“Hide-and-Seek” –
On the Reclusion and Political Activism
of the Mid-Tang Yinshi (“Hermit”) Fu Zai
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By the late 8th century, a successful political career for a Tang 唐 (618–907) literatus would likely require degree holding. In particular, the much coveted jinshi 進士 degree had become an essential qualification for any ambitious scholar who aspired after top-ranking positions in the government. Indeed, statistics demonstrate that a substantial number of chief ministers since Emperor Xuanzong’s 玄宗 (r. 712–756) reign were jinshi graduates.¹

There are exceptions, of course. Sons of high officials, often from prominent families, could find their way into central government through the yin 蔭 protection privilege,² and there is no lacking of examples of those who entered government this way and eventually achieved highly successful careers. Li Deyu 李德裕 (787–849), one of the most notable cases, began his career in government through this channel of yin protection, and moved on to serve in Emperors Wenzong’s 文宗 (r. 827–840) and Wuzong’s 武宗 (r. 841–846) courts as chief minister.³ Nonetheless, there is little doubt that degree credential was much sought after, and it brought prestige to literati because literary skill was the most important measure of talents in Tang times.

Whether they opted for examination degrees or relied on their family background and connections, most literati would actively assert themselves in politics in order to climb up the ladder of officialdom. For one examination candidate who successfully rose to the top of officialdom, there were hundreds and thousands of those who faced great frustration at the tiresome examinations and the equally challenging phase of getting good placements from the Ministry of Personnel.⁴

¹ Throughout the Tang dynasty, high-ranking positions in government were mostly occupied by members of prominent families. By late-Tang, over 80% of those who rose to the position of chief minister were jinshi graduates. See Mao Hanguang 毛漢光, “Tangdai da shizu de jinshi di” 唐代大士族的進士第, in Zhongguo zhonggu shehui shilun 中國中古社會史論 (Taipei: Lianjing, 1988), 362; Wu Zongguo 吳宗國, Tangdai keju zhidu 唐代科舉制度 (Shenyang: Liaoning daxue, 1997), 173–184.
³ For a study of his life, see the chronological biography by Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮, Li Deyu nianpu 李德裕年譜. Ji’nan: Qilu shushe, 1984.
⁴ The famous literatus Han Yu 韓愈 (768–824), for example, spent ten years after he obtained the jinshi degree in the capital Chang'an 長安 to “wait” for proper official assignment. See the three letters that he wrote to a chief minister for help, Quan Tang wen 全唐文 (Dong Gao 董誥, ed. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983; hereafter cited as QTW), 551:11b-23a. The appointment process seems to have become more challenging after the An Lushan Rebellion as central government delegated substantial authority of recruitment to local governments. For a study of this development in mid- and late-Tang, see Jin Yingkun 金潑坤, “Zhong-wan Tang quanxuan zhidu bianhua yu keju jidi rumu de guanxi” 唐代銓選制度變化與科舉及第入幕的關係, Renwen zazhi 人文雜誌 2002:4, 110–116.
However, there were also those who chose a seemingly different path of retreating to famous mountains, living a life of serenity. They acquainted themselves with other like-minded literati, often forming self-taught groups and referring to their way of life as a form of reclu-
sion. Indeed, many of them addressed themselves or were looked upon by others as *yinshi* 隱士 or its variants such as *yinze* 隱者, *dunyin* 遁隱, or *shanyin* 山隱, notions variously rendered broadly as hermit, recluse, and eremite. However, most of them were no real hermits in its narrow sense, who withdrew physically and mentally from any involvement in the realm of politics and state affairs. They neither lived a solitary life nor rejected the possibility to serve in public offices. In fact, many of them consciously and unambiguously revealed their enthusiastic in public service, and quite a few would eventually enter government. Some even became highly successful in the world of politics.

As “hermits,” they were a highly respected group. Local officials competed with each other to recruit them into their offices, reflecting a complex cultural-political character of the discourse on hermits that evolved since the early medieval period. *Yin* 隱 was an identity, representing a system of values that not only shaped the life attitude of the literati but also played a subtle role in shaping politics in local governments. Yet, the eremitic tradition is a dynamic process that encompasses a whole range of social, political, intellectual, and religious processes in interaction. The editors of 新唐書 新唐書 furnished explicitly a statement that conceptualizes such a tradition by the early eleventh century:

古之隱者，大抵有三概上焉者，身藏而德不晦，故自放草野，而名往從之，雖萬乖之貴，猶尋軌而委聘也；其次，挈治世具弗得伸，或持峭行不可屈于俗，雖有所應，其於爵祿也，汎然受，悠然辭，使君常有所慕企，怊然如不足，其可貴也；末焉者，資槁薄，樂山林，內審其才，終不可當世取捨，故逃丘園而不返，使人常高其風而不敢加訾焉。… 唐興，賢人在位眾多，其遁戢不出者，纔班班可述，然皆下概者也。… 然放利之徒，假隱自名，以詭祿仕，肩相摩於道，至號終南、嵩少為仕塗捷徑，高尚之節喪焉。

In general, in ancient times there were three categories of hermits. The greater ones hid their bodies, and yet [the brilliance of] their virtue did not become opaque. Hence, although they exiled themselves in the wilderness, their eminent reputation always accompanied them. Even the rulers, with their great authority, would seek them out and humbly invite them for their service. [For those hermits] of a lesser degree, despite their ability to govern the world, they were unable to apply themselves. Holding fast their upright character, they refused to bend to the worldly mores. Although there were times when they responded to invitations, they accepted titles and stipends dispassionately, and would turn them down at
great ease. This led to the admiration from the part of the rulers. Melancholically, they felt that they lacked [worthy subjects]. This is what made [these hermits] so valuable. For the last category of hermits, their talents were shallow, and they were delighted of dwelling in mountains and forests. Inspecting their talents internally, [they realized that] they were ultimately incapable of getting positions in the world. Therefore, they escaped to the wilderness and did not return. [Nonetheless], people often regarded them highly and did not dare to find faults in them … When the Tang rose, numerous worthy subjects occupied official ranks, and few would refuse to serve. However, [for those who did so], they belonged to the last category … For those who sought profit, they insincerely hid their names in order to attract titles and salaries. They crowded the roads, saying that Mount Zhongnan and the Shaoshi peak of Mount Song were the shortcut to officialdom.9 The lofty virtue of eremitism has been lost.

Despite this simple categorization of hermits, it certainly reveals a spectrum of values and motivations that underpin the tradition. Such a reflection was not new. Statements articulated during the Period of Disunion, most readily attested by the genre of ‘Biography of the Hermits’ in the dynastic histories on the period, provide certain theoretical foundations for the tradition since antiquity. They cite, in particular, the authority from classics such as the Yijing, Shijing, and the Analects.10 There are also examples by those who articulated their views in a less “official” capacity, with notable examples such as Huangfu Mi’s Gaoshi zhuan 高士傳, and Ge Hong’s Baopu zi 抱朴子.11 Nonetheless, despite the height of the tradition reached by the third and fourth centuries,12 many statements on eremitism put forward by early Tang times remained sporadic, and few would present a framework that characterizes the gradation of practitioners of eremitism like the one given in Xin Tang shu.13

One exception is the introductory statement to the biography of hermits in Liang shu, which also categorizes hermits at three different levels. It is a view that privileges moral-ethical

9 This alludes to the biography of Lu Zangyong 卢藏用 (d. 713). See XTS 123:4374–4375.
13 See Liang shu 51:731.
values that shaped eremitism. While praising those yinshi who refused to compromise their principles in the face of dynastic transition, it does not characterize the lesser practitioners of eremitism who chose such a path to abandon the moral virtues of rites and filiality just to escape the danger of the time in a negative sense. In the case of Xin Tang shu, where reclusion was categorized into three grades, those who belonged to the lowest category were said to be motivated largely by a strong sense of self-interest. Nonetheless, it explicitly admits that the personal integrity preserved in such an act of retirement "counteracted the trend toward greed and self-seeking, and such men served 'a use by their uselessness'."\(^{14}\)

What particularly interest us here in the above statement is that the three grades are not exclusively pre-Tang modes of seclusion. The last one is explicitly stated as the more prevalent mode practiced during the Tang. Obviously, it does not come close to any form of substantive reclusion in which one “practiced it for life” and unremittingly eschewed of an official career.\(^{15}\) To the contrary, their retirement to mountains and marshes was precisely for securing official positions. While many of these Tang “hermits” may be viewed as hypocrites, this does not stop us from discussing them as hermits or to reduce the usefulness of examining their mode of thinking and behavior within the context of the eremitic tradition.

Eremitism is not a monolithic construct, as the scheme of categorization readily attests the diverse nature of the discourse. Moreover, yin was an identity commonly perceived and acknowledged by the Tang literati. It is historically relevant and useful in understanding those values that shaped the outlook and helped guide the behavior of many Tang literati. It is precisely in this sense that the statement in Xin Tang shu helps testify the relevance and usefulness of the concept, even though it does not offer further information on other sub-groups of Tang hermits,\(^{16}\) which would certainly further our understanding of the complexity of the Tang intellectual world. If many hermits chose to retire to mountains for the sake of gaining entrance to officialdom, then there must be something substantive in the concept of reclusion that served the pragmatic goal of attracting interest from among those in authority. The act of reclusion, viewed in such a lifestyle and its perceived virtues, was certainly significant enough in the minds of the Tang literati. If not, few would have chosen the path of reclusion as a shortcut to political success. Moreover, yin points to the “relationship of the individuals to the state and society”\(^{17}\)—more specifically, one’s attitude towards the state within the Tang cultural-political milieu.

It is in this respect that this paper attempts to broaden our understanding of such an attitude within a specific political context, in particular, through a close examination of the life and career of the mid-Tang literatus Fu Zai (759–812?). While it is unnecessary to generalize the case of Fu, this case study would nonetheless reveal, or at least suggest, some salient features of the nature of eremitism shared by many Tang yinshi. Fu exhibited strong tendency to adhere to a reclusive lifestyle, and was perceived as a noteworthy hermit by his contempo-

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He was active at the turn of the ninth century when leading mid-Tang literati such as Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773–819) endeavored to revive Confucianism. There is evidence showing that Fu was somewhat associated with some of them, or at least shared with them a few important mutual patrons. Despite the fact that some of his writings have been lost, those that survived are still sufficient to allow us to assess some important traits of Fu’s political career in relation to values that might have guided his decisions made about those career options that were opened to him.

A careful study of his career choice, in particular, should shed light on important features of the Tang literati discourse. For this purpose, a reconstruction of his life is necessary to evaluate his career and the values that he adhered to in making such decisions. It shows that Fu, perhaps many other Yinshi too, was playing some kind of “hide-and-seek” game, and the rules of this game reveal their action and inaction.

Life of a Mid-Tang Literatus/Hermit

Our knowledge of Fu’s life and his family is very limited. There is no contemporary biographical material survived. The two Tang standard histories and the Tang caizi zhuan 唐才子傳 furnish no biography for him, and the biographical sketch found in the Qing 清 anthology Quan Tang wen offers only a meager amount of information:

Style Houzhi, [Fu] Zai was a native of Shu. He retired to mount Lu, [and was later] invited by Li Xun (746–808), Surveillance Commissioner of the Jiangnanxi [circuit], to serve as his secretary. [Later], he occupied the positions of probationary Chief Musician in the Court of Imperial Sacrifices and Investigating Censor.

An earlier and more detailed account is in Chao Gongwu’s 晁公武 (1105–1180) Junzhai dushi zhi 郡齋讀書志:

Fu Zai, style Houzhi, was a native of Qixiang. When he was young, his had ambitious goals. He retired to mount Lu and had in his possession a collection of ten thousand juan of books, but he was not interested in the art of composition. During the middle of the Zhenyuan period (785–805), he was recommended by Li Xun, Surveillance Commissioner of the Jiangnanxi circuit to the position of Court Gentleman for Ceremonials. [Concurrently], he served as the assistant commander of the Nanchang Army. Later, he was invited to serve as secretary of Wei Gao (746–805), [Military Governor] of Xichuan, and as a military advisor to Xi Shimei (756–819), [Military Governor] of Zelu. Fu had occupied the positions of Chief Musician in the Court of Imperial Sacrifices and Investigating

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18 For example, see Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846), “Dai shu” 代書, in Bai Juyi ji 白居易集 (Taipei: Hanjing wenhua, 1984), 43:942.

19 QTW 688:1a. The renditions of official titles follow Charles O. Hucker, A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985. This account of his official titles when he served Li Xun is not totally accurate. More on this will be dealt with later in this section.
Censor. He died in the middle of the Yuanhe period (806–820), and Duan Wenchang (773–835) composed a tomb inscription for him, which is attached to the end of his collected works. His collected works consist of mainly miscellaneous writings, with only a few poems in the last juan. In the front matters are [two] “Preface to the poem sending Fu off to visit his parents” composed by Cui Qun and Wang Xiang. Both note that Fu was a native of Shu, and compared him to Sima Xiangru (179–117 BCE), Wang Chong (27–91), and Yang Xiong BCE 53 – 18 CE).20

This is by far the most detailed pre-modern account of Fu’s life that is available to us, for the tomb inscription by Duan is no longer extant. It is also a largely accurate account for most of the information can be verified by Fu’s own writings. When Chao Gongwu put together his bibliography, Fu’s collection was still extant. Since the tomb inscription by Duan was included in it, Chao must have consulted this source when he put together the short biographical outline. Of course, there are still gaps and problems in the account. For example, Cen Zhongmian has pointed out that it is unclear where exactly Qixiang was located.21

Fu left behind a collection of writings in fourteen juan.22 However, by the Yuan (1279–1368) dynasty, a substantial portion of them had been lost.23 Nonetheless, based on the writings still extant and with the help of other Tang-Song materials, it is possible to provide a sketch that outlines some of the key events in his life. Since Pan-Lü Qichang has recently published a biographical study of Fu,24 the following section that provides a biographical sketch of Fu’s life makes use of Fu’s writings, other Tang-Song sources, and Pan-Lü’s study. This provides the necessary context to situate a proper discussion of the intellectual implications of Fu’s career in mid-Tang China.

Liu Zongyuan, in a letter to Zhao Zongru 趙宗儒 (745–831), addressed Fu as Wudu Fu Zai 武都符載.25 Wudu (in Gansu 甘肅) is likely his prominent clan (junwang 郡望), not the place where he grew up. According to the tomb inscription that Fu composed for his wife, he

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20 See Junzhai dushu zhi in Xu Yimin and Chang Zhenguo 常振國, eds., Zhongguo lidai shumu congkan 中國歷代書目叢刊 (Beijing: Xiandai, 1987), 18:3a-b. Wang Xiang’s preface is no longer extant. A preface to a poem, by Cui Qun, sending Fu back home to visit his parents has survived. However, instead of comparing Fu with Sima Xiangru and Yang Xiong, it compares him with figures such as Yan Hui 顏回 and Yan Guang 顏光. See “Song Luyue chushi Fu Zai gui Shu jinsheng xu” 送廬嶽處士符載歸蜀覲省序, QTF 612:10b.

21 Cen Zhongmian has pointed out that Qi 岐 refers to Qizhou 岐州 (in Shaanxi) where Fengxiang was located. It is where the Fu’s family maintained its ancestral burial ground. However, it is unclear what “Xiang” 襄 really refers to. See the entry “Zaishuo Fu Zai” 再說符載, in Tangshi yushen 唐史餘渾 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), 125. Pan-Lü Qichang 潘呂棋昌 surmises that because Fu had at one point stayed as a guest in Fan Ze’s 樊澤 office when the latter was the governor of Xiangyang and Shan’nan East Circuit (Xiangyang Shan’nan dongdao 襄陽山南東道), it is possible that this caused Chao Gongwu to mistaken Fu’s native place. See “Fu Zai shiji kaoshu” 符載事蹟考述, Kongda renwen xuebao 空大人文學報 2 (1993), 99. I am grateful to Prof. Chen Jo-shui 陳弱水, National Taiwan University, for obtaining this article by Pan-Lü Qichang.

22 XTS 60:1605.

23 According to the “Yiwen zhi” 藝文志 in Song shi 宋史 (Tuo Tao 脫脱, et al., eds. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), 208:5340, only two juan of Fu’s writings remained.

24 See “Fu Zai shiji kaoshu,” 93–119.

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returned her casket to the ancestral burial ground in Fengxiang 凤翔 (in Qizhou 戍州).26 As his writings testify that he came from Shu, and the fact that he traveled back there to visit his parents, there is little doubt that he grew up in this area. Yet, the specific location in Shu where he spent his early years is unclear. One thing we can be certain is that he was not from Chengdu 成都, because he talked about himself as a guest there.27

We know practically nothing about his parents and most other members of his family. Fu’s wife is a daughter of Li Cheng 李逞, prefect of Fangzhou 房州. She died in 795 at the age of thirty-six sui 岁, and bore a son Kuangru 匡儒 and a daughter Shangqing zi 上清子.28 Fu also mentioned a cousin from the Cui 崔 family who was married to an official with the surname He 何, likely He Shigan 何士幹 (jinshi 766).29 Despite the scanty information it seems that Fu, though certainly not of a humble upbringing, was not a member of any prominent or powerful family.30 He often presented himself as a man of humble background, using labels such as: wild man (yeren 野人),31 common folk (fangfu 凡夫),32 mountain dweller (shanke 山客),33 the vulgar one (pifu 鄙夫),34 and weakling (nuofu 懦夫).35

Fu Zai retreated to mount Qingcheng 青城 at a young age (ruonian 弱年), no more than nineteen years of age, in around 774.36 He was accompanied by three close friends: Yang Heng 阳亨.26 “Wangqi Lishi muzhi ming” 亡妻李氏墓誌銘, in Lu Xinyuan 陸心源, ed., Tangwen shiyi 唐文拾遺 (in QTW), 27:1b-2b.

27 See “Jian’nan Xichuan mufu zhugong xiezhen zan bingxu” 剑南西川幕府諸公寫真讚并序, QTW 690:28b.

28 “Wangqi Lishi muzhi ming,” Tangwen shiyi 唐文拾遺 27:1b-2b. See also “Ji waijiu Fangzhou Li shijun wen” 祭外舅 房州李使君文 and the funeral prayer “Ji qi Lishi wen” 祭妻李氏文, QTW 691:18b-20a. See the diagram for the family tree of his wife. The name “Kuangru” is indicative of Fu’s Confucian commitment, while “Shangqing zi” suggests that she was either “offered” to a Daoist temple or she chose the path of a Daoist living when she grew up.

29 See “Wei Cuishi mei ji dafu Helang wen” 為崔氏妹祭大夫何郎文, QTW 691:20a-b. Fu’s funeral prayer of He includes reference to his literary talent and his success in the examinations. See “Ji He dafu wen” 祭何大夫文, QTW 691:151. For his jinshi degree, see Meng Erdong 孟二冬, Dengke jikao buzheng 登科記考補正 (Beijing: Beijing Yanshan, 2003), 10:420.

30 The reference in Junzhai dushu zhi 鏡齋讀書志 that Fu had accumulated over ten thousand juan 卷 of books and his marriage strongly suggest that it was unlikely that he came from too obscure a social background. As will be demonstrated later in this section, the highly selective nature of his career choice also points to his possible origin from the “leisure” class.

31 See “Da Lu dafu shu” 答盧大夫書, QTW 688:26b; “Tufu zhen baoning ji” 土洑鎮保寧記, QTW 693:18a; “Xiangyang Beilou ji” 襄陽北樓記, QTW 689:6b. In “Huainan jiedushi Baling gong Du You xiezhen zan zengxu” 淮南節度使灞陵公社佑寫真讚贈序, QTW 690:27b, he addresses himself as a “shanlin yejian zhi shi” 山林野賤之士, a wild and lowly person from the mountains and forests.

32 “Jiangling Lu shiyu zhai yanji guan Zhang yuanwai hua songshi tu” 江陵陸侍御宅讌集觀張員外畫松石圖, QTW 690:2b; “Zhonghe jie pei He dafu huiyan xu” 中和節陪何大夫會讌序, QTW 690:7a.

33 “Song Lu shiyushi fu Wang linggong mu xu” 送盧侍御史赴王令公幕序, QTW 690:16a. The notion ruonian refers to a young age. For young men reaching the age of twenty, often referred to by the term ruoguan 弱冠, they would participate in the cap ritual (guanli 冠禮) that symbolized adulthood. Here, we take ruo tentatively as the age of nineteen or younger. If so, Fu was born some time around 756.

34 See “Xie Li Xun changshi shu” 謝李巽常侍書, QTW 688:22a.

35 See “Tufu zhen baoning ji” and “Jian’nnan Xichuan mufu zhugong xiezhen zan bingxu,” QTW 690:28b.

36 See “Ji waijiu Fangzhou Li shijun wen.”
杨衡，Wang Jianyan 李元象，all came from Shu as well. Together, they would later be known as the “Four Companions in the Mountain” (Shanzhong siyou 山中四友). There, they cleared some lands and built their own dwellings and immersed themselves in learning.

After staying in Mount Qingcheng for about six years, the young men moved along the Three Gorges on boat and eventually entered Mount Lu near Xunyang 潋阳 (in Jiangzhou 江州) in 780. It was probably on their way there that Fu and others stopped at Jiangling 江陵, where he met Lu Li 盧吏, Surveillance Commissioner, and his brothers: Ba 煜, Run 潤 and Huai 惠. He also befriended with the famous painter Zhang Zao 張璪 and monk Xuanlang 玄覽. This was in the early Jianzhong 建中 period (780–783). When they arrived at Mount Lu,
they built their own dwellings and immersed in the learning of the Confucian classics and the philosophers. As a result, they gained fame. Bai Juyi, as noted already, considered Fu Zai and Yang Heng as the more noted ones who had retreated to that mountain to cultivate themselves in Confucian scholarship.41

Mount Lu was a famous spot where, for centuries, young scholars, retired officials, Daoist priests and Buddhist monks chose their dwellings. The famous Buddhist monk Hui Yuan 慧遠 (334–416), for example, built the Donglin 東林 temple there, attracting a large number of followers both from among the clergies and the lay people, of course, including famous scholars and officials. Bai Juyi would build his thatch hut there in the Yuanhe period, and composed the “Caotang ji” 草堂記 to commemorate the occasion, giving a vivid depiction of the surroundings of this serene site.42 Intellectual life in mount Lu was highly dynamic, and Fu’s learning of Confucian scholarship there would likely have benefitted from his interactions, both socially and intellectually, with many other mountain dwellers and religious figures.43 For example, he was acquainted with the Daoist priest Huang Dongyuan 黃洞元, the 15th generation patriarch of the Maoshan 茅山 sect, when both of them moved to mount Lu in around 780.44 As noted earlier, it was around the same time that he befriended with the Buddhist monk Xuanyan. He also wrote to Bao Jie 包佶 (jinshi 747), prefect of Jiangzhou. Impressed by Fu, Bao sent him high regards and this resulted in the spread of Fu’s name in the literary arena.45 In 783, Fu was acquainted with Wang E 王鍔, who took up the position of prefect of Jiangzhou.46 Moreover, an official with the surname Cui 崔, serving in Jiangxi 江西, visited Fu often during a three years period while the former traveled on official trips to Xunyang.47

780) period when monk Xuanlang was living at the Zhiqi temple. Since Fu and his friends moved to mount Lu in around 780, it was probably on their way that they stopped in Jiangling.48

41 See note 18 above.
42 See Bai Juyi ji 43:933.
45 See “Shang Wei shangshu shu” 上韋尚書書, QTW 688:13b and Yu Xianhao 郁賢皓, Tang cishi kao quanbian 唐刺史考全編 (Hefei shi: Anhui daxue, 200), 158:2279.
47 See “Song Luyue chushi Fu Zai gai Shu jinsheng xu,” QTW 612:10a-11a. Fu’s writings place his six years stay in mount Lu somewhere between 780 and 785. This preface also notes that Fu retreated to mount Lu for six years (háng 半紀). It was composed on the occasion that Fu was sent back to Shu to visit his parents, and it is dated on the ninth month. The year should be Zhenyuan 1st year (785). However, there is an obvious problem with this text because it is said to be a work by Cui Qun. It was already included into the early Song collection Tang wenwu 唐文粹 (Yao Xuan 姚燧. Taibei: Shijie shuju, 1988).
show that his “reclusive” living in mount Lu was far from being a life of solitude, and they likely relate to what Fu meant by “broadening his experience.”

In the ninth month of 785, after five to six years in mount Lu, Fu finally left and returned home to pay visit to his parents in Shu. It was on his way that he met Li Cheng. Impressed by Fu’s talents, Li soon married his daughter to Fu. This marriage connected Fu to a prominent family, for the Lis were related to the imperial clan, belonging to the Elder Zhengwang (Da Zhengwang 大鄭王) branch. His wife’s grand uncle, Li Gao 李暠, was a high-ranking official in Emperor Xuanzong’s court. Yet, it is quite unlikely that this connection was helpful at all in his future political career.

Soon after marriage, he returned home. He was around the age of thirty and his reputation readily attracted interest from among the local officials. As he left mount Lu to search for employment to provide for his parents, it is natural that he did not stay at home for too long. He traveled in the nearby areas to seek for patrons. However, Fu was highly selective, turning down a number of invitations from local officials. In the eighth month of 785, for example, Lu Yuanqing 卢元卿, Surveillance Commissioner of Eyue 鄂岳, dispatched an envoy to invite Fu to join his government but was only turned down with the reason of bad health. Nonetheless, Fu was a guest in Lu’s government in Jiangxia 江夏 early in the following year.

1989), 98:8a. The first problem is that Cui, born in 772, was only about thirteen in 785. Second, it is mentioned in the text that Cui was serving in the office in Jiangxia for three years already when he composed this preface, which is quite impossible given his young age. Cui passed the jinshi examination in 792 when he was twenty-one, and his biographies in the two standard histories do not provide any information if he started his career at that early. However, as Cen Zhongmian has pointed out, Cui was still in his early teens at the time. He suspects that there is a problem of textual corruption. Fu’s friend was perhaps someone from a Cui family, but not Qun. See his “Ba Tang zhiyan,” 690. It is also possible that this friend of Fu’s just happened to have the same name of Qun, but not the one who later passed the jinshi examination and moved on to become a chief minister during the Yuanhe period.

48 “Zhang wen jian zhi lu” 張聞見之路, see “Jingzhou yu Yang Heng shuo ji yin songyou Nanyue xu,” QTW 690:20a.

49 In “Song Luyue chu shi Fu Zai qiu Shu jinsheng xu,” QTW 612:11a, Cui Qun clearly indicated that Fu left mount Lu in the ninth month.


51 See XT5 70a:2003. However, only one son’s name, that of Li Gou 李遘, is listed under Li Sheng 李昇, Cheng’s father, on the table of genealogy of the imperial clan.


53 「君家在岷蜀, 展愛高堂, 将聖賢典籍, 充人子幣帛, … 方伯地君不以厚禮遲吾子, 予未之信。」“Song Luyue chu shi Fu Zai qiu Shu jinsheng xu,” QTW 612:11a.

54 Fu explicitly noted about this in “Shang Wei shangshu shu,” QTW 688:13b-14a; “Xie Li Xun changshi shu,” QTW 688:24a.


56 See his “Tufu zhen baoning ji,” QTW 689:16b-18a and “Xiari Lu dafu xi song jing shi yu zhi Nanhai xu” 夏日盧大夫席送敬侍御之南海序, QTW 690:14b-16a.
On the Reclusion and Political Activism of the Mid-Tang **Yinshi** ("Hermit") Fu Zai

In the seventh month of 786, he visited Li Gao 李臯 (733–792), military governor of Jingnan 荆南. Probably later that year, Fu traveled to Zitong 梓潼 (in Zizhou 梓州), receiving financial support from Li Suming 李叔明 (d. 787), military governor of Jian’nan dongchuan 剑南东川. At this time, Yang Heng came to join Fu, and they were also accompanied by another friend, Xu Jingwei 徐景威, whom they acquainted with earlier in mount Lu. The three engaged in Confucian learning, went on trips in nearby mountains of Qi 郯 prefecture, composed poems and enjoyed wine. Fu did not stay in Zizhou for too long. He went on trips searching for other opportunities.

In 788, he went to Chengdu, trying to get a position in Wei Gao’s government. Nothing seems to have worked out there. Fu probably wrote to Fan Ze, then military governor of Jingnan, for financial support. Perhaps because of this, he was invited by Fan for a visit, for Fu would travel there the next year. Before he arrived there, he visited Li Gao, now military governor of Shan’nan 山南 in the sixth month of 789, and the prefect of Ezhou 鄂州 in the eighth month.

Fu probably arrived in Jinzhou late in 789. Yang Heng, who had just passed the *jinshi* examination in Chang’an, came to join him. Perhaps unable to obtain appointment, Yang decided to meet Fu in Jingzhou to look for opportunities together. It is obvious that Fu’s life had been rather unstable during these few years. It was also around this time that his good friends Wang Jiangyan and Li Yuanxiang passed away in poverty. Fu stayed in Jingzhou for about two to three years, between 789 and 791, for, in the summer of 791, Fu was there.

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57 See Pan-Lü Qichang, “Fu Zai shiji kaoshu,” 103.

58 See “Xunyang suimu song Xu shijiu Jingwei you Lufu xu” 潛陽歲暮送徐十九景威遊潞府序, *QTW* 690:18b. Fu addressed Li Shuming as Li taifu 太傅. He was prefect of Zizhou and military governor of Jian’nan between 768 and 786. See Yu Xianhao, *Tang cishi kao quanbian*, 229:3025. According to *JTS* 12:342, Li was given the honorary title of “Taizi taifu” 太子太傅 in the fifth month of 784.

59 See “Jian’nan Xichuan mufu zhugong xiezhen zan,” *QTW* 690:28a-b. "載亦敢以肺腸之事干之。誠能迴公方寸之地, 為小子生涯庇庥之所。移公盈月之俸, 為小子度世衣食之業, 使隱不遺親。“王”楚 should be “Fan” 樊. This letter is not dated, but internal evidence suggests that it was written before he traveled to Jinzhou.

60 See “Dengzhou cishi ting biji” 鄧州刺史廳壁記, *QTW* 689:1a-4a. It was composed on the fifteenth day of the eighth month of Zhenyuan fifth year (789). We only know that the surname of this prefect was Wang. See also Pan-Lü Qichang, “Fu Zai shiji kaoshu,” 104.

61 See Pan-Lü Qichang, “Fu Zai shiji kaoshu,” 104.

62 See “Dengzhou cishi ting biji” 鄧州刺史廳壁記, *QTW* 689:1a-4a. It was composed on the fifteenth day of the eighth month of Zhenyuan fifth year (789). We only know that the surname of this prefect was Wang. See also Pan-Lü Qichang, “Fu Zai shiji kaoshu,” 104.

63 See Pan-Lü Qichang, “Fu Zai shiji kaoshu,” 104.

64 It was for financial reasons that Yang sat for the *jinshi* examination. See “Jingzhou yu Yang Heng shuo-jiu yinsong you Nanyue xu,” *QTW* 688:15b. “Chu” 楚 should be “Fan” 樊. This letter is not dated, but internal evidence suggests that it was written before he traveled to Jinzhou.

65 “He Fangong tian huohu song” 賀樊公畋獲虎頌, *QTW* 688:5a-b. For Yang’s degree, see Meng Erdong, *Dengke jikao bu-zheng*, 12:523–524.

66 Li Jianyan was not buried until twenty some years later. See “Ji chushi Lijun wen,” *QTW* 691:1a-4a. It was composed on the fifteenth day of the eighth month of Zhenyuan fifth year (789). We only know that the surname of this prefect was Wang. See also Pan-Lü Qichang, “Fu Zai shiji kaoshu,” 104.

The governor seat was in Jinzhou, and the essay explicitly notes that Fan had been in his office for four
sending Yang Heng off to accompany Qi Yin 齊映 (746–795), who was appointed Surveil-
ance Commissioner of the Guiguang 桂管, to his new office.67

We have no information about Fu’s whereabouts during the next three to four years, be-
tween 791 and 794. It is likely that he moved back to mount Lu with his family and drifted
around in the neighboring areas for supports. We hear about his activities again in 795. Fu
was invited to a banquet by Yan Shiliang 嚴士良, prefect of Jiangzhou,68 and this
would be a difficult year for Fu, because his wife passed away in the same month.69 Fu
would later marry a woman from the Hongnong Yang 弘農楊 clan. While it is unclear when
this took place, we know that He Shigan was involved in bringing this marriage together.70

After taking care of his wife’s funeral in the fourth month,71 Wang probably took a trip to
Guangzhou 廣州, trying to get a position in Wang E’s government in Lingnandong嶺南東.
Fu was acquainted with Wang earlier when he was in Jiangling and Xiangyang. It is note-
worthy that Yang Heng was in his entourage in Guangzhou at this time.72 One may surmise
that this trip might have to do with this specific connection. Fu left for Guangzhou in the fifth
month. However, due to serious illness, he stopped at Nankang 南康 (in Qianzhou 慶州) for
treatment and was forced to return to mount Lu by the tenth month, already in the winter
season.73 It was on his way back that he stopped by the local government in Jiangzhou, where

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67 “Jingzhou yu Yang Heng shuoju yin songyou Nanyue xu,” QTW 690:19b–21h. See also JTS 136:3751.
68 According to Yu Xianhao, Tang cishi kao quanbian 158:2280, Yan served as prefect of Jiangzhou in 795
only. This was recounted a year later in his letter to a Lu Yuanwai 卢員外 of Qizhou 鄿州. Fu noted
about this event because the two met in the banquet, likely for the first time. 「去年春三月，某有謂暫
出蓬戶間，適值麾幢將度潯陽，嚴太守命某為貳食之客。偶於末席，備聆嘉話。」
70 See the discussion in note 89 below.
71 Fu stored her casket temporarily in the “Northern Peak of the Dehua xiang” 德化鄉 on the twenty-first
day of the fourth month. See “Wangqi Lishi muzhi ming” 仁妻李氏墓誌銘, Tang wen shiyi 28:2a.
72 Fu mentioned in “Ji Nanhai Wang shangshu shu” 寄南海王尚書書, QTW 688:16b–18a, that he had
heard from a couple of visitors, likely from Guangzhou, that Yang Heng was serving in Wang’s gov-
ernment at that time. Fu indicated that this was in the third month. According to the way it was narrated
in the letter, this would likely be in 796. According to Yu Xianhao, Wang’s governorship there endured
from 795 to 801. See his Tang cishi kan quanbian 257:3168.
73 A number of letters record this. See “Ji Nanhai Wang shangshu shu,” QTW 688:16b–18a, “Da Zetu
Wang shangshu shu” 大赤唐王尚書書, QTW 688:18a; it is noted in this letter that he reached Jiangzhou
he obtained a letter of invitation from Wang Qianxiu 王虔休, governor of the Zelu 澤潞 province. He turned down the offer, obviously because of his ill health.74

In the autumn of 796, a military official (Guangjun jiangjun 冠軍將軍) by the name Li Yuan 李圓 came to visit Fu in mount Lu. The two discussed about the art of swordsmanship. Li showed Fu an essay by Zhang Jianfeng 張建封 (d. 800), military governor of Xusi 除泗. The title of the essay was “Baojian ming” 寶劍銘. In early 797, Fu wrote Zhang a letter to seek for employment, which was accompanied with a copy of his “Gexi jian zhi” 葛溪劍志.75 This, however, did not work out. Fu probably asked Fan Ze for support while he was in Xiangyang in the sixth month and composed an essay for the occasion of the completion of Xiyuan 西園.76 He stayed there until the next spring.77

Fu probably stopped by Hongzhou 洪州 as a guest of Li Xun before returning to mount Lu because he was there in the spring of 798.78 Not long after he arrived back in mount Lu, Fu received a sum of forty thousand cash from the prefect of Jiangzhou, Li Kang 李康. With this, Fu purchased some lands in Sanjian feng 三澗峰, close to Donglin and Xilin 西林 in mount Lu.79 Probably impressed by Fu's talents during his brief stay in Hongzhou, Li Xun invited Fu to join his government. Fu turned down the invitation three times before finally accepted the offer. He was given the official appointments of Gentleman of Ceremonials at the Court of Imperial Sacrifices (Taichang si fengli lang 太常寺奉禮郎) and Military Vice Commander of the Nanchang Army 「至冬十月歸山下」), and “Zeng Qizhou Lu yuanwai shu,” QTW 688:20b.

74 See “Da Zelu Wang shangshu shu,” QTW 688:18a-19a. Wang's governorship was between the tenth month of Zhenyuan tenth year (794) and the third month of the fifteenth year (799). See also Pan-Lü Qichang, “Fu Zai shiji kaoshu,” 106.

75 See “Ji Xusi Zhang dafu shu” 寄除泗張大夫書, QTW 688:19a-20b. Zhang served as military governor in Xusi between 788 and 800. See Yu Xianhao, Tang cishi kao quanbian 64:925. Fu noted in this letter that Zhang had then been in Xusi for ten years already. Thus, this letter should be dated to 797. Pan-Lü Qichang also dates this to this year. See her “Fu Zai shiji kaoshu,” 106. It is noteworthy that she dates Fu's trip to Guangzhou to 796, see “Fu Zai shiji kaoshu,” 116–117, n. 24. However, in view of his letter to Zhang Jianfeng, this would be quite unlikely because this letter clearly reveals that Li Yuan's visit was in the “autumn” of the year before: 「適值去年秋,有冠軍將軍李圓者,道來自東。」 If Fu did travel to Guangzhou in 796, then he could not have met Li Yuan, for he was still on his way back to mount Lu. He did not return until the winter, in the tenth month!

76 See “Xiangyang Zhang duangong Xiyuan ji” 襄陽張端公西園記, QTW 689:11b-12b. See also Pan-Lü Qichang, “Fu Zai shiji kaoshu,” 106. This prayer was composed later in autumn when Fu was back in mount Lu, and it shows clearly that Fu had met Fan not long before.

78 Fu composed an essay for the newly renovated Ganzi Hall (Ganzi tang 甘子堂), probably a quarter in Li's Hongzhou government office. See “Ganzi tang gefu yiwu shi xu” 甘子堂各賦一物詩序, QTW 690:8b-9a. Also see “Xie Li Xun changshi shu,” QTW 688:23a-b. 「一昨候謁盛府,禮數優貸。… 嘗於甘子堂中,輒以私志,上廣視聽。」

79 「近者江州李使君以俸錢四萬,為某買山。號三澗峰,在二林之右。孤巖絕壑,匡廬之左,雋褐破袍,沛然滿篋,方將面蜃峰,構草堂,詠歌堯舜。」 See “Xie Li Xun changshi shu,” QTW 688:23b. For Li Kang’s prefectship, see Yu Xianhao, Tang cishi kan quanbian 158:2281. Yu cites an essay by Liu Ke 劉軻 which shows that Li was serving in Jiangzhou in the spring of 798 already. It is, however, not sure if Fu solicited this fund directly. In addition, the nature of their relationship is unclear, for there is no other reference about Li Kang in his works. Based on the two works cited by Yu Xianhao, Li was a keen patron of Buddhism. Their mutual interest in the Buddhist religion may be another reason for their acquaintance and the support that Li gave Fu.

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(Nanchang jun fushi 南昌軍副使). Li's first letter clearly shows that this exchange took place in the early summer, and these appointments had already been approved by the central government. If all these exchanges took place in the summer, then Fu might have assumed his position in Jiangxi later that year. If so, he served in the Jiangxi government for just about one year, between 798 and 799.80 For – once again, due partially to health problems – Fu retired back to mount Lu in late 799. He was accompanied by Xu Jingswei briefly, and the latter would soon leave for Luzhou 潞州, taking up a position there through the connection of his relative Xi Shimei.81

Some time at the turn of 800, Yang Heng requested Fu to write a funeral prayer for his father Ou 鷗, who would be buried with his wife in Chen Cang.82 On the first day of the second month of 800, Fu traveled to Jiangxia 江夏 to visit the military governor He Shigan. There, they celebrated the Zhonghe 中和 festival together.83 Fu returned to mount Lu by the summer and received a letter from Yu Di 于頔 (d. 818), who replaced Fan Ze as the military governor of Shan'andong after Fan died in the autumn of 798. Yu sent Fu a copy of the tomb inscription of Meng Haoran and invited him to join his government. However, Fu turned down the invitation.84 Near the end of the year, Xiao Cun 蕭存 (739–800), son of the famous guwen 古文 advocate Xiao Yingshi 蕭穎士 (706–759), died.85 Since Fu was acquainted with Xiao a few years earlier as the latter settled in Zixiao feng in mount Lu, he composed a tomb inscription for Cun.86

80 These exchanges between the two are extant. However, the writing on the final acceptance has not been preserved. The three letters of invitation by Li are in *QTW* 526:5b-6b, and Fu's replies are in *QTW* 688:22b-23a. Luo Liantian 羅聯添 holds that Fu did not accept Li's invitation because Li did not recommend him to a position in central government. See his “Lun Tangren shangshu yu xingjuan” 論唐人上書與行卷, in *Taibei xuesheng shuju* (Taibei: Xuesheng shuju, 1989), 54. Lu Yang 魯陽 follows Luo's view on this. See his “Cong Xichuan he Zhexi shijian lun Yuanhe zhengzhi geju de xingcheng” 從西川和浙西事件論元和政治格局的形成, *Tang yanjiao* 唐研究 8 (2002), 230 and 249, n. 24. This article is also published under the same title, with minor changes, in Zhou Zhiping & Willard Peterson, eds., *Guoshi fuhai kaixin lu – Yu Yingshi jiaoshou rongtui lunwen ji* 國史浮海開新錄 – 余英時教授榮退論文集 (Taibei: Lianjing, 2002), 121–158. However, this is unlikely to be the case because Li Xun did offer to recommend Fu a position in the central government, and Fu did enter Li's Hongzhou government. For a discussion of these, see Pan-Lü Qichang, “Fu Zai shiji kaoshu,” 117, n. 27.

81 See “Xunyang suimo song Xu shijiu Jingwei you Lufu xu,” *QTW* 690:18b. See Pan-Lü Qichang, “Fu Zai shiji kaoshu,” 117–118, n. 28 for a discussion of the time when Fu left Li Xun's government. However, her use of Fu's essay sending Xu to Luzhou does not really help to establish the time at all.

82 See “Xipu xianling Yang fujun muzhi ming” 犀浦縣令楊府君墓誌銘, *QTW* 691:4a-6b.

83 See “Zhonghe jie pei He dafu huiyan xu” 中和節陪何大夫會讌序, *QTW* 690:5b-7b.


85 Xiao Yingshi was a leader of a group of literati, including Li Hua 李華 (ca. 710 – ca. 767) and Dugu Ji 独孤及 (725–777), who propounded on the centrality of Confucianism in politics and formulated influential ideas on 文 that would shape the intellectual discourse for the rest of the mid-Tang period. For a study of this group, see David McMullen, “Historical and Literary Theory in the Mid-Eighteenth Century,” in Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett, eds., *Perspectives on the T’ang* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 307–342.

86 See “Shangshu bibu langzhong Xiao fujun muzhi ming” 尚書比部郎中蕭府君墓誌銘, *QTW* 691:6a-9a.
In the spring of 801, Fu visited Li Xun at Zhongling. Soon after that, he traveled to Jiangxia to visit He Shigan, and stayed there for about a year until the spring of 802 when He passed away. Fu stayed there only shortly, perhaps in order to help taking care of He’s funeral. Zheng Shen was appointed to replace He, and Fu composed the “Qizhou xin chengmen song” praising Zheng’s achievement in defending against Wu Shaocheng’s revolt earlier in Huaiyi when Zheng served as prefect of Qizhou. Fu probably returned to Sanjian feng after taking care of He’s funeral. Later in the seventh month, he arrived at Yangzhou. On his way there, he might have made a short stop by Xuancheng, received by Cui Yan, Surveillance Commissioner of Xuanshe. When he arrived in Yangzhou, he entered service in the Huainan government under the patronage of the chief minister Du You. Fu composed a number of memorials for Du. However, he only stayed there for about nine months because Du was transferred back to the capital in the third month of 803. Fu left Yangzhou in the fourth month.
month, moved along the Yellow River and stopped by Shangyuan上元, southwest of Yangzhou, on his way back home. There, he was received by the magistrate Zhang Ji張集. After a short stay, he returned to Xunyang. He wrote to Wei Gao expressing his hope to work in his government, but this did not work out.94

In the sixth month of 804, Fu went to Changsha長沙, entering the office of Yang Ping楊憑 (ca. 750–815), Surveillance Commissioner of Hunan between 802 and 805.95 This was probably because of Fu’s earlier acquaintance with Yang.96 Unfortunately, his stay there was once again short, probably because Yang was unable to offer him anything more stable. Fu then wrote to Wei Gao again to seek employment or financial supports. This worked out because he was in Wei’s government by the summer of 805.97 He served Wei for just a few months because the latter died in the eighth month of 805.98 Liu Pi劉闢 (d. 806), a subordinate officer, assumed the position as Wei’s substitute without getting any official recognition.

At this point, Emperor Xianzong憲宗 (r. 806–820) had just ascended the throne, and the court was embroiled in fractional politics. Uncertain about the situation and unwilling to risk a major military confrontation in the Xichuan area, the court appointed Liu as assistant governor of Xichuan at the end of the year. However, the ambitious Liu wanted to take over the whole of Sanchuan 三川 region. In defiance of the court’s order, Liu revolted and launched attacks in neighboring areas at the beginning of 806. The court thus appointed Gao Congwen高崇文 (746–809), a commander of the Shence神策 army, in charge of suppressing the rebel force. It took about eight months for the court to put down the unrest. Liu was captured and brought to the capital, where he was executed.99

Fu and others who served in the Xichuan government could easily be charged for their complicity in Liu’s revolt. However, Gao not only trusted that they were not involved in Liu’s treasonous acts, but treated them with great respect. He even commanded them for government posts in his memorial to the central government. At the end, he rewarded them with monetary gifts handsomely before letting them go.100 Despite the fact that Fu escaped the

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93 See “Ganlu ji”甘露記, QTW689:19b-20b. This was composed a year later in 804, and nothing can be found about Zhang.
94 See “Shang Xichuan Wei linggong shu”上西川韋令公書, QTW688:12a-13a. Pan-Lü Qichang thinks that Fu traveled to Sichuan after leaving the Huinan government. However, there is no evidence supporting this. See “Fu Zai shiji kaoshu,” 109.
95 「甲申歲夏六月,中丞楊公下車長沙之三年也。余自故山,扁舟一葉,主人舍我於東館。」「Feng-song Liangying shangren you Luofu shan xu”奉送良郢上人遊羅浮山序, QTW690:23a. It is explicitly stated there that Fu traveled to Changsha directly from mount Lu (gushan故山).
96 See “Changsa Dongchi ji”長沙東池記, QTW689:144a-16b. This piece states that it was written in the third year when Yang took up the position, so 804. See JTS13:397. It is also noteworthy that Yang was the father-in-law of Liu Zhongyuan.
97 See “Song Lu duangong gui Hengzhou xu”送盧端公歸恆州序, QTW690:136a-14b. See also Pan-Lü Qichang, “Fu Zai shiji kaoshu,” 110.
99 For a discussion of this campaign, see Lu Yang, “Cong Xichuan he Zhexi shijian lun Yuanhe zhengzhi geju di xingcheng,” Tang yanjiu8 (2002), 225–256.
100 ZZTJ237:7636. The other literati include: Fang Shi房式, Wei Qianchu韋乾度, Dugu Mi獨孤密, Xi Shimei, and Duan Wenchang. Fu was acquainted with Xi Shimei earlier, and Duan Wenchang would compose a tomb inscription for Fu later.
serious crime of complicity in treason, it must be a very disappointing experience to him. He was about fifty at this time.

He was in the Fan’ge 梵閣 temple in the first month of 807, perhaps to find peace in mind after the chaotic and uncertain period in Chengdu. It is noteworthy that Fu was still in his official capacity with the titles of Taichang xielü lang and Jiancha yushi 監察御史 at this time. Fan’ge temple is close to Xipu prefecture, which was northwest of Chengdu. He was probably waiting for the government’s decision on his fate. An entry in Bu guoshi 補國史 notes that because of Gao Congwen’s recommendation, Fu was appointed mishu lang 秘書郎, and the order was sent down before Fu arrived in the capital. However, there is no other source to corroborate this piece of information.

Soon after that, the court probably decided that Fu was not involved in Liu Pi’s affairs. Fu thus left Chengdu and returned to Sanjian feng. He was in Jingzhou in the fourth month where he composed a tomb inscription for the famous Buddhist monk Tianhuang Daowu 天皇道悟 (748–807). There is no information pertaining to Fu’s earlier association with this monk. However, Daowu was active in areas such as Zhongling and Jingzhou between the Jianzhong and Yuanhe periods. Since these are also places where Fu frequented during the same period, it is quite likely that Fu was acquainted with Daowu at that time.

Fu’s writings provide little information about his activities after this incident. It is quite possible that he was back in Sanjian feng during much of 807 and 808. In around 809 or a bit later, Fu accepted – according to Liu Zongyuan – an invitation from Zhao Zongru, military governor of Jingnan, to join his government as secretary (shuji 書記). In the eighth month of 812, Fu moved the caskets of his father and wife from Xunyang to the family burial ground in Fengxiang. It is probably around this time that Fu buried his close friend Li Yuanxiang, who died some time earlier in 789.

If Junzhai dushu zhi is correct about Fu’s service in Xi Shimei’s government, then Fu would be in Luzhou not long after he buried his father and wife, for Xi served as governor of Zhaoyi

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101 See “Fan’ge si Changzhun shangren jingyuan ji” 梵閣寺常準上人精院記, QTW 689:8a-9a.
104 This is explicitly stated in Liu Zongyuan’s letter to Zhao Zongru: “及受署之日…” See “He Zhao Jiangling Zongru pi Fu Zai qi,” Liu Hedong quanji 35:269.
105 Zhao served in this position between 808 and 811. It is in the fourth month of 811 that Zhao was called back to the capital to take up the new appointment. See Wu Tingxie 吳廷燮, Tang fanzhen nianbiao 唐方鎮年表 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 689.
106 See “Wangqi Lishi muzhi ming,” Tangwen shiyi 28:1b-2b. Fu’s wife, as noted earlier, died in 795. This inscription also notes that Fu’s father died on the seventh day of the eighth month in Yuanhe seventh year (812). Fu probably decided to bury his father back in Fengxiang that he moved his wife’s casket together.
107 According to Fu’s funeral prayer to Lü, it was twenty some years after Lü’s death that Fu finally buried Lü. See “Ji chushi Lisheng wen,” QTW 691:17b.
昭義 between 811 and 817. This seems to have been the last position that Fu held before he died, since the *Junzhai dushu zhi* notes that Fu died in the “mid-Yuanhe” period.

Fu Zai the Official-Hermit: A Split Personality

The above reconstruction of Fu’s life provides the basis upon which we can make some observations about the different strands in Fu’s thought that might have influenced the ways he chose his career path. He unequivocally shows the desire to realize himself in real politics. Of course, to talk about political activism of a *yinshi* may seem contradictory; yet, there is no lack of examples of *yinshi* with this outlook during the Tang. The case of Fu Zai helps to reveal some of the values that underpinned such attitudes, which can be seen as a dualistic worldview.

Fu was living at a time of recovery. Born during the years of the An Lushan Rebellion (755–763), he was ten to twenty years senior than most leading mid-Tang literati such as Han Yu, Liu Zongyuan, and Bai Juyi. However, his career path was distinctively different from most of theirs. One most notable difference is his “insistence” in not taking the examinations. Although there is no evidence showing that he had consciously refused to sit for the examinations, there is also no sign whatsoever that he had ever considered such an option while he was ardously searching for a government post to make his political dream come true. An entry in *Beimeng suoyan* is particularly revealing in this respect, noting that because Fu was a man who took great pride in his ambition to realize kingly and hegemonic rule (*wangba*),

108 See Yu Xianhao, *Tang cishi kao quanbian* 86:1240; Wu Tingxie, *Tang juzhen nianbiao*, 481–482. Fu, of course, worked together with Xi in Wei Gao’s government in 805, but the two were acquainted with each other much earlier. According to the preface to a poem sending Xu Jingwei to Luzhou in 799 to work for Xi, Fu noted that he knew Xi earlier through their mutual friend Xiao Yijian 蕭易簡. See “Xunyang suimo song Xu shijiu Jingwei you Lufu xu,” *QTW* 690:19b.

109 An entry in *Beimeng suoyan* gives an account of Fu’s activity since he joined Wei Gao’s government in Sichuan. Fu was invited by the military governor of Nanchang to join his government in the official capacity of *fengli lang*. However, Fu turned down the offer. He then wrote Yu Di asking for a fund of a million cash so that he could buy some lands for retirement. This account, however, raises some problems. The invitation of the governor of Nanchang should be that of Li Xun’s. As we have noted earlier, Fu accepted the offer. But this took place before Fu served Wei Gao in Xichuan. As to Fu’s request for financial support from Yu Di, *Tang yulin* also makes mention of this event, but it adds that Yu granted the money that Fu had asked for, and sent clothes and paper to Fu. See *Tang yulin jiaozheng* 4:334. However, it is not clear if this happened after 806. The entry in *Tang yulin* is actually taken from Zhao Lin’s *Yunxi youyi*, probably the earliest source of this piece of information. See *Yunxi youyi*, in *Tang guoshi bu deng bazhong* 唐國史補等八種 (Taibei: Shijie shuju, 1962), juan shang 上, 7. The entry in *Beimeng suoyan* is likely to be based on *Yunxi youyi*, too. As has been noted already, Fu was associated with Yu earlier, possibly through Fan Ze. By the Yuanhe period, Yu had amassed great power, and was notorious “for cruelty and violence, for avarice, for extravagant expenditure …” For a study of Yu, see Denis Twitchett, “The Seamy Side of Late T’ang Political Life: Yü Ti and His Family,” *Asia Major*, 3rd series, 1:2 (1988), 29–63. It is therefore not impossible that Fu would solicit financial support from Yu. It is also noteworthy that Yu was addressed as Yu Xiangyang 于襄陽. Yu was then prefect of Xiangzhou 襄州 and governor of Shanmandong 山南東 between 798 and 808, and Fu was either serving in various local governments or visiting patrons mostly between 798 and 806. If he did ask for money, this would probably have occurred between 807 and 808 when Fu returned to mount Lu, soon after he had left the Xichuan government.

On the Reclusion and Political Activism of the Mid-Tang Yinshi (“Hermit”) Fu Zai

he sneered at the path of the regular channel to officialdom, i.e. the civil service examinations.111 Such an attitude likely accounts for his lack of interest in taking the examinations.

Degree holding certainly played a role in shaping the intellectual circle of a Tang literatus, and there are many examples of those who failed to obtain the jinshi degree, but, nonetheless, would occupy leading positions in the literary and intellectual arenas. Meng Haoran112 and the late-Tang poet Luo Yin 羅隱 (833–909)113 are two such examples who failed to obtain the jinshi degree but nonetheless became renowned as a result of their participation in the examinations. Besides sitting for the examinations, they participated in the literary-intellectual circle in the capital areas – Chang’an and Luoyang 洛陽. The difference between them and Fu is not merely that of degree holding, but more in terms of culture and worldview.

A candidate would enter or even create a world of well-knitted network very early on. He did not just learn the Confucian classics, philosophers, and literary skills, but also the proper manners in the daily interactions with fellow candidates, scholar-officials, and examiners. Such interactions would be most intense in the capitals where over a thousand examinees would gather as early as in the summer to prepare for the examinations held in the winter. Banquet gatherings, which were not unusually held in the gay quarters, visits to high officials, particularly those involved in the examinations, and the presentation of scrolls (xingjuan 行卷 and wenjuan 温卷) are routine activities demanded of these candidates.114 These activities are themselves transformed into the very symbolism of the examination discourse. Although Fu was also exposed to this culture, probably through his association with those in the entourage of local governments, he did not personally participate in any of them.

We are uncertain about Fu’s family background, but it also played a role in shaping his circle of friends.115 There is no evidence for any close connection between Fu and leading literati of the

111 「唯公以王霸自許，恥於常調懷會之望。」Beimeng suoyan 5:118.
112 Fu certainly considered Meng admirable and certainly looked upon him as a fellow jinshi. In a letter to Fan Ze he asked him for his assistance to repair the damages in Meng’s tomb. See his “Cong Fan Hannan wei Lamen chushi qia siurujuan,” QTW 688:27b-28a. Meng’s biography in Xin Tang shu 203:5779–5780 notes that he was much respected by high officials and leading literati such as Zhang Jiuling 張九齡 and Wang Wei 王維 for his literary talent at the time when he was in the capital to take the jinshi examination.
113 Luo’s name was originally Heng 橫. After failing the jinshi examination for ten times, he changed his name to Yin, signifying his disappointment and the decision to end his attempts to take the examination. For his biography, see Wuyue beishi 吳越備史 juan 1, in Luo Yin ji 羅隱集 (Yong Wenhua 雍文華, comp. Beijing Zhonghua shuju, 1983), appendix, 325–326. See also Lin Qixing 林啟興, “Luo Yin de ‘shiju budi’ yu wan-Tang keju” 羅隱的‘十舉不第’與晚唐科舉, Beijing shifan daxue xuebao 北京師範大學學報 1994:2, 97–102.
115 The majority of the leading literati in mid-Tang were descendents of prominent families. See Chen Ruoshui 陳弱水, “Lun zhong Tang guwen yundong de yige shehui wenhua beijing” 中唐古文運動的一個社會文化背景, in Zheng Qiaoren jianzu wenhua tongyi jianian lunwen ji 鄭欽仁教授榮休紀念論文集 (Taipei: Daoxiang, 1999), 217–246.
time. Besides his “hermit” friends, he was associated mostly with officials in local governments, noted more for their administrative skills than their literary talents. It is very likely that he had met Liu Yuxi 刘禹锡 (772–842) at the end of the Zhenyuan period because both were serving in the Huainan government under the patronage of Du You some time between 802 and 803, and were both involved in drafting up memorials.116 However, the two do not seem to have been close friends, since there is no reference to each other in their writings. Although Fu befriended with Yang Ping and Yang Ning 凝 (d. 803),117 it is unclear if Fu and Liu Zongyuan had ever met each other. When Liu was young, he stayed mostly in the capital Chang’an until the beginning of the Yuanhe period.118 After his downfall following the abortive 805 reform, Liu was sent into exile until he died in 819.119

Fu clearly selected a different path to exert himself in achieving a political career. The biographical sketch given above reveals that his activities were largely confined to the mid-Yangtze River valley area (see Map). There is no indication that he had ever stayed in Chang’an. In fact, none of his extant writings provides any evidence showing that he had ever traveled to any one of the two capitals. The closest is perhaps Fengxiang when he brought the caskets of his father and wife to the ancestral burial ground not long before he died.

Chang’an was an exciting place to be, politically, socially, and culturally.120 Yet, it is quite puzzling that Fu hardly ever traveled to this important city. His “insistence” of not taking the examinations does not quite explain this satisfactorily. Unlike the scions of prominent families who had more options in finding their ways to enter government, Fu does not seem to be a man of much resource. Drifting between local governments, his political career was by-and-large a disappointing one.121 Certainly, he could have chosen a more direct route to bring about a political career – through the jinshi examination. Giving his literary talents and the reputation that he already enjoyed in early Zhenyuan period, and his connections with influential politicians and potential patrons such as Bao Ji, a jinshi degree was not an unrealistic op-

117 Yang Ning had composed a preface to a poem sending Fu off. See Liu Hedong quanji 21:251.
118 Liu was in Xialou 夏口 with his father around 784 to escape the havoc caused by the Zhu Ci 朱泚 rebellion, and moved to Jiangxi with his father briefly. Fu was just about leaving mount Lu at the time searching for patrons, but they were in different places. At any rate, Liu was only in his early teens. See Jo-shui Chen, Liu T’ung-yüan and Intellectual Change in T’ang China, 773–819 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 47. David McMullen mentions in passing that Fu and Liu were friends, but he does not provide any evidence on this point. See his State and Scholars in T’ang China (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 355, n. 249. There is a chance that Bai Juyi came to hear about Fu in the early 790s when he stayed with his father, Jigeng 季庚 (730–794), who served as Vice Prefect of Xiangzhou 襄州 under Fan Ze. Although Fu just left Fan and returned to mount Lu, he was still communicating with Fan frequently. See Zhu Jincheng 朱金城, Bai Juyi nianpu 白居易年譜 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1982), 16. Also see Denis Twitchett, “The Seamy Side of Late T’ang Political Life: Yü Ti and His Family,” 45, n. 53.
120 For a discussion of the political, ritual, economic, and religious functions of the Chang’an city, see Victor Cunnia Xiong, Sui-Tang Chang’an: A Study in the Urban History of Medieval China. Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, the University of Michigan, 1992. This is by far the most comprehensive study of Chang’an during the Tang in English, but its important function in the examination discourse is unfortunately not examined there.
121 His “Chou fu” 愁賦, assumedly written during the last phase of his life, clearly reveals such a sentiment. See QTW 688:1a-2b.
Moreover, it is important to note that Fu was well aware that the jinshi degree is the way to high office, as he stated most explicitly in the preface to a Yuan jiaoshu 袁校書 that the jinshi degree is the ladder for climbing up the official ranks. Although they entered the officialdom with a
ninth rank position, for those who have such credential and talents in literature, if they did not
make serious mistakes or suffered from ill health, they will gradually rise to top-ranking posi-
tions in less than twenty years.\textsuperscript{122} So, why did Fu refuse to consider such an option after years
of frustration? The answer to the question has to be sought in the realm of ideas.

Mount Lu is a place that brought the Three Teachings (\textit{sanjiao 三教}) together, and Fu, de-
spite his strong Confucian outlook, was also interested in both the Buddhist and Daoist reli-
gions. However, they remained subordinate to his ambitions to participate in real politics – to
achieve good government through Confucian learning. He did not demonstrate particular
interest in classical learning or speculative thinking. He studied the Confucian classics for the
purpose of applying them in immediate politics. The notion \textit{dazhong 大中} (Great Centrality), in
particular, captures his political activism, and he propounded it in a number of occasions to
characterize the Confucian ideal of ordering the world, transforming social mores, and nouris-
hing the people.

Far from being a hermit who practiced reclusion for life and who wholly withdrew from
politics, Fu was keen on getting into government to realize himself in political terms. His
acceptance of Li Xun’s invitation was probably due to Li’s promise to get Fu a position in the
central government.\textsuperscript{123} However, despite his lofty ideal of bringing good government to the
world, which he repeatedly emphasized in his writings, his position remained ambivalent, for
he often proffered such ambition in the position of a \textit{yinshi}. His letter to Fan Ze clearly dis-
plays this inner tendency:

\begin{quote}
載頃與友生數人, 隱居廬山。其所學者, 不獨文章名數而已。意根於皇極大中之道, 用
在於佐王治國之術。常欲致君於堯舜, 驅俗於中古。此乃小子夙夜孜孜不怠也。… 意者
欲開故山草堂, 拂舊帙編簡, 晨昏之暇, 終竟前志。… 移公盈月之俸, 為小子度世衣食
之業, 使隱不遺親。
\end{quote}

Previously, I retired to mount Lu with a few friends. What I studied was not merely the arts of com-
position (\textit{wenzhang}) and institutions (\textit{mingshu}), I focused my attention on the way of Great Centrality
(\textit{huangji dazhong}), so that it can be applied as the techniques to assist the emperor to govern the state.
My intention was to elevate my sovereign to the positions of [the sage-kings] Yao and Shun, and to
bring worldly customs back to that of mid-antiquity. This is what I have untiringly toiled myself in …
I would like to reopen my thatch hut in mount [Lai], and to clear my books of dust during my free
time in morning and dawn so that I can fulfill my earlier ambition … [I wish] you could donate a
month of your salary to me so that I could take care of the needs of clothing and food. In this way,
the recluse would not need to abandon his parents.\textsuperscript{124}

Two points relevant to our present discussion are discernible here. The most notable one is
the affirmation of the canonical view of \textit{wen}’s didactic function: \textit{Wenzhang} serves as the essential
means to realize government policy and to inculcate Confucian moral-ethic. That is all! The act of composing should not be seen as an end in itself and it certainly should not serve merely as a form of artistic expression. Such a literary view was propounded repeatedly in his

\textsuperscript{122} 「國朝以進士擢第為入官千仞之梯, 以蘭臺校書為黃綬者九品之英。其有折桂枝, 坐藝閣, 非名聲
衰落, 體命轗軻, 不十數歲公卿之府, 媲步而登之。」\textit{Song Yuan jiaoshu gui mishu sheng xu},
\textit{QTW} 690:10a. Also see “Jingzhou song Yang Heng shuojiu yinsong you Nanyue xu,” \textit{QTW} 690:21a.

\textsuperscript{123} This is expressed quite explicitly in the second letter that Li wrote to Fu:「僕素高山仰之, 豈不能薦足下
於朝, 立可觀之地。矯翼霄漢, 跃鱗清流, 以成雅志哉。」 See “Zaiqing shu” 再清書, \textit{QTW} 526:7a-b.

\textsuperscript{124} “Shang Xiangyang Chu dafu shu,” \textit{QTW} 688:15a-b.
other writings. While often articulated in “formal” writings composed for the purpose of seeking employment or soliciting financial supports from high officials, it also appeared in a more private context, e.g. in a preface which he wrote when sending Yang Heng off to Nanyue for a position in Qi Yin’s government. It is a piece that Fu recalled the “good old days” when the two retired in mount Qingcheng and mount Lu, striving to master Confucian learning. Hence, the distinction drawn to separate the means and the end of wenzhang 文章 (composition) can be seen as a highly internalized endeavor. It was a recurring theme that firmly establishes his stance on wen. In view of the above biographical sketch, these statements on his intellectual outlook or literary view should not be taken lightly. More specifically, his tendency to de-emphasize literary value suggests a likely explanation for his “refusal” to take the jinshi 進士 examination, for this examination precisely placed great stress on the candidates' literary skills, as testified by the importance put on the genres shi 诗 poetry and fu 赋赋.

Such a literary view was not unique because many leading literati in the eighth century’s intellectual arena shared a similar sentiment. However, it is difficult to firmly establish any intellectual link between Fu and these literati. Nonetheless, his view on wen would soon find echoes in the Yuanhe intellectual realm. Lü Wen 吕溫 (772–811), for example, would certainly find this de-emphasis of literary value (wenzi 文字) attractive. Moreover, the desire to revive the culture of mid-antiquity was shared by many writers at the turn of the ninth century, particularly those guwen 古文 advocates. While a few contemporary literati in the Zhenyuan period had also propounded on the notion dazhong 大中, Fu was more serious and specific in using it to promote Confucian learning in real politics.

125 The more explicit statements include: 「其所務者，不專文字，亦嘗有意窺佐王治國之術，思樹勳不朽之事。」 “Shang Xichuan Wei linggong shu,” QTW 688:12a-b; 「況乎屬一詞，屯一事，上不陳教化，次不敘志意，皆遊言也，豈曰文為。」 “Ji Xusi Zhang dafu shu,” QTW 688:19b; 「夫詩之所主，大者存諷刺，備勸戒。觀風俗之美惡，細者眄江山，采雲物，導性情之幽滯。」 “Song Xue pingshi huan Jinzhou xu” 送薛評事還晉州序, QTW 690:9b; 「俱務佐王之學。初載未知書，其所覽誦，章句而已。中師發明大體，擊去疵離，誘我於疏通廣博之地，示我精淳元顥之際，偲偲之道，賓有力焉。」 “Jingzhou yu Yang Heng shouqiu yinsong you Nanyue xu,” QTW 690:20a. For other statements that reveal a similar view, see “Yu Liu pingshi Bozhou shu” 與劉評事伯芻書, QTW 688:16b; “Huainan jiedushi Baling gong Du You xiezhen zan,” QTW 690:27a.

126 Pan-Lü Qichang holds that Fu owed intellectual debts to leading guwen 古文 advocates in the mid-eighth century because they shared similar view on wen. She further argues for her case by pointing out that Fu was closely associated with Zhao Zongru, Xiao Cun, and Xi Shimei, all were sons of key guwen advocates. See “Fu Zai shiji kaoshu,” 95–97. Although this is not impossible, her arguments are largely speculative in nature. Fu’s association with Zhao Zongru, as far as we can tell, occurred late in his life, and the nature of that between Fu friendship with Xiao and Xi was largely unclear. It is, therefore, at best speculative to talk about any intellectual debt that Fu owed to these figures. In my view, it would be more appropriate to talk about his literary view in relation with the prevailing intellectual atmosphere of the time.


128 For examples, see Cui Yuanhan 崔元翰 (ca. 735 – ca. 805), QTW 523:19b and Quan Deyu 權德輿 (759–818), Quan Zaizhi wenji 權載之文集 in Zhongguo xibei wenxian congshu 中國西北文獻叢書, 11:6a, 13:6a, 31:6a.

129 See QTW 688:7a, 688:15a, 689:3b, 690:7a, 690:17a.
would repeatedly propound the centrality of Confucianism using the same notion. Although there is no clear evidence for any intellectual debt that Liu owed to Fu, Liu’s high regards for Fu’s talents and political ambition (yishu zhiqi 藝術志氣) suggest that he had probably read some of Fu’s writings.

While there is no strong evidence for an inner link between Fu’s literary view and his not taking the jinshi examinations, this, nonetheless, was quite likely a possible explanation. A couple of examples may help to illustrate such a possible connection. The example of Li Xi-yun 李栖筠 (719–776), grandfather of the powerful chief minister Li Deyu during Emperor Wuzong’s reign, provides some hints to Fu’s attitude toward the examinations. Li, like Fu, lived as a recluse before the age of twenty in a mountain in Gongcheng 共城. He first refused to sit for the examinations in order to cultivate the dao 道, but was later persuaded by his nephew Li Hua to take the jinshi examinations. Eventually, he obtained his jinshi degree and moved on to become a high official. It is obvious that the dao he pursued was in great conflict with the examination culture, suggesting that his reluctance to take the examination was a consequence of his dislike of the emphasis on literary skills in the examinations. In particular, the growing trend in euphemistic literature was identified with decadence in government. Therefore, the very act of sitting for the examination can be seen as taking a stance on values. Indeed, Li’s grandson Deyu used this precisely as the reason to distinguish jinshi graduates from those who entered office through the yin protection (zidi 子弟). Although it is unlikely that Fu would have agreed with such a preference for zidi in high office, he probably shared a similar rejection of the stress on literary skills in the examinations.

Another revealing example is the case of Li Kan 李戡 (d. 837), whose “refusal” to take the jinshi examination and vehement attack of euphemistic literature are recorded in much detail in his tomb inscription composed by Du Mu 杜牧 (803–852). Li, from Jiangxi, traveled to the capital in 812 for the jinshi examination. However, he found it a great insult because of the way government clerks checked the candidate’s credentials. As a result, he refused to take the examination and returned home. Many scholars perceived this as an upright act of refusing to compromise one’s principles. Due to this event, Li Kan soon attained a legendary status. As Du reported, fifteen years later, when it was his turn to sit for the jinshi examination, candidates in the two capitals still talked about Li’s remarkable story. Moreover, he was also known for his vehement criticism of the unrestrained and dexterous literature as exemplified by the works of Yuan Zhen 元稹 (779–831) and Bai Juyi, the so-called Yuan Bai ti 元白體, vowing that he would have punished those who practiced such decadent literature if he had the authority to do so.

Both of these examples show the tension between the prevalent euphemistic...
The second noteworthy and even more interesting point about the passage cited above is the seemingly ambivalent position that Fu maintained in terms of his identity. On the one hand, he repeatedly and solemnly proclaimed his political ambition. On the other hand, the real purpose of writing Fan was indeed to solicit financial support so that he could maintain his reclusive lifestyle. The same can also be seen in a letter that he wrote to Wei Gao, where Fu reminded the governor of Xichuan that he had previously visited or wrote him five times, but failed to impress him. This was clearly another attempt to find employment in the Xichuan government. However, at the end of this letter, he told Wei that his intention was to travel along the Yangtze to return to mount Lu, obviously a return to reclusion. For this, he needed financial support from high officials. As we have seen in the biographical sketch, he also obtained money from Li Kang in Jiangzhou that allowed him to build his dwelling in Sanjian feng, and one cannot rule out the possibility that Fu received financial support from Yu Di near the end of his career.

One can certainly see the paradoxical nature of Fu's career choice. He was drifting not just between local governments and patrons, but also between two diametrically opposite identities. Yet, this seems not to have bothered Fu at all. To him, the two were really perceived as being one - two aspects of the same worldview. Perhaps one may even say that any attempt to draw a distinction between the two was meaningless to Fu. The paradox reveals the values that shaped his actions.

A revealing example to attest such an attitude is the way he identified himself in the praise (zan 贊) that he composed for Du You’s portrait. Written in 803 when he was serving in Du’s Huainan government, he first addressed himself in the official position of Gentleman of Ceremonials at the Court of Imperial Sacrifices (Taichang si fengli lang), a post he was originally appointed to when he served in Li Xun’s government in Jiangxi. However, it is interesting to read at the end of the piece when he described himself as a “wild and lowly man from the mountains and forests,” clearly in the image of a recluse rather than one serving with official title. It shows a “split personality,” albeit certainly revealed subconsciously.

Reclusion and political activism thus coexisted in Fu’s thought without any clear sign of tension. Such a seemingly contradictory worldview, however, was not uncommon. Even from the state’s perspective, the paradoxical attitude was considered totally acceptable as it was most readily seen in the decree examinations (zhike 制科) that aimed at recruiting those “with cultivated virtues and talents, but refused to serve” (Yunde huaicai yinju bushi 蘊德懷才隱居不仕). scholar Huang Tao 黃滔 (jinshi 895) also noted about Li’s complaint. See Tang Huang yushi gong ji 唐黃御史公集 (Sibu congkan 四部叢刊 edition), 7:85a.

136 The post of fengli lang is an upper ninth rank position (cong jiuping shang 從九品上), see JTS 42:1802. Despite the low rank, this was nonetheless a regular entry position that allows later promotion to high ranks.
Despite the obvious oxymoronic nature, examinations of a similar nature were not uncommon during the eighth century. The fact that they were offered and that candidates (recluses?) did come forward to sit for them testifies that a reclusive lifestyle and a political career were not necessarily unreconcilable with each other.

Undoubtedly, many of them had strategically chosen a reclusive lifestyle as the “shortcut of mount Zhongnan” (Zhongnan jiejing 终南捷径), because the hermit identity was an important asset. In his exchanges with high officials, mainly for the purposes of getting employment or financial support, Fu consistently stressed his identity as a recluse. He repeatedly reminded his potential patrons of this because hermits were seen as exemplars of great moral integrity. It characterizes those who upheld great virtue, whether they be Confucian, Daoist, or Buddhist, and not being “contaminated” by decadent trends. Fu highlighted this identity likely because it helped to strengthen his plea for support, and, at the same time, provided a way to justify his desire to maintain such a lifestyle. It was therefore a double-edged sword.

However, the dilemma remained – he could not have them both at the same time. Nonetheless, he did try to reconcile the inner tensions of his personality and justify his rather ambivalent attitude toward serving the state and retreating to the mountains.

The Jade and the Pine Tree – Theorization and Justification

A choice for a reclusive lifestyle or an active political career was not always an either-or question. While Fu’s passion to realize himself in politics is unequivocal, the calling for a reclusive living, at the end, out-weighed his political activism. The above discussion of his “split personality” clearly illustrates this tendency. So, he was continuously attracted to his mountain dwelling where he felt totally at ease. The reason behind his drifting between a life of a mountain dweller and that of an official in local governments was the result of a seemingly conflicting set of values that he adhered to. He solicited gifts of money from high-officials and local governors but also turned down numerous offers of jobs from others. His decisions to accept or turn down these offers do not merely reflect his personality, but also that of a worldview which helps to reconcile the tensions of his “split personality.”

He tried to theorize, and thus to justify, such a worldview in his writings by using the metaphors of jade and pine tree. Among his extant writings, there is only one piece that belongs to the sub-genre of discourse (lun 論), a kind of writing that often reflects the writer’s stance on topics such as politics, philosophy, or history. This is the kind of writing that may reveal his reflection on his reclusive lifestyle. Indeed, this work is valuable in its way of providing insight.

139 See Chen Fei 陳飛, Tangdai shiye kanlun 唐代試策考述 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2002), 383.
140 The oft-cited reference in Zhao Lin’s 趙琳 Yin hua lu 因話錄 that sarcastically mocks at those “hermits” who hurried to the capital for these decree examinations most readily testifies this. See Yin hua lu, in Tang guoshi bu deng bazhong, 28 (section jue 角), 「有似昔歲,德宗搜訪懷才抱器不求聞達者。有人於昭應縣逢一書生, 奔馳入京, 問求何事。答云:『將應不求聞達科。』此科亦豈可應耶!號欺聾俗,皆此類也。」
On the Reclusion and Political Activism of the Mid-Tang Yinshi (“Hermit”) Fu Zai

Entitled “Zhisong lun” (On Planting the Pine Tree), this essay uses the pine tree as a metaphor to elaborate on the importance of nourishing one’s potential in order to prepare oneself for an eminent political career in the future. It clearly shows a link between a political career and a reclusive lifestyle.

The essay describes, in a fictitious way, an official of Chu who planted a small pine tree in his courtyard. Though reaching the height of just a few feet with circumference only slightly bigger than that of a bamboo tree, it readily shows an elegant form. Upon inspecting the tree, the official decided that it was time to cut it down, perhaps for the making of utensils. When it was about to be chopped down by the axe, a visitor tried to stop him by elaborating on its great potential:

This tree has the demeanor of reaching the clouds and the potential for the construction of a great mansion. If you place restraints on it too early, I am afraid that this would only damage its potentials. Now it is planted in the courtyard, serving the purpose of entertaining the viewers, it is affected by its surroundings, thus showing withering signs. If you move it to areas around mount Song and Tai, then the essence of the water fills within, and it is exposed to the brilliance of the sun and the moon. The auspicious Luan bird is trilling away on top of it while the running spring is echoing below. With the protruding peaks lying on top of one another, calmly it is at ease. With the spirited winds from the four directions, it is surrounded by the sounds of the Yu and Lai pipe instruments. At this point, with the surrounding conditions unsurpassed and the spirit in master, it can rise up to a thousand yards, with roots penetrating deep down and branches touching the blue sky. It can then serve as the pillar of the Mingtang or as the beam of a great mansion.

This essay metaphorically dwells on the need for man to properly cultivate his potentials for a future brilliant political career. Such a program of cultivation should involve a standard curriculum of Confucian learning, just as he had mentioned it in quite a number of instances. However, he said nothing of the sort in the above quoted passage. Instead, he put much emphasis on the proper surroundings, the proximity to nature that is needed in nurturing one’s potentials. In this sense, this piece can also be read more literally. The clear implication is that a life in the mountain does not preclude a political career. To the contrary, it provides the best environment for one to cultivate his virtues and allow the future statesman to develop his potentials. Hence, a reclusive lifestyle does not contradict a political career. It is the essential stage for the ultimate goal of serving the state.

This is the expression of an attitude, also an attempt to justify his early and prolonged retirement to mount Qingcheng and mount Lu. Moreover, it is possible that he perceived his long-term reclusive lifestyle as a continuous process of cultivation. Nonetheless, such an act of justification reveals a sign of tension. In reality, when he finally entered the next phase of asserting himself in politics, to fulfill the dream of bringing order to the world, his preference for a reclusive lifestyle continuously guided him to the opposite direction. A consequence is that he was often prevented from fully asserting himself in real politics. He probably felt that

142 QTW 690:25b.
143 See David McMullen, State and Scholars in T’ang China, 124–128.
his mountain dwelling was a place where he could fall back to. With gifts of money from officials, he could live out his life in simplicity.

Another reason that helps to explain his rather unsuccessful political career is that he was not given the chance to apply himself in politics. As seen in the biographical sketch, his terms of service in local governments were often cut short because his patrons were transferred to other positions or died shortly after Fu took up his position. Perhaps because of the short stays, Fu was unable to demonstrate his ability to handle important administrative duty. The writings that he composed during his stays in Jiangxi and Xichuan, for example, were often written for banquet gatherings or gatherings of a commemorative nature, having little to do with the practical matters of government. Nonetheless, despite this external factor, Fu was far from being aggressive in climbing up the official ladder for he held the belief of waiting for the right time, and for the right patron who would come along to lift him up from reclusion.

This is another key feature of his politico-intellectual outlook — the expectation of an official-patron, an understanding friend (zhìyīn 知音), who appreciates his talents and would recommend him to an important position in the central government. Such an attitude helps to account for the largely passive role that he took in bringing about a political career. This is consistent with his view on the relevance of a reclusive lifestyle to a successful political career, and he articulated this by using the metaphor of a precious jade, one that needs to be polished and discovered by a patron who recognizes its worth. This basically alludes to the story of the Jade of Bian He (卞和)

According to Han Feizi (韩非子), the earliest source that records this story, Bian was a native of Jingzhou in the state of Chu (楚) during the Spring and Autumn period (722–481 BCE). He once discovered a piece of unpolished jade in mount Jing (荊) and offered it to the court. King Li (厲) of Chu had a jade specialist to inspect it. The specialist reported that it was no jade but simply a stone. So, considered of being deceitful, He was punished by having his left foot chopped off. Later, He offered the jade to the court again when King Wu (武) came to the throne. Once again, the result of the inspection was the same. Therefore, King Wu had his remaining right foot cut off as well. Finally, when King Wen (文) came to rule, Bian He for three days and nights miserably wept in mount Jing with his jade to the point of weeping blood. Upon hearing this, King Wen sent an official to inquire about it. Bian He replied by saying that “I’m weeping not for having lost my feet. I am sad because of the fact that people call this precious jade a mere stone, and because the upright person is looked upon as being deceitful. It is for this reason that I wept.” The king then had the stone cut open, and this finally revealed the perfect jade hidden inside.144

Both used as a metaphor and an allusion, Fu articulated his view on how a worthy person should expect to have his political ideal realized. This is most explicitly developed in a preface to a poem to send his friend Xiao Yijian away on a tour along the Three Gorges (Sanxia 三峡). After dwelling on the hidden quality of the jade and invoking the allusion of Bian He, he moved on to liken it to the case of a man who possesses hidden virtues. Like the jade of Bian He, he also needs to wait for the right time when his worthiness would be discovered and appreciated by an understanding patron who would elevate him to the position of governing:

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144 See the chapter “Bian He” in Han Feizi jijie (韩非子集解) (Wang Xianshen 王先慎, annotations. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003), 4:95–97.
When he rides at the point when time and situation match, with the support of an understanding patron, he would be raised from [a life of] farming and fishing, and establish his merits and ranks. Assisting the ruler above, and bringing prosperity to the populace below, his achievements benefit ten thousand generations, and his reputation spread to the nine directions.

Literally, Fu was using this to offer comfort to Xiao Yijian, who was likely agonizing over a frustrated political career, too. However, it can likewise be read as a self-reflection. It is also a statement of self-consolation and self-assurance to reconfirm his dream of bringing order to the world. At the same time, such an attitude is consistent with his reclusive tendency.

Fu identified himself as a jade elsewhere in his other writings. In the rhapsody “Chou fu,” he expressed his melancholy over his unfulfilled life goal of a successful political career. Of the long concatenation of allusions that he used to articulate his frustration is the jade of Bian He where he invoked in particular on the point of those who suspected the jade as merely a piece of worthless stone, thus likens them to those who distrusted his worthiness.

A more lucid example in which Fu revealed this expectation or desire of a zhizhu to facilitate his transformation into a “refined jade” (a successful official) appears in the funeral prayer that he composed for Fan Ze. Fu came to associate closely with Fan in the late 780s, spending up to three years in Jingzhou. They remained in good terms until Fan died in 798. Fu was in Xiangyang just the year before. The act of composing the funeral prayer clearly attests their cordial relationship, and its content further confirms Fu’s gratitude to Fan’s recognition of his ability. It states clearly that just the year before his death, Fan was planning to invite him to serve in his government, with the intention to recommend him to a position in the central government. To this, Fu described Fan as one who helped to transform him from a jade-like stone (min) into a refined jade (yu).

Conclusion

A reclusive life style is a mode of thinking, which is amply reflected in Tang sources. Many young scholars spent years in mountains to prepare for the examinations. Indeed, there were many reasons for them to do so. A more serene environment, the opportunity to meet other scholars and teachers, and the availability of good libraries in the monasteries, these are some of the reasons that attracted bright young man to dwell for years in the mountains. They either resided in the monasteries, or visited these religious sites in their mountain dwellings. Hence, they were exposed to a variety of values and lifestyles, particularly that of the recluse. This accounts for many of those who exhibited a penchant for a life of hermit. However, as the...
main purpose for many was political success, they had to choose between an active political career and a reclusive lifestyle at a certain point in their life. Our discussion here examines the life of Fu Zai, a literatus *yinshi* in mid-Tang. While there are quite a few examples of such figures in Tang, most of them were silent about their desire to involve in government. Unlike the more narrowly defined religious figures, or those hermits who simply disliked or rejected politics, they were Confucian scholars keen on learning the skills of government. The case of Fu Zai allows us to learn about this particular group of Tang intellectuals.

Active during the time of political and intellectual changes, Fu did not choose a more direct path to enter politics. The decision in choosing his career path was guided by a value system that was quite opposite to that stressed by the recruitment system of his days. The examinations recruited cultured man talented in the skill of literature. Fu, who endeavored to apply himself in real politics, likely saw the examinations as something that undermines his political idealism. His interest is in the way of kingly and hegemonic rulership. Despite such an intellectual orientation, Fu was at the same time profoundly shaped by his early experience as a *yinshi*.

His stays in mount Qingcheng and mount Lu were perhaps too long a period. Not only did he spend twelve years in these serene environments, mount Lu remained his home base for the rest of his life. He kept returning to his dwelling there throughout those years when he was moving from one local government to another. For example, in his letter to Yu Di in 801, he stressed that he had stayed in mount Lu for twenty years. Certainly, he had been serving in various local governments during the last couple of years. Yet, in his own mind, he was a mountain dweller, always a *yinshi*. It was such a mindset that affected his political decision. Despite his enthusiasm in politics, he was always pulled back.

Was Fu Zai an isolated case of a frustrated *yinshi* who tried to assert himself in politics? Some aspects of his life, his career choice in particular, are indeed the result of his personality. In this sense, they are unique. However, his career choice reveals certain patterns that were likely shared by many. This applies in particular for his drifting between the two poles of serving and not serving. Just like Fu Zai, many scholars would have liked to integrate both poles into their lives.149 Fu’s position in Li Xun’s Jiangxi government seems promising at first. The probationary office of Chief Musician is a typical appointment for those who were first recruited into a local government. Ample examples show that some of those who entered government service through a similar path would gain more authority in local administrations, and eventually moved on to take up positions in the central government. Two such examples should suffice to illustrate this. Deng Yu (755–810), a contemporary of Fu, with a very similar employment history of serving in the local governments of Jiangxi and Xichuan, began his career as Court Gentleman for Ceremonials (*fengli lang*) of the *Taichang si*, exactly the same official title that Fu had in Xichuan. In the case of Deng, however, he moved on to administer legal matters in local governments. Eventually, he rose to the position of prefect of Guizhou.150

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149 The case of Zhu Wan 朱灣, a contemporary of Fu, shows a similar pattern. Living a life of a recluse during the Dali period, he eventually served in local governments. Like Fu, he also turned down many offers. However, he did not leave behind enough writings that would allow us to get further insight into his worldview. The same can be said about most *yinshi*. See *Tang caizi zhuan jiaojian*, vol. 1, 3:681–686.

Kong Shurui 孔述睿 (730–800), whose biography is in the “Yinyi” section in the two Tang histories, retired to mount Song 嵩 together with his brothers during the Dali period. Recommended by the chief minister Liu Yan 刘晏 (?-780), he was appointed by Emperor Daizong 代宗 (r. 762–779) as the Chief Musician of the Taichang si. Gradually, he was promoted to a number of positions in central government before choosing a path of reclusion again. When Emperor Dezong came to the throne, he invited Shurui to serve in his court. Though reluctant, he served and stayed until 788 when he was allowed to retire.151

One can find numerous examples of this sort throughout mid- and late-Tang. Hence, it was not unrealistic for Fu to expect a similar career. However, he was not given any such opportunity to serve in any stable administrative post. Moreover, he must be disappointed that Li Xun’s earlier promise of helping him to secure a position in central government was not redeemed. He spent just about a year in Jiangxi and resigned due to health problems. Within a year after he returned to Xunyang in 801, he found a position in the Huainan government. One suspects that either his health problem was not so serious or that he was simply using it as an excuse. The latter seems to be quite likely the case as the Tang zhiyan notes that Fu left Jiangxi in disappointment, apparently being disillusion with the future prospect of his job in Li Xun’s government.152

A position in local government would have provided Fu with a relatively secured living, but he did not accept the position merely for making a living. Despite his love for a reclusive life style, he was nonetheless highly serious in fulfilling a political career. Unfortunately, his dream never came true. His oscillation between local government service and reclusive living in mount Lu is symptomatic for his final disappointment. The effort to rationalize his highly ambivalent position did not help to resolve the tension. He played the “Hide-and-Seek” game in a more passive way that instead of asserting himself more aggressively to seek for a career, he waited in vain for being discovered by an understanding patron. Thus, at the end, it is not surprising to hear his agonizing voice echoed in the rhapsody “Chou fu”: “My dream for ranks and merits is remote. Aged, my hair turned gray.”153

Table: A Chronology of Fu Zai’s Life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Age (≤)</th>
<th>Activities &amp; Other Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>756</td>
<td>Shu</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Born?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>756–774</td>
<td>Shu</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grew up in the Shu area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>774 (Jiayin)</td>
<td>Dali 9th year</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Fu traveled to mount Qingcheng with Yang Heng 杨衡, Wang Jianyan 王简言, and Li Yuanxiang 李元象. They studied the way of government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>775 (Yimao)</td>
<td>Dali 10th year</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>In mount Qingcheng.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>776 (Bingchen)</td>
<td>Dali 11th year</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>In mount Qingcheng.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>777 (Dingzi)</td>
<td>Dali 12th year</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>In mount Qingcheng.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

152 「符載後佐李騭為江西副使, 失意去從劉闢。」See Tang zhiyan jiaozhu 2:36. Cen Zhongmian had pointed out that Li Zhi 李鶴 should be Li Xun.” See his “Ba Tang zhiyan,” 689.
153 「功名慨其緬邈, 鬢髮颯以斑白。」“Chou fu,” QTW 688:1h.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1778 (Maowu 戊午)</td>
<td>Mount Qingcheng</td>
<td>23 In mount Qingcheng.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1779 (Jiwei 己未)</td>
<td>Mount Qingcheng</td>
<td>24 Moved to Mount Lu from Mount Qingcheng near the end of the year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jiangling 江陵</td>
<td>Stopped at Jiangling. Acquainted with the painter Zhang Zao 張璪, monk Xuanlang 玄覽, Lu Li 陸澧 and his brothers Ba 畔, Run 潤, and Huai 淮.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1781 (Xinyou 辛酉)</td>
<td>Mount Lu</td>
<td>26 In Mount Lu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1782 (Renxu 壬戌)</td>
<td>Mount Lu</td>
<td>27 In Mount Lu. *Befriended with a Cui Qun 崔群 who served in Jiangxi 江西.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1784 (Jiazi 甲子)</td>
<td>Mount Lu</td>
<td>29 In Mount Lu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1785 (Yichou 乙丑)</td>
<td>*Chengdu 成都</td>
<td>30 Left Mount Lu in the ninth month and returned home to see his parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Fangzhou 房州</td>
<td>*Cui Qun composed a poem with a preface sending Fu back to Su: “Song Luyue chushi Fu Zai gui Shu jinsheng xu” 送廬嶽處士符載歸蜀覲省序. *Met Li Cheng 李逞 (in Fangzhou?), and married his daughter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Langzhou 郬州</td>
<td>*In Zhangzhou in the eighth month. *Traveled to Qizhou. Invitation from Lu Yuanqing 魯元卿, but Fu turned down the offer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Qizhou 鄉州</td>
<td>*Works: ”Da Lu dafu shu” 答盧大夫書 *Huang xianshi Qutong ji” 黃仙師瞿童記 *Baoan zhen zhengtu ji” 保安鎮陣圖記</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1786 (Bingyin 丙寅)</td>
<td>Jingzhou 荊州</td>
<td>31 In the seventh month, Fu was in Li Gao’s 李皋’s Jingnan 荊南 government as guest. *Went to Zitong with Yang Heng and Xu Jingwei 徐景威. Received support from Li Shuming 李叔明, military governor of Jian’nan 東川. *Works: ”Tufu zhen baoning ji” 土洑鎮保寧記 *”Xiari Lu dafu song Jing shiyu zhi Nanhai xu” 夏日盧大夫送敬侍御之南海序</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location/City</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>787 (Dingmao 丁卯)</td>
<td>Zhenyuan 3rd year</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>788 (Wuchen 戊辰)</td>
<td>Zhenyuan 4th year</td>
<td>Chengdu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>789 (Jisi 己已)</td>
<td>Zhenyuan 5th year</td>
<td>Jingzhou Xiangyang Dengzhou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>790 (Gengwu 庚午)</td>
<td>Zhenyuan 6th year</td>
<td>Jingzhou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>791 (Xinwei 辛未)</td>
<td>Zhenyuan 7th year</td>
<td>Jingzhou Mount Lu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>792 (Renshen 壬申)</td>
<td>Zhenyuan 8th year</td>
<td>Mount Lu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>793 (Guiyou 癸酉)</td>
<td>Zhenyuan 9th year</td>
<td>Mount Lu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>794 (Jiaxu 甲戌)</td>
<td>Zhenyuan 10th year</td>
<td>Mount Lu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>795 (Yihai 乙亥)</td>
<td>Zhenyuan 11th year</td>
<td>Mount Lu Nankang Jingzhou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>796 (Bingzi 丙子)</td>
<td>Zhenyuan 12th year</td>
<td>Mount Lu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Works

- "Jian’an Xichuan mufu zhugong xiezhen zan bingxu" 剑南西川幕府諸公寫真讚並序
- "Shang Xiangyang Chu dafu shu" 上襄陽楚大夫書
- "Xiangyang Beilou ji" 襄陽北樓記 (六月十五日) 三月
- "Dengzhou cishi ting biji" 鄧州刺史廳壁記 (八月十五日) 三月
- "He Fangong tian huohu song" 賀樊公畋獲虎頌 (六年冬) 三月
- "Xiangyang yu Yang Heng shuo ji yin songyou Nanyue xu" 襄陽與楊衡說舊因送遊南越序 三月
- "Cong Fan Han nan wei Lumen chu shi qiu xiumu jian" 從樊漢南為鹿門處士求修墓牋 三月
- "Jiqi Lishi wen" 祭妻李氏文
- "Ji Nanhai Wang shangshu shu" 寄南海王尚書書 三月
- "Da Zelu Wang shangshu shu" 答澤潞王尚書書 三月
- "Zeng Qizhou Lu yuanwai shu" 贈蔪州員外書 丙子
- "Jiangzhou lushi canjun ting biji" 江州錄事參軍廳壁記 丙子
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>797</td>
<td>Fu wrote Zhang Jianfeng, military governor of Xusi for employment. It was sent together with a copy of “Gexi jianming”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>798</td>
<td>Fan Ze died. Received a sum of forty thousand cash from Li Kang, prefect of Jiangzhou. He used it to purchase some land in Sanjian feng. Visited Li Xun, Surveillance Commissioner of Jiangnan, in Zhongling. Later, Fu accepted invitation from Li to join his government. Fu likely moved to Zhongling later this year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>799</td>
<td>Fu served Li Xun in Jiangxi, and resigned at the end of the year due to illness. Xu Jingwei came to Zhongling to join Fu, and the two returned to Sanjian feng together. Xu would soon left for Zelu.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Works:**
- “Song Lu duangong gui Baling jianwang Jiangxia ye He dafu xu”
- “Song Cui fushi gui Hongzhou mufu xu”

800 (Gengchen 庚辰) Zhenyuan 16th year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>800</td>
<td>In Jiangxia in the second month, celebrating the Zhonghe festival with He Shigan. Invitation from Yu Di, but Fu turned it down. Yang Heng’s father died. He requested Fu to compose a tomb inscription for his father. Xiao Cun died.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Works:**
- “Zhonghe jei he Di dafu huiyan xu”
- “Song Cui fushi gui Hongzhou mufu xu”

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154 「乙卯歲 … 主君以清淨之理, 治洪州之三年也。… 顧謂部從事符載序而導之云 … 」 Fu was still in Jiangxi. However, “Yimao” 乙卯 corresponds to 775 or 834. Fu would be too young in 775, and died already in 834. So “Yimao” cannot be correct. Since Fu served Li Xun sometime between 795 and 800, the year 799 is a “Jimao” 己卯 year. One suspects that “Jimao” was mistaken as “Yimao.” See Cen Zhongmian, “Xu Lu Ge du Quan Tang wen za ji,” 28.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>dài</th>
<th>Works</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>801 (Xinsi 辛己)</td>
<td>Zhenyuan 17th year</td>
<td>Sanjian feng Zhongling Jiangxia</td>
<td>Visited Li Xun in Zhongling. Traveled to Jiangxia to stay with He Shigan. Works: “Zhongling Donghu ting ji”鍾陵東湖亭記</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>802 (Renwu 壬午)</td>
<td>Zhenyuan 18th year</td>
<td>Sanjian feng Yangzhou 楊州 Xuancheng 宣城</td>
<td>Stayed with He Shigan in Jiangxia. He Shigan died in the spring this year. Zheng Shen 鄭伸 was appointed to replace He, and Fu stayed with him briefly after he arrived to take up the new position. Traveled to Yangzhou in the seventh month. Served Du You in the Huainan government. *Stopped in Xuancheng on his way to Yangzhou. Works: “ji He dafu wen”祭何大夫文 “Wei Yang tingping ji He dafu wen”為楊廷評祭何大夫文 “Wei Caishi mei ji dafu Helang wen”為崔氏妹祭大夫何郎文 “Song Xue pingshi huan Jinzhou xu”送薛評事還晉州序 “Qizhou xin chengmen song”贈州新城門頌 “Wei Du xianggong he enci Huaisi shubo biao”為杜相公賀恩賜淮西粟帛表 “Luzhou jin jiahe biao”廬州進嘉禾表 “Xie chaojing biao”謝朝覲表 “Xie ci dongyi biao”謝賜冬衣表 “Xie ci yaofang biao”謝賜藥方表 “Xie shouzhao biao”謝手詔表 “Dier biao”第二表 “Wei Du xianggong ji Yidi Zhang xianggong taifuren wen”為杜相公祭易棣張相公太夫人文 “Wei Du xianggong ji Cui zhongsheng wen”為杜相公祭崔中丞文 “Song Yuan jiaosu guishu sheng xu”送袁校書歸書省序 “Xuancheng song Li shanren guixia Langya shanju xu”宣城送黎山人歸上琅琊山居序</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>803 (Guiwei 癸未)</td>
<td>Zhenyuan 19th year</td>
<td>Yangzhou 楊州 Shangyuan 上元 Sanjian feng</td>
<td>Left Yangzhou in the fourth month. Met Zhang Ji 張集 in Shangyuan 上元. Back in Sanjian feng. Works:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>805 (Yiyou 乙酉)</td>
<td>Yongzhèn 永貞 1st year</td>
<td>Served in the Xichuan government. Wei Gao died in eighth month. Liu Pi 蘇闖 usurped power after Wei's death. Fu served under Liu Pi. Works: “Jiuri pei Liu zhongcheng Jia changshi yan Hejiang ting xu” 九日陪劉中丞賈常侍宴合江亭序 “Wei Jia changshi ji Wei taiwei wen” 為賈常侍祭韋太尉文 “Wei Xichuan mufu ji Wei taiwei wen” 為西川幕府祭韋太尉文</td>
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<tr>
<td>806 (Bìngxù 丙戌)</td>
<td>Yuanhe 元和 1st year</td>
<td>Liu Pi defied court order, and launched attacks in neighboring areas. The court sent Gao Congwen 高祟文 to suppress Liu's rebel force. Liu was defeated in the eighth month of the year. Fu and other literati were pardoned. Gao recommended them to the court and presented them gifts of money before letting them go. Works: “Wufu lou ji” 五福樓記 “Wei Liu shangshu ji Wang yuanwai wen” 為劉尚書祭王員外文 “Wei Liu shangshu ji Wei taiwei wen” 為劉尚書祭韋太尉文 “Wei Liu shangshu ji Zhang zhongcheng wen” 為劉尚書祭張中丞文 “Shangsi ri pei Liu shangshu yanji Beici xu” 上巳日陪劉尚書宴集北池序</td>
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<tr>
<td>807 (Dìnghài 丁亥)</td>
<td>Yuanhe 2nd year</td>
<td>Visited Fan’ge 梵閣 temple in the first month In Jiangling in the fourth month Retired to Mount Lu Wrote Yu Di to solicit a fund of a million qiān for retirement. Works: “Fan’ge si Changzhuan shangren jingyuán ji” 梵閣寺常準上人精院記 “Jingzhou chengdong Tianhuang si Daowu chanshi bei” 荊州城東寺道悟禪師碑 (四月十三日).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
On the Reclusion and Political Activism of the Mid-Tang Yinshi ("Hermit") Fu Zai

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>808 (戊子)</td>
<td>Mount Lu</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>In mount Lu?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>809 (己丑)</td>
<td>Mount Lu</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>In mount Lu?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>810 (庚寅)</td>
<td>Mount Lu</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>In mount Lu?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>811 (辛卯)</td>
<td>Jiangling</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Zhao Zongru, governor of Jingnan, invited Fu to join his government in Jiangling. Fu accepted the offer. Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 sent Zhao a letter on his invitation of Fu, &quot;He Zhao Jiangling Zongru pi Fu Zai qi&quot; 贺趙江陵宗儒辟符載啟.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>812 (壬辰)</td>
<td>Fengxiang</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Traveled to Fengxiang, in Qizhou 岐州 to bury the caskets of his father and wife in the ancestral burial ground. Work: &quot;Wangqi Lishi muzhi ming&quot; 亡妻李氏墓誌銘.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>813 (癸巳)</td>
<td>Luzhou</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Joined Xi Shimei's 郗士美 government in Luzhou. Fu probably died soon.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The (*) sign indicates tentative dating for events, works, or Fu's whereabouts.

Diagram: A Family Tree of Fu Zai's Wife

Li Shentong 李神通 (淮安王)
   ↓
Li Xiaojie 李孝節 (清河王)
   ↓
   Li Yu 李瑜 (鄭州刺史)
   ↓
   Li Gao 李暠 (吏部尚書) —— Li Sheng 李昇 (衛尉卿) —— Li Yun 李暘
   ↓
   Li Cheng 李逞 (房州刺史)
   ↓
   Li shi 李氏 ——— Fu Zai 符載
   ↓
   Fu Kuangru 符匡儒 —— Shangqing zi 上清子

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