Biography of Murong Hui

Murong Hui, courtesy name Yiluogui, was a Xianbei from Jicheng in Changli. His ancestors were descendants of the Youxiong clan, who had long dwelt among the northern barbarians, settling in the plains of Zimeng, known as the Eastern Hu. Later, they rose to power alongside the Xiongnu, commanding over 200,000 archers, with customs and official titles similar to the Xiongnu. During the Qin and Han dynasties, they were defeated by the Xiongnu and sought refuge in the Xianbei Mountains, from which they took their name. His great-grandfather Mohuoba, at the beginning of Wei, led various tribes to settle in Liaoxi. For his meritorious service in following Emperor Xuan's campaign against the Gongsun clan, he was appointed as the King of Shuaiyi and established his state north of Jicheng. At that time, many in Yan and Dai wore the buyao crown. Mohuoba saw and admired it, so he gathered his hair and adopted the crown. The tribes thus called him Buyao, which later became corrupted in pronunciation to Murong. Another account says the name Murong came from "admiring the virtue of heaven and earth" and "succeeding the appearance of the three lights." His grandfather Muyan was the Left Wise Prince. His father Shegui was promoted to Xianbei Chanyu for his achievement in preserving Liucheng, and moved his settlement to northern Liaodong, whereupon they gradually adopted the customs of the Central Plains.

Hui was tall and imposing from a young age, with a handsome appearance, standing eight chi tall, and possessed heroic qualities and great magnanimity. Zhang Hua, the General Who Pacifies the North, was known for his ability to judge character. When Hui, still wearing a youth's cap, went to pay his respects, Zhang was greatly impressed and said to him: "When you come of age, you will surely become an extraordinary vessel of your time, one who will rectify difficulties and save the age." He then gave Hui his own cap and hairpin, and they parted with deep mutual regard. After Shegui's death, his younger brother Nai usurped the position and plotted to kill Hui. Hui fled in secret to escape harm. Later, the people of the state killed Nai and welcomed Hui back to establish him as their leader.

Initially, as Shegui had harbored resentment against the Yuwen Xianbei, Hui sought to settle his predecessor's grievance and petitioned to attack them. Emperor Wu refused permission. Enraged, Hui invaded Liaoxi, killing and plundering many. The Emperor dispatched Youzhou forces to suppress Hui, and they fought at Feiru, where Hui's forces suffered a major defeat. Thereafter, he continued to raid Changli annually without cease. He also led forces east to attack Fuyu, where King Yilü committed suicide. Hui razed their state city and took over ten thousand people captive. The Eastern Barbarian Colonel He Kan sent Supervisor Jia Shen to escort and establish Yilü's son as king. Hui dispatched his general Sun Ding with cavalry to intercept them. Shen fought fiercely and beheaded Ding, thus restoring the state of Fuyu.

Hui then consulted with his people, saying: "Since my ancestors' time, we have served the Middle Kingdom. Moreover, Chinese and barbarians follow different principles, and there is a natural distinction between the strong and weak. How can we compete with Jin? Why not seek peace instead of harming our people?" He then sent envoys to submit. The Emperor commended this and appointed him Commander of the Xianbei. Hui paid respects to the Eastern Barbarian Prefecture, wearing Chinese attire and observing the etiquette of scholars. He Kan received him with troops in formation, whereupon Hui changed into barbarian clothing before entering. When asked why, Hui replied: "If the host does not observe proper etiquette, why should the guest?" Upon hearing this, He Kan felt ashamed and treated him with increased respect and caution. At this time, the Eastern Hu Yuwen Xianbei and Duan clan, fearing Hui's growing power and influence, frequently conducted raids. Hui responded with humble words and generous gifts to pacify them.

In the tenth year of Taikang [289 CE], Hui relocated again to Mount Qing by the Tu River. As Dajicheng was the ancient site of Emperor Zhuanxu, he moved to settle there in the fourth year of Yuankang [294 CE]. He taught his people agriculture and sericulture, and established laws and institutions similar to those of the Upper Kingdom. During the Yongning period, when Yan experienced severe flooding, Hui opened his granaries to provide relief, saving the people of the Youzhou region. When the Son of Heaven heard of this, he commended him and bestowed ceremonial robes.

In early Tai'an, Yuwen Mogui sent his brother Quyun to raid the border cities, while his separate commander Da Suyan attacked and plundered various tribes. Hui personally attacked and defeated them. Enraged, Suyan led 100,000 troops to besiege Jicheng. The people were terrified and lost their will to resist. Hui said: "Though Suyan has gathered troops like dogs, sheep, and ants, his army lacks discipline and order. He is already within my calculations. My lords, you need only fight with all your might and have no cause for worry." He then personally donned armor, rode out to attack them, and greatly defeated Suyan, pursuing them for a hundred li and capturing or beheading over ten thousand men.

At the beginning of Yongjia, Hui proclaimed himself Great Chanyu of the Xianbei. In Liaodong, Governor Pang Ben killed Eastern Barbarian Colonel Li Zhen due to personal grudges. The frontier Xianbei leaders Su Lian and Mu Jin, using vengeance for Zhen as a pretext but actually intending to cause chaos, attacked and captured various counties, killing and plundering officials and commoners. Governor Yuan Qian suffered repeated defeats, and Colonel Feng Shi fearfully sued for peace. The raids continued for years, causing people to lose their livelihoods, with refugees continuously seeking refuge with Hui.

Hui's son Han said to him: "Among ways to seek hegemony, none surpasses aiding the king. Throughout history, all successful rulers have relied on this principle. Now Lian and Jin are running rampant, the royal army has been defeated, and the common people are being slaughtered - what could be worse? These petty men use Pang Ben as an excuse while actually taking advantage to become bandits. Lord Feng seeks peace by offering to punish Ben, yet the harm only grows deeper. Liaodong has been falling for almost two years, the central plains are in chaos, and the provincial armies repeatedly suffer defeat. Now is the time to aid the king. The Chanyu should display the might of the Nine Campaigns, save those in dire straits, enumerate the crimes of Lian and Jin, and gather righteous forces to punish them. Above, we can restore Liaodong; below, we can absorb these two tribes. This will demonstrate loyalty to the dynasty while bringing benefit to our state. This is the beginning of our grand plan, and will ultimately lead to success among the princes."

Hui followed this advice. That day, he led cavalry to attack Lian and Jin, greatly defeating and beheading them. The two tribes all surrendered. He relocated them to Jicheng, established Liaodong Commandery, and returned.

When Emperor Huai was in distress at Pingyang, Wang Jun, acting on imperial authority, appointed Hui as Cavalier Attendant-in-Ordinary, Champion General, Grand Commander of the Vanguard, and Great Chanyu, but Hui declined. During the Jianxing period, Emperor Min sent envoys to appoint Hui as General Who Guards the Army and Duke of both Changli and Liaodong. At the beginning of Jianwu, Emperor Yuan, acting on imperial authority, appointed Hui as Bearer of the Tally, Cavalier Attendant-in-Ordinary, Commander of Military Affairs for the Various Barbarians and Refugees of Liaozuo, General of Dragon Flight, Great Chanyu, and Duke of Changli, but Hui declined these honors.

General Who Conquers the Barbarians Lu Chang advised Hui: "Now that both capitals have fallen and the Emperor is in distress, Langye's authority in Jiangdong is truly what people's lives depend on. Your Excellency commands the northern regions beyond the sea and controls this entire area, yet various tribes still rely on their numbers to take up arms and have not submitted to civilization, perhaps because your office lacks imperial mandate and they consider themselves strong. Now you should send envoys to Langye, encourage support for the great succession, and then spread imperial orders to attack the guilty. Who would dare not follow!"

Hui approved of this advice and sent his Chief Clerk Wang Ji across the sea to encourage support. When the Emperor ascended to the throne, he sent Ceremonial Officer Tao Liao to reaffirm the previous appointments, conferring upon Hui the titles of General and Chanyu, though Hui firmly declined the ducal enfeoffment.

At this time, with both capitals having fallen and Youzhou and Jizhou having been overrun, Hui maintained clear laws and governance, and humbly welcomed refugees. Many displaced officials and commoners came to him with their families. Hui established commanderies to govern these refugees: people from Jizhou were organized into Jiyang Commandery, those from Yuzhou into Chengzhou Commandery, those from Qingzhou into Yingqiu Commandery, and those from Bingzhou into Tangguo Commandery.

He then selected talented individuals and entrusted them with administrative duties:

- Pei Yi of Hedong, Lu Chang of Dai Commandery, and Yang Dan of Beiping served as chief strategists

- Feng Xian of Beihai, You Sui of Guangping, Xifang Qian of Beiping, Feng Chou of Bohai, Song Shi of Xihe, and Pei Kai of Hedong served as his chief ministers

- Feng Yi of Bohai, Song Gai of Pingyuan, Huangfu Ji of Anding, and Miao Kai of Lanling were appointed to key positions for their literary talents

- Zhu Zuoche of Kuaiji, Humu Yi of Taishan, and Kong Zuan of Lu State were treated as honored guests for their traditional virtues

- Liu Zan of Pingyuan, being well-versed in Confucian studies, was appointed as Director of the Eastern School, where the heir apparent Huang led noble youths in studying under him

During breaks from governing, Hui personally attended these lectures. As a result, people sang praises on the roads, and courtesy and deference flourished.

At this time, Cui Bi, the Inspector of Pingzhou and Colonel of Eastern Barbarians, considered himself a prominent southern official and hoped to gather followers, but no refugees came to him. Suspecting Hui of detaining them, he secretly allied with Goguryeo and the Yuwen and Duan states, plotting to destroy Hui and divide his territory.

In early Taixing, the three states attacked Hui. Hui said: "They believe Cui Bi's empty words, seeking temporary gain, and come as a loose alliance. Without unified leadership or mutual submission, I will surely defeat them. However, their initial assault will be fierce, and they hope us to fight quickly. If we counter-attack directly, we'll fall into their trap. If we remain calm and wait, they'll grow suspicious of each other. First, they'll suspect I'm conspiring with Bi to destroy them; second, they'll suspect one among their three states has a Han-Wei style plot with me. Once their morale is confused, victory will be certain."

When the three states attacked Jicheng, Hui closed the gates and didn't fight. He sent wine and cattle to entertain the Yuwen forces, loudly announcing: "Cui Bi's envoy arrived yesterday." As expected, the other two states suspected Yuwen of collaborating with Hui and withdrew. Yuwen Xiduguan said: "Though the two states have left, I alone will take their territories - what need have I of others?" He surrounded the city with camps stretching thirty li.

Hui assigned elite troops to Huang to lead the vanguard; Han led select cavalry as the surprise force to strike from the side directly into their camps; Hui advanced with the main formation. Xiduguan , overconfident in his numbers, failed to take precautions. When Hui's army arrived, he had just begun to organize resistance. As the vanguards engaged, Han had already entered their camps and set them ablaze. Their troops panicked and were thoroughly defeated. Xiduguan barely escaped, and all his troops were captured.

A camp guard then found the Emperor's jade seal with three knobs, which Hui sent to Jianye with Chief Clerk Pei Yi. Fearing Hui's revenge, Cui Bi sent his nephew Tao to falsely congratulate Hui. When envoys from the three states also arrived requesting peace, saying "This wasn't our intention; Inspector Cui instructed us," Hui showed Tao the siege locations and threatened him with troops, saying: "Your uncle instructed the three states to destroy me - why do you come with false congratulations?" Tao, frightened, confessed everything.

Hui then sent Tao back to persuade Bi, saying: "Surrender is the best strategy; fleeing is the worst." He followed with his army. Bi, along with several dozen horsemen, abandoned his family and fled to Goguryeo. Hui accepted the surrender of all Bi's followers, relocated Tao and Gao Zhan and others to Jicheng, and treated them with the courtesy due to guests. The following year, when Goguryeo raided Liaodong, Hui sent troops to attack and defeat them.

When Pei Yi returned from Jianye, the Emperor sent envoys to appoint Hui as Commander of Military Affairs in Pingzhou, General Who Pacifies the North, and Inspector of Pingzhou, increasing his fief by 2,000 households. Soon after, he was further appointed as Envoy of the Imperial Insignia, Commander of Military Affairs for Eastern Barbarians in Youzhou, General of Chariots and Cavalry, and Shepherd of Pingzhou. He was promoted to Duke of Liaodong Commandery with a fief of 10,000 households, while retaining his positions as Attendant-in-Ordinary and Chanyu. He received an iron certificate with vermillion writing, was granted authority over the eastern coastal regions, and was ordered to establish official positions and appoint administrators for Pingzhou.

When Duan Mobo first took control of his state, he failed to maintain proper defenses. Hui sent Huang to launch a surprise attack, entering Lingzhi, where they captured fine horses and valuable treasures before returning.

When Shi Le sent envoys to establish peaceful relations, Hui rejected them and sent their envoys to Jianye. Enraged, Shi Le sent Yuwen Qidegui to attack Hui, but Hui dispatched Huang to resist. He appointed Pei Yi as Commander of the Right Division, with Suo Tou leading the right wing, and ordered his younger son Ren to advance from Pingguo to Bolin as the left wing to attack Qidegui. They defeated him and captured all his troops. Taking advantage of their victory, they captured the state's capital, seizing resources worth hundreds of millions and relocating tens of thousands of households back to their territory.

When Emperor Cheng ascended to the throne, Hui was additionally appointed as Palace Attendant and promoted to the rank of Special Advanced. In the fifth year of Xianhe (330), he was further appointed as Commander of the Palace Forces with Equal Authority as the Three Excellencies, but he firmly declined to accept this position.

Hui once remarked casually: "The law courts hold people's lives in the balance, so we must handle them with utmost care. Worthy and virtuous people are the foundation of the state, so we must treat them with respect. Agriculture is the basis of the nation, so we must give it urgent attention. Wine, sensual pleasures, and flattery are extremely destructive to virtue, so we must guard against them." He then wrote "Family Instructions" containing several thousand words to elaborate on these principles.

He sent an envoy with a letter to Grand Commander Tao Kan, which said:

"To Your Excellency: You uphold virtue and display authority, pacifying and stabilizing the realm. You devote yourself to both civil and military affairs, keeping soldiers and horses in good condition. I deeply admire and look up to you, and my respect grows ever stronger. The royal road is long and treacherous, and we are separated by vast distances. Whenever I gaze at the river's edge, I crane my neck looking into the distance."

Heaven has sent down hardships, and disasters have come one after another. The old capital could not be defended and became the court of barbarians, forcing the imperial carriage to relocate and seek refuge in Wu and Chu. The Great Jin dynasty, which was established to last for countless generations, has not lost Heaven's mandate, as shown clearly in celestial signs. Thus, righteous and valiant men harbor deep indignation. Despite my meager achievements, I have received special favor from the state. Yet I have failed both to sweep away the Jie barbarians above and to personally face the nation's crisis below. Moreover, treacherous ministers were allowed to repeatedly threaten the imperial capital. Wang Dun initiated calamity first, and Su Jun spread his poison afterward. Their brutality exceeded that of Dong Zhuo, and their wickedness surpassed that of Li Jue and Guo Si. Throughout the realm, who does not share in this anger! I am deeply puzzled that our civil and military officials, who enjoy such imperial honors, have been unable to eliminate the bandits of the Central Plains and wash away the shame of our nation.

You, my lord, have established your base in Jiangyang and shown your brilliance in Jing and Heng. You wield authority like Duke Ye and possess the determination of Bao Xu, yet you have allowed criminals like Bai Gong and Wu Yuan to reach the extremes of their violence - this would make even Qiuming ashamed. Even the likes of Zizhong of the small state of Chu were ashamed when their ruler was weak and the ministers could not match their predecessors. They disciplined themselves and warned others to subdue Chen and Zheng. Even Wwen Zhong and Fan Li were able to assist Goujian and achieve victory at Huangchi. How much more so now, when Wu's territory is full of talented people standing shoulder to shoulder - yet they do not support the sage ruler and advance north across the Yangtze.

With righteous proclamations, we should attack the rebellious Jie barbarians, issue commands to rally the warriors of the old states, and recruit those who wish to preserve our foundations. Would this not be as easy as leaves falling with the wind or wheels rolling downhill? Moreover, when the Sun family first rose, they used the forces from Changsha to defeat Dong Zhuo, aiming to support the Han court. Although they encountered setbacks and their noble aspirations were not fulfilled, their original intentions were sincere, even to the point of disregarding their own lives.

When Sun Quan held Yangzhou and Yuezhou, he relied externally on Zhou Yu and Zhang Zhao, internally on Gu Yong and Lu Xun, resisted Wei successfully, and captured Xiangyang. Since then, successive rulers have all been able to pressure Xuzhou and Yuzhou, causing the Wei court to eat their meals late with worry. I don't know if today's talented people in the Jiangnan region are hiding their wisdom and concealing their strategic abilities? Or have the great examples of Lü Meng and Ling Tong been lost to time?

Moreover, now that the violent Jie barbarians are brutal, the people of the Central Plains are under urgent pressure, their situation as precarious as stacked eggs. The enemy's false authority is something the people's hearts have already abandoned - they show weakness that can easily be shaken. Although Wang Lang and Yuan Shu were deceptive, their foundations were shallow and weak, and disaster came swiftly - these are all events that you, my lord, have witnessed.

Minister Wang is pure and has few desires, skilled at self-preservation - in the past, Cao Can also followed this path and was known for his principle of 'maintaining uniformity.' Lord Yu holds the honored position of the emperor's uncle and bears the responsibility like Shen Bo, transcending worldly matters with clear wisdom and discretion. During these times of invasion and trouble, I have received generations of favor from the Great Jin, yet I regret being in a remote region, unable to aid the sacred court, only able to set my heart toward the distant capital and feel indignation when facing the wind.

Today, among all those looked up to within the empire, only you, my lord, have sufficient influence to tip the balance like in the times of Chu and Han. If you would exert all your effort and deploy the forces of the five provinces, occupy the outskirts of Yanzhou and Yuzhou, and cause those inclined toward righteousness to turn their weapons around and lay down their arms, then the Jie bandits would surely be destroyed and our national shame eliminated. In my region, I dare not spare any effort in service. However, advancing alone with a small force is insufficient to make the enemy fear both front and rear attacks, and those loyal subjects who wish to respond from within have no way to act. Therefore, I present these thoughts from afar, though words cannot fully express everything."

Murong Hui's envoy encountered storms and was lost at sea. Afterward, Hui rewrote his previous letter and sent it along with memorials from over thirty officials, including Feng Chou, the Colonel of Eastern Barbarians, and Han Jiao, the Acting Minister of Liaodong, to Tao Kan's office, saying:

"Throughout history, few nations and families have not experienced decline after reaching their peak. Since the Great Jin dynasty's rise to power, it conquered Mount Hun and Hui, with military prowess surpassing historical records. However, at the end of Emperor Hui's reign, court factions created difficulties, disaster struck the capital region, and rifts formed within the imperial clan. This allowed the Jie bandits to exploit the weakness, overthrowing the Central Plains. The old capital fell into ruin, imperial tombs were desecrated, causing both humans and spirits to grieve and both the living and deceased to feel outrage. In the past, even when the Xianyun were strong and the Xiongnu were at their peak, none were as brutal as today's Jie bandits, who trample across Chinese territory and falsely claim imperial titles.

Heaven has blessed the Jin dynasty and bestowed it with outstanding talents. The General of Cavalry and Chariots, Murong Hui, has governed his state since his youth, remaining loyal to the royal house. He is wise, trustworthy, respectful, and solemn, with aspirations to establish merit. When the empire fragmented and the imperial court relocated, Emperor Yuan initiated the restoration and Emperor Su continued the lineage, pacifying the regions beyond the Yangtze. Although Hui is separated by mountains and seas, and cut off by the Jie bandits, he constantly looks toward the capital with his heart set on it, losing sleep with concerns for the state rather than himself. Tributes have been sent continuously, with ships filling the routes, and military campaigns have never ceased, always serving righteous causes.

Now the Jie bandits' evil reaches to the heavens, relying on their barbaric kind, establishing bases in Zhao and Wei, and extending their control over Yan and Qi. Although Hui leads righteous forces to punish these great rebels, even when Guan Zhong served Qi, he said that his honors were insufficient to command his subordinates. How much more so for Hui, who supports the royal house and has achievements worthy of a hegemon, yet holds a low position and light rank, not yet receiving the Nine Honors? This is not the way to show special favor to frontier nobles and encourage extraordinary merit.

Currently, imperial edicts are cut off and the royal road is dangerous and distant, with tribute missions taking years to complete their journeys. Now the old territory of Yan - bounded by the desert in the north, reaching Lelang in the east, extending to Mount Dai in the west, and stretching to Ji region in the south - has all fallen under barbarian control and is no longer part of the imperial domain. The officials and commanders believe we should follow the precedent of the Zhou Dynasty and the early Han period by promoting Hui to King of Yan and appointing him as Grand General. This would allow him to command all divisions from above and reduce enemy territory from below, causing the people of Jizhou to submit upon hearing of it. If Hui could receive such imperial orders, he could lead various states, oppose the barbarians, and achieve accomplishments like those of Duke Huan of Qi and Duke Wen of Jin. If it benefits the state, this authority can be granted exclusively.

However, Hui has remained firmly modest and maintained his integrity at an even higher level. Whenever honors were bestowed by imperial edict, he would decline them for years, and we officials cannot force him to accept. What we present here is not merely to seek elevation of status; rather, our sincere thoughts are truly for the nation's strategy."

Tao Kan replied to Feng Chou and others, saying in essence: "The General of Cavalry and Chariots has put the state before himself, sending continuous tributes. When the Jie bandits sought peace, he detained and sent their envoys. He campaigned westward against the Duan state, northward beyond the frontier, pacified the distant Suotou, and presented tributes from remote regions. Only the northern regions remain unsubmitted, against which he has repeatedly sent campaigns. I also understand that regarding official titles in the east, ranks are equal at all levels, with neither authority to command others when advancing nor proper hierarchical distinctions when retreating. The proposal to promote the General to King of Yan has been fully explained. Advancing rank based on merit is an ancient system. Although the General has not yet been able to enforce official authority, his loyalty and righteousness are complete. Now that this memorial has been submitted for imperial consideration, whether fast or slow, it should await heaven's decision."

The court discussions were not concluded. In the eighth year, Hui passed away, and the matter was dropped. He was sixty-five years old and had ruled for forty-nine years. The Emperor sent envoys to posthumously bestow upon him the titles of Grand General and Palace Attendant with Equal Authority of the Three Excellencies, with the posthumous title of Xiang. When Jun later usurped the throne, he falsely bestowed the posthumous title of Emperor Wuxuan.

Biography of Pei Yi

Pei Yi, courtesy name Wenji, was from Wenxi in Hedong. His father Chang served as the Colonel Director of Retainers. Yi was upright and capable, and was progressively promoted to Gentleman of the Imperial Secretariat, then to Gentleman Attendant at the Yellow Gates, and Governor of Xingyang.

When chaos engulfed the realm, Yi's elder brother Wu was serving as Governor of Xuantu. Yi then requested to become the Governor of Changli. After serving in the commandery for some time, Wu died, and Yi was summoned back. He then accompanied Wu's son Kai to escort the funeral procession south. When they reached Liaoxi, they found the roads blocked, so they sought refuge with Murong Hui.

At that time, many displaced scholars who saw Murong Hui's emerging power were uncertain whether to stay or leave. Yi was the first to establish proper relations with Hui, setting an example for other scholars to follow. Hui was very pleased and appointed Yi as Chief Clerk, entrusting him with military and state affairs.

When Xiduguan's bandits approached and besieged the city, causing unrest both inside and outside, Hui sought counsel from Yi. Yi said: "Although Xiduguan commands a large force, his army lacks discipline and his troops have no formation. If we select elite soldiers and strike while they are unprepared, we can capture them easily." Hui followed this advice and successfully raided the enemy camp. This greatly enhanced Hui's prestige and authority. When he wanted to send envoys to Jianye to report this victory, he carefully selected his messenger and ordered Yi to carry out this diplomatic mission.

Initially, the court regarded Hui as merely a frontier chieftain due to his remote location. When Yi arrived as envoy, he eloquently described Hui's military prowess and noted how talented individuals from across the realm were serving under him. This changed the court's entire perspective.

When Yi was about to return, the Emperor tried to retain him to test his loyalty. Yi declined, saying: "I and my family have long enjoyed imperial favor and served in the central government. Due to circumstances, I found myself in distant lands. Now that I have the fortune to see the court and receive gracious orders to stay in the capital, this would indeed be a great personal honor. However, considering that the imperial residence has been displaced and the imperial tombs dishonored, General Murong Hui, though far away, remains devoted to the royal house with a sincerity that moves heaven and earth. He is preparing to pacify the central plains and welcome back the imperial carriage, which is why he sent an envoy thousands of miles to demonstrate his loyalty. If you retain me now, he might think the court looks down upon him in his remote location and doubts his sincere heart, causing his righteous spirit to waver. Therefore, I, your humble servant, forget myself for the state's sake and wish to return to deliver my report."

The Emperor said, "Your words are right," and sent Yi back.

Later, Hui told his officials, "Chief Clerk Pei's reputation carries weight in the central court, yet he humbled himself to serve here - isn't this heaven's gift to me?" Yi was later appointed Minister of Liaodong and then Governor of Lelang.

Biography of Gao Zhan

Gao Zhan, courtesy name Ziqian, was from Tiao in Bohai. From a young age, he showed exceptional talent and intelligence, and grew to be eight chi and two cun tall. During the Guangxi period, he was appointed as Gentleman of the Imperial Secretariat. When the Yongjia chaos broke out, he returned to his hometown and discussed with the elders, saying: "Now that imperial authority is weak and warfare spreads everywhere, this commandery with its fertile land and natural defenses of rivers and seas will surely become a target for bandits during times of war and famine. This is not a place to seek safety. Wang Pengzu is already established in You and Ji, controlling the resources of Yan and Dai, with strong military and rich state - we can rely on him. What do you all think of this?" Everyone agreed with his proposal.

He then led several thousand households to migrate north to Youzhou with his uncle Yin. Later, finding Wang Jun's governance inconsistent, he sought refuge with Cui Bi and followed him to Liaodong.

When Cui Bi plotted with the three states to attack Murong Hui, Zhan strongly advised against it, but Bi did not listen. After Bi's defeat, Zhan surrendered to Hui along with others. Hui appointed him as a general, but Zhan claimed illness and declined to serve.

Hui, respecting Zhan's character and bearing, visited him frequently to comfort him, saying: "Your illness lies here [in your heart], not elsewhere. Now that the Son of Heaven has been displaced, the Four Seas are falling apart, and the common people are in chaos, not knowing where to turn. I wish to work with you gentlemen to restore the imperial house, eliminate the oppressors from the two capitals, escort the Emperor back from Wu and Hui, pacify all directions, and achieve merits comparable to the ancient heroes. This is my heart's desire and my wish. You are from a great clan of the Central Plains and of noble status - you should be deeply concerned and sleep on your weapon waiting for the dawn. Why do you harbor reservations about the distinction between Chinese and barbarians? Besides, the Great Yu came from the Western Qiang, and King Wen was born among the Eastern Yi. One should only consider a person's ambition and strategy - how can different customs be a reason to withhold one's loyalty?"

Zhan continued to claim serious illness, which greatly displeased Hui. Moreover, Zhan had a conflict with Song Gai, who secretly urged Hui to eliminate him. When Zhan heard of this, he became increasingly uneasy and eventually died of anxiety.