

CHAPTER I

Yuan Haowen and the Degree-Holder Society in the Jin Dynasty

In 1203, a scholar-official named Yuan Ge 元格 took his fourteen-year-old adopted son Yuan Haowen 元好問 (1190–1257) to Lingchuan county, Shanxi, in north China, then under Jurchen rule.¹ There Yuan Haowen spent the next five years studying with a teacher his father had carefully chosen for him: Hao Tianing 郝天挺 (1161–1217), a local *jinsi* degree holder who was teaching in the county school. In the Jin dynasty's central capital, Zhongdu 中都 (now Beijing), while waiting to be appointed to his next position, Yuan Ge had consulted with all his relatives and friends about where to find a good tutor to prepare his beloved son for the civil service examinations. Those consulted all recommended Zezhou subprefecture (now Jincheng, Shanxi), because it had been famous for producing excellent scholars since the Northern Song dynasty. Giving priority to his son's education, Ge took a position as magistrate of Lingchuan, a county in Zezhou subprefecture.

This story, told by Yuan Haowen three decades later in the funeral biography of his teacher Hao Tianing, illustrates the functioning of the typical Chinese examination-based society after the Northern Song. In this society, the civil service examination system functioned as the major mechanism for placing Confucian literati in government, and participation in the exams was the most important state-associated marker of

literati status. Yuan Haowen first saw this society flourish in north China in the middle Jin dynasty and then saw it completely dissolve after the Mongol conquest, which started in 1211.

Yuan Haowen was one of the Jin scholars whose lives were dramatically changed by the Mongol conquest in the early decades of the thirteenth century.² He stands out as our best informant on the sea change in northern Chinese society during the Jin-Yuan transition, particularly as it concerned literati. First, as a well-known scholar who lived through the late Jin and the early Mongol periods, Yuan Haowen traveled widely and associated with an extraordinarily large number of people, both literati and non-literati (map 3).

Second, Yuan Haowen left the richest body of surviving materials about late Jin literati, politics, and society. After the demise of the Jin state in 1234, Yuan Haowen decided to write a history of the Jin state and people. For the rest of his life, he devoted himself to this massive historical writing project. Some of his books have been lost over time, but many others survive.³ Yuan built the Pavilion of Unofficial History (*yeshi ting* 野史亭) for his history-writing project next to the ancestral graveyard of his family in his native village of Hanyan, in Xiurong county (now Xinzhou, Shanxi). The graveyard of the Yuans has survived and is a famous historical site in Xinzhou today (see plate 2). People pay respectful visits and make offerings to a modern statue of Yuan Haowen in the graveyard (fig. 1.1).

2. Yuan's given name Haowen, which literally means "fond of learning," refers to a passage in *Lanyu* 論語 (5:21). The translation is from Confucius, *The Analects of Confucius*, 22. Yuan Haowen's literary name was Yuzhi 裕之, and his pseudonym was Yishan 逸山.

3. His record of the siege of Kaifeng, *Miscellaneous Notes in the Year Renchen*, 1232 (*Renchen zaibian* 壬辰雜編), was lost. His surviving writings have been compiled and edited by modern scholars into *The Collected Works of Yuan Haowen* (*Yuan Haowen quanji*, hereafter *QJ*). This includes materials from the original *Collected Works of Yishan* (*Yishan ji* 逸山集), *Anthology of the Central Region* (*Zhongzhou ji* 中州集), and *The Record of the Listener Continued* (*Xu yijian zhi* 續夷堅志). Its appendix includes several introductions to the *Collected Works of Yishan*, the primary sources related to Yuan Haowen written by his contemporaries, and a year-by-year chronology of his life compiled by the modern scholar Miao Yue 繆誠. Because the *QJ* omits poems by Jin literati originally preserved in Yuan Haowen's *Zhongzhou ji*, I will cite the complete version of the *Zhongzhou ji* when quoting those poems.

1. Yuan Haowen's biological father was Ge's older brother, Yuan Deming 元德明, who entrusted Haowen to the childless Ge.



MAP 3 Places Yuan Haowen visited in 1190–1234. Map adapted from “Provinces of China (Circa 1997),” downloaded from https://worldmap.harvard.edu/data/geonode/Provinces_1997. Harvard CHGIS.



FIGURE 1.1 A statue of Yuan Haowen, Yuan family graveyard, Xinzhou, Shanxi province. This statue, probably dating to the 1980s or 1990s, portrays Yuan Haowen as a scholar by placing a brush in one hand and a book in the other. Yuan Haowen's writings are a crucial source about the Jin and Yuan occupation of north China. Author photo.

Using Yuan Haowen as the major source, this chapter describes the Jin examination-based society to establish a baseline for the discussion in the following chapters of the profound social transformation in north China under Mongol rule. In Jin society, Confucian literati, especially degree holders (who had passed the exams), held the status of a political and social elite among the Han population under Jurchen rule.⁴ This type of literati-centered social order had taken shape in north China during

4. A large number of modern Chinese and Japanese studies have greatly furthered our understanding of the Jin literati's political roles in Jin history, literary achievements, and intellectual culture. See Liu Pujiang, *Ershi shiji liaoqinshi*, 242–60 and 323–24.

the Northern Song. Beginning with the third Jurchen emperor, Xizong (r. 1135–50), the Jin reserved military power to the Jurchen elite recruited from the Jurchen social-military units of battalions (*yong'an* 猛安) and companies (*mouke* 谋克), while entrusting the management of the civil bureaucracy to Chinese Confucian elites recruited through civil service examinations. Military power ranked above civilian.⁵ Yet under Jurchen rule civil service examinations functioned as a major way for Chinese literati families to maintain their social status and as a ladder for non-literati families to move upward. The distinction between degree holders and others also separated the elite from the nonelite. This means that Jin literati elites remained largely dependent on the state. To this extent, the Jin examination-based society probably could be better described as a degree-holder society, in which literati who passed civil service examinations dominated elite society.

As we will see, the dramatic expansion of the Jin examination system and the increasing imperial patronage of Chinese literati culture after the 1160s greatly consolidated the literati-centered social order in north China. State-sponsored Confucian schools functioned as the institutional centers for literati learning and education for taking exams. The schools also provided the literati with a social space for circulating political and social information and forming extra ties, such as marriage alliances and friendships. Importantly, the lands of state schools that were allocated by the Jin state to support teachers and students enjoyed tax exemption, marking the prestigious social status of Chinese literati under Jurchen rule.

Examination candidates, teachers and students of state schools, and scholar-officials constituted the social group of literati, whose members enjoyed the most favorable social status among the Han under Jurchen rule. These men identified with each other based on their common experiences in civil service examinations and, for those who gained degrees, in Jin officialdom. Yuan Haowen was born in the golden age of the Jin literati, and during his childhood and youth (from 1190 to 1211), he witnessed and participated in the flourishing examination society in north China. His adult years (from 1211 to 1234) saw the gradual dissolution of that society following the first Mongol invasion. And in the last two de-

5. Schneider, "The Jin Revisited," 369–72.

cade of his life, Yuan Haowen struggled to adapt to a completely different world—one that had discarded civil service examinations and marginalized him and his literati peers.

Yuan Haowen in the Degree-Holder Society before the Mongol Invasion

When the Northern Song fell to the Jurchen in 1127, the majority of northern literati families moved south, and a number of local schools were destroyed. However, Chinese literati as a distinctive social group survived in north China, as the Jurchen government continued to recruit Chinese scholars as officials. Yuan Haowen frequently mentioned three crucial conditions for becoming a scholar. As he explains in one essay,

The creation of a scholar depends on state education, family origins of his father and elder brothers, and group study with teachers and friends. All of these three elements are absolutely necessary. It is like the beautiful women in the world. Most of them are nurtured in wealthy and well-known families. Of course there are famous beauties in the villages. Yet when those women become wives of officials, their posture and manners are not even as good as servant-girls of elite families. The reason is the same. Accordingly, education is necessary to cultivate talented people.⁶

Note that the value that Yuan sees in the "family origins of his father and elder brothers" is not notable pedigree or blood descent but training: learning how to be a scholar and gentleman. In this way origins are absolutely parallel to "state education" and "study with teachers and friends." But the key element that held these three conditions together was the civil service examination system.

Unlike the Northern Song government, which recruited most officials through the civil service examinations, the Jin government recruited Chinese through the examinations but recruited Jurchen and members of other non-Han ethnic groups—including Khitan, Bohai, and Xi

6. Yuan Haowen, "Xinan shilao Xin Yuan" 溪南詩老辛愿, *QJ*, 41:957.

people—through protection (*yin* 蔭), hereditary selection, and transfer from military service. Moreover, the Jin government always reserved the most important military positions and top civil positions for Jurchen officials.⁷ After Emperor Shizong 世宗 (r. 1161–89) established the Jurchen *jinsi* degree examinations in 1170, a few Jurchen, particularly poor commoners, also took the exams to achieve upward social mobility.⁸

In theory, Chinese scholar-officials could receive appointment to high-ranking and even ministerial posts, but they had to pass through more posts before receiving such an appointment than did their Jurchen counterparts. Most Chinese officials started in county-level positions after receiving their *jinsi* degrees and spent their political careers in local government.⁹ For example, Yuan Haowen's father, Yuan Ge, had been a county official in 1194 and was still a county magistrate when he died, in 1210.¹⁰

The flourishing society centered on degree-holders that Yuan Haowen witnessed early in his life was the product of a prospering civil culture supported by the imperial government under the reigns of two Jurchen emperors—Shizong and Zhangzong 章宗 (r. 1190–1208). These emperors, as Peter Bol argues, favored the idea that a civil order, to which Chinese literati were philosophically and practically committed, was a social good of universal value and could serve the imperial interest.¹¹ Even the promotion of Jurchen-language schools and examinations by the two emperors reflected, as Xin Wen demonstrates, the transformation of Jurchen identity in the direction of literary culture instead of "Jurchenization," as historians have traditionally believed.¹² Shizong and Zhangzong showed

great interest in Chinese learning, raised the quotas for recipients of Chinese *jinsi* degrees, and most importantly, gave preference to officials with *jinsi* degrees. Their reigns marked a golden era for Chinese literati. As Yuan Haowen remarks, "The government recruited the literati through examinations on rhyme prose (*cifu* 詞賦) and the classics (*mingjing* 明經). Many students who passed those examinations reached high-ranking positions. Since the examinations were an easy path to officialdom, people competed to take them. A civil order attained harmony, and the sound of students reciting books was heard in community and family schools."¹³ Imperial patronage of literati prompted enthusiasm for learning and education. While the lack of competition from southern literati helped literati families in the north succeed, northern Chinese literati also had a better chance of receiving degrees than did their counterparts in the south. The number of examination candidates during Zhangzong's reign held steady at 30,000 to 40,000 in any given examination year, and about one-fifth of candidates passed the department examinations. In contrast, during the late Northern Song only 10,000 to 20,000 students from north China took the examinations in a single year.¹⁴ And the passing rate in the Song was only one-tenth to one-fourteenth on average.¹⁵

In the same year that Yuan Haowen was born (1190), Emperor Zhangzong ascended the throne. Yuan Haowen regarded Zhangzong's reign—the period in which he grew up—as the best time for literati. As he put it: "In the Cheng'an (1196–1200) and Taihe (1201–1208) periods, civil culture flourished brightly. Among literati who were born at that time, nine-tenths of those who came from poor families benefited from their fathers and elder brothers' learning and grew up from students to be famous and capable scholar-officials."¹⁶ Here again, Yuan Haowen

7. Liu Pujiang, *Liaojinshi lun*, 77–82.

8. Iiyama, *Kin Gen jidai*, 140–44.

9. Tao, "Jindai de zhengzhi jigou" and "Political Recruitment in the Chin Dynasty."

10. For the development of the Jin examination system and the Han Chinese literati's involvement in the examinations, see Mikami, "Kin no kakyo seido to sono seiji reki sokumen" 金の科擧制度とその政治的側面, in his *Kinshi kenkyū III*, 268–320.

11. Bol, "Seeking Common Ground," 491–92.

12. Wen, "The Road to Literary Culture." For a comprehensive review of historians' debate about Shizong's efforts to revive the Jurchen traditions, see Schneider, "The Jin Revisited," 343–62. Schneider also rejects the argument that Shizong initiated a "Jurchen nativist movement" and emphasizes that he merely tried to strengthen the Jurchen forces politically and socially in Jin society to consolidate the legitimacy of the government (393, see also 382–95).

13. Yuan Haowen, "Shouyang xianxue ji" 壽陽縣學記, *QJ*, 32.674.

14. Iiyama, *Kin Gen jidai*, 158–59. It is worth pointing out, though, that northern exam-takers in the Northern Song already had a better chance than southern ones, because the Song state used lower standards for northerners to guarantee that a significant number of them would pass the exams and enter office.

15. Araki, *Sodai kabyō seido kenkyū*, 102–27 and 223–35. Also the average number of successful candidates per examination in the Northern Song and Southern Song was about 457.8 and 446.4 respectively, whereas under the Jin during the period 1167–1187 the average was 500, and during the period 1188–1199 it was 677.7. See Tao, "Political Recruitment in the Chin Dynasty," 28–29.

16. Yuan Haowen, "Zhangjun muzhiming" 張君墓誌銘, *QJ*, 24.537.

wants to highlight the importance of family origins and education in creating a successful scholar. But the narrative suggests that a larger number of successful examination students than before came from humble literati families that had not previously produced officials. A rough survey of data in the *Anthology of the Central Region*—a collection of Jin literati biographies and poems compiled by Yuan Haowen after 1233—shows that among the literati who received their education or earned *jinsshi* degrees during and after Shizong's reign, the majority indeed came from literati families. Among sixty-three individuals for whom family background information is listed and who received *jinsshi* degrees or became officials, only three were reported to have come from peasant or poor families, and only one from a clerk family.

The ability of elite families to maintain their prestigious status shows the critical importance of examination success for northern Chinese in the Jin dynasty. Many former elite families in north China abandoned the choice of military career and turned to the civil service examination route.¹⁷ Yuan Haowen's great-grandfather was a military officer in the late Northern Song. During the Jin, when civil service examinations became the only route to officialdom for Han Chinese, the men of the Yuan family tried to shift their identity from the military elite to the literati elite. Starting with Yuan Haowen's grandfather, who gained a *jinsshi* degree in 1157 and served in the Jin local government, three generations of Yuan men took the examinations; some succeeded, while others failed. Yuan Haowen's father Yuan Ge earned the *jinsshi* degree, possibly in the early 1190s; Yuan Haowen later mentioned that as a child, he accompanied his father to take up his position as a local official in Ye county (now Licheng, Shandong) around 1194.¹⁸ Yuan Haowen's great uncle, biological father, and elder brother all failed at the prefectural examinations and ended up spending their lives in their native village of Hanyan, either farming or teaching local students.¹⁹ Yuan Haowen's uncle, Yuan Sheng 元升, was the only one who kept to the military route, yet he was unable to obtain military office due to the lack of a recommendation from

17. Iiyama identified ninety-one individuals from northern Shanxi who held the *jinsshi* degree in the Jin dynasty, but only seventeen during the Five Dynasties and the Northern Song (see *Kin Gen jidai*, 107–26, particularly 113 and 118–19).

18. Yuan Haowen, "Jinan xingji" 濟南行紀, *QJ*, 34–713.

19. *QJ*, 37775, 39, 823, 41, 967, and 53, 1263.

a senior military official, which was required at that time.²⁰ Yuan Sheng's experiences illustrate the difficulties Chinese had in being appointed to military offices, which were mostly monopolized by the Jurchen and members of other ethnic groups. As a result, most Chinese elite families tried to educate their young men in Confucian learning, particularly in exam learning.

Yuan Haowen received his early education from family members. His mother, Lady Zhang, was his first teacher. He states in a funeral biography for the famous Jin scholar-official Wang Huanghua 王黃華, "From the time I began to talk, my mother taught me to recite Mr. [Wang's] poems."²¹ After he entered elementary school at the age of seven, Yuan Haowen started to study Confucian texts, beginning with the *Classic of Filial Piety*.²² He later vividly described in a poem his experience of learning the text:

我昔入小學
首讀仲尼居
百讀百不曉
但有唾成珠

When I had just entered elementary school,
I first read "Zhongni [Confucius] Stayed at Home Idly" [the first chapter of the *Classic of Filial Piety*].
I read it aloud one hundred times and still did not understand;
Only my spittle formed pearls [meaning that he recited the poem numerous times].²³

Although he mocked himself for not understanding what the Confucian text meant, from his childhood, Yuan Haowen was no doubt talented in learning. In an introduction to the Yuan clan genealogy that he later wrote, he explains, "I began to read books at the age of four and to learn composing poems at the age of eight."²⁴ At the time, Yuan Haowen—together with Yuan Haogu 元好古 the older son of his biological father, Yuan Deming—probably studied composing poems with Deming, who

20. Yuan Haowen, "Chengfeng Henan Yangong muning" 承奉河南元公墓銘, *QJ*, 25359.

21. Yuan Haowen, "Wang Huanghua mubei" 王黃華墓碑, *QJ*, 16395.

22. Yuan Haowen, "Guyi ershou" 古意二首, *QJ*, 1, 112.

23. Yuan Haowen, "Qufu jixing shishou" 曲阜紀行十首, *QJ*, 2, 45.

24. Yuan Haowen, "Nanguanlu yin" 南冠錄引, *QJ*, 37774.

taught at a community school in the countryside and was particularly fond of poetry.²⁵

Yet even within the same literati kin group, young men's opportunities to receive a good education differed, depending on their family's wealth and even on birth order. Haogu never left his hometown, possibly because Deming did not have enough money to afford Haogu's tour to study. Yuan Haowen tells us that Deming led a very simple life because he had not inherited much from his father and also because he cared little about making a living.²⁶ As a result, besides studying with his father, Yuan Haogu seemed to associate only with several local literati friends. Yuan Haowen, however, had the opportunity to study with various literati while accompanying his adoptive father to civil-administration positions in different regions. When Yuan Ge was serving in the local government of Jizhou (now Jixian, Hebei) in 1200, Lu Duo 路鐸—a well-known local scholar-official—taught the eleven-year-old Haowen to compose essays.²⁷

In north China under Jurchen rule, it was mainly the state schools that prepared students for civil service examinations. Notably, there were almost no private schools there like the private academies (*shuyuan* 書院) in the south that on the one hand prepared students for participation in the exams and on the other hand claimed to offer an education less oriented to a career.²⁸ The state school system in the north expanded a great deal along with the expansion of the civil service examinations during the reigns of Shizong and Zhangzong, who established a nationwide state education network paralleling the hierarchical administrative system from the capital to central regional cities. By 1190, in addition to six capital schools that had a combined enrollment of 795, twenty-four prefectural schools and sixty subprefectural schools—representing about half of the 174 Jin prefectures and subprefectures—had been established with government-allocated funds to accommodate about 1,800

students collectively. Each of these schools had one professor selected from those who either had taken the civil service examinations five times (without passing) or held a *jinshi* degree but were over age fifty (and therefore too old to embark on an official career).²⁹ The government supervised state schools by controlling their funding, teaching positions, and enrollment quotas, indicating strong ties between the Jin state and literati education. At least two-thirds of 683 Jin counties also had schools.³⁰ These public schools, often called "temple schools" (*miaoxue* 廟學) because they combined a school and a Confucian temple, functioned as institutional centers for Jin scholars and examination students.³¹ Some regional state schools developed reputations for producing a number of scholar-officials. For instance, the Taiyuan prefectural school became famous among Jin literati after seven students from the school passed the *jinshi* degree examinations in 1191, and one of them attained the highest ranking of Number One Scholar (*Zhuangyuan* 狀元).³²

State schools appealed to the Jin literati because all students in those schools were exempted from the duty of labor service and received regular stipends from the government.³³ According to the law titled "Supporting Schools and Educating Students" (*Shunxue yangshi fa* 膳學養士法), which was promulgated in 1201, each regional school student received annually thirty *shi* (about sixty kilograms) of millet from 60 *mu* 畝 (approximately 4 hectares) of state land cultivated by tenant farmers, and each National University (*taixue* 太學) student received all of the income from 108 *mu* (approximately 7 hectares) of land that was assigned to him.³⁴ Additionally, some regional schools also received financial support from

25. Yuan Haowen, "Xian dafu shi" 先大夫詩, *QJ*, 41.967. Haogu was four years older than Haowen and his name (Haogu means "fond of the past"), like Haowen's, refers to a passage in *The Analects of Confucius*. See Confucius, *The Analects of Confucius*, 31.

26. Yuan Haowen, "Xian dafu shi," *QJ*, 41.967.

27. Hao Jing 郝經, "Yishan xiansheng muming" 道山先生墓銘, *QJ*, 53.1263.

28. For the academy movement in Southern Song China, see Chaffee, "Chu-hsi and the Revival"; Chen Wenyi, *You guanxue dao shuyuan*.

29. The enrollment in prefectural schools was limited to 20 to 60 students, and that in subprefectural schools to 10 to 30. See *JS*, 10.229 and 51.1132–33. See also Tao, "Public Schools in the Chin Dynasty." According to Tao, the official history's description of the school system is reliable.

30. Tao, "Public Schools in the Chin Dynasty," 54; *JS*, 24.550.

31. Most local official schools included Confucian temples, yet not every local Confucian temple was combined with a school. See Zhang Fan, "Jindai difang guanxue," 87–88.

32. Zhao Feng 趙鳳, "Taiyuan fuxue wenmiao bei" 太原府學文廟碑, in *Quan Liao Jin wen*, 2:1755–56; Yuan Haowen, "Zhang Daizhou Dajie" 張代州大節, *QJ*, 41.911.

33. On the system of labor service in the Jin dynasty, see Chan, "Organization and Utilization of Labor Service."

34. *JS*, 11.257.

powerful local literati families. According to Yuan Haowen, a Lady Chuan, the widow of a high-ranking official from Jizhou, used a large amount of money to buy 2,000 *mu* (approximately 133 hectares) of good land, which she donated to the Jizhou subprefectural school to support its students.³⁵ In the Jin, school lands were exempted from taxes. The land Lady Chuan gave to the school could support three hundred or more students.

Supporting public schools was a good way for literati families to improve their prestige, both in local society and in the national literati circle. Soon after Lady Chuan's donation to the school, the prefect reported the event to the court, and Emperor Shizong granted Lady Chuan the honorific title of Lady Sublime Virtue (*chengde furen* 成德夫人). Since the Northern Song, the image of virtuous women had largely focused on support for the education of their male relatives.³⁶ This image continued to shape the Jin literati's view of the social values of women in elite families.

Given the material and intellectual advantages of state schools, Yuan Ge might have wanted Haowen to study in the Jizhou subprefectural school or, even better, at the National University while Ge was in the capital in 1203. Yet a strict admission qualification prevented Haowen from attending the subprefectural school, let alone the National University. State schools gave priority to the family members of officials with official ranks above at least the sixth grade, but Ge's official rank as a Jin magistratus was only 7b. According to state policy, prefectural and subprefectural schools also reserved one-third of their spots (up to twenty) for the sons and grandsons of lower-ranking officials, but they required recommendations from the prefectural government and had to pass entrance examinations.³⁷ Haowen was still young at the time and had not started studying for the civil service examinations; even if he had taken the entrance examinations, he might not have been able to pass them.

Yuan Ge chose instead to send Haowen to county schools, which had much looser requirements because of their half-official and half-local nature. Emperor Zhangzong had made it clear that the government would not allocate funds to support county schools but encouraged local offi-

cial and populations to build and support these institutions.³⁸ Due to a lack of resources, many county magistrates cooperated with local literati or powerful families to raise money for school construction and education. The educational quality of a given county school, then, reflected the region's cultural level. This is why Yuan Ge focused on finding the best place for Haowen to study.

Yuan Ge's relatives and literati friends in the capital all recommended Zezhou subprefecture. Shanxi ranked among the top educational regions in the Jin cultural landscape. As Yuan Haowen would later state proudly, "The deities that take charge of the fortune of literary composition have favored Hedong for one hundred years."³⁹ Scholars from both the southern and northern parts of Shanxi achieved their greatest success in the examinations during Zhangzong's reign.⁴⁰ Within Zezhou, Lingchuan county had a particularly good reputation because several prominent local literati families had produced successful scholars who placed first in the national examinations; in fact, two families had produced five top candidates between them. In total, more than eighty people who earned the *jinsi* degree in the Jin dynasty came from Zezhou, about thirty-two of who were from Lingchuan.⁴¹ The success of local literati heightened local enthusiasm for education while attracting many students from other regions.

38. Zhao Bingwen 趙秉文, "Jiaxian wenmiao chuangjian jiangrang ji" 郊縣文廟創建講堂記, *Jinwen zui*, 14-133.

39. Yuan Haowen, "Ti Li Tingxun suocang *Yajin* ershou" 題李庭訓所藏律集圖二首, *QJ*, 12-303.

40. Iiyama's solid study of the regional distribution of Jin degree holders shows that before Shizong's reign, only eighteen scholars from northern Shanxi and eleven from southern Shanxi had earned *jinsi* degrees in the first four decades of the Jin dynasty. During Shizong's reign, three *jinsi* degree holders came from northern Shanxi, and fourteen came from the south. In Zhangzong's reign, twenty-five *jinsi* degree holders came from northern Shanxi, and forty-nine came from the south. See Iiyama, *Kin Gen jidai*, 75.

41. According to the local gazetteer, Wu Mingfu came in first in the national rhyme prose examinations in 1134. His nephew Wu Tianyou did the same in 1199, forty-five years later. In the Zhao family, Zhao Anrong and Zhao Anshi obtained the honor in 1140 and 1160, respectively. In 1203 Wu Tianhe, Wu Tianyou's younger brother, ranked first in the classics examinations. Another Wu family member earned the *jinsi* degree. See *Lingchuan xianzhi* [1779], 21-7b and 10a-12b.

35. Yuan Haowen, "Lu Jizhou Zhongxian" 路冀州仲縣, *QJ*, 41-910.

36. Bossler, *Powerful Relations*, 12-24.

37. *JS*, 51.1130.

When Yuan Ge brought Haowen to Lingchuan in 1203, Hao Tianting—Haowen's future teacher—was teaching in the county school. The history of Hao's clan reveals how a single scholarly family dominated literati education in Lingchuan. The Hao family migrated from Taiyuan to Zezhou at the end of the Northern Song dynasty. They became a well-known scholarly family in Zezhou society after the career of Tianting's uncle, Hao Zhen 邦震, who studied at the National University in the capital and later taught in the countryside. The Haos established a family rule to prevent their undivided family, which often included a hundred people, from falling apart. The family rule stipulated that the Hao men would work in different fields according to their individual talents: some as farmers, some as businessmen, and some as scholars. Subsequently, the whole family became wealthy enough to support more family members in careers as scholars. Hao Tianting and two of his nephews all took the palace examinations, and Tianting earned the *jinsshi* degree. When Tianting's older brother Hao Yuan 邦源 became the head of the family, he made a new rule that one of his younger brothers or nephews must teach in the county school, suggesting that the Haos monopolized teaching positions there.⁴²

The ability to support county schools demonstrated a family's leading role within local society. Since instructors in county schools did not receive a regular salary from the government, only people like the Hao family scholars, who had solid economic support within their own kinship group, could afford to teach in county schools. When new magistrates came to Lingchuan, they often visited the Haos, and the Haos had a close relationship with Yuan Ge when he was serving as magistrate. At the county school, Yuan Haowen studied under Hao Tianting alongside Tianting's son, Hao Siwen 邦思溫, who was the same age as Haowen. When Yuan Ge ended his tenure as magistrate and left Lingchuan in 1206, he entrusted Haowen's education completely to the Haos.

Yuan Ge expected Hao Tianting to prepare Haowen for the civil service examinations. Yet Hao believed that a real scholar should learn much more than what the examinations tested, so he taught Haowen to compose poems, a skill not important for passing the exams. When someone criticized Hao for not preparing the magistrate's son for the exami-

nations, Hao replied: "Precisely. I do not want him to be an examination candidate!"⁴³ The Lingchuan county school's semiofficial and semiprivate nature and the fact that it was supported by private wealth made it resemble a southern private academy in that it was oriented by the head teacher's choice toward something broader than exam training. Even so, most students still saw exam taking as their primary reason for learning. Yuan Haowen never gave up his hope of passing the examinations. In 1205, at the age of sixteen, he traveled to Taiyuan to take the prefectural examinations for the first time, but he failed to pass. Nevertheless, he clearly learned poetry well from Hao Tianting. During this trip, on hearing a story about a wild goose that committed suicide after its mate was shot by a hunter, Yuan Haowen bought the two geese from the hunter, buried them, and wrote one of the most celebrated lyrics on romantic love in Chinese classical poetry.⁴⁴

Hao Tianting's relatives claimed that they had inherited their educational philosophy directly from adherents of the Northern Song Neo-Confucian scholar Cheng Hao 程灝 (1032–85), who had served as magistrate of neighboring Jincheng county in Zezhou and taught local scholars there. We do not know whether or not Hao Tianting taught Yuan Haowen about Cheng Hao's learning, as Jin exams did not test students' knowledge of Neo-Confucianism. But Hao did reach his son Siwen about Cheng Hao's learning, and Siwen subsequently taught his son Hao Jing 邦經 (1223–75), who became a famous northern Neo-Confucian scholar and a student of Yuan Haowen.⁴⁵ As for Yuan Haowen, he shared Hao Tianting's view of poetry but disliked Neo-Confucianism throughout his life.

Yuan Haowen's six years in Lingchuan, from 1203 to 1208, were a period of peace and happiness for him. This was also the period when he began to establish and expand his personal social network in the Jin literati world. Apart from studying, he started to gather with his county school classmates and other literati to drink, compose poems, and enjoy the local landscape. Yuan tells us that three days before Tomb-Sweeping

43. Quoted in Yuan Haowen, "Hao xiansheng muming" 郝先生墓銘, *QJ*, 23, 518.

44. Yuan Haowen, "Mo yu'er (Hen renjian, qing shi hewu)" 摸魚兒 (恨人間, 情是奈何), *QJ*, 42, 987.

45. Hao Jing, "Xian zengshu daifu dongxuan laoren muming" 先曾叔大父東軒老人墓銘, *QYW*, 4:444–45.

42. Hao Jing, "Xianbo daifu muming" 先伯大父墓銘, *QYW*, 4:446–47.

Day (the *Qingming* 清明 festival) in 1205, he went on an excursion with five or six literati friends to a temple dedicated to the Two Immortals—two popular local goddesses. They visited the temple, enjoyed the view of a local stream, and composed poems. Yuan's poem, which was inscribed on the wall of the temple and is still visible today, states that nothing made him happier than looking at the beauty of differently shaped hills in the mild spring air.⁴⁶ Yuan also associated with a local literati family surname named Qin. He and Qin Lie 秦略, who was a member of Yuan's father's generation, became friends, drinking and composing poems together.

In this period, Yuan Haowen established a marriage alliance with the powerful Zhang scholar-official family in his hometown, which exemplifies how such alliances strengthened the Jin literati's social networks. In 1207, at the age of eighteen, Yuan temporarily returned to his rural home in Xiurong county to marry the daughter of the high-ranking official Zhang Han 張翰, also a Xiurong native. The Zhangs were even more successful than the Yuans in local society. Zhang Han had earned the *jinsi* degree in 1188 and was a junior assistant at the Ministry of Revenue (ranked 6b) in 1208. His younger brother Zhang Shu 張榘 had passed the *jinsi* exam in 1200 and later reached the position of associate commander-in-chief of Northern Hedong circuit (ranked 4b).⁴⁷ Establishing a marriage alliance with the Zhang family offered Yuan Haowen a stronger elite family background. During the marriage preparations Yuan Ge instructed Haowen about civil administration to prepare him for future official positions like that of magistrate.⁴⁸ Yuan Ge had done everything necessary for his adoptive son's success in the intellectual and political world, yet Haowen had to pass the *jinsi* degree examinations to reach the pinnacle of the Jin degree-holder society.

After marrying, Yuan Haowen returned to Linchuan to complete his studies with Hao Tianing. In 1208 Yuan Haowen left Lingchuan and moved to Longcheng county in Shaanxi to be near his father, who was the magistrate there at that time. Yuan Haowen continued to concentrate

46. Yuan Haowen, "Xixi cixianmiao tiliu" 西溪二仙廟題留, *QJ*, 14372.

47. Later, Zhang Han's nephew Zhang Tianyi passed the *jinsi* degree examinations in 1212, and his son Zhang Tianren held the position of assistant commissioner of the palace attendants service (ranked 6b). See Yuan Haowen, "Zhang hubu Han" 張戶部翰, *QJ*, 41916.

48. Yuan Haowen, "Nanguanlu yin," *QJ*, 37775.

on examination learning, associating with other literati, and raking the exams. His life did not change much until the spring of 1210, when Yuan Ge died of an ulcer in Longcheng. In that year, at the age of twenty-one, Yuan Haowen ended a decade of studying away from home and took his adoptive father's coffin to Hanyan village for burial in their ancestral graveyard.

After Yuan Ge died, Haowen and his immediate family—including his mother, wife, and their first daughter, Yuan Zhen 元真, born in 1209—lived a comfortable life in their rural home supported by wealth and property Haowen had inherited from his father, and Haowen continued to study for the examinations.⁴⁹ Yuan Haowen must have passed the prefectural exams in the fall of 1212, since he traveled to the capital in the spring of 1213 for the next round of departmental examinations. In Yuan Haowen's time, a student needed to take three rounds of triennial examinations—at the prefectural, departmental, and palace levels. The prefectural examinations were often held at a regional examination site during the fall, and the next two rounds were held in the capital the following spring.⁵⁰ After failing the exams in the capital, Yuan Haowen returned to stay in the Taiyuan prefectural school for the summer. He could be admitted to a prefectural school without taking the entrance examinations by virtue of a government policy aimed at showing benevolence to examination candidates who had passed prefectural examinations but failed departmental examinations.⁵¹

Yuan Haowen's experience in the Taiyuan prefectural school reveals the important role state schools played for literati trying to establish helpful social networks in Jin society. State schools provided both room and board to students and allowed them to study together intensively every day and develop relationships with each other—as acquaintances, friends, rivals, or even enemies—that would shape their future lives intellectually and politically. In the Taiyuan prefectural school, Yuan organized a study group (*xiake* 夏課) with two students from Jiaocheng, Shanxi, who were living in the same dormitory as he was.⁵² The study group was a

49. About Yuan Zhen's birth year, see the textual analysis in Shi, *Yuan Yishan niannpu*, 40.

50. There were national examinations in 1213. See Xue, *Jindai keju*, 185–88.

51. *J5*, 51.1131.

52. Yuan Haowen, "Shiqishi mengqiu xu" 十七史蒙求序, *QJ*, 36754–55.

distinctive way for literati, and examination students in particular, to interact socially. Many of these groups, as Iiyama Tomoyasu has pointed out, were originally designed so students could share books, due to the lack of books in the early Jin period.⁵³ Students in the same study group also gathered for parties and banquets. According to a ghost story that Yuan recorded, an examination candidate once organized a study group whose members dined together every ten days. After one member died, on the next date designated for a party the others set a place for the deceased student to commemorate him. After the food was served, the spoon and chopsticks at the seat for the dead student rose into the air as if the student were using them. Everyone sobbed and could not eat.⁵⁴ Yuan included this anecdote in the book of tales *The Record of the Listener Continued*, an important source for this chapter.⁵⁵

In addition to literati gatherings, state schools also provided space for Jin examination students to collectively imagine a distinctive spiritual world reflecting their own lives and literati culture. For instance, in one tale that Yuan Haowen heard from a school instructor, set sometime between 1161 and 1189, several students were studying together late at night in the Taiyuan prefectural school. After midnight, someone suddenly heard the sound of a person walking outside the window. A female ghost—who, according to the tale, was a concubine of a Northern Song official buried near the school—entered the dormitory and lightly tapped those

53. Iiyama, *Kin Gen jidai*, 79.

54. Yuan Haowen, “Xunhui zhi yi” 旬會之異, *QJ*, 48.1147.

55. In a tomb inscription for the Daoist Yu Zixu written in 1238, Yuan mentions that a few illiterate people were capable of composing thoughtful hymns, which he had included in *The Record of the Listener Continued* that he was writing (*QJ*, 31.645). Clearly he had at least already started to write the book in 1238. The latest date mentioned in the book was 1251, suggesting that Yuan finished this book late in life. The period of writing *The Record of the Listener Continued* paralleled Yuan's historical writing project after the Jin fell in 1234, indicating that *The Record of the Listener Continued* might be part of Yuan's massive project to write the history of the Jin state and Jin people. The title and literary genre of the book follow the model of *The Record of the Listener* (*Yijian zhi* 異堅志), written by Southern Song scholar Hong Mai 洪邁 (1123–1202). Like Hong Mai, Yuan collected tales from various sources; some recorded events that he witnessed or experienced, and some he heard from relatives, friends, colleagues, and others. The majority of his informants were literati, and about one-fifth of the 207 tales are about people in his social network. On Hong Mai's book, see Hanssen, *Changing Gods in Medieval China*, 17–23, and Ter Haar, “Newly Recovered Anecdotes.”

who were asleep, murmuring, “this person will receive the *jinhshi* degree, and this person will not.” The three students she tapped performed exactly as she had foretold.⁵⁶

Constructing, circulating, and recording these anecdotes were part of the Jin literati's social and cultural life beyond studying for the exams. Many of the anecdotes that Yuan Haowen collected about Jin literati in *The Record of the Listener Continued* were very similar to those in a large body of examination stories that had circulated in Song society about omens, prophecies, and dreams concerned with foretelling examination success.⁵⁷ The fact that Yuan was able to collect so many anecdotes about examination students is in itself evidence of the constant circulation of such information within the active social networks of Jin literati.

At the Taiyuan prefectural school, Yuan Haowen and his literati peers must have discussed important political and social news as well, especially news about the earthshaking Mongol attacks along the Jin border, which began in 1211 and grew more threatening over the next two years. Yuan likely had heard the news early. His home subprefecture, Xinzhou—which included Xiurong and Dingxiang as subordinate counties—was close to the Jin border that Mongol troops attacked, and local people spoke of the possibility of a nomadic invasion from the north as early as 1209.⁵⁸ Yet local literati did not seem to realize how serious the Mongol threat was. Even in the eighth month of 1213, after the Jin western capital (Dalong, in modern-day Shanxi) had fallen to the Mongols, Yuan Haogun, Haowen's elder biological brother who never left his hometown, still met literati friends in Xinzhou to enjoy the mid-autumn festival, drinking and composing poems. Local literati life continued unaffected until early 1214.⁵⁹

56. Yuan Haowen, “Yu'er” 玉兒, *QJ*, 48.1133.

57. For examination stories in the Song, see Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates of Learning*, 177–81.

58. Yuan wrote in *The Record of the Listener Continued* that as early as 1209 some Xinzhou natives had fled to Taiyuan on hearing about the northern nomadic attack on the Jin border, and in 1213 a local family started to recite a Buddhist Marishiren incantation in pursuit of spiritual protection from incoming disasters. See Yuan Haowen, “Wang Wanzhong” 王萬鍾 and “Molizhitan zhou” 摩利支天咒, *QJ*, 41.898 and 49.1162.

59. Yuan Haowen, “Minzhi xiong shichen” 敏之兄詩讖, *QJ*, 48.1131.

The Fall of Areas North of the Yellow River

The year 1214 marked a seismic shift in Yuan Haowen's life: his earlier comfortable days as the son of a well-off literati family came to an end, and an unsettling two years as a wartime fugitive began. In the spring of that year, Mongol troops appeared in Shanxi, ravaging every city, town, and village in their path and killing large numbers of people. The devastation was unprecedented. Li Junmin 李俊民 (1176–1260) described a destroyed Zezhou in the spring of 1214: "On the first day of the second month, the capital city of the prefecture fell. The violent fire set the sky ablaze. The city walls were destroyed, buildings burned down, and marketplaces turned into ruins. The surrounding region for one thousand miles became completely desolate. There was no trace of human presence."⁶⁰ A similar scene occurred in Xinzhou. After breaching the prefectural city wall on April 14, the Mongols slaughtered more than 100,000 residents.⁶¹ Yuan Haowen's brother Haogu, then twenty-nine, was killed in that massacre. Yuan Haowen and his family survived the turbulence by hiding in the local mountains.⁶²

The war caused massive migration, the deaths of many literati and commoners, the destruction of schools, the suspension of civil service examinations, and ultimately the unraveling of literati activities in areas north of the Yellow River. Many Zezhou scholars—including Li Junmin and Hao Tianing—fled their hometowns to escape the war, and the active local literati communities that Yuan Haowen had witnessed a decade before disappeared amid the devastating population loss.⁶³ Local schools were abandoned, too. As Yuan later lamented, "The survival of the temple

60. Li Junmin, "Zezhou tuji" 澤州圖記, *QYW*, 1:51.

61. Yuan Haowen, "Wang Wanzhong," *QJ*, 41:898.

62. Yuan Haowen, "Bibing Yanggu beishan zhi yanggu ti shikan" 避兵陽曲北山之羊谷題石記, *QJ*, 14:345.

63. Li Junmin later recorded that the population of Zezhou dropped to 973 households after the war ended in 1235 (Li Junmin, "Zezhou tuji," *QYW*, 1:51). And from a 1209 inscription, we learn that Xiangling county in southern Shanxi alone had more than 20,000 households on the eve of the Mongol conquest. See Kong Tianjian, "Xiangling xian chuangu xiu miaoxue ji" 襄陵縣創修廟學記, *Quan Liao Jin wen*, 2:1932.

school was utterly hopeless. . . . The people in power were mostly military leaders who did not care about the school, which gradually fell into disrepair due to damage by rain and wind."⁶⁴

In the summer of 1214 the Jurchen Emperor Xuanzong 宣宗 (r. 1213–24) abandoned the central capital (now Beijing), crossed the Yellow River, and moved his court to the southern capital (now Kaifeng), an event euphemistically dubbed the southern crossing (*nandu* 南渡) by contemporary literati. From then on examinations were mostly given only in areas south of the Yellow River, particularly Henan and Shaanxi—the only two intact regions under state control after 1214. In that year, students were excused from taking the prefectural exams and allowed to go directly to the departmental examinations in the central capital and Kaifeng. Some nine thousand men participated, and about one-tenth of the candidates passed.⁶⁵ Although still seeking refuge in Shanxi, Yuan Haowen managed to travel to Kaifeng for the examinations, yet he failed once again.

The loss of literati life, the ruins of public schools, and the suspension of civil service examinations all marked the disappearance of critical institutions that had sustained the Jin degree-holder society in the areas north of the Yellow River before 1214. In such chaos, the Yuan family needed to decide whether to remain in northern Shanxi or flee. They had been on the move since the spring of 1214. In 1216 Mongol troops attacked Xinzhou a second time. The Yuans hastily hid their collection of fine books and artifacts inside their house and then fled again to the nearby mountains. After the Mongol army withdrew, in light of the frequent raids in northern Shanxi, the Yuans decided to join three to four million other northern Chinese and move south to the territory that—at least for the time being—was still held by the Jin state.⁶⁶ They entrusted some books to their relatives in Taiyuan and buried their inkstones at their rural villa, hoping that they would someday return and retrieve this treasured family property.⁶⁷ They packed two carts of selected

64. Yuan Haowen, "Zhaozhou xue ji" 趙州學記, *QJ*, 32:673.

65. *JS*, 51:1139–40.

66. Wu Songdi, *Zhongguo renkou shi*, 383.

67. Yuan Haowen, "Guwu pu" 故物譜, *QJ*, 39:823.

materials to go south with them, including a thousand books, manuscripts hand-copied by their ancestors, and a hundred paintings.

Not every literati family chose to flee south. Instead, some families, like that of Zhou Xianchen (mentioned at the beginning of this book), remained in their locales. Many shifted from maintaining a literati identity to engaging in military service. Even within a single family, individual choices could differ. Zhou Xianchen's elder brother, Zhou Dingchen, who was a friend of Yuan Haowen, chose a different path than the one his brother took. According to Zhou Dingchen's funeral biography, written by Yuan Haowen, the two men met in Kaifeng during the summer of 1214 when both took the departmental examinations. While Yuan Haowen failed, Dingchen passed the *jinsi* examinations and received an appointment as vice magistrate of Wurai county, Shanxi. In 1216, when Mongol troops under the leadership of Mukhali launched the attack on northern Shanxi, Xianchen traveled to Yanggu county next to Dingxiang county, where Dingchen was serving as the magistrate, to consult with his elder brother about what he should do in the face of the upcoming calamity. Dingchen told his younger brother to do whatever was necessary to protect their family and fellow villagers in Dingxiang, but Dingchen, as a loyal Jin official, had decided to die at his post with his wife and children. The two brothers did what they had chosen: one surrendered to the Mongols and successfully elevated their natal family to Hereditary Vassal status, and the other died for the old regime and preserved his own moral integrity as a loyal Confucian official.⁶⁸

Yuan Haowen's Harsh New Life as a Farmer in Henan

After Yuan Haowen and his family finally arrived in Henan in the summer of 1216, he found many literati gathering there, including two old friends—Liu Angxiao 劉昂霄 from Lingchuan county and Zhao Yuan 趙元 from Dingxiang county. Yuan Haowen had been friends with Zhao since childhood and had met Liu ten years earlier, when they took the

prefectural examinations in Taiyuan.⁶⁹ With the help of Liu and Zhao, Yuan temporarily settled in Sanxiang county (now Yiyang county, in Henan province) and quickly joined local literati communities. In one instance, Yuan met a scholar, Xin Yuan 辛愿, who led the life of a poor peasant after being bullied by local clerks.⁷⁰ While living in Sanxiang county, Yuan, Liu, Zhao, and Xin occasionally visited local temples, composed and exchanged poems, and met new people, such as the Chan Buddhist Master Ying 英禪師, a monk-poet from Baoying Monastery in Luoxi. Master Ying was originally an examination candidate in Liaodong and had moved to Henan in 1213.⁷¹ Association with other scholars meant the continuation of a literati life that these men had all once enjoyed. As Zhao explained in a poem for Yuan, "Catching a glimpse of associated friends makes any place one's hometown."⁷²

Yet their lives were no longer the same, and tremendous losses had accompanied their migration. Many northern scholars who moved to Henan after 1214 lost all their property and were plunged into poverty. Yuan Haowen described his situation: "In this year [1217] I temporarily stayed in Sanxiang county. In the tenth month the northern army conquered the Tong Pass, and we took refuge at Mount Nuiji in Santan. When we went down the mountain, we lost almost everything in the flames of war."⁷³ He was unable to keep most of his books, paintings, inkstones, and fine artifacts. The tangible loss of property accompanied the intangible loss of a formal system of social support. When Yuan's teacher Hao Tianqing moved to Henan with his wife and children, they lost substantial support from their kinship networks—including material support, job opportunities, and social prestige. No one from the outside helped them. Hao lived in poverty and eventually died of illness.⁷⁴

With their circumstances so dramatically changed in Henan, many literati families like the Yuans had to earn a living.⁷⁵ The duty of supporting

69. Yuan Haowen, "Yuxuan jushi Zhao Yuan" 愚軒居士趙元, *QJ*, 41:878–79.

70. Yuan Haowen, "Xinan shiliao Xin Yuan," *QJ*, 41:956–57.

71. Yuan Haowen, "Mulan shiji xu" 木蘭詩集序, *QJ*, 37:773.

72. Zhao Yuan, "Ji Yuzhi ershou" 寄裕之二首, *QJ*, 54:1275.

73. Yuan Haowen, "Guwu pu," *QJ*, 39:833.

74. Yuan Haowen, "Hao xiansheng muming," *QJ*, 23:518.

75. When the Yuans first arrived in Henan, to earn some income, Yuan Haowen's uncle Yuan Sheng, who used to support himself by farming, applied for a government

68. Yuan Haowen, "Yanggu ling Zhoujun mubiao" 陽曲令周君墓表, *QJ*, 22:497–98.

the family now fell to Yuan Haowen, who had his mother, wife, and three young daughters to feed. His first daughter, Yuan Zhen, had been born in 1209; the third daughter, Axiu 阿秀, was born in 1219; and the second, Yuan Yan, was born sometime in between. In 1218, for the sake of security, Yuan Haowen moved his home to Dengfeng, a mountainous and isolated county in front of Mount Song—the Central Sacred Peak. To solve the urgent problem of food supplies, Yuan turned to farming. According to him, members of other formerly well-known official families did the same after moving to Henan.⁷⁶

Agricultural life was very difficult for men like Yuan Haowen, who had so little experience. As his friend Zhao Yuan, who also had to live as a farmer, once told him, "In terms of working the land, old peasants are my true teachers."⁷⁷ Both men acquired agricultural knowledge from experienced peasants. After a year in Dengfeng, Yuan realized that it was not an ideal place for farming. Long-lasting drought followed by damaging rain destroyed much of the crop, and the harvest in the fall was not enough to feed his whole family.⁷⁸ Yuan decided to find better land elsewhere.

In the winter of 1218, shivering in an unlined garment in a cold northerly wind, Yuan Haowen traveled alone to neighboring areas, and in 1219 he ultimately found land in Kunyang (an ancient name for what was then Ye county (now Yexian county in Henan). He was very satisfied with the land in Kunyang, stating that "the lower land was good for either sorghum or rice. I have dug a long ditch to plant water chestnuts and learned how to plant red ginger from an experienced vegetable grower."⁷⁹ He built a hut near this parcel of land at Kunyang to live in while growing crops and left his household in Dengfeng. As a result, he had to travel frequently between Dengfeng and Kunyang, 150 kilometers away.

position under the shadow privilege of his brother Yuan Ge. Yet Yuan Sheng died of disease soon after receiving an appointment. See Yuan Haowen, "Chengfeng Henan Yuangong muning," *QJ*, 25, 539.

76. Yuan Haowen, "Gaomen guan" 衙門關, *QJ*, 4, 78.

77. Zhao Yuan, "Shuhuai ji Yuan di Yuzhi yun sishou" 書懷寄元弟裕之韻四首, *QJ*, 54, 1274.

78. Yuan Haowen, "ji Zhao Yizhi" 寄趙宜之, *QJ*, 5, 101.

79. Yuan Haowen, "Xuehou zhao linshe Wang Zan Zixiang yin" 雪後招鄭舍王贊子襄然, *QJ*, 3, 65–66.

In a new place, it was naturally easier for Yuan Haowen to associate with his peers first and only later with unfamiliar local peasants. A hospitable neighbor who was a reclusive scholar and also liked to compose poems apparently liked Yuan's company; he even tried to convince Yuan to move his family to Kunyang. Yuan used the excuse that his horse was sick to explain his decision not to move. Perhaps it was too risky to exhaust all the family savings building a new home there, because he did not own the land. Or he might simply not have been able to afford a second move. His experience of associating with a landlord several years later confirmed that he had no money to buy land or hire laborers. As he explains in the poem "Sighing for Wheat,"

借地乞麥種	I rented a piece of land and borrowed wheat seeds;
微俸今年秋	I expected a good fortune this fall.
乞種尚云可	I could tolerate begging for seeds;
無丁復無牛	But I have neither strong laborers nor oxen.
田主好事人	The landlord is a warmhearted man who likes to help others;
百色副所求	He gave me anything I asked for. ⁸⁰

Yuan Haowen's dependence on the landlord suggests a new type of literati-peasant connection formed by the literati's engagement in farming, which demanded a lot of time and energy. This new connection demonstrates a dramatic decrease both in the available income that had provided the material foundation for literati life and in the leisure time that permitted literati to concentrate on studying and associating with peers.

Meanwhile, associating with peasants gave literati new awareness of social problems and perspectives on social customs that differed from what they had been used to learning from texts. Daily life as farmers allowed literati to share peasant anxieties that were new to them, such as concern about the weather. In the poem that follows, Yuan Haowen complained of his misfortune in farming because of a severe drought, using the metaphor of the Drought Mother:

四月草不青	The shoots were not green in April;
吾種良漫投	My seeds have been sown in vain.

80. Yuan Haowen, "Mai ran" 麥然, *QJ*, 1, 18.

田間一太息 I stood in the fields and sighed;
 此歲何時周 When could I ever have a harvest this year?
 向見田父言 I once heard from farmers;
 此田本良疇 This land had been fertile.
 三歲瘠不治 It has not been cultivated for three years;
 種則當備收 The gain should be doubled once it has been farmed.
 如何落吾手 How could it happen that in my hands,
 羊年雙雞猴 The Year of the Sheep became the Year of the Chicken or of the Monkey?
 身自是早母 I myself [might] be the Drought Mother;
 咄咄將誰尤 I cannot blame anyone else.⁸¹

The metaphor of the Drought Mother likely came from a story Yuan heard from local peasants and later recorded in *The Record of the Listener Continued*. According to Yuan, a severe drought occurred in the Luoyang area during 1213. In Dengfeng local people circulated a rumor of a demon that brought the drought. Since they believed that the drought demon would often accompany fire, when a peasant's house caught fire one evening, local people instructed teenagers to beat the fire with big sticks to drive off the demon.⁸²

The personal experience of farming allowed men like Yuan Haowen to truly understand the hardship of peasants. He wrote a poem describing his joy while standing in the rain in Ye county, where he was cultivating his Kunyang land—rain that he happily attributed to a dragon deity.⁸³ When he later served as a magistrate of Neixiang county in Henan, Yuan Haowen accepted the locals' request to pray for rain from a dragon deity when a drought had lasted more than three months. The peasants built a new temple for the dragon deity to thank it for bringing rain. In the record Yuan wrote of the event, instead of describing peasants' behavior as unorthodox and labeling their deities without government sanction as licentious, he expressed a deep understanding of the significance of rain and dragon worship for peasants.⁸⁴

81. Ibid., 118–19.

82. Yuan Haowen, "Gaocheng hanba" 告成旱魃, *QJ*, 48.1132.

83. Yuan Haowen, "Ye xian yuzhong" 葉縣雨中, *QJ*, 8.168.

84. Yuan Haowen, "Changqing ximiao ji" 長慶泉新廟記, *QJ*, 32.679. On the licentious cults, see Hansen, *Changing Gods in Medieval China*, 84–95.

Peasant culture and village customs became new topics of conversation among the late Jin literati who had gathered in Henan. *The Record of the Listener Continued* by Yuan Haowen includes many stories about such topics from Henan. Three anecdotes from the same Hantou village in the south of Pingyu county describe peasant beliefs in taboos, the afterlife, and reincarnation, as well as villagers' lawsuit practices.⁸⁵ Yuan heard some stories in person and some from local officials and literati.

More importantly, their agricultural experiences reflected the literati's declining political and socioeconomic status. For example, the family of Yuan Haowen's friend Zhao Yuan fell down the social ladder from scholar-officials to impoverished peasants. Zhao depicts his rural life as a farmer in the poem "Learning to Sow Grain":

不堪炊煮一箱書 I have a box of books, which are not enough for fuel to cook a meal;
 十口東西若可糊 How can I feed ten mouths?
 食糠已漸中隱吏 The salary I received was small enough to shame retired clerks;
 懸山聊作下農夫 I reclaimed mountain lands and now work as a lowly peasant.
 藁遺場圃無多積 Coming away from the threshing ground, I accumulated little;
 子入官倉困運輸 And I had trouble delivering the crop seeds to a remote official granary.
 近日惡軒睡眠少 Recently I have had little sleep,
 打門時復有追胥 Because clerks coming to collect taxes have repeatedly knocked at my door.⁸⁶

Zhao had served as a vice magistrate before his eyesight deteriorated and he had to retire from the post. His comment about his salary suggests the insufficient wages for low-ranking Jin scholar-officials and their low political status: they ranked below the clerks who were usurping the power of civil officials. Indeed, after 1214 clerks at both the local and central levels gained considerable power and were often promoted faster than

85. Yuan Haowen, "Zhengsou fan tujin" 鄭叟犯土禁, "Zhangrong running" 張童入冥, "Fan Yuanzhi jue niusong" 范元質決牛訟, *QJ*, 48.1122–23 and 1165.

86. Zhao Yuan, "Xue jia" 學稼, *Zhongzhou ji*, 5.268.

holders of the *jinsbi* degree.⁸⁷ In the eyes of local clerks, Zhao was no different from other peasants after he withdrew from the government and started cultivating land.

The declining social and economic position of the Zhao family affected the choice of occupation for the next generation. Zhao told Yuan Haowen that "I have a son who has abandoned reading books and diligently cultivates land in the mountains."⁸⁸ When Yuan later mentioned Zhao Yu 趙顥—the son of Zhao Yuan—in Zhao Yuan's biography, instead of discussing Zhao Yu's poems or scholarly achievements, he said only that Zhao Yu had integrity as a recluse, hinting at Zhao Yu's lack of literati education.

Yuan Haowen's generation of literati now struggled not only to adjust themselves to a harsh new life in Henan but also to maintain their literati identity. They did not choose to farm; they had no other option. The famous poet Tao Qian 陶潛 (365–427), more commonly known as Tao Yuanming 陶淵明, claimed to have withdrawn from the world to lead a peaceful hermit life as a farmer, and Chinese literati often invoked Tao's model and presented farming and reading (*gengdu* 耕讀) as an ideal lifestyle.⁸⁹ However, in a poem he sent to his friend Han Junxi in Qinzhou subprefecture in Shanxi province, for Han's hall of Farming and Reading, Yuan Haowen rejected Tao's model:

讀書與躬耕	Reading books and farming land in person,
兀兀送殘年	One quietly passes the last days of life.
淵明不可作	Yuanming could not be imitated;
尚友乃為賢	Yet it is wise to associate with virtuous friends.
田家豈不苦	Aren't farmers suffering—
歲功聊可觀	A year's harvest is so little?
讀書有何味	What is the meaning of reading books?
有味不得言	The meaning is hard to say. ⁹⁰

87. Tillman, "An Overview of Chin History and Institutions," 37.

88. Zhao Yuan, "Shu huai ji Yuan di Yuzhi yun sishou," *QJ*, 54.1274.

89. For a late Ming example, see Spence, *Return to Dragon Mountain*, 156–57 and

224–27.

90. Yuan Haowen, "Ji ti Qinzhou Han Junxi gengdu xuan" 寄題沁州韓君錫耕讀軒, *QJ*, 2.56–57.

From his own experience as a poor farmer, Yuan Haowen knew all too well that being a farmer meant having not an idyllic time but a hard, exhausting, and anxious daily life. Although he asked a rhetorical question about the meaning of reading, for Yuan and his peers, reading was a symbol of their literati identity, something that differentiated them from ordinary farmers.

Yuan Haowen's Political Career and the Collapse of the Jin State

As the Jin government continued to recruit Chinese officials through the civil service examinations, many literati in areas south of the Yellow River, like Yuan Haowen, continued to try to find positions in the government. After he moved to Henan, in addition to associating with local literati friends, Yuan tried to make his name known in the literati circles of the capital, particularly among established scholar-officials like Zhao Bingwen 趙秉文 (1159–1232), the leader of the Jin intellectual world at the time.⁹¹ Yuan visited Zhao to present him with two poems in 1217. After Zhao praised Yuan's poems highly and introduced him to other established scholar-officials, such as Yang Yunyi 楊雲翼 (1170–1228), Yuan—now nicknamed Gifted Scholar Yuan (Yuan caizi 元才子)—immediately gained fame in the literati world of Kaifeng. Yuan Haowen later regarded Zhao and Yang as his intellectual and political role models. When Zhao was the chief examiner in 1221, Yuan finally passed the civil service examinations, after six failed attempts in the preceding sixteen years, and gained the highest degree of *jinsbi* at the age of thirty-two. But he was accused by others of having improper ties to examiners like Zhao, Yang, Lei Yuan 雷淵 (1186–1231), and Li Xianneng 李獻能 (1192–1232)—scholar-officials with whom Yuan had indeed associated frequently.⁹² Behind this incident was a heated factional conflict at the Jin court between scholar-officials with *jinsbi* degrees and officials who had

91. Bol, "Chao Ping-wen" and "Seeking Common Ground," 502–12.

92. Yuan Haowen, "Zhao Xianxian zhenzan" 趙閑閑真贊, *QJ*, 38.798.

been promoted from positions as clerks.⁹³ Outraged by the accusations, Yuan refused to accept a government appointment and returned to Dengfeng county to farm.

In the following three years, while continuing to farm his Kunyang land to support his family, Yuan Haowen devoted himself to poetry and associating with his literati peers, especially in their efforts to search for enduring values in the Chinese cultural tradition and to enable Jin literati to claim authority over that tradition. Taking the Northern Song literati Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101) as a model for literati learning, these late Jin literati, under the leadership of Zhao Bingwen, emphasized literary composition—in particular, writing poetry—as a key method of mastering the cultural tradition.⁹⁴ Fully committed to this idea, Yuan wrote many fine poems during his frequent meetings with old and new literati friends. His poems circulated widely among contemporary literati, some via letters and others by word of mouth. According to Hao Jing, who studied with Yuan and later wrote his teacher's funeral biography, Yuan's poetry became so popular in these years that everyone was reciting lines of his poems in villages and on the road. "It was almost like Su Shi and Huang Tingjian had been reborn!" Hao commented, invoking the memory of two famous eleventh-century poets.⁹⁵

Yuan Haowen's literary fame brought him another chance to obtain a position in the government. The deteriorating political environment in the 1220s, however, made government service increasingly hard to endure for scholar-officials who tried to hold on to Confucian moral integrity. In 1224, after passing the special degree examinations for recruiting extraordinary literary talent, Yuan received his first official appointment as a junior compiler in the History Academy (*Gushi juyuan* 國史院).

93. Takahashi, "Gen Yisan to tōsō."

94. Bol, "Seeking Common Ground," 495–520. In his reexamination of the late Jin intellectual movement, Qiu Yihao claims that Bol mistakenly believed that the shared pursuit of pure literature brought the Jurchen rulers and Han literati together to see "this culture of ours" as their common ground. This is a misrepresentation of Bol's argument. But Qiu is right that the late Jin intellectual revival was the literati's response not just to the development of literati culture but to the interaction of all three teachings—Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. In particular, the literati wanted to offset the increasing influence of new Daoist schools by establishing the literati's cultural identity in Confucianism and by allying with Buddhists. See Qiu Yihao, "Wudao," 87–88.

95. Hao Jing, "Yishan xiansheng muning," *QJ*, 53, 1263.

Yet in the sixth month of the next year, Yuan declined the position and returned to Dengfeng again. In a poem he composed upon his departure from the capital, Yuan explained that he could neither bear a crowded urban life nor endure the stress of a political career.⁹⁶ What caused his stress was most likely corrupt and complicated court politics. The last Jin emperor, Aizong (r. 1224–34), was a weak and indecisive ruler who constantly yielded to the poor advice of sycophants and recalcitrant Jurchen military officials. Meanwhile, despite the increasing menace from the Mongols, the Jin court was caught in a bitter, self-perpetuating power struggle between military officials and other Jurchen and Chinese scholar-officials.⁹⁷ In Yuan's eyes, the political world was decaying, but even more devastating was the decline of Confucian teaching. In a poem he wrote in 1226 Yuan lamented that "the Sacred Teaching had difficulty achieving success."⁹⁸

After witnessing the degeneration of court politics and Confucian teaching, from 1226 to 1228 Yuan Haowen served three terms in local government as a magistrate and one as a prefectural secretary. He now found himself watching a local society also on the verge of collapse yet unable to do anything about it. The scenes that Yuan saw were indeed terrible: tyrannical officials and clerks, heavy taxation and requisitions of extra military supplies, and frequent local riots all drove peasants to despair. Other than accepting local peasants' request to pray for rain to the dragon deity, as mentioned above, Yuan was unable to help peasants reduce their suffering. In a 1227 poem recounting a conversation he had had with local peasants, Yuan sadly expressed his limited power. As he explained, he could forbid clerks to harass ordinary people, but he could do nothing to relieve the burden of military taxes. He could only tell the peasants not to evade them, for otherwise they could suffer whippings or even execution.⁹⁹ He knew, however, that it was impossible for peasants who had already been devastated by increasing land taxes and the duty of labor services to offer more grain to support the armies. Where could Yuan raise enough grain to fulfill his country's tax quota? Sitting in a

96. Yuan Haowen, "Chujing" 出京, *QJ*, 19.

97. Chan, "From Tribal Chieftain to Sinic Emperor," 128–31.

98. Yuan Haowen, "Yinjia wushou" 飲酒五首, *QJ*, 1, 15–16.

99. Yuan Haowen, "Su Juran" 宿菊潭, *QJ*, 1, 23.

studio alone on a quiet night, anxious about his inability to either raise the taxes needed or help ordinary people, Yuan once again thought of retiring.¹⁰⁰

The political and social environments grew worse and worse for Jin literati. In 1228, upon his mother's death, Yuan Haowen left his position as magistrate and declined an appointment offered by a Jurchen military strongman. Later he agreed to serve in that strongman's office, but soon left. Yuan's repeated withdrawals from office indicated that he shared the feelings of many contemporary scholar-officials who had been deeply disappointed by the political world and were frustrated by their powerlessness to alter the situation. Yuan argued that the custom of favoring personal profit had become so strong that any effort to change it was doomed. Literati could do nothing but reject such customs first and then influence others by behaving like gentlemen.¹⁰¹ In reality, literati could not even save their own lives in a world full of extreme violence. As warfare continued, military strongmen monopolized power both at court and in regional governments. Some literati found jobs in the offices of regional strongmen, who often had the power of life and death over their subordinates. Yuan's friend Li Fen recommended himself to the powerful general Wu Xian and served as an assistant in Wu's branch secretariat until the general had him murdered.¹⁰²

In 1231, Yuan Haowen moved to Kaifeng for a new position in the central government. This was, unfortunately, the beginning of even greater tragedy in his personal life. Mongol troops attacked Kaifeng in April 1231, but the solid fortifications of the city prevented it from being conquered immediately. The Mongol troops reacted by launching a yearlong siege, which eventually caused the capital, and the Jin state as a whole, to collapse irreversibly. By the end of that year, the situation inside Kaifeng had grown desperate. On March 24, 1232, Yuan's third daughter, Axiu, died of sickness at the age of fourteen, and Yuan himself became very ill.¹⁰³ In June and July, a devastating epidemic swept the city, claiming the lives of more than 900,000 residents.¹⁰⁴ As food supplies dwindled, rice prices

skyrocketed to two taels of silver per liter, plunging the people into an abyss of misery. Yuan saw men sell their wives for just one meal.¹⁰⁵ In the worst cases, according to an eyewitness, the starving stripped the dead of their flesh, ate children, and killed people who walked alone at night and then ate them.¹⁰⁶

Conditions in Kaifeng deteriorated even further in the spring of 1233 and led to the fall of the capital in early summer. In January, Emperor Aizong fled the capital to Caizhou (Ruman county, in Henan), where he ended his own life a year later.¹⁰⁷ On March 3 Cui Li 崔立, one of four generals in charge of defending Kaifeng, rebelled. He slaughtered the leading civilian ministers, enthroned a puppet prince regent, and then surrendered to the Mongols. Cui and his followers killed any official at court who disobeyed them.¹⁰⁸ Tragically for Yuan Haowen, his controversial involvement in erecting a notorious stele for Cui endangered his reputation among his peers.¹⁰⁹ A few days after the Mongols took over the city, they sent former Jin officials—including Yuan—to Liaocheng county in Shandong in the custody of Mongol troops and their Chinese allies.

On June 1, 1233, two days after Kaifeng fell, Yuan Haowen sent a letter to Yeliu Chucui 耶律楚材 (1189–1243), the Mongol's secretariat director, who was in charge of administrative affairs in the conquered part of north China. In the letter, Yuan asked Yeliu to protect northern Chinese literati. He listed fifty-four Jin literati, calling them "the best people in the empire," who could be helpful to the new government but were still in danger.¹¹⁰ The purpose of Yuan's letter has been debated: Did he use it to introduce himself to the Mongol authorities, or was he trying to protect traditional Chinese culture? Did his behavior reflect a lack of personal integrity?¹¹¹ The letter's effect was minimal, in any case: only a few

100. Yuan Haowen, "Neixiang xianzhai shushi" 内鄉縣齋書事, *QJ*, 8, 173.

101. Yuan Haowen, "Fengzhi Zhaofun mujieming" 奉直趙君墓銘, *QJ*, 22, 500.

102. Yuan Haowen, "Li Jiangyi Fen" 李綱議汾, *QJ*, 41, 959.

103. Yuan Haowen, "Xiaoni Axiu muming" 孝女阿秀墓銘, *QJ*, 25, 546.

104. *JS*, 17, 387.

105. Yuan Haowen, "Nie xiaoni muming" 聶孝女墓銘, *QJ*, 25, 545.

106. Liu Qi, *Guligan zhi*, 11, 126.

107. *JS*, 18, 395–403.

108. Yuan Haowen, "Nie Yuanji muzhiming" 聶元吉墓銘, *QJ*, 21, 491.

109. Yang Qingchen, "Yiwei zhijian."

110. Yuan Haowen, "Ji Zhongshu Yeliu gong shu" 寄中書耶律公書, *QJ*, 39, 804–5.

111. For the scholarly debate about Yuan's intentions, see Yao Congwu, "Yuan Haowen duyü baoquan zhongyuan," Han Zhiyuan, "Yuan Haowen zai Jin Yuan."

of the listed scholars were hired.¹¹² All fifty-four men had gathered in Henan after 1214 and fled to areas north of the Yellow River in the early 1230s, before the Mongols besieged Kaifeng. Yuan's list of their names and native places indicates his broad circle of associates. Among those fifty-four scholars, nineteen were natives of Shanxi. Yet none of Yuan's close friends appeared on the list, because they had all died.

The violent and chaotic final four years of the Jin state, 1231–1234, saw the nearly complete extinction of the entire literati class. As Yuan Haowen later lamented, "Most descendants of scholars with illuminating virtues and marvelous fame were dead, and most families that had produced high-ranking officials had gone. Less than one-tenth of them survived. Among those still alive, countless became homeless, fell into slavery, and could not preserve themselves from cold and hunger."¹¹³ In addition to the decimation of the northern literati and the disappearance of literati families, most Confucian schools were abandoned, and more importantly, the civil service examinations were suspended. As a result, all the institutional mechanisms that had sustained the degree-holder society in north China disintegrated.

The lives of the small number of literati survivors, such as the fifty-four scholars on Yuan Haowen's list and Yuan himself, now largely relied on the mercy of the Mongol rulers and the new governing elites. Yuan counted on Yeli Chucai to help the fifty-four scholars. But it was a group of non-literati warlords—the Han Chinese Hereditary Vassals—that protected Yuan for the rest of his life. Many other Jin literati found refuge in the religious communities of Quanzhen Daoism. Military strongmen and Quanzhen Daoists became the new political and social elites among the northern Chinese population under Mongol rule. Quanzhen Daoists, who acted in cooperation with the Mongol rulers and Mongol-appointed governors and local officials, now made a spectacular entrance onto the historical stage and played unprecedented leading roles in reorganizing and integrating the war-torn society in north China after 1234.

112. De Rachewiltz, "Ye-lü Chu-ts'ai," 205.

113. Yuan Haowen, "Longshan zhaoshi xinying zhi bei" 龍山趙氏新塾之碑, *QJ*, 30.627.

CHAPTER 2

The Quanzhen Daoist Order and Postwar Social Reconstruction,

1234–1281

Fighting finally ended after the Mongols completed their seizure of north China in 1234. The following spring Yuan Haowen moved north to Shandong province at the invitation of Zhao Tianxi 趙天錫, who had been appointed governor of Guanshi county by the new Mongol state. Zhao asked Yuan to compose a brief history of a Quanzhen Daoist abbey, which the governor had renovated on behalf of his aged mother. Throughout north China the Quanzhen Daoist order drew many different social groups, in addition to former Jin literati, together to play leading roles in rebuilding the shattered local society after the Jin-Mongol war. These groups ranged from the Mongols and local governors in the upper classes to peasants and craftsmen in the lower classes. Most remarkably, a large number of women—like Zhao's mother, who studied Quanzhen Daoist teachings with a male master—also participated in the new Quanzhen order that emerged rapidly to dominate the social space between state and family after 1234. Yuan Haowen could not help wondering why Quanzhen Daoism appealed to so many different people at the time. He attempted to account for the success of the movement in this inscription:

Sometime after the Zhenyuan [1153–55] and Zhenglong [1156–60] periods the Quanzhen School came into being. Wang Zhongfu [Wang Zhe 王喆, 1112–70], a native of Xianyang [in Shaanxi province], founded the school,