

soldier from the army of Chu and, without knowing anything about his ability, he sets him by his side in the royal carriage and even makes him a supervisor over all of us who are his seniors!" But when the king heard what they were saying, he only continued to heap further honours on Chen Ping.

Chen Ping eventually accompanied him in the campaign against Xiang Yu as far east as Pengcheng, where they were defeated by the Chu army and forced to retreat. The king gathered up his scattered forces and marched to Xingyang, where he appointed Chen Ping a lieutenant general under the command of Xin, the king of Hann, and sent him to garrison Guangwu. Zhou Bo, Guan Ying, and others of the high officers all began to speak ill of Chen Ping to the king of Han. "Chen Ping is a handsome man," they said, "but good looks are like jewelled decorations on a hat — they do not necessarily indicate that there is anything inside! We have heard that while he was living at home he carried on in secret with his brother's wife. He went to serve the king of Wei but, when he could get nowhere there, he ran away and joined Xiang Yu. And when he failed to make an impression on Xiang Yu, he ran away again and came to join us. Today Your Majesty has honoured him with a high position and put him in charge of the army. But we have heard that he is accepting money from the various generals — those who give a lot of money get good assignments, and those who give only a little get poor ones. As a subject, Chen Ping is fickle and corrupt. We beg you to look into the matter!"

The king of Han, his suspicions aroused, summoned Wei Wuzhi, who had first recommended Chen Ping, and began to berate him. "I recommended the man because of his ability," Wei Wuzhi replied, "but now Your Majesty questions me on his behaviour! Even the most shining examples of chaste and loyal behaviour would be of no help in deciding our fate in battle, so why should Your Majesty trouble about such questions? The armies of Chu and Han are locked in stalemate. When I recommended this man for his ability to devise ingenious strategies, I was only considering whether or not his schemes could be of actual benefit to the state. Why should the fact that he slept with his brother's wife or took bribes be grounds for doubting his ability?"

The king of Han then sent for Chen Ping and upbraided him. "I understand, Master Chen, that you served Wei until you found you could not get your way, and then you joined Xiang Yu, but left him too. Now you have decided to follow along with my party. Don't you think you have changed your allegiance rather often?"

"I served the king of Wei," replied Chen Ping, "but he was unwilling to

listen to my advice. Therefore I left him and went to serve Xiang Yu. But Xiang Yu is incapable of trusting others. The only men he employs or shows favour to are members of the Xiang family or relatives of his wife. Although he has clever strategists, he is unwilling to use them. Hence I left him too. Then I heard that the king of Han knew how to use men, and so I joined Your Majesty. I came here naked and alone. Had I not accepted money from others, I would have had nothing to keep alive on. If among the schemes and plans which I have to suggest there are any that are worthy of attention, I hope that Your Majesty will use them. If there are none of use to you, I beg to be allowed to seal and hand over all the money in my possession, relinquish my position, and take my leave."

With this the king of Han pardoned Chen Ping and rewarded him with generosity, making him colonel of the guard with supervision over all the other generals. After this the other generals dared say no more against him.

~~Later Xiang Yu pressed his attack on the king of Han, cutting off the Han walled supply road and encircling the king in the city of Xingyang. After some time had passed the king of Han, worried by the situation, offered to make peace on condition that he be allowed to retain possession of all the land west of Xingyang, but Xiang Yu refused to listen to such terms.~~

~~"When will this turmoil in the world ever come to an end?" the king of Han remarked to Chen Ping.~~

~~Chen Ping replied, "Xiang Yu is by nature respectful and thoughtful of others. Hence the gentlemen of honour and integrity and the lovers of propriety all flock to his side. But when it comes to rewarding the achievements of others and conferring fiefs, he is too niggardly, and for this reason there are some men who will not stay with him. Your Majesty, on the other hand, is arrogant and unmindful of propriety, and therefore gentlemen of honour and integrity do not come to you. But because you are willing to enrich men with grants of territory, the dull and unscrupulous, the lovers of gain and the shameless all rush to your side. If only each of you could lay aside his shortcomings and build up his strong points, then the leadership of the world might be settled once for all. But because Your Majesty is so wifful and insulting to others, it is impossible to win over men of honour and integrity!"~~

~~"And yet there is a way to bring confusion to the Chu forces. Xiang Yu has only a few honest and outspoken ministers such as Fan Zeng, Zhongli Mo, Long Ju, and Zhou Yin. Now if you were actually willing to part with 30,000 or 40,000 catties of gold, I could tempt them to revolt, bring about dissension between the leader and his men, and cast suspicion upon their loyalty. Xiang Yu is by nature~~