (*Sikong* 司空) and Minister of Education.
38. Huan Yi 桓彝 (275–328) and Zhou Yi 周顗 (269–322) were high-ranking officials in the Eastern Jin central government. Zhou Yi was also famed for his drunkenness while in office.
39. He Zeng 何曾 (199–278), a prominent official during the Wei, was part of the Sima faction. He had a reputation for leading an extravagant life and for being jealous of others.
40. Liu Ling 劉伶 (d. ca. 265), one of the Seven Sages, was famed for his love of wine.