

# The Origins of Chinese Eremitism

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## I

Hermits have been more conspicuous in Chinese history than in other major cultural traditions of the world.<sup>2</sup> The reasons behind this no doubt are complex, but one key factor seems to have been that in pre-Buddhist China religion played a relatively minor role in providing norms and ideals to guide the conduct of individuals. Of course, long before the arrival of Buddhism the Chinese people sacrificed and prayed to gods they believed influenced human affairs, and the ancient landscape was densely populated with all manner of spiritual beings. But those gods and spirits gave very little in the way of detailed instructions concerning what individuals should do and the aspirations they should have – *that* was something left to the philosophers. Hence the highest principles and ideals of Chinese morality have a foundation which is almost entirely secular rather than religious. In cultures in which morality is regarded as divinely ordained, it is figures such as saints, holy men and monks who are looked up to for attaining ideals of personal conduct beyond the reach of most men. Such types do in various ways withdraw from the world for the sake of higher things, and therefore in some sense may be considered to exhibit types of eremitism, but their withdrawal from the world has to be understood in terms of a desire to transcend the world, to rise above it to a supermundane realm. The characteristic feature of Chinese eremitism, on the other hand, is that from earliest times it was a secular affair, like the ideals of individual perfection the hermits embodied. Therefore in the non-religious sphere of traditional Chinese morality hermits filled roles which in other cultures are occupied by a range of religious figures. When institutionalised religions did become established in China there was a certain amount of mutual influence between their monasticism and the much older tradition of eremitism, but the latter lost little of its distinctiveness and vitality.

Eremitism in the sense that I shall be using the term, then, involves the realisation of particular ideals of personal character and conduct derived from the highest moral

1. I would like to acknowledge here the advice and comments received in the course of my research by Professor Liu Ts'un-yan, Dr Pierre Ryckmans and Dr Ken Gardiner, and thank Dr Colin Jeffcott for his many helpful criticisms and suggestions before and after reading my draft.

2. Useful comparisons with hermits in other cultures are made in one of the few book-length studies of Chinese eremitism, Nemoto Makoto, *Sensei shakai ni okeru teiko seishin* 專制社會における抵抗精神 (Tokyo: Sōgensha 創元社, 1952), esp. 83–93. A useful outline of eremitism in the Christian tradition is provided by Peter F. Anson, *The Call of the Desert: The Solitary Life in the Christian Church*, 2nd ed. (London: SPCK, 1964).

authorities of a culture – in the Chinese case, this means primarily the great philosophers of the ancient period. In general, therefore, eremitism may be taken to refer to a mode of conduct or outlook which has been fairly consciously arrived at, usually involving some moral and even intellectual sophistication. As to defining eremitism – which I take to be the closest English equivalent for the Chinese term *yinyi* 隱逸<sup>3</sup> – perhaps it is best to say that it entails, psychologically, a lack of regard for those things of the world which are the common objects of human action, such as wealth, power and fame, with correspondingly greater importance being attached to goals which in a philosophical or moral sense are conceived to be ‘higher’, for example, personal integrity and unwavering devotion to what is right, or the eradication of desire and the complete identification of self with the principle of order in the cosmos; behaviourally, this is manifested in a tendency to withdraw (either physically or mentally) from those types of social involvement likely to result in the violation of those higher goals – in particular, involvement in the realm of politics and state affairs.

As this monograph will show, the variety of outlooks and actions which may be subsumed under this general concept is wide indeed, and the full range of such outlooks and actions had emerged in ancient China before the unification of the empire in 221 B.C. Essential to all eremitism, however, is the element of free choice: for whatever reason a hermit turns away from the world, and whatever the lifestyle he takes up as a result, he can properly be called a hermit only if his actions follow from a moral decision rather than merely the pressures of circumstance. This is one reason the refusal to accept an official position when it was offered is so crucial in the biographies of Chinese hermits: a refusal to accept an official post is fairly clear evidence (though not necessarily conclusive) that the individual concerned was, for the sake of his principles, declining the most important opportunity his society offered to win wealth and renown or to wield power. To be able to refuse such things one first has to have the option of having them; hence eremitism related mainly to the moneyed and educated sections of society. Just as it would be misleading to call someone who runs off into the mountains simply to avoid danger a hermit, so too it is impossible to apply the term to a poor peasant who from birth has had to scratch a living from the soil in some remote backwater. It is possible that such a peasant actually has no interest in worldly things and devotes himself to the pursuit of moral perfection, but it would be impossible for anyone to label him as a hermit for the simple reason that his life is no different from that of any other (virtuous) peasant, with no evidence that he has willingly sacrificed anything to pursue his ideals. In this sense it could be argued that the notion eremitism itself involves an element of class differentiation. But it is being in a position to choose between lifestyles that counts – social background is relevant

3. Possibly the earliest extant use of this compound occurs in the *Shizhou ji xu* 十洲記序, traditionally attributed to Dongfang Shuo 東方朔 in the reign of Emperor Wu (140–87 B.C.). While that famous wit and ‘hermit at court’ was almost certainly not the author of this piece, it must date approximately from his time and the term *yinyi* appears to have been just one of the many compound verbs relating to hiding, withdrawing, etc., coined by the *sao* 騷 and *fu* 賦 poets in that period. For *Shizhou ji xu* see *Dongfang dazhong ji* 東方大中集 in *Han-Wei-liuchao baisan mingjia ji* 漢魏六朝百三名家集 Xinshu Tang 信述堂 ed., 1879, ce 册 3/25a.

to eremitism primarily in terms of the way it widens or limits that choice.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the prominence of eremitic practices in Chinese history and of eremitic ideas and themes in Chinese philosophy and poetry,<sup>5</sup> eremitism is a topic which has received remarkably little attention from modern scholars either in China or the West. In English there are few extended treatments of the subject,<sup>6</sup> while modern Chinese studies have tended to be written from the viewpoint that eremitism is a pathological state, a symptom of social decay<sup>7</sup>. However, since as a practice or institution eremitism

4. These considerations must be kept in mind when reading the witty, debunking articles by Lu Xun 魯迅, 'Yinshi 隱士', *Lu Xun quanji* 魯迅全集 (Xianggang wenxue yanjiu she 香港文學研究社 ed.) 6/178-80, trans. Yang Hsien yi and Gladys Yang, *Selected Works of Lu Hsun*, (2nd ed; Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1964), 4/164-66, and Shen Gangbo 沈剛伯, 'Shi he yin de renshengguan 仕和隱的人生觀', in *Shi he yin de renshengguan* (Taipei: Mengya chubanshe 萌芽出版社, 1970), 127-131. It is not necessarily true, as Lu Xun suggests, that the only genuine hermits will be those we hear nothing about, but certainly it is only those whose withdrawal has not been total who can come to the notice of historians.

5. The amount of space devoted to the topic in traditional encyclopedias provides some evidence of that prominence: thus 2 of the 100 *juan* 卷 of the Tang 唐 work *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 are devoted to material on eremitism (the material on sageliness 聖, worthiness 賢, loyalty 忠 and filiality 孝 together makes up only one *juan*), while the entry on the subject in the *Gujin tushu jicheng* 古今圖書集成 runs to some 83 double pages.

6. The only works I have been able to locate are A.R. Davis, 'The Narrow Lane: Some Observations on the Recluse in Traditional Chinese Society' (The Twelfth George Ernest Morrison Lecture in Ethnology, Canberra: The Australian National University, 1959); Frederick W. Mote, 'Confucian Eremitism in the Yuan Period', in Arthur F. Wright (ed.), *The Confucian Persuasion* (Stanford U.P., 1960), 202-240; Li Chi 李卓, 'The Changing Concept of the Recluse in Chinese Literature', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 24 (1962-1963), 234-247. Important material is also contained in Richard B. Mather, 'The Controversy over Conformity and Naturalness during the Six Dynasties', *History of Religions* 9.2-3 (Nov. 1969-Feb. 1970), 160-180, largely reproduced in his introduction to his translation of the *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語, *A New Account of Tales of the World* (University of Minnesota Press, 1976).

7. Jiang Xingyu 蔣星堃, in *Zhongguo yinshi yu zhongguo wenhua* 中國隱士與中國文化 (first published in 1943 in Chongqing, reprinted in a more legible form by Longtian 龍田 chubanshe, Taipei, 1982) gathers together some useful information in the course of showing that eremitism is a disease which undermines the vitality of the Chinese people and undermines their ability to fight the Japanese. Even what is probably the best discussion of aspects of the topic by a modern Chinese scholar, Wang Yao's 王躍 essay 'Lun xiqi yinyi zhi feng 論希企隱逸之風', in his *Zhongguo wenren shenghuo* 中國文人生活 (Hong Kong: Zhongliu 中流 chubanshe, 1973), 77-109, treats it on a par with drinking wine, drug taking and forging 'old' texts, following the lead of Lu Sun, *Wei-Jin fengdu ji wenzhang yu yao ji jiu zhi guangxi* 魏晉風度及文章與藥及酒之關係, *Lu Xun quanji* 3/379-95. Other works include Fu Maomian 傅懋勉, 'Lun jindai de yinyi sixiang he yinyi shiren 論晉代的隱逸思想和隱逸詩人', *Wenshizhe* 文史哲 1958 (4), 20-24; Liu Xiangfei 劉翔飛, *Tangren yinyi fengqi ji qi yingxiang* 唐人隱逸風氣及其影響 (Masters thesis, National Taiwan University, 1978); A Ying 阿英, 'Shuo yinyi 說隱逸', *A Ying wenji* 阿英文集 (Hong Kong: Sanlian 三聯 1979), 1:151-152; Hong Anquan 洪安全, 'Liang Han rushi de shiyin taidu yu shehui fengqi 兩漢儒士的仕隱態度與社會風氣', *Kong-Meng xuebao* 42 (1981) 孔孟學報, 42 (1981), 115-39, and 44 (1982), 221-54; Liu Jiyao 劉紀燾, 'Shi yu yin -- chuantong zhongguo zhengzhi wenhua de liangji 仕與隱——傳統中國政治文化的兩極' in Liu Dai 劉岱 (ed.), *Zhongguo wenhua xinlun: sixiang diyi 中國文化新論一：思想第一* (Taipei: Lianjing chubanshiye gongsi 聯經出版事業公司, 1982), 1/292-343. Also relevant are the essays by Yu Ying-shih 余英時 in his *Zhongguo zhishi jieceng shilun* 中國知識階層史論 (Taipei: Lianjing chubanshiye gongsi, 1980).

appears to have been so prominent in China since earliest times, there is good reason to think that a special study of it will tell us much about traditional Chinese society, and in particular about that society as perceived and experienced from the point of view of the individual. For what the eremitic tradition has concerned itself with most centrally is the question of the relationship of the individual to the state and society, the problem of how social expectations and obligations are to be reconciled with more personal beliefs and attitudes.

In this monograph I shall attempt to describe how eremitism emerged in China and the type of social and philosophical changes to which its development was related. I shall try in particular to outline the variety of attitudes and positions which were involved in the eremitism of the Warring States period. It will be noticed that my account deals primarily with the philosophical foundations of eremitism rather than with the lives or motives of individual hermits. The reason is that there is not enough reliable evidence available concerning the lives of individual hermits before the Han period to make such discussion profitable. Thus in relation to the ideas examined below it must be remembered that the motives of individuals will not necessarily have coincided with the philosophical ideals they used to account for their behaviour. There is no reason to suppose that hypocrisy was any less or more frequent in the ancient world than it is today.

## II.

There is no evidence that anything that might properly be termed eremitism existed before the time of Confucius (551–479 B.C.). As far as we can now determine, eremitism was a creation of the late Spring and Autumn and Warring States period (approximately 500–221 B.C.) and to a large extent stemmed from the ideas of Confucius himself. It was only after Confucius' lifetime that a socio-cultural milieu existed in which eremitic ideas could flourish and an eremitic way of life could be pursued. Of course, eremitism in the fairly sophisticated sense that I want to use the term could not begin overnight. When they formulated their eremitic principles, Confucius and the philosophers who came after him found in their tradition elements which could be interpreted as prefiguring their own ideas. This they did, and supplemented their interpretations with numerous stories about legendary hermits from remote antiquity. Fascinating though those stories are, they tell us more about the period in which they originated than about the times to which they purport to relate. Therefore in this section of my monograph, rather than recount tales about such legendary figures I will consider passages from texts of the period before Confucius expressing attitudes and ideas which can be regarded as elements of the prehistory of eremitism, and which, because of their antiquity and eventual canonical status, came to be regarded as supremely authoritative statements of eremitic principles. The passages I will consider are from the earliest segments of the *Book of Documents* (*Shangshu* 尚書), the hexagram and line texts of the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing* 易經), and the *Book of Songs* (*Shijing* 詩經).

In those sections of the *Book of Documents* commonly accepted as 'genuine' (in the rather loose sense that they consist of material dating from pre-Qin 秦 times), there are two passages which came to be construed as relating to eremitism. One of these is the passage in *Yaodian* 堯典 in which Siyue 四岳 declines to accept the position of emperor when offered it by Yao 堯<sup>8</sup>. Siyue's reason for declining, however, is that he modestly considers himself unworthy of that august position. So it seems that his actions stem from considerations such as deference and gentlemanly non-contention, modes of conduct which came to be closely identified with Confucian teaching<sup>9</sup> but do not have any special eremitic significance, though they do indicate something of the background of more general ideals against which some of the distinctive characteristics of Chinese eremitism are to be understood. The other passage is that in the *Weizi* 微子 section which narrates a conversation between the Viscount of Wei and two members of the Shang 商 court when the fall of the dynasty was imminent. The viscount announces that he 'will set forth and go away; the old men of our house have retreated to the countryside'.<sup>10</sup> This passage illustrates the point made in relation to the definition of eremitism given above, that we can properly talk of eremitism only where there is evidence of a moral decision to withdraw from a world which threatens the moral integrity of the individual. There is no reason to assume in this case that the old men were trying to do anything more than save their own necks by deserting the palace for the country (*huang* 荒) or suburbs (*huangjiao* 荒郊).

Although there are points of contact between the two, we must distinguish between being a hermit and being a refugee. The term 'hermit' becomes impossibly imprecise if we apply it to all those who take refuge in isolated places in order to avoid danger. It is essential to the idea of being a hermit that the dangers the individual wishes to keep at a distance are essentially *moral dangers*, such as loss of self-control or personal integrity. In ancient China, as in other times and places, it was common practice to escape danger by fleeing into the mountains, forests or swamps. This is attested, for example, by the *Mozi* 墨子, which states that such behaviour may be enough to elude men but not spirits<sup>11</sup>, and also by *Zhuangzi* 莊子. In fact, it is reflection on the inadequacies of this practice as a way of staying alive that gives much of the inner chapters of *Zhuangzi* their point. I shall return to this in the section on *Zhuangzi* below.

The *Book of Changes* originated as a divination manual, and continued to be regarded as such in some quarters long after it had begun to attract sophisticated philosophical attention. This familiar point needs to be restated, not in order to dismiss the text as so much worthless superstition, but in order to try to determine what

8. Bernard Karlgren, 'The Book of Documents', *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 22 (1950), 3-4; Qu Wanli 屈萬里 *Shangshu jinzhu jinyi* 尚書今註今譯 (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1969), 8.

9. See, for example, *Lunyu* 論語 3.7. For this and also subsequent references to the *Lunyu* see also D.C. Lau, *Confucius: The Analects* (Penguin, 1979).

10. Karlgren, 'The Book of Documents', 27; Qu Wanli, *Shangshu jinzhu jinyi*, 69.

11. *Mozi* (Harvard-Yenching index series), 31/81-82. For *Mozi* see also Mei Yi-pao, *The Ethical and Political Works of Motse* (London: Probsthain, 1929).

meaning is likely to have been attributed to particular passages in the text roughly before the time of Confucius. References to the *Book of Changes* in the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 indicate that even before Confucius it was referred to for philosophical wisdom as well as for divinatory purposes<sup>12</sup>, but of course it was the expositions contained in the Ten Wings (*shi yi* 十翼) which transformed the text into a work of the highest philosophical interest, and the Ten Wings do not date from before the Warring States period<sup>13</sup>. In relation to the history of eremitism this is of the utmost importance, for it was the Ten Wings which first introduced specifically eremitic ideas into this classic.

The fundamental, original purpose of the *Book of Changes* was to serve as a guide for decision-making in government: when faced with a given situation, a ruler or official could consult the oracle to determine what sort of response would be appropriate. What the hexagram and line texts (*guaci* 卦辭 and *yaoci* 爻辭) provide is a description in the most general terms of the type of response indicated by any given hexagram. The texts for particular hexagrams and their constituent lines may advocate anything from prompt and determined action when circumstances are favourable to strict avoidance of action when the situation is such that action would precipitate disaster, when the only possibility of a positive outcome lies in cautiously waiting for circumstances to change. Inevitably these judgements are couched in terms so general that they may be applied to the full range of situations and decisions that might be faced by those involved in affairs of state. There is little in the text that would relate the judgements to specific actions, since that would destroy the system's claim to be a comprehensive guide to human affairs.<sup>14</sup> This in turn means that as the repertoire of roles and modes of behaviour in the culture to which it belonged changed, so too did the explanatory scope of the *Book of Changes* and the way its judgements were applied to particular situations. Thus when eremitism was added to the repertoire of socio-political roles during the late Spring and Autumn period, those parts of the text which

12. See Iulian K. Shchutskii, *Researches on the I Ching*, trans. William L. MacDonald and Tsuyoshi Hasegawa with Hellmut Wilhelm (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), 191–93.

13. On the date of the Ten Wings, see Qian Mu 錢穆, 'Lun shiyi fei Kongzi zuo 論十翼非孔子作', Li Jingchi 李鏡池, 'Yizhuan tanyuan 易傳探源', and 'Lun Yizhuan zhuzuo shidai shu 論易傳著作時代書', all in *Gushi bian* 古史辨 3 (1931); Dai Junren 戴君仁, *Tan yi 談易* (Taipei: Kaiming shudian 開明書店, 1961), 25–30; Zhang Dainian 張岱年, 'Lun Yi dazhuan de zhuzuo de niandai yu zhexue 論易大傳的著作的年代與哲學', *Zhongguo zhexue 中國哲學* (Beijing) 1 (1979), 121–43; Willard J. Peterson, 'Making Connections: "Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations" of the *Book of Change*', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 42.1 (1982), especially 69–79. Dai Junren argues that in terms of style and thought and also rhyming patterns the Ten Wings resemble *Xunzi* 荀子 more than any other text. His comment (p. 1) that the *Changes* is best regarded as a *congshu* 叢書 which acquired its present form over a long period under many hands applies to the commentaries as much as to the classic itself. Peterson (p. 77) makes a similar remark about the *Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳 which may be applied more generally, namely that it 'was accumulated over a certain period, beginning approximately a generation before the Ch'in dynasty was proclaimed and hardening by the first century B.C. into the form that was taught by Fei Chih 費直 and later engraved on the stone tablets'. Zhang Dainian argues that this commentary postdates *Laozi* but is earlier than *Zhuangzi* (I believe the inner chapters of *Zhuangzi* are in fact earlier than the *Laozi*, as argued below), but is most unconvincing and does little more than reaffirm Qian Mu's observations that the commentaries contain a number of major concepts characteristic of the late Warring States period.

14. *Zhou yi* 周易 (*Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊 ed.), 7/3a, 4b.

counselled caution and non-action came to be interpreted with that type of behaviour in mind, and eremitism came to be regarded as the course of action advocated when certain hexagrams were turned up.

It is illuminating to consider the hexagram *dun* 遯 in this context. 'Dun' ('to retreat', 'to withdraw', 'to hide') is given an amplified meaning in the commentaries *Tuanzhuan* 象傳, *Daxiang zhuan* 大象傳 and *Zagua zhuan* 雜卦傳. 'Dun indicates retiring', comments the latter<sup>15</sup>, while the commentary on the image is:

... the superior man keeps the inferior man at a distance, Not angrily but with reserve.<sup>16</sup>

This commentary introduces eremitic sentiments which are not present in the hexagram or line texts – there 'retreat' is presented as a matter of caution, avoidance of danger, not as a question of moral superiority and the desire to keep the corrupt world at a distance.

It has been argued by Gao Heng 高亨 that the character *dun* 遯, 'to retreat', probably is a substitute for *dun* 豚, meaning 'piglet'.<sup>17</sup> Reading *dun* to mean piglet certainly makes it easier to make sense of the line text; it also shifts much of the emphasis away from the notion of withdrawal to the practice of giving ceremonial gifts (for which piglets were used). Thus the interpretation of the fourth line, which is rendered by Wilhelm/Baynes as:

Voluntary retreat brings good fortune to the superior man and downfall to the inferior man.<sup>18</sup>

becomes:

Giving piglets as ritual presents, the gentleman gains good fortune, the petty man bad fortune.

Gao Heng's reconstruction of something close to the original meaning of the *Book of Changes* strips passages such as this of the encrustations of eremitic thought that built up around them over time. However, it does not change their emphasis on caution and the need to avoid dangerous situations. While *dun* probably originally meant 'piglet' rather than 'retreat', the fact that this hexagram indicates a dangerous situation remains unchanged. It should also be emphasized that the interpretation of such passages against a background of eremitic ideas began very early: it had certainly begun when the Ten Wings were compiled, presumably in the Warring States period.<sup>19</sup>

15. *Zhou yi* 9/9a.

16. *Zhou yi* 10/15a; Richard Wilhelm and Cary F. Baynes trans., *I Ching, or Book of Changes*, 3rd ed., (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), 551.

17. Gao Heng, *Zhouyi gujing jinzhū* 周易古經今注 (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1963), 113.

18. *Zhou yi* 4/3b–4a; Wilhelm/Baynes 553.

19. See note 13 above. It remains to be seen whether the Mawangdui 馬王堆 text of the *Book of Changes*, when finally published, will confirm Gao Heng's argument by having 豚 in place of 遯. The use of 'substitute' characters is one of the notable features of that text. See Yan Lingfeng 嚴靈峯, *Mawangdui boshu yijing chubu yanjiu* 馬王堆帛書易經初步研究 (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe 成文出版社, 1980). Of course, the use of 遯 in the Mawangdui text would not invalidate Gao Heng's argument.

This applies not only to the *dun* hexagram, but also to all the others which develop the principles of caution and prudence, such as *qian* 乾, *kun* 坤, *song* 訟 and *gen* 艮.

The only passage in the hexagram and line texts which could be regarded as presenting problems for my argument here is the well-known text for the last line of *gu* 蠱: 不事王侯, 高尚其事 translated by Wilhelm/Baynes as 'He does not serve kings and princes, sets himself higher goals'.<sup>20</sup> Even Gao Heng comments that this line refers to 'staying in seclusion and not serving in office'.<sup>21</sup> I believe this is wrong, however, and that this is one of the few points where Gao Heng goes off the track. If we set aside the idea, foisted on us by long-established patterns of thought, that this line must refer to eremitism, it becomes clear that a more natural rendering of the grammar would be, 'he does not serve the king or (feudal) lords, setting his own affairs higher'. In other words, we have to distinguish between setting oneself loftier goals and valuing one's private affairs more highly. The latter are as likely as not to be anything but lofty concerns. That it is not high-mindedness which leads to the refusal to serve is borne out by the text for the hexagram as a whole.

*Gu*, in the context of this hexagram, means 'affairs' (*shi* 事).<sup>22</sup> The hexagram as a whole relates to the handling of affairs, and the individual lines are all said to refer specifically to handling the affairs either of one's father or mother – at least up to the final line. This means that if the final line did relate to withdrawing from official posts in order to further loftier goals it would be largely unconnected to the meaning of the rest of the hexagram. But surely its original meaning was that one should give higher priority to one's own affairs than to serving the king or feudal lords; duties towards the ruler are to be disregarded not because one wants to pursue goals which are loftier but because circumstances compel one to place private family matters first. Counsel such as this, it is clear, fits perfectly well with what we know of both Western and Eastern Zhou society: the conflict between family interests and duties toward the ruler was a perennial one.<sup>23</sup>

As far as the *Book of Changes* is concerned, then, in the 'classic' itself – namely the hexagram and line texts – we find no ideas relating specifically to eremitism, but there are passages which advocate prudent withdrawal and placing private concerns ahead of serving one's ruler. These passages came to be interpreted in terms of fully-fledged eremitism in the commentaries known as the Ten Wings, but these date from no earlier than the Warring States period.

Given the personal, everyday concerns of so many of the poems in the *Book of Songs*, it would be reasonable to expect there would be some which deal, if not with

20. *Zhou yi* 2/9b; Wilhelm/Baynes 78.

21. *Zhouyi gujing jinzhū*, 69.

22. This is stated in the *Xugua zhuan* 序卦傳 (*Zhou yi* 9/5b), and is forcefully argued by Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1627–1679), *Zhouyi baishu* 周易稗疏, cited by Gao Heng, *Zhouyi gujing jinzhū*, 68.

23. This argument is not weakened by Liu Baimin's 劉百閔 observation, *Zhouyi shili tongyi* 周易事理通義 (Taipei: Xue bujuan zhai, 學不倦齋 1966), 162, that in antiquity state affairs and family affairs amounted to one and the same thing. The line text refers specifically to the affairs of the parents, the immediate family, not to the family-based model of the state.



eremitism specifically, then at least with the problems and pitfalls of holding office. This is precisely what proves to be the case. Thus Mao 194 (*Yu wu zheng* 雨無正) is about the dangers of serving in office, the dilemma of on the one hand refusing to do so and offending against the Son of Heaven, or on the other hand, serving the ruler and incurring the ill-will of others as a result. However, there is no suggestion that those who are not inclined to serve offer any moral justification for their attitude. It is simply that serving entails onerous duties and is a source of danger. The emphasis on the dangers and inconvenience of holding office anticipates Zhuangzi, but while this outlook became an important element in his philosophy of eremitism, by itself it amounts to nothing more than dislike and distrust of what official service entails.

Other poems in the anthology present similar viewpoints. Mao 204 (*Siyue* 四月) is the complaint of an official 'exhausted' by his duties who receives nothing but misfortune for his pains. Mao 205 (*Beishan* 北山) expresses the woes of an official who believes that he alone of all the king's servants is faithfully attending to his duties, while others ignore the call and give themselves over to idleness. Very similar are Mao 40 (*Beimen* 北門), 184 (*Heming* 鶴鳴) and 193 (*Shiyue zhijiao* 十月之交): in each case the speaker presents himself as a loyal subject who is the last bulwark against disorder. The viewpoint of those who do not want to serve on the other hand, is unequivocally expressed in Mao 206 (*Wujiang daju* 無將大車), which advises the listener not to help the great carriage of state on its way, as he will make himself dusty; to serve in office is only to burden oneself with anxieties.

If such attitudes are akin to those later expressed by Zhuangzi, perhaps the poem which brings him most strongly to mind is Mao 186, 'The White Colt' (*Baiju* 白駒), which as well as articulating a distaste for official duties contains the term *xiaoyao* 逍遙, or carefree leisure, which is so central to Zhuangzi's philosophy, as well as the white colt itself, which in *Zhuangzi* features in the marvellous simile comparing the brevity of human life with a glimpse of a white colt as it rushes past a crack in a wall.<sup>24</sup> The poem is also an example of how our understanding of a work can be distorted if we read ideas from later periods into it. It is fairly clear that the poem is supposed to be the utterance of a woman who is urging her lover to disregard other concerns, such as his official duties, so that they will be able to prolong the pleasure of each other's company: he must think of himself as a duke or a prince, she says, and give up all thoughts of leaving, in order to be able to enjoy 'carefree leisure without end'. Nevertheless, one traditional interpretation holds that the poem is a harangue against self-indulgence and eremitism – this is in fact how it is translated by Legge<sup>25</sup>. With little more justification, other commentators have taken it as an invitation to become a recluse, interpreting the verbs *yi* 逸, *you* 遊 and *dun* 遁 in the particular eremitic sense they subsequently acquired.<sup>26</sup> This is anachronistic distortion of the same sort as that which attributes eremitic ideas to the hexagram and line texts of the *Book of Changes*.

24. *Zhuangzi* (Harvard-Yenching) 22/39. For this and other references to *Zhuangzi* see also Burton Watson, *Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (Columbia U.P., 1968).

25. James Legge, *The Chinese Classics* (rpt. Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe 文史哲出版社, 1971), 4/300.

26. On the various interpretations of this poem see Bernard Karlgren, 'Glosses on the Siao Ya Odes', *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, 16 (1944), 63–64.

Expressions of dislike of the dangers and burdens of official duties do not amount to eremitism. It is not just coincidence that the poems mentioned are mostly the complaints of men in office or on behalf of men in office. What the poems are about is the attractions of leisure and idleness for those who are in office; they do not suggest there are moral grounds for refusing to take up office. Pleasure-seeking and idleness are presented in terms of disregard for, or dereliction of, duty, and not as consequences of a refusal to take up duty. The reason for this is most important and helps us understand why, before the time of Confucius, eremitism could neither develop as a philosophy of personal conduct nor as social practice. The poems of the *Book of Songs* relate to a period when office-holding was understood in terms of the principle of heredity, and the point about hereditary office-holding is that there is little scope for resigning or declining to take up certain duties and responsibilities, especially on moral grounds. We are used to pointing out the benefits that hereditary office brings to the incumbent, the land, income, power and prestige which are his, regardless of personal merit – but we are less inclined to see that the business of hereditary office-holding cuts both ways. If you are related to an evil king you are stuck with him, and, what is more, are liable to come unstuck with him. In the system of heredity, duty towards the sovereign remains a duty even if it is ignored, a part of the unalterable scheme of things.<sup>27</sup>

In the poems in the *Book of Songs* which suggest that there is a degree of choice as to whether or not the individual serves his ruler, such as Mao 194 (*Yu wu Zheng*) and 206 (*Wujiang daju*), the choice is not so much whether or not to take up a given position as whether or not to conscientiously carry out the duties inherent in one's position. The alternative to doing one's duty is turning to pleasure-seeking and idleness. The main word used in this context, *yi* 逸, as it appears in the *Book of Documents* as well as in the *Book of Songs*, usually carries connotations of neglect or dereliction of duty and is frequently condemnatory. Thus the *Book of Documents* contains the section 'Do Not Be Idle' (*Wuyi* 無逸) and *yi* is cited as the cause of the downfall of King Zhou of the Shang<sup>28</sup>. The same meaning is obviously intended in a poem such as Mao 207 (*Xiao ming* 小明), in which someone on military duty in a remote region reproaches the noblemen back in the capital for their *yi*.

In saying that the poems in the *Book of Songs* relate to a period in which office-holding was understood in terms of the principle of heredity, I do not mean that there was no place for the consideration of individual merit and ability in official appointments in the Western Zhou and early Spring and Autumn periods. But the argument

27. On the connection between heredity and office-holding in the Zhou period see Hsü Cho-yün 許倬雲, *Ancient China in Transition*, 2–8, 31–34, 78–80; also 'Some Working Notes on the Western Chou Government', *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊 36.2 (1966), 513–24; Chen Mengjia 陳夢家, 'Xizhou wenzhong de yinren shenfen' 西周文中的殷人身分, *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究 1954 (6), 85–106; H. G. Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China* (University of Chicago Press, 1970), 376–87; Paul Wheatley, *The Pivot of the Four Quarters* (Edinburgh U.P., 1971), 112–13, 118–25. Especially important is the article by Du Zhengsheng 杜正勝, 'Zhou dai fengjian zhidu de shehui jigou' 周代封建制度的社會結構, *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan*, 50.3 (1979), 551–613.

28. Karlgren 'Book of Documents', 64; Qu Wanli, *Shangshu jinzhu jinyi*, 151.

put forward by some scholars in recent years, that appointments to office at this time were made largely on the basis of personal merit rather than family ties, must be rejected.<sup>29</sup> As Du Zhengsheng 杜正勝 has shown in his excellent study of Zhou feudalism,<sup>30</sup> 'heredity' is by no means a simple thing, and where discussion of this topic has fallen down is in assuming that appointment to office on an hereditary basis could only operate in one way – namely, through the eldest son of the proper (or senior) wife in each generation. Du musters a lot of evidence to show that in Western Zhou times all high positions were held on an hereditary basis in the sense that positions were essentially clan possessions, and eligibility for them was a matter determined by kin ties. However, positions did not necessarily pass to the eldest son of the senior wife; they often went to another clan member who was judged to have greater ability or merit. Thus within the hereditary system there was a place for appointment by merit, and no doubt such appointments were sometimes made regardless of kinship ties as well.

What must be stressed here is that principles of heredity were central to the official ideology of the Zhou 周 rulers, which made kinship the basis of government and conceived the position and responsibilities in terms of those of the head of a family. The king was not just the head of state, the supreme authority; he was also the senior member of the senior branch of the family, he in whom all the virtuous power of the ancestors was concentrated and to whom all other members of the family were obliged to defer. Such was the theory, and while this was obviously an idealised conception and reality often fell short of the ideal, it was the ideal which legitimised authority and the actions of the aristocracy. It was in terms of that ideal that a refusal

29. Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft*, 376, is prepared to accept that the family served as the ideal model for government in the Zhou and that heredity was of major importance in the Spring and Autumn Period, but believes that from that point of view the Western Zhou was like 'another country' (p. 380). However, he ignores the ample evidence in the *Book of Songs* that kinship and descent were central to the socio-religious beliefs of the period (e.g. Mao 209, 210, 235, 240, 243, 247, 275, 279, 283, 286, 287, 302) and underestimates the efficacy of appointments by heredity in a society which regards heredity as the only source of political legitimacy. That appointment to office in the Spring and Autumn Period frequently had nothing to do with heredity is argued by Barry B. Blakely, 'Functional Disparities in the Socio-political Traditions of Spring and Autumn China', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 20.2 (1977), 208–43; 20.3 (1977), 307–43; 22.1 (1979), 81–118. Blakely makes a state-by-state examination of the appointments recorded in the *Zuozhuan* and finds that the proportion of offices held by members of the ruling clan or collateral branches varied strongly from state to state, from as high as 78 per cent in Song 宋 to a mere 9 per cent in Jin 晉. He concludes that while kinship could be a help in obtaining office in states such as Song, Zheng 鄭, Chu 楚, and Lu 魯, in states such as Jin, Qi 齊 and Zhou 周 it was actually a disadvantage (22.1/107). But Blakely's statistics do not establish what he thinks they do. He makes the elementary statistical error of assuming that in the absence of an appointment policy favouring kinsmen, royal kinsmen should occupy the same proportion of posts as non-kinsmen because members of each group will have equal chances of gaining office. But kinsmen would be over-represented in office if the proportion of available posts they held exceeded the proportion of kinsmen in the total population of the state (or, more precisely, the total number of possible office-holders). It seems safe to assume that the proportion of royal kinsmen in any state never approached even the 9 per cent of office-holders who were kinsmen in Jin. Hence even there kinsmen had the advantage over non-kinsmen when it came to receiving an appointment.

30. Du Zhengsheng, '*Zhoudai fengjian zhidu de shehui jiegou*', especially 569–83.

to carry out one's duties toward the ruler would have had to be justified – and *that* was impossible. Justification of a refusal to serve the ruler required an alternative conception of personal morality. It was Confucius who formulated that alternative conception, and that is the reason why eremitism in China really began with Confucius.

### III

Before the notion of refusing to take office, or distancing oneself from affairs of state despite being qualified to hold office, can become a matter for philosophical dispute, it is surely necessary on logical grounds alone for the whole matter of qualification for office and the justification of participation in state affairs itself to have become the subject of philosophical dispute: it is difficult to see how the former could be debated if the latter was not. Nor can there be much doubt that it was Confucius who turned the question of qualification for office into a controversial issue by taking the stand that it was according to the integrity and self-cultivation of the individual, rather than kinship ties and heredity, that appointments to office should be made.<sup>31</sup> While Confucius no doubt made use of ideas and principles already current in his time, including the doctrine that the ruler's right to the throne derived from his moral worth, we must assume that his adaptation of such ideas to a universal ideal of self-perfection in the service of society was something new. If it were otherwise it would be impossible to account for the historical impact he made.

Perhaps of even greater significance for the development of eremitism was what appears to have been another fundamental innovation by Confucius: the principle that it is the moral nature of the individual, properly cultivated and self-regulated, which can be the only source of ethical value and social order. The *junzi* 君子 – the morally superior man or noble man – does what is right by following his own refined moral understanding, spurred by neither fear of punishment nor hope of reward. It is with the concept of such a morally autonomous individual, whose ultimate measure of what can and cannot be done is his own moral sense, that the philosophical possibility of eremitism arises.<sup>32</sup>

At the heart of Confucius' philosophy lies the ideal of moral perfection, the man of benevolence. It was an ideal he believed was rarely accomplished and only then after long years of self-discipline and self-cultivation. Rules can be dispensed with only after they have been completely internalised.<sup>33</sup> When Confucius said, 'Is benevolence really so distant? The moment I want it is there'<sup>34</sup>, he was making the point,

31. Such an idea is implicit, for example, in *Lunyu* 2.18, 2.19, 2.20, 4.14, 5.6, 5.16, 6.8, 12.22, 13.2, 13.13, 15.32. Liu Jiyao, 'Shi yu yin' 293, also makes the point that freedom to choose between official service and eremitism only became a possibility after the relationship between ruler and office-holders began to be established on an individual basis rather than in terms of heredity.

32. This is implicit in *Lunyu* 2.4, 5.27, 7.3, 9.3, 9.24; 11.20, 12.4, 13.3, 13.6, 14.42, 15.21. On the idea of moral autonomy in the *Lunyu* see Lin Yu-sheng, 林毓生, 'The Evolution of the Pre-Confucian Meaning of *Jen* 仁 and the Confucian Concept of Moral Autonomy', *Monumenta Serica* 31 (1974–75), 172–204.

33. *Lunyu* 2.4, 6.18, 7.33, 12.1

34. *Lunyu* 7.30.

in a paradoxical way, that benevolence is a question of rectification of the will: once we *really* want to be benevolent we will be so, but to get that far is not easy.

The *junzi* has his heart set upon benevolence even if he has not actually attained it. It is this moral commitment, his sincere endeavour to act according to correct principles, which makes him try to respond to each situation on its particular merits rather than mechanically applying general rules. What Confucius valued in personal conduct was flexibility. 'For the *junzi* in his dealings with the world there is nothing that is necessarily good, nothing that is necessarily bad; he keeps only to his judgement of what is right.'<sup>35</sup> To judge what is 'right' requires great moral sensitivity and discernment, but once the *junzi* has those qualities he can approach all situations with the flexibility which makes it possible to make the right decision every time – including the decision whether or not to take office, or whether or not to resign from his post.

Confucius was not one who regarded lightly the duty of a subject to his ruler, nor did he suggest that duty should easily be set aside. His basic principle is simple to state but far from simple to put into practice: the *junzi* serves in office as long as by doing so he can further the Way; once that becomes impossible he must resign to avoid moral compromise.<sup>36</sup> It was for his sensitivity and discretion in knowing the right moment to take office or retire that Mencius praised Confucius.<sup>37</sup>

When introducing the notion that a subject's duty to his ruler could in certain circumstances be waived, Confucius was conscious of living in a situation in which there was more than one ruler to whom a *junzi* with his heart set upon benevolence could turn. The principle 'do not enter a state in danger, do not stay in a state in turmoil',<sup>38</sup> presupposes a situation in which a choice is possible. Eremitism, as we shall see, was very much tied up with emergence of the multi-state polity of the late Zhou period. For Confucius, the purpose of retiring from a post was not merely to avoid personal compromise, but also to be able to go elsewhere, to another state, where, hopefully, it would be possible to help make the Way a reality.

Confucius indicated that should it prove to be the case that the world was completely without the Way, he would leave it and go to sea on a raft.<sup>39</sup> In his view it was only when there was nowhere else to turn that a man would be justified in withdrawing from society altogether. It is this idea which lies behind *Lunyu* 論語 14.37, a passage which at first sight is rather puzzling:

Worthy men shun the world; next come those who shun a particular place; next come those who shun a particular expression; and next come those who shun particular words.

Interpreting the passage as if it were written by someone like Zhuangzi must be avoided. The point is that complete withdrawal is justifiable only when the whole world is without the Way and therefore to be shunned. It is somewhat less defensible to

35. *Lunyu*, 4.10; also 9.4, 14.32, 15.37.

36. *Lunyu*, 11.24.

37. *Mencius* 2A.2, 5B.1. For this and subsequent references to Mencius, see also D.C. Lau, *Mencius*, 1970.

38. *Lunyu* 8.13.

39. *Lunyu* 5.7. Confucius also entertained the idea of going to live among the barbarians (9.14).

withdraw completely and finally if it is just a question of not wanting to serve in a particular state or territory in which the Way does not prevail. Remaining in retirement merely to avoid improper looks or expressions cannot really be justified at all, and doing it to avoid improper words even less so.

Confucius' own career demonstrates the strength of his conviction that if necessary a man of principle must travel from state to state until he finds a ruler willing to put his ideas into practice. 'A *shi* 士 who has his mind set on a sedentary life is not fit to be considered a *shi*'.<sup>40</sup> The idea of loyalty to a given ruler or ruling house is not to be found in the *Lunyu* because for Confucius there was no one ruler or ruling house with an undisputed claim to the mandate of Heaven. A *junzi* could serve with a clear conscience any ruler who refrained from improper conduct and offered some hope that he would put into practice the enlightened principles put before him.

The possibilities for serving in office in the multi-state polity of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, clearly, were very different to what they were after the unification of the empire by Qin and Han 漢. Once the empire had been unified, virtually all choice about whom to serve was eliminated. If particularly towards the end of the Warring States period men found themselves looking to a unified empire under one ruler as the only way of ending the chronic warfare and social instability which plagued their time, their counterparts under the empire that followed not infrequently longed for the opposite: they looked back with nostalgia to the time when, if dissatisfied with the particular despot or libertine who happened to be on the throne, a virtuous man could simply cross the border into a neighbouring state and try his luck there. No-one expressed this idea more clearly than Han Yu 韓愈 (768–824):

If the scholars of old were out of office for three months they lamented the fact, therefore when crossing the state border they were sure to carry gifts of introduction with them. Moreover, if it proved impossible to present themselves in Zhou, those who considered it important left and went to Lu 魯; if it proved impossible in Lu they left and went to Qi 齊; if it proved impossible in Qi they left and went to Song 宋, to Zheng 鄭, to Qin or to Chu 楚. Now the empire has one lord and all within the four seas is one state, and if one is set aside in this one can go only to the barbarians, leaving the country of one's parents. Therefore for scholars who want to put the Way in practice, if they do not obtain a position at court, there remain only the mountains and forests. The mountains and forests are places where scholars who like to nourish themselves alone and are unconcerned about the world can find peace; for those who feel concern for the world it is impossible.<sup>41</sup>

If Confucius and his contemporaries were aware of the opportunities for employment the political situation of their time presented, they were also aware of the advantages it had for those who did *not* want to take office. Thus *Lunyu* 6.9 records the fact that when the Ji 季 family ruling Lu wanted to make Min Sun 閔損 (Ziqian 子騫) the steward of Bi 費, the disciple said 'Decline politely on my behalf. If anyone

40. *Lunyu* 14.2

41. Han Yu, 'Hou ershijiu ri fu shangshu' 後二十九日復上書, *Han Changli wenji jiaozhu* 韓昌黎文集校注 (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1972), 95. On the implications of the unification of the empire on eremitism see also Liu Jiyao, 'Shi yu yin', 314.

comes to ask me again I'll make sure I'm crossing the Wen 汶 River [i.e. crossing the border from Lu into Qi]'. The existence of a number of states side by side meant that those who do not want to serve a particular ruler could move elsewhere – and this option was open to those who did not want to serve *any* ruler as well as to those who were eager to try their luck elsewhere.

There is one other passage in the *Lunyu* important for the history of eremitism which, though it is not as significant for later developments as the ideas already discussed, nevertheless offers such a superb, ready-made justification for any would-be hermit that it is surprising more use was not made of it for that purpose:

Someone said to Confucius: "Why don't you take part in government?" The Master said: "The *Book of Documents* says, 'Filiality! Simply by being a filial son and a friend to his brothers a man influences government.' This certainly is to take part in government, so why need one be actively involved in government?"<sup>42</sup>

It appears to be this passage which inspired the proclamation by Emperor Zhao 昭 of the Former Han in 80 B.C. announcing that the virtuous recluse Han Fu 韓福, who had been summoned to the capital and given presents of silk, would not be burdened with the affairs of office, but that his duty would be 'to cultivate the conduct of a filial younger brother for the edification of his district'.<sup>43</sup> The only place I have come across it used as an excuse for retirement from office, however, is in Pan Yue's 潘岳 (247–300) 'Fu on Living in Idleness' (*Xianju fu* 閑居賦).<sup>44</sup>

The passages from the *Lunyu* I have discussed thus indicate that the development of eremitic ideas was closely related to the emergence of the *youshi* 遊士, the wandering scholars who went from state to state offering their advice and assistance in the handling of state affairs, and especially to Confucius' moral interpretation of their role, which stressed their obligation to withdraw rather than compromise themselves through association with a corrupt ruler. Fundamental to this was the principle that a man of integrity has not only a right but a duty to decide, in accordance with his sense of what is right, to whom he shall offer his services and when he shall withdraw them. I shall consider some of the philosophical, social and economic factors involved in the flowering of eremitism in the Warring States period in the following section, but first I must deal further with the question of the extent to which the origin of these ideas is to be attributed to Confucius. What of the many hermits and virtuous men protesting against evil who are supposed to have lived before Confucius or as his contemporaries?

To begin with the hermits mentioned in the *Lunyu* itself: the stories about Changju 長沮 and Jieni 桀溺, and the old man carrying a basket on a staff 荷篠丈人 both appear in Book 18 (*Weizi* 微子), a section of the text which almost certainly dates from around the time of Mencius and Zhuangzi, when the social and intellectual

42. *Lunyu* 2.21.

43. *Hanshu* 漢書 (*Zhonghua* punctuated ed.) 72/3083; also Huangfu Mi 皇甫謐 (215–282), *Gaoshi zhuan* 高士傳 (*Sibu beiyao* 四部備要 ed.) B/9b.

44. *Wenxuan* 文選 16 (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1936), 323.

world was quite different to that in which Confucius moved some two hundred years earlier.<sup>45</sup> As will become clear from the discussion of these passages below, the points they raise belong very much to the debates current in that later time. They cannot be accepted as evidence that such hermits existed in the Spring and Autumn period. The story about Jieyu 接輿 the madman of Chu which also appears in Book 18<sup>46</sup> does not give us any particular reason to assume he was a hermit, any more than does the other version of this anecdote in the inner chapters of *Zhuangzi*, with which it is probably contemporaneous.<sup>47</sup> It is only in later versions of the story that he is transformed into a model hermit with all the necessary trappings.<sup>48</sup> Similarly in the brief anecdotes concerning the keeper of the Stone Gate (*shimen nong* 石門農) and the man from Wei 魏 carrying a basket (*he kui zhe* 荷蕢者)<sup>49</sup>, there is nothing to indicate that they were hermits, even if they subsequently came to be categorised as such.<sup>50</sup> This, plus the fact that the anecdotes appear in the later section of the text, render them useless as evidence that hermits existed in the time of Confucius.

As far as those hermits who may confidently be classified as legendary are concerned – including all the weird and wonderful figures clustered around the sage emperors Yao 堯 and Shun 舜, such as Xuyou 許由 and Chaofu 巢父, Shanjuan 善卷 and Puyizi 蒲衣子 – I shall say nothing except to point out that the enter-

45. Cui Shu 崔述 (1740–1816), *Shusi kaoxin lu* 洙泗考信錄 4/28–30; *Lunyu yushuo* 論語餘說, 20–22 (Cui Dongbi yishu 崔東壁遺書 [Shanghai: Yadong tushuguan 亞東圖書館, 1936]), on the basis of the forms of address used in various sections of the *Lunyu*, has argued that part of the text (in *Kaoxin lu* he refers only to the last five books, in *Lunyu yushuo* to the last ten books) is quite different to and dates from much later than the rest of the text, containing usages current in the time of Mencius but not earlier. His arguments were taken up and expanded by D.C. Lau, *Confucius: The Analects*, 222–27. Hu Zhikui 胡志奎, also drawing on Cui Shu but introducing further evidence of his own, has argued very persuasively that the whole of the second part of the *Lunyu* (Books 11 to 20) dates from much later than the first part, probably being compiled after the *Mencius* text was put together, and that the two parts most likely derive from the *Qilun* 齊論 and *Lulun* 魯論 respectively, which were combined by Zhang Yu 張禹 in the reign of Emperor Yuan 元 of the Former Han (48–33 B.C.). See the articles collected in Hu Zhikui, *Lunyu bianzheng* 論語辨證 (Taipei: Lianjing chubanshiye gongsi, 1978), but especially 'Lunyu bianxian yuanliu kaozheng 論語編撰源流考徵', originally published in *Dalu zazhi* 大陸雜誌 31.7–9 (1965) 23–26, 27–31, 30–36 and 'Lunyu pianzhang zuzhi kaozheng 論語篇章組織考徵', originally published in *Kongmeng xuebao* 孔孟學報 12 (1966), 153–96. For my purpose, here it is not necessary to accept all of Hu Zhikui's ambitious argument concerning the *Qilun* and *Lulun*, only his evidence that sections of the text in which the anecdotes about hermits occur date from around the time of Mencius. If it is accepted that these anecdotes deal with ideas and attitudes from the time of Mencius and Zhuangzi rather than Confucius, this in turn supports Hu Zhikui's argument that the second part of the *Lunyu* dates from approximately that period.

46. *Lunyu* 18.5.

47. *Zhuangzi* 4/86–89. On this point see D.C. Lau, *Analects*, 225; A.C. Graham, *Chuang Tzu: The Inner Chapters* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1981), 74–75.

48. See, for example, *Hanshi waizhuan* 韓詩外傳 (Sibu congkan ed.) 2/12b–13a; *Lienü zhuan* 列女傳 (Sibu beiyao ed.) 2/9 a–b; *Gaoshi zhuan* A/9a–b.

49. *Lunyu* 14.38 and 14.39.

50. Huangfu Mi, *Gaoshi zhuan* A/8b–9a; also Xi Kang 嵇康 (223–262), *Gaoshi zhuan*, in *Xi Kang ji jiaozhu* 嵇康集校注, ed. Dai Mingyang 戴明揚 (Beijing: Renmin wuxue chubanshe 人民文學出版社, 1962), 401.



taining stories about them are not to be found in any text that dates from before the beginning of the third century B.C.<sup>51</sup> and that their appearance is best regarded as an indication of the attraction eremitism had for men at that time. Similarly, there are other figures, who in themselves were historical enough, but who began to take on the appearance of hermits only in the eyes of men of later times whose minds were imbued with eremitic ideas. To this category must be assigned Yi Yin 伊尹 of the beginning of the Shang dynasty and Taigong Wang 太公望 of the beginning of the Zhou.<sup>52</sup> A good illustration of this type of transformation at work is the somewhat later case of Xian Gao 弦高, according to the *Zuozhuan* a merchant who in 629 B.C. saved the state of Zheng by a clever ruse which delayed the attacking Qin army long enough to enable Zheng to prepare itself against the assault.<sup>53</sup> The basic account of this incident is elaborated in the *Huainanzi* 淮南子; there Duke Mu 穆公 of Zheng wants to reward Xian Gao for saving Zheng, but Xian Gao refuses to accept, saying that if he was rewarded for having told untruths (to the Qin officers) it would undermine the fidelity of the state, and goes off to live out his life among the eastern barbarians.<sup>54</sup> Huangfu Mi 皇甫謐 enlarges on this still further in *Gaoshi Zhuan* 高士傳 by saying that Xian Gao was not really an ordinary merchant at all but a hermit of the marketplace who had refused to serve in office because he recognised the threat to Zheng posed by its aggressive neighbours Jin 晉 and Qin.<sup>55</sup>

Also from the *Zuozhuan*<sup>56</sup> comes the account of Jie Zitui 介子推 (or Jie Zhitui 介之推). There, all we are told is that when his lord Prince Chonger 重耳 of Jin was forced to go into exile, Jie Zitui followed and served him faithfully for nineteen years. When Chonger became ruler of Jin in 636 B.C. and was rewarding his loyal followers, he overlooked Jie Zitui. In anger and indignation at his lord's failure to keep to the traditional rites governing the relationship between ruler and loyal subjects, Jie Zitui together with his mother went into hiding and was never seen again.

51. The main sources are *Zhuangzi*, the inner chapters of which date from the time of Zhuangzi's death approximately 286 B.C. and outer and miscellaneous chapters frequently much later, and the *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋, which contains a postface dated 239 B.C.

52. Sima Qian 司馬遷 records traditions to the effect that Yi Yin and Taigong Wang were hermits but appears to give them little credence (*Shiji* 史記 [Zhonghua punctuated ed.] 3/94; 32/1478). The many tales about Taigong Wang are examined and sifted for historical fact by Sarah Allan, 'The Identities of Taigong Wang in Zhou and Han Literature', *Monumenta Serica* 30 (1972-73), 57-99. It was the tradition of Yi Yin as a hermit which led to the appearance of tales about figures supposedly his contemporaries but much more virtuous and uncompromising than he, such as Bian Sui 卞隨, Wu Guang 務光, Ji Te 紀他 and Shentu Di 申徒狄. Material relating to Yi Yin as hermit is examined in the interesting little article by Dan Tao 但譚, 'Yi Yin de chushen: shi chufu haishi Chushi? 伊尹的出身 (是廚夫? 還是爽士?)', *Huaguang* 華光 1.3 (1939), 4-6. On Bian Sui, Wu Guang, Ji Te and Shentu Di see *Zhuangzi* 6/13, 26/46-48, 28/70-78, 29/42, *Lüshi chunqiu* (*Sibu congkan* ed.) 19/2a-b, *Hanshi waizhuan* 1/12b; *Xinxu* 新序 (*Sibu congkan* ed.), 3/9b, 7/13a.

53. *Zuozhuan*, Duke Xi 僖 33; Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu* 春秋左傳注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 495.

54. *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (*Sibu beiyao* ed.) 18/10a-b. The basic *Zuozhuan* account is repeated in 13/11a, as it is in *Lüshi chunqiu* 16/10a-b. For the *Lüshi chunqiu* see also Richard Wilhelm, *Frühling und Herbst des Lü Bu We* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1928).

55. *Gaoshi zhuan* A/5b.

56. Duke Xi, 24; *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu* 417-18.

If we make allowance for a certain amount of embellishment and ideological purification, there is no reason why this account should be dismissed as untrue. Especially in the early Spring and Autumn period, when feudal structures and traditions were beginning to be eroded, there are likely to have been uncompromising traditionalists who felt they had to make a stand on behalf of social order and the rites against the modern tide of corruption. On the other hand, the rather grotesque elaborations and variations in later versions of the story, such as Jie Zitui cutting flesh from his thigh to feed his hungry lord and being burnt to death when that same lord tries to smoke him out of the forest in which he has taken refuge, are rather improbable.<sup>57</sup>

Jie Zitui is not one of the people praised by Confucius in the *Lunyu* for making a stand on behalf of virtue, but Boyi 伯夷 and Shuqi 叔齊 are.<sup>58</sup> In their case, complicated as it is by numerous alternative versions of their deeds, it is extremely difficult to tell fact from fiction and to determine their precise significance for the development of eremitism. Since I have discussed the legends concerning Boyi and Shuqi in detail elsewhere,<sup>59</sup> I shall restrict myself here to commenting briefly on their relevance to the eremitic tradition.

Boyi and Shuqi, their biography tells us, were sons of the ruler of Guzhu 孤竹 who both fled that state in order to remain true to the principles of filiality and deferment, Boyi because his father had wanted the younger son Shuqi to inherit his position after his death, and Shuqi because he believed that the position should properly go to his elder brother.<sup>60</sup> It is that part of their legend concerning what happened after they left Guzhu, however, that relates them to the eremitic tradition. After going to the Zhou realm, we are told, some matter arose over which they felt they had to make a moral stand, and hence they withdrew to Shouyang Mountain 首陽山, where eventually they starved to death. The grounds given for their departure from King Wu's 武王 domain vary considerably in different versions of the story. Most familiar is that recorded by Sima Qian 司馬遷 in the *Shiji* 史記, namely that they took exception to King Wu's unfilial conduct in setting off on a military campaign before the completion of funeral rites for his father, King Wen 文王, and his traitorous behaviour in taking up arms against his rightful sovereign King Zhou 紂王.<sup>61</sup> Another

57. See *Zhuangzi* 29/42–43; *Lüshi chunqiu* 12/5a–b; *Hanfeizi* (*Sibu beiyao* ed.) 8/11b; *Hanshi waizhuan* 7/4a; *Shiji* 39/1660–62; *Shuoyuan* 說苑 (*Sibu congkan* ed.) 6/4a–5a, 8/17a, 17/12a; *Liexian zhuan* 列仙傳 (*Gujin yishi* 古今逸史 ed.) A/8b–9a. For discussion of these passages in terms of the question of *where* (rather than *whether*), Jie Zitui went into hiding, see Wei Juxian 衛聚賢, 'Jie Zitui yinkao 介子推隱考' *Shuowen yuekan* 說文月刊 2.6–7 (1940), 103–09.

58. *Lunyu*, 5.23, 7.15.

59. Aat Vervoorn, 'Boyi and Shuqi: Worthy Men of Old?', *Papers in Far Eastern History*, 29 (September 1983), 1–22.

60. *Shiji* 61/2123. It is evident from the contrast drawn in *Lunyu* 7.15 between the conduct of Boyi and Shuqi on the one hand and the Lord of Wei 衛君 (Ousted Duke Zhe 出公輒) and his father Kuai Kui 蒯聵 on the other, that this tradition concerning the brothers was believed by Confucius and his disciples. On the significance of this historical contrast see Liu Baonan 劉寶楠 (1791–1855), *Lunyu zhengyi* 論語正義 (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1930), 7/41–43. On the events involving Ousted Duke Zhe and Kuai Kui (subsequently Duke Zhuang 莊) see *Chunqiu* 春秋, Duke Ding 定 14, Duke Ai 哀 16; *Zuozhuan*, Duke Ding 14, Duke Ai 2, 7, 15, 16; Yang Bojun, *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu*, 1594, 1597, 1612–13, 1640, 1694–98.

61. *Shiji* 61/2123.

version is that they objected to the covenants they witnessed being made between King Wu and his followers, covenants which promised land and title in return for participation in treachery and violence and were sealed with the blood of a sacrificial victim. Such practices the brothers are said to have looked upon as evidence of the final decay of the social order based on mutual trust, co-operation and harmony supposed to have been characteristic of the reign of the legendary emperor Shennong 神農.<sup>62</sup> Yet other versions would have us believe that King Wu wanted to cede the empire to them, or, less fancifully, that it was office and salary that they sought to escape by hiding away in the hills, or 'the position of feudal lords'.<sup>63</sup>

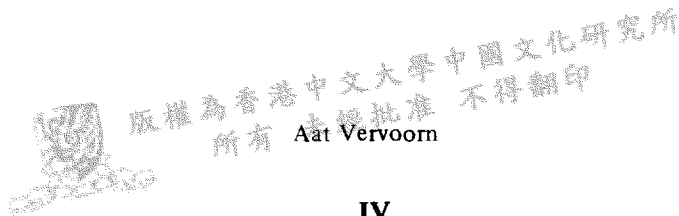
There is no evidence available to us that would establish the truth or falsity of any one of these claims, though it appears that the last three are relatively late in origin and are conscious attempts to turn Boyi and Shuqi into familiar eremitic types. Probably all these claims are reinterpretations of historical events which in themselves did not provide a neat demonstration of the validity of the doctrines of any particular philosophical school; the account of the brothers' departure from Guzhu is another moralist's reinterpretation of that kind.<sup>64</sup> But even if the story of their withdrawal and virtuous death on Shouyang Mountain is accepted as factual, Boyi and Shuqi's significance for the development of eremitism would still be minor. Not only would their stand to the death for their principles be such an isolated incident that at most it could be regarded as a singular event which had little discernible influence for at least the next five hundred years, but even the fact that the brothers withdrew to a remote mountain environment seems totally incidental: the emphasis in the legend is on them dying for their principles, and they might just as well have thrown themselves in a river or cut their own throats. Suicide can have links with eremitism, as we shall see later, but suicide is a course of action at odds with all the major philosophies of eremitism formulated by Confucius and those who came after him.

Therefore, as far as anticipating Confucius in the development of eremitic ideas and attitudes is concerned, the significance of Boyi and Shuqi was probably nil. At most they could be regarded as isolated examples of a type of commitment to moral principles that Confucius admired and which was central to his philosophy. More generally, we can conclude that while there were a number of people who lived before Confucius who expressed ideas which he took up and developed, or whose conduct he regarded as an inspiration or model, as far as eremitism is concerned there is no evidence of any significant cluster of ideas being articulated in any systematic way before him. It was after Confucius, and especially in the second half of the Warring States period, that a profusion of philosophies concerning eremitism developed and hermits became important moral exemplars. These developments will be discussed in the next section.

62. *Lüshi chunqiu* 14/7a-b; also *Zhuangzi* 28/78-86, which derives from it.

63. *Hanfeizi* 4/17b; *Huainanzi* 11/13b; *Shuoyuan* 8/19b.

64. That the story of that departure from Guzhu involves a refurbishing of history is evident from its close similarity to the story of the family of King Wen, which also concerns a ruler with three sons, two of whom leave their homeland out of the highest moral principles when their father declares his wish that his position should go to a younger son. In the case of King Wen's family, this is supposed to have led to the founding of the state of Wu 吳 by (Wu) Taibo 太伯. See *Shiji* 4/115. 31/1445-46.



## IV

Before Confucius, then, there were little more than vague intimations of eremitism. Hanfeizi, writing near the end of the Warring States period, on the other hand, complained that as a result of the influence of eremitic ideas it was becoming impossible to run a state properly: 'men of wisdom retire, turning back to live in caves and refusing salaries, so that armies cannot avoid weakness and governments cannot avoid disorder'.<sup>65</sup> Even though Han Fei held the view that even one hermit was one too many, there is sufficient independent evidence to show that his remark was not just polemical exaggeration.

During the Spring and Autumn period the lowest level of the aristocracy was the *shi* class. What the specific duties and responsibilities were that attached to the *shi* rank is impossible to say; however, they were clearly expected to be proficient in the 'Six Arts' of ritual, music, archery, charioteering, composition and arithmetic, combining cultural knowledge with military skills. Their rank entitled them to a small landholding, which they worked with tenants, and frequently they served as officials in the state administration.<sup>66</sup> In the late Spring and Autumn period a fundamental change began to take place in the social role and standing of the *shi*, as the idea of what it was to be a *shi* shifted from someone who occupied a certain social rank (and therefore could be expected to have certain skills) to someone who possessed certain knowledge and expertise (and therefore qualified to hold certain positions). Confucius' teachings played a major part in bringing about this change, and evidence that it was more or less complete by the time of the Warring States may be found in the texts of that period, where '*shi*' is used, not as an aristocratic rank in conjunction with *qing* 卿 and *daifu* 大夫, but as one of the *simin* 四民 or 'four professions'.<sup>67</sup> In other words, *shi* ceased to indicate a social rank and was used instead as an occupational category, along with farmer (*nong* 農), craftsman (*gong* 工) and merchant (*shang* 商).

The conception of the *shi* as someone who acquired certain knowledge and skills and then had to find a position in which he could apply his abilities, led to the appearance of the *youshi* or 'wandering scholars'. Confucius was not necessarily the first wandering *shi*, but as far as we know it was he who developed the moral conception of the *youshi*'s role, as someone who has a *duty* to travel from state to state in order to serve the Way rather than to obtain personal wealth and power. Naturally such an exalted interpretation did not appeal to everyone.

Yü Ying-shih 余英時 has argued that, during the Spring and Autumn period, on the one hand ritual and ceremonial observances became much more diverse and

65. *Hanfeizi* 19/6a. Han Fei's disapproval of anyone who dares to set aside their duty to their ruler is clear in passages such as 11/10a and 17/14a. For these and other references to *Hanfeizi* see also W.K. Liao, *Complete Works of Han Fei Tzu* (London: Probsthain, 1939).

66. Hsü, *Ancient China in Transition*, 7-8; Yü Ying-shih, '*Gudai zhishi jiecheng de xingqi yu fazhan* 古代知識階層的興起與發展', originally published the fiftieth anniversary publication of the Institute of History and Philology of Academia Sinica, *Zhongguo shanggu shidai dinggao* 中國上古史待定稿 (1978), rpt. In Professor Yü's *Zhongguo zhishi jiecheng shilun* 11, 24-29.

67. Yü Ying-shih, '*Gudai zhishi jiecent*', 20-24.

elaborate than they had been previously, and on the other hand traditions became confused and fell into decay, with the result that few people could claim competence in these means of regulating society and they gradually became a specialist task devolving upon the *shi*. During the Warring States period the *shi* ceased to look upon themselves merely as the interpreters of tradition and instead they began to see themselves as figures in a sense outside the socio-political system, as intellectuals whose task it was to formulate and transmit new teachings whose outlines society might gradually acquire. It was in the effort to provide such blueprints for society that the philosophers of the Hundred Schools competed.<sup>68</sup>

While Professor Yü's point is essentially correct, I believe he has tended to focus his attention on a small, rather elite minority of the *shi*, with the result that *youshi* as a group acquire an elevated status not all of them can have deserved. It would be wrong to suppose that all *shi* were serious men who looked for philosophical answers to society's problems, just as it is wrong to suppose that all *youshi* roamed the states with the moral zeal of a Confucius. From the accounts of the retainers (*ke* 客) of the feudal lords of the Warring States period, it is all too clear that they cannot all be placed in the category of 'unattached intellectuals' on which Professor Yü's discussion focuses. They were a very disparate bunch who hawked whatever skills they happened to possess. Some certainly were scholars and teachers, others found employment as military advisors and generals, with some adventurous types shading off into the *youxia* 遊俠, or 'knight-errant' category.<sup>69</sup>

Minor talents also had their hour of glory, if we can believe some of the tales recorded by Sima Qian. Lord Mengchang's 孟嘗君 employment of a petty thief and a mimic has long been referred to contemptuously by Chinese scholars<sup>70</sup>, and Lü Buwei 呂不韋 (died 235 B.C.) is said to have used a certain Lao Ai 嫪毐, who had genitalia of such generous proportions that when appropriately displayed they served to arouse the lust of the Empress-Dowager of Qin.<sup>71</sup> It could perhaps be argued that the term '*ke*' is not necessarily co-extensive in meaning with *shi* and that any *shi* who served as retainers were intellectuals, scholars or teachers, but there is no evidence to show that less illustrious retainers of the sort mentioned fell outside the category of *youshi*. *Shi* as an occupational category probably was much more elastic than it had ever been as a rank.

A number of rulers became famous for their patronage of able and learned men –

68. Ibid., 30–38. For different perspectives on the rise of the *shi* to social prominence see also Hsü, *Ancient China in Transition*, 24, 34–37; Hou Wailu 侯外廬, *Zhongguo sixiang tongshi* 中國思想通史 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1957), 1/40–47; Tao Xisheng 陶希聖, *Bianshi yu youxia* 辯士與游俠 (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1970).

69. On the *youxia*, see especially *Shiji* 124/3181–89; Tao Xisheng, *Bianshi yu youxia*, 73–98; James J. Y. Liu, *The Chinese Knight-Errant* (University of Chicago Press, 1967). The most famous example of the 'hermit-activist' type is Lu Zhonglian 魯仲連: see *Shiji* 83/2459–69; Long Lianjun 龍運鈞, *Lu Zhonglian pingzhuan* 魯仲連評傳 (Taipei: Zhengzhong shuju 正中書局, 1969).

70. *Shiji* 75/2354–55. Critics include Ban Gu 班固 (32–92) in *Hanshu* 92/3697; Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021–1086), 'Du Mengchang jun zhuan 讀孟嘗君傳', *Wang Linchuan ji* 王臨川集 (Sibu beiyao ed.), 71/8b; Su Shi 蘇軾 (1036–1101), 'Youshi shizhi zhi huo 遊士失職之禍', *Dongpo yilin* 東坡志林 (Peking: Zhonghua, 1981), 110.

71. *Shiji* 85/2511.

especially Marquis Wen of Wei 魏文侯 (446–395 B.C.), Lord Mengchang of Qi, Lord Pingyuan 平原君 of Zhao (died 251 B.C.), Lord Xinling 信陵君 of Wei (died 243 B.C.) and Lord Chunshen 春申君 of Chu (died 238 B.C.), as well as Kings Wei 威 and Xuan 宣 of Qi, during whose reigns (356–320, 319–301 B.C.) the Jixia 稷下 academy flourished. If some of the *shi* supported by these men held office and worked in the administration of the realm, others did not and presented themselves as guides and mentors who could advise the ruler on the arts of government. Both they and the rulers regarded their relationship as something distinct from the traditional bond between subject and ruler, as something which was more like the relation between teacher and student or between friends.<sup>72</sup> This is the type of relationship alluded to in *Zhuangzi* when Duke Ai 哀公 of Lu says, 'Confucius and I are not subject and lord, we are friends in virtue, that's all'.<sup>73</sup> Thus at the court of Marquis Wen of Wei the distinguished figures of Zixia 子夏, Tian Zifang 田子方 and Duangan Mu 段干木 cast themselves in the role of mentor and friend, refusing to accept official posts or regular salaries,<sup>74</sup> and relying for support instead on the gifts and ceremonial offerings by which the ruler showed his appreciation of their talents and virtue.

If the situation of such men, as of retainers generally, lacked economic security, it did give a type of independence that was impossible otherwise. Since they did not serve in the capacity of minister or official they could speak their minds relatively freely and could dissociate themselves from actions and policies of which they did not approve; since their bond with the ruler was an informal one there were not the constraints of loyalty to prevent them from leaving if they believed their situation had become intolerable. At the Jixia academy in Qi, however, these informal relationships were institutionalised: although the scholars there were not expected to take office and their task was 'not to carry out duties but to discuss affairs of state',<sup>75</sup> they nevertheless received the sinecure rank of *dàifu* for their service to the state.<sup>76</sup>

It is clear that as a way of maintaining independence and moral autonomy, no matter how proper and respectful it was considered by many, court sponsorship left something to be desired. When the arrangement became institutionalised, as at Jixia, it could reasonably be asked whether any claim to moral superiority based on it was not illusory. A witty expression of misgivings concerning this point occurs in the *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策 in relation to Tian Pian 田駢, one of the prominent figures at Jixia:

72. Yü Ying-shih, 'Gudai zhishi jieceng', 57–65. The stories about these feudal lords and their retainers provided much of the content of texts such as the *Guoyu* 國語 and *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策, but see especially the *Shiji*, *juan* 75–78. On the Jixia Academy see Hu Jiacong, 胡家聰, 'Jixia xuegong shi gouchen 稷下學宮史鉤沉', *Wenshizhe* 文史哲, 1981 (4), 25–33.

73. *Zhuangzi* 5/49.

74. *Lüshi chunqiu* 15/9b–10a, 19/19b, 21/4a; *Huainanzi* 19/4a; *Shiji* 44/1838–39; *Xinxu* 4/2b; Yü Ying-shih, 'Gudai zhishi jieceng', 57–59. On the distinction between a ruler's friend and teacher, on the one hand, and his subjects on the other, see also *Mencius* 5B.3.

75. *Yantie lun* 鹽鐵論 (*Sibu beiyao* ed.) 2/10b.

76. *Shiji* 74/2347–48. Sima Qian's remark is not to be taken completely literally: if there were indeed thousands of *shi* gathered at Jixia they cannot all have been feted in the way he describes, although the more illustrious ones were no doubt well treated. See also Yü Ying-shih, 'Gudai zhishi jieceng', 63–66.

A man from Qi had an interview with Tian Pian and said: "I have heard your lofty pronouncements, and though you claim not to have a government post in fact you willingly serve."

"How do you know that?" asked Tian Pian.

"From what I know about my neighbour's woman", he replied.

"What do you mean?" asked Tian Pian.

He replied: "My neighbour's woman claims not to be married to him. For thirty years it has gone on like that and they have seven sons. If they are not married, then so be it, but as a marriage it has been exceptionally successful. Now you claim to be without a government post, yet you have an income of a thousand *zhong* 鍾 and one hundred attendants. If you have no government post then so be it, but the wealth you enjoy is nevertheless more than a post would yield."

Master Tian excused himself.<sup>77</sup>

The point made here stands regardless of any doubts we may have about the historical veracity of the conversation itself: if you receive a *daifu*'s stipend from a ruler, even though you do not actually occupy a post, do you have the right to claim moral superiority to those who do serve? This type of criticism was made not only in relation to the institutionalised *youshi* at Jixia, for it focused on a moral dilemma which faced all wandering scholars, especially those as famous as Mencius.

In a passage in *Mencius*, Peng Geng 彭更 (believed to have been a disciple of Mencius), asks rather pointedly, 'Is it not excessive to travel with a retinue of hundreds of followers and scores of carriages, living off one feudal lord after another?'<sup>78</sup> Never at a loss for an answer, Mencius replies quite properly that whether it is right or not to accept something from another depends on whether it is in accord with the Way. Besides, he argues, a worthy scholar makes an important contribution to society, therefore he deserves to be fed.<sup>79</sup> What is not touched upon in this passage is the moral standing of the giver or provider. While there is evidence enough to show that Mencius was not one to compromise himself by associating with corrupt individuals, the issue can become a little unclear where the subject of respecting the rites and honouring worthy men is concerned.<sup>80</sup> Confucians have always used as a major indicator of a ruler's moral standing, as a measure of whether or not association with him could be justified, the question whether or not he treats worthy men with the civility and respect they deserve. A sceptic could be forgiven for doubting the sincerity of any self-proclaimed worthy who is prepared to classify a ruler as morally respectable on the basis that he extends to the worthy in question the honour and deference he feels is his proper due.

The point of Peng Geng's objection to Mencius and the rebuke of Tian Pian by

77. *Zhanguo ce* (Sibu congkan ed.) 4/16b; see also J. I. Crump, *Chan-kuo Ts'e* (2nd ed., San Francisco: China Materials Center, 1979), 165–166.

78. *Mencius* 3B.4.

79. Whether being fed is something which requires hundreds of followers and a baggage train of accessories is a matter not disputed. The vaguely opportunist note discernible in Mencius' reply becomes more pronounced in the words of later hermits who allude to this passage when justifying their own material concerns. See, for example, the anecdote about Xu Xun 許詢 (fl. ca. 358) in the *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語, 18.13, trans. Richard B. Mather, *A New Account of Tales of the World* (University of Minnesota Press, 1976), 337.

80. For example, *Mencius* 5B.4, 6B.14.

the citizen of Qi is that taking office under a corrupt ruler is not the only way of compromising oneself. And in the case of Peng Geng the doubts expressed relate to issues more fundamental than the possibility of hypocrisy and unjustified self-righteousness – he questions whether the *youshi* – and here he has in mind particularly those who do not take office – really do make any contribution to society in return for the goods they consume: ‘it is not right for a *shi* to take no part in affairs and yet be fed’. Mencius’ position on this issue is in fact very similar to that of Confucius as stated in the *Lunyu*. In his eyes a *shi* is making a contribution to society by ‘practising benevolence and righteousness’, be ‘being filial at home and respectful in society, and preserving the Way of the former kings for the sake of students who come after him’.<sup>81</sup>

The charge that *youshi* were parasites who lived off society without contributing to it is one which recurs frequently in Legalist writings.<sup>82</sup> More important here, however, is the fact that it was a charge that was taken seriously by some *shi* themselves, just as they took seriously the charge that *any* association with those in power was just as potentially compromising as actually taking office. It was with such men that what came to be regarded as the quintessential forms of eremitism originated; it was their response to those charges which produced much of what was to become the standard iconography and terminology for eremitism generally. Confucius taught that if one ruler proved impossible a man of principle had to move to another state to look for an opening. But what if one believed that *all* rulers were equally bad? Some famous *youshi* believed one could influence rulers without actually serving in office. But what if one believed that the informal position of friend or teacher at court amounted to no more than polite or intellectualised scrounging? Confucius and Mencius believed a man could make a significant contribution to the state and society just by conducting himself according to precepts which came from the sage kings and which he preserved and handed on to posterity. But what if some more tangible accomplishment was needed to satisfy oneself or to silence one’s critics? The only possible solution then was physical withdrawal, putting a distance between oneself and the centres of power.

What the individual did in his seclusion at the edge of society was largely a matter of temperament, but also was influenced by the pressures and criticisms he had to deal with. Those who were filled with revulsion and indignation against the socio-political system generally withdrew as completely as possible from human contact, to dwell in the mountains or forests, in caves or crude huts, and subsist on whatever wild foods they could find. Whether anyone in fact succeeded in living in total isolation for long is an open question – probably this image of the hermit represents an ideal type which actual individuals only approximated to a greater or lesser degree. It is exemplified by Xu Wugui 徐無鬼, who according to the *Zhuangzi* lived in the mountains and forests on a diet of nuts and wild plants.<sup>83</sup> That such figures continued to occur after the Warring States period is evident from the scornful comments about them made by Lu

81. Mencius 3B.4.

82. For example, *Shangjun shu* 商君書 (Sibu beiyao ed.), 1/4a–5a, 7b–8a, 10b–11b, 13b–14a, 5/6a; *Hanfeizi* 19/8a–b, 11a–b. For this and other references to *Shangjun shu* see also J.J.L. Duyvendak, *The Book of Lord Shang* (London: Probsthain, 1928).

83. *Zhuangzi* 24/1–25.



Jia 陸賈 (died ca. 178 B.C.) in his *Xinyu* 新語,<sup>84</sup> and the *Keyi* 刻意 chapter of *Zhuangzi*, where they are described as 'men of mountain and valley who condemn the age'.<sup>85</sup>

The more extreme the hermit's rejection of society and the stronger his reaction against his critics, the more total his isolation had to be. Sometimes, however, physical isolation was not sufficient to preserve personal integrity. Then it could be safeguarded only by the most radical withdrawal of all: suicide. Suicide in ancient China could serve many purposes. For those involved in affairs of state this included political protest; for those accused of wrongdoing it was a way of salvaging what remained of their honour. When suicide was both a socio-political protest and a reassertion of individual integrity, it could take on the appearance of an ultimate form of eremitism. The most familiar example in this context is Qu Yuan 屈原.<sup>86</sup> Another example, which demonstrates the logical continuity between eremitism and suicide, is that of Wang Zhu 王蠋, a virtuous hermit from Qi. When the Yan 燕 armies overran much of Qi in 280 B.C., the order was given by the Yan authorities, out of respect for Wang Zhu, that no one was to go within thirty *li* 里 of the town where he lived. They then offered to make him a general with a fief of ten thousand households, threatening to slaughter the inhabitants of his native place if he refused. Wang Zhu's response was that when the king of Qi failed to heed his remonstrations he had retired to the country to plough the fields, and that he would rather die than accede to Yan's demand. Without further ado he hanged himself.<sup>87</sup>

For hermits who still felt some responsibility towards society, on the other hand, those who believed they had a duty to make a contribution to the common good, the alternative to the intellectual and administrative tasks of the *shi* was direct personal involvement in agricultural production. Physical withdrawal in their case meant retirement to some rural spot where they could devote themselves to tilling the soil. But not all of these farmer-hermits farmed because of their social conscience. Some merely aimed at economic self-sufficiency, which amounted to a less drastic but more feasible way of minimising contact with the world. A good illustration of how this set of ideas developed ultimately from Confucius' principle of withdrawing from a state in which the Way did not prevail is *Lunyu* 18.6, which deals with the hermits Changju and Jieni who turned the soil by harnessing themselves to the plough. Jieni said to Zilu 子路:

'Things are the same the whole world over, so with whom could you possibly change it? And as to following a fellow who shuns particular individuals, what would you think of following men (like us) who shun the world altogether?'

84. Lu Jia, *Xinyu* (*Sibu beiyao* ed.) A/11b; also Kow Meikao 卓美高, 'A New Treatise on the Art of Government, Being a translation of the *Hsin Yü* of Lu Chia (? - 178 B.C.) of the Western Han Dynasty' (M.A. thesis, The Australian National University, 1974), 69.

85. *Zhuangzi* 15/1-2.

86. Discussion of suicide as a form of social and political protest is to be found in Laurence Schneider's book on the Qu Yuan legend, *A Madman of Ch'u: The Chinese Myth of Loyalty and Dissent* (University of California Press, 1980).

87. *Shiji* 82/2457. It has been suggested that Wang Zhu is to be identified with Yan Chu 顏蠋, another hermit from Qi (mentioned in *Zhanguo ce* 4/12a; *Shuoyuan* 9/2a; *Gaoshi Zhuan* B/4b-5a). However, both names are included in Ban Gu's *Gujin renbiao* 古今人表 (*Hanshu* 20/945, 948). See commentary to *Zhanguo ce* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 上海古籍出版社, 1978), 408.

The best and apparently most historically reliable example of the extremes to which this sort of attitude was taken is that of Chen Zhongzi 陳仲子 (also known as Wuling Zizhong 於陵子仲 and Tian Zhong 田仲). The *Zhanguo ce* contains an account of an interview of an envoy from Qi by the consort of King Huiwen of Zhao 趙惠文王 (ruled 298–266 B.C.). The queen asks how it can be that a man like Wuling Zizhong has not yet been executed, for he has failed to serve his king, regulate his family or associate with the feudal lords. She regards it as an indication of the depths to which government has sunk in Qi.<sup>88</sup> But if this conversation was historically accurate, the queen should in fact have been able to answer her own query: Wuling was in the state of Chu, and Chen Zhongzi presumably moved there from Qi in order to be able to escape persecution and live the simple life he was seeking. In *Xunzi* 荀子, Chen Zhongzi is referred to as an extremist in matters of self-control who failed to understand the importance of social distinctions and the duties associated with them, as someone worse than a bandit because it was fame he acquired dishonestly rather than just someone else's goods.<sup>89</sup> It was for his extremism that Mencius also criticised him, despite regarding him as 'the most outstanding of the *shi* of Qi':

Zhongzi comes from one of the great families of Qi. His elder brother Dai 戴 received an emolument of ten thousand *zhong* from Ge 蓋, but because he considered his brother's emolument ill-gotten he would not eat from it, and because he considered his brother's house ill-gotten he would not live in it. Shunning his brother and leaving his mother, he went to live at Wuling. When he went back one day his brother had been given a present of a live goose. He frowned and said, "What can be done with this honker?" Another day his mother killed the goose and used it to make him a meal. "This is that honker's meat", said his brother from outside. Zhongzi went out and vomited it up. He did not accept food from his mother but did from his wife; he refused to live in his brother's house and stayed in Wuling. Does this amount to the fullest realisation of his type of ideal? Chen Zhongzi's ideal could be fully realised only by an earthworm.<sup>90</sup>

Chen Zhongzi tried to carry to its logical conclusion the ideal that a man of integrity should not allow himself to benefit from association with any immoral person – to draw the line at not taking office, as far as he was concerned, was mere sophistry. So as to minimize contact with the corrupt world he tried to become as self-sufficient as possible. But as Mencius points out, to apply this principle rigorously would be to make any social life out of the question. Unless Chen Zhongzi is fortunate enough to meet someone as saintly and fastidious as himself, everyone with whom he comes into contact will inevitably have their share of the common human failings. He may make sandals and his wife twist hemp and silk thread for barter, and in that way scratch a living, but can he be sure that the house they inhabit was built by a Boyi or the millet they eat was grown by one?<sup>91</sup>

88. *Zhanguo ce* 4/64b.

89. *Xunzi* (Harvard-Yenching) 3/50, 6/3–4.

90. *Mencius* 3B.10; also 7A.34.

91. *Mencius* 3B.10. According to *Shuoyuan* 8/19b, in Wuling Chen Zhongzi made a living by watering other people's gardens – if this is true we must assume he watered only the gardens of virtuous men. There is a text called *Wulingzi* 於陵子 which is supposed to be the work of Chen Zhongzi, but it is a late and uninteresting forgery. See Zhang Xincheng 張心澂, *Weishu tongkao* 偽書通考 (2nd ed., Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1957), 1010–11. The collected works of Liu Xiang 劉向 in *Han-Wei-liuchao baisan mingjia ji* (ce 7/37b–38b) contains 'On Presenting Wulingzi to the Throne 上於陵子'. However, it seems strange, not only that a work presented by Liu Xiang is not mentioned in the *Hanshu* bibliography, but also that a person such as Chen Zhongzi would write a book at all.

The principle that everyone – from the ruler down – had to take part in agricultural production was fundamental to the teachings of the School of the Farmers or Tillers (*nongjia* 農家), together with the belief that this had actually happened during the reign of Shennong 神農 in a perfectly harmonious society based on hard work, cooperation and mutual trust. A.C. Graham, in his excellent account of this neglected school of ancient thought,<sup>92</sup> has argued that its doctrines originated in the coming together of some rather homespun peasant wisdom and the more sophisticated ideas of déclassé intellectuals – hermits who refused to take office and turned to the fundamental tasks to make an honest living. The problem with this argument is that it has explanatory power only if we assume that all hermits held more or less the same opinions.<sup>93</sup> It should be clear already, however, that eremitism involved a full spectrum of attitudes concerning self and society, while the Tiller doctrines only relate to one small part of that spectrum. Some hermits did regard farming as the only possible way of earning a living that was both morally respectable and socially useful; others, as we have seen, believed a man who withdraws from office can serve society by moral cultivation and teaching; still others washed their hands entirely of society and its problems; and others yet again, as we shall see in the next section, believed that a hermit should live in society but be completely detached from it.

What is obvious is that not everyone was satisfied by the suggestion that farming could provide a way of resolving the moral conflicts faced by the *shi*. After all, Confucius had explicitly rejected the idea that a *junzi* should become involved in tilling the land.<sup>94</sup> This was not just because a *junzi* should be prepared to go hungry if necessary, but also because as a *shi* he knows nothing about farming anyway<sup>95</sup> and should devote himself to those higher things which are his proper concern. The question did not pose itself for Confucius in the terms which subsequently evolved, and the idea of agriculture as a moral task became significant only in the Warring States period. The passage in *Lunyu* 18.7, in which an old hermit berates Zilu for his ignorance of agriculture and failure to work, might be thought to contradict this view. However, it appears that this anecdote is a case of putting words into the mouth of an eminent figure to give them extra weight rather than a report of a historical incident.<sup>96</sup> Zilu is made to observe:

Not to serve is not right. Not even the proper relation between young and old can be disregarded, so how could what is right between ruler and subject be disregarded? He may want to keep himself undefiled, yet he subverts the great relationship.

92. A. C. Graham, 'The *Nung-chia* 農家 "School of the Tillers" and the Origins of Peasant Utopianism in China', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 42 (1979), 66–100.

93. Compare the argument by Fung Yu-lan 馮友蘭, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (New York: Fress Press, 1948), 37, updating a theory put forward by Liu Xin 劉歆 (53BC–23 AD) that it is to hermits as a group that we owe Daoist teachings.

94. *Lunyu* 15.32.

95. *Ibid.*, 13.4.

96. The motifs of personal involvement in agriculture and/or complete self-sufficiency appear in many of the tales about hermits which began to circulate in the Warring States period. If an early version of a particular story did not include such details they were often used to fill out later ones. The best examples of this are the tales about Jieyu, the madman of Chu, referred to in note 48 above, and the various version of the Xuyou legend.

There is no reason to believe that hermits holding such principles were to be found in Zilu's lifetime. Similarly, there is in the *Mozi* a story about a certain Wu Lu 吳廬 who lives among the common people, farming in summer and making pottery in winter, and compares himself to Shun. Mozi criticises him because as *junzi* it is his duty to teach about what is right, not just to practice it himself.<sup>97</sup>

The topic of agriculture and the problem of how a hermit is supposed both to support himself and make a contribution to society leads naturally into a consideration of the general economic factors affecting eremitism. It is to these I will now turn, before going on in the next section to examine other important streams of thought pertinent to eremitism – in particular that which comes from Zhuangzi.

As the lowest rank of the aristocracy, in the Spring and Autumn period the *shi* had been minor landowners whose fields were worked for them by tenants. The *Guoyu* 國語, in the context of a description of the splendid achievements of Duke Wen after coming to power in Jin in 636 B.C., gives what is obviously meant to be a description of a social ideal realised:

The Duke lived from his tributes, the great officers lived from their fiefs, the *shi* lived from their fields, the commoners lived from their labours, the craftsmen and merchants lived from their trades, official servants from (the wages they received for) their service, and household servants lived from their private plots.<sup>98</sup>

In other words, the *shi* did not labour in the fields they owned. If in terms of the feudal system land was granted to aristocrats in return for their service to the ruler or feudal lord, then presumably those duties would have made it difficult for them to be personally involved in tilling the land.<sup>99</sup> While admitting that he had many skills,<sup>100</sup> Confucius specifically denied any practical knowledge of agricultural matters, as was pointed out above, and rejected the idea that a *junzi* should become involved in such matters. It was most unlikely that he would have held such a view if tradition had prescribed a farming role for the *shi*. Moreover, those who rejected the traditional *shi* ethos and Confucius' adaptation of it, such as the Tillers and the more socially orientated hermits, placed great emphasis on tilling the land *in person*, which would have been pointless if that was in fact the normal task of a *shi* anyway.<sup>101</sup>

97. *Mozi* 49/40–54.

98. *Guoyu jijie* 國語集解 (Shanghai: Zhonghua, 1930), 10/25a.

99. Hsü Cho-yün, *Ancient China in Transition*, 8, suggests that some *shi* must have worked the land personally, citing as evidence the *Liji* (*Liji zhengyi* 禮記正義, *Sibu beiyao* ed., 35/7b), which says that when asked his age a *shi* formally was supposed to reply (if adult) that he had been able to till the land or (if young) carry firewood for X number of years. But formal expressions such as this usually contained a strong element of polite self-deprecation. It would be hasty to deduce from the fact that the Zhou kings referred to themselves as 'I, the small child' (*Zhen xiaozi* 朕小子) that they were actually children. Graham, 'The *Nung-chia*', 96, also suggests that for *shi* to personally cultivate the land would not have been an unusual state of affairs.

100. *Lunyu* 9.6, 9.7.

101. *Guanzi* 管子 (*Sibu beiyao* ed.) 7/13a–b, 9/12b seems to imply that any *shi* not in office should personally take part in agriculture, but given that the authors of the *Guanzi* generally espouse Legalist principles that is hardly surprising and cannot be regarded as evidence that traditionally *shi* were expected to do so.

For the *youshi* of the Warring States period things were very different. To travel from state to state in the hope of finding a position under a heedful ruler was a risky and uncertain business which amounted quite literally to living from one's wits. A vivid (but probably fictional) illustration of this relates to Zhang Yi 張儀, who as arch rival of Su Qin 蘇秦 looms so large in the political intrigues of the late Warring States period. Early in his career he is said to have received a severe beating for some alleged offence. To his distressed wife's complaint that had he not studied and travelled to persuade rulers he would not have suffered such humiliation, Zhang Yi's only response was to ask her to check whether he still had his tongue. When she laughed and assured him that it was still there, a relieved Zhang Yi said, 'That's all we need'.<sup>102</sup> A *youshi* owned no land by virtue of rank because he had no official rank; he was dependent entirely on his eloquence to win himself titles and emoluments. Not surprisingly, even to talented men success came neither easily nor often.<sup>103</sup> If a *shi* was fortunate enough to hold office and have estates which gave him an income, he was certain to lose that land if he moved to another state to take up a post. No ruler would continue to support a man who helped his enemies, or even his allies. Thus Mencius complained to King Xuan 宣王 of Qi:

Nowadays when a subject whose remonstrations have not been acted upon and whose counsel has not been heeded, with the result that he has not been able to benefit the people, leaves (a state) for that reason, the ruler seizes him, creates difficulties for him where he is going, and appropriates his land the day he leaves.<sup>104</sup>

According to Qin statues any foreign *shi* who came to Qin was to be fined and any Qin *shi* who left the state was to be sentenced to three or four years' hard labour.<sup>105</sup>

If moving from state to state in search of a position meant a life of economic insecurity, to refuse altogether to hold office obviously had drastic economic implications, and it is easy to see why any *youshi* who was lucky enough to enjoy the liberal support of a ruler who valued his services as friend and counsellor would be hesitant to leave. Fidelity to principles in ancient China was not an easy option.<sup>106</sup> From this perspective the decision on the part of many hermits to take up farming amounts to taking the most realistic course open to them.

But to farm one needs land. By the middle of the Warring States period (say the late fourth century B.C.) the feudal system of land tenure was largely defunct. Direct taxation in kind had begun to replace feudal cultivation of the lord's estate as early

102. *Shiji* 70/2279.

103. *Ibid.*, 79/2425. On the poverty experienced by *youshi*, see also Yü Ying-shih, 'Gudai zhishi jieceng', 82–83.

104. *Mencius* 4B.3.

105. Yunmeng Qinjian Zhengli Xiaozu 雲夢秦簡整理小組, 'Yunmeng Qinjian shiwen er 雲夢秦簡釋文二', *Wenwu* 文物 1976(7), 9, Yü Ying-shih, 'Gudai zhishi jieceng', 90–91. The extent to which such laws were enforced is not clear. After all, the chancellor of Qin, Lü Buwei, supported thousands of retainers (*Shiji* 85/2510) without being charged with subverting the law, and many of them must have come from other states. Certainly according to *Shiji* 75/2361 *youshi* continued to go to Qin.

106. See the comments by Davis, 'The Narrow Lane', 4, 9–12.

as 594 B.C.<sup>107</sup> Land continued to be granted by rulers to deserving subjects throughout the Warring States period, but increasingly this involved commoners rather than the hereditary aristocracy. In order to build up their economic power most of the states encouraged the opening up of virgin lands by settlers; immigrants were attracted from neighbouring states by promises of exemption from taxation and military service. Increased trade and manufacture, the growing role of money as the medium of exchange, and rapid changes in family and local prosperity associated with warfare and attendant social upheavals will have helped to create an economy characterised by a high level of exchange.<sup>108</sup> Under such circumstances the buying and selling of land would have been an inevitable development which no ruler would have been able to eradicate even had he wanted to. There is no evidence to suggest that the buying and selling of land began as the result of anyone's policy decision; one moment's reflection is enough to show the absurdity of the traditional claim that it was Shang Yang 商鞅 who was to be blamed for it.<sup>109</sup> Everything Shang Yang did aimed at tightening control over the activities of the population, and this included enacting sumptuary laws under which the land, housing and clothing an individual could possess was determined by social rank, which in turn depended on military merit.<sup>110</sup> To encourage uncontrolled exchange of land would have been to destroy the strict social order Shang Yang was at pains to construct. In Qin as elsewhere, buying and selling will have occurred because no-one could stop it.<sup>111</sup>

The net result of all these economic changes, from which the social developments that led to the appearance of the *youshi* were inseparable, was that for those who did not want to be involved in state affairs there was land available which allowed them to turn to farming. Those with money could buy it; those with a more adventurous nature could acquire it gratis by squatting on virgin land. It may be that the movement of hermits into remote places was sometimes connected with state policies of colonising virgin land, since those policies could provide a legitimate excuse for occupying land for those whose principles might otherwise prevent them from doing so.

107. *Zuozhuan.*, Duke Xuan 宣 15; *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu* 766; Hsü, *Ancient China in Transition*, 108.

108. For an excellent account of these changes see Hsü Cho-yün, *Ancient China in Transition*, 107–116; *Han Agriculture* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980), 10–14.

109. *Hanshu* 24A/1126, 1137.

110. *Shiji* 66/2230.

111. There is some evidence that Shang Yang did take steps to eradicate any vestiges of traditional feudal patterns of land tenure as part of his attempt to create a completely regulated, meritocratic society. The list of his reforms given in the *Shiji* (68/2232, 79/2422) includes 'doing away field border paths and estate boundary embankments'. But this is no more a move to throw society open to market forces than any of his other reforms, such as the establishment of an effective administrative system, the regularisation of taxes, and the standardisation of weights and measures. That the buying and selling of land began in Qin as the result of government recognition of what had become common practice is indicated by a passage in *Hanshu* 99B/4129–30, which records an official's attempt to dissuade Wang Mang 王莽 from trying to reinstitute the well-field system: 'Although the well-field system was the law of the sage-kings, it has long been defunct. The way of Zhou has declined and the people do not follow it. Qin knew that by complying with the hearts of the people great profit could be gained, therefore huts and wells were razed and the grid of field border paths was established...' The fact that Shang Yang is said both to have established and abolished field border paths suggests that the expression means little more than that he formalised new patterns of land holding.

Such considerations will not have troubled those who rejected the idea that the state had a right to claim any moral authority over them. The more remote the location to which one withdrew the less likelihood there was of objection to land being occupied. Moreover, since the claims the state made on the individual did not automatically end just because the individual chose to ignore them, withdrawing to an isolated spot in the mountains or forests also served as a way of avoiding the attention of tax collectors, *corvée* overseers and conscription officials.

## V

In the previous sections I have discussed what may be considered the central developments in Chinese eremitism, namely, Confucius' moral conception of the role of the *youshi* and what were essentially modifications of, or direct reaction against that conception. From Mozi on, however, reaction against Confucius and the precepts he espoused led to philosophical positions based on quite different sets of premises, and these too were of major importance in determining the forms eremitism was to take in China.

One aspect of Confucius' teachings of which Mozi was extremely critical was the suggestion that a subject's duty to his ruler could be something other than absolute and unconditional. In Mozi's strictly hierarchical society it is the superior who is to decide what is right for his subordinates, not the other way around.<sup>112</sup> By denying that a subject's duty to his ruler was unconditional, Confucius was encouraging insurrection, says Mozi, and the only reason Confucius ran about from state to state and ruler to ruler was to try to stay alive – he only became finicky about points of propriety and righteousness when his personal well-being was assured.<sup>113</sup>

If Mozi rejected Confucius' moral individualism and aspired to the selflessness of Heaven, Yang Zhu 楊朱 in turn rejected Mozi's selflessness,<sup>114</sup> believing that the individual's fundamental duty was to serve himself, and that if everyone was guided by enlightened self-interest the world would come to order of itself. Self-sacrifice of the sort demanded by both Confucius and Mozi he rejected on principle<sup>115</sup>. It was precisely such self-sacrificing people, those who allowed their feelings to overpower them and endangered themselves for the sake of mere things, who were the cause of the disorder in the world. Yang Zhu taught 'keeping one's nature intact and protecting one's genuineness, and not involving the body in trouble for the sake of external things'.<sup>116</sup> Hence he refused to pull out even one hair from his body in order to

112. *Mozi* 26/14-15.

113. *Ibid.*, 39/55-59.

114. *Mencius* 7B.26; *Huainanzi* 13/7b.

115. See Thomasine Kushner, 'Yang Chu: Ethical Egotist in Ancient China', *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 7 (1980), 319-25.

116. *Huainanzi* 13/16a. The translation is by A.C. Graham, from his excellent summary of Yang Zhu's ideas in *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics and Science* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1978), 15-17. Also on Yang Zhu see the articles by eminent scholars in *Gushi bian*, volume 4; Chen Cisheng 陳此生, *Yang Zhu* (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1965), Aloysius Chang, 'A Comparative Study of Yang Chu and the Chapter on Yang Chu', *Chinese Culture* 12.4 (Dec. 1971), 49-60 and 13.1 (March 1972), 44-84; Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton U.P., 1952) 1/136-41.

benefit the world.<sup>117</sup> Although the topic of not taking office is not broached in any of the extant passages believed to reflect the teachings of Yang Zhu, there can be little doubt that he would have argued that to take office was to become embroiled in the pursuit of things. There would seem to have been some basis of Mencius' complaint that 'Yang is all for himself, which amounts to denying his ruler'.<sup>118</sup>

Whatever Yang Zhu's contribution to the philosophical foundations of eremitism, it was soon eclipsed by that of the brilliant figure of Zhuangzi, who aside from Confucius is the single most important figure in the history of Chinese eremitism. For Confucius, Mencius and the *youshi* influenced by them, refusing or retiring from office was always a second choice, a course of action which was forced on one by circumstances. Even those who reacted against what they regarded as the moral obtuseness of the *youshi*, such as Chen Zhongzi and the Tillers, shared their basic premise that selfless devotion to the Way is the first duty of a worthy man and that if circumstances allow it he must serve his ruler in whatever way is appropriate. But for Zhuangzi it was not a question of being pushed into an eremitic life by adverse circumstance: for him eremitism, properly understood, was the highest ideal to which a man can aspire.

From the perspective of eremitism Zhuangzi's teachings may be summarised as follows: Stay out of sight and out of trouble; keep away from politics and state affairs until such times as you have achieved sagehood. The perfect man (the sage, the true man), however, is beyond harm and can wander where he will, freely and joyfully; his environment has no effect on him, so he is totally at ease whether in or out of the world's affairs.

To counterbalance the usual preoccupation with Zhuangzi the ethereal mystic and to set his ideal of the carefree sage in its proper context, it will be useful to consider first that side of his philosophy which deals with the problems faced by all those common mortals still flailing about in the world's entanglements. Much of *Renjian shi* 人間世, for example, is concerned with the dangers that lie in wait for those who venture unprepared into the struggle for wealth, power and prestige. In the first anecdote Zhuangzi's Confucius warns Yan Hui 顏回 that the only outcome of his naive zeal to do good will be his own death: until he has perfected himself, gained complete self-control and detachment from the world, he has no business meddling in its affairs.<sup>119</sup> The same point is made even more strongly in *Ying diwang* 應帝王:

When a sage governs, does he govern externalities? He gets himself right before acting and makes sure he can carry out his tasks, that's all. A bird will fly high to avoid the danger of stringed arrows. A fieldmouse will burrow deep under the sacred hill to escape the threat of being dug up or smoked out. You aren't even as smart as those two creatures!<sup>120</sup>

In *Renjian shi* Confucius goes on to voice Zhuangzi's understanding of social and political realities: the impatience sermons would arouse in a despot and the unlikelihood that sermons alone would bring about moral regeneration in others; the

117. Mencius 7A.26.

118. Ibid., 3B.9.

119. *Zhuangzi* 4/4-6.

120. Ibid., 7/6-7.



attractions and dangers that fame has for those who pride themselves in their own rectitude; the impossibility of remaining self-possessed in the presence of a tyrant who inevitably has the psychological advantage. Similarly, Zigao, the Duke of She 葉公子高 is advised that if he wants to survive the diplomatic mission on which he is about to be sent he should do only what he absolutely has to do, to volunteer nothing of himself and remain as passive, as invisible as he can.<sup>121</sup> Qu Boyu 蘧伯玉 tells Yan He 顏闔 that in affairs he must proceed with utmost caution, keep his talents to himself and not entertain ideas about his own abilities as unrealistic as those of the praying mantis trying to stop a cart by waving its arms in front of it;<sup>122</sup> Ding the Cook ( *Pao Ding* 庖丁 ) also advocates caution, especially in dangerous situations.<sup>123</sup>

The general point to be extracted from these parables is that danger comes from drawing attention to oneself, from revealing talents and qualities that are of use to others. It is the beautiful pelts of tigers and leopards that cause them to be hunted, the cleverness of monkeys and dogs that lead them to be chained up<sup>124</sup>. Conversely, safety comes from being totally useless, for it is only when something is completely useless that it ceases to be an object of human desires. To become completely useless, however, is not as easy as we might think – to succeed in doing so requires dedication and persistence.<sup>125</sup> Should we find ourselves embroiled in public life before we have managed to make ourselves useless we must revert to the stop-gap measures of caution and discretion, recognising our limits, following along with the natural disposition of things and never trying to impose our will on anyone or anything not that way inclined already. But we must realise that it is only he who has attained complete understanding – the sage, the true man – who is truly beyond harm. Cripple Shu 支離疏 is able to keep himself alive thanks to his malformed body, but ‘how much better if he had crippled virtue!’<sup>126</sup> This whole dimension of Zhuangzi’s thought is summed up by a passage in *Ying diwang*:

Do not be the medium for a name. Do not be a storehouse for schemes. Do not put yourself at the service of affairs. Do not be the proprietor of wisdom. Identify completely with the inexhaustible and wander where there are no signs. Make the most of what you receive from heaven, but do not recognise gain. Be empty, that is all. The perfect man uses his heart like a mirror: he neither welcomes nor farewells, he responds but does not retain; therefore he is able to gain mastery over things without being hurt.<sup>127</sup>

The striking thing about these passages from *Zhuangzi* is that they contain nothing which suggests that to stay alive the individual must withdraw to some remote spot, seeking refuge far from human society in a mountain cave or forest hut. It seems

121. Ibid., 4/34-53.

122. Ibid., 4/53-60.

123. Ibid., 3/10.

124. Ibid., 7/13.

125. Ibid., 4/71. Obviously Zhuangzi is concerned with more than just trees in the parables that mention them. Trees seem to have served as a standard metaphor in ancient China for officials or those involved in government. Good examples of this occur in the *Book of Songs* (Mao 241, ‘*Huang yi* 皇矣’) and Lu Jia’s *Xinyu* (B/1a-2a). When Han Fei remarked that the ruler should prune his trees from time to time to stop them from blocking his gate ( *Hanfeizi* 2/14a-b ) he was not recommending silviculture as a royal hobby.

126. *Zhuangzi* 4/86.

127. Ibid., 7/31-33.

clear that Zhuangzi attached no particular importance to physical location, though it may be that in the individual's efforts to make himself invisible a situation could arise in which physical isolation would be a useful strategy. Some of the analogies Zhuangzi uses, such as birds flying high and mice burrowing deep to avoid danger, certainly imply this. But humans are not animals, and because the dangers they face are likely to be more subtle and intangible than those which threaten animals they have to devise much more devious strategies to avoid them.

The type of hiding that interests Zhuangzi – making oneself invisible by doing away with any outstanding characteristics or abilities – is a type of hiding that takes place within society rather than outside it. The best way to hide is to be a face in the crowd, to be completely anonymous: it is when no-one knows who you are that you will be free from danger. It is the desire for fame that is the biggest threat to personal well-being, hence Zhuangzi attacks it consistently, and his philosophical ideal, as shall be argued below, is a state in which all self-conceptions and personal identity vanish altogether. But to understand why it is the desire for fame that is the target of so much of Zhuangzi's criticism it is necessary to consider some of the social and religious beliefs concerning personal fame current in his time.

In Zhuangzi's lifetime, as in other periods in China, to acquire fame was generally regarded as a virtuous and proper thing to do. One reason the acquisition of fame was held to be such a meritorious and socially desirable thing was its significance in relation to ancestor worship. It was through fame that the individual glorified his ancestors and demonstrated the continuing potency of their virtue, hence it was his duty as a member of a clan to conduct himself in such a way as to bring the power of that ancestral virtue to the attention of all. Another reason was that the strength of the individual's moral influence was seen to be largely dependent on the extent of his reputation; an anonymous individual influences nobody except perhaps the few people he happens to meet.<sup>128</sup> 'A *junzi* hates the thought of passing away and his name dying with him'.<sup>129</sup> By this, of course, Confucius did not mean that a *junzi* should hunger for fame *per se* – he taught that a *junzi* should be more concerned with deserving fame than acquiring a baseless reputation<sup>130</sup> – but rather that a *junzi* should win fame in order to be able to exert a good influence long after his death. In Confucian thought, therefore, the connection between personal fame and moral influence was very close indeed and reinforced the basic principle of filiality that through fame one glorified one's ancestors.<sup>131</sup>

In the political sphere fame was even more important than in private life because political influence had to be spread over a wider area – ideally the whole world. The importance attached to fame in the political context is readily apparent from some of

128. Possibly no-one in ancient China was more aware of this than Sima Qian. See *Shiji* 61/2129, 130/3299–3300; *Hanshu* 62/2735.

129. *Lunyu* 15.20.

130. *Ibid.*, 4.5, 12.20, 14.30, 15.19; also Mencius 6B.6, 7B.11.

131. This principle is clearly stated in the *Xiaojing* 孝經 ( *Sibu congkan* ed. ) 3b, 13b. On the early development of the concept of filiality see Harry Hsin-i Hsiao 蕭欣義, 'Concepts of Hsiao (Filial Piety) in the *Classic of Poetry* and the *Classic of Documents*', *Journal of the Institute of Chinese Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong* 10.2 (1979), 425–43.

the state hymns in the *Book of Songs*<sup>132</sup>. In the multi-state polity in which Confucianism developed the political significance of fame was particularly marked. The type of situation portrayed by Mencius for example, in which people are supposed to yearn for the coming of a virtuous ruler,<sup>133</sup> presupposes that the ruler's reputation for virtue has circulated beyond the boundaries of his own state.

Such were the religious, moral and political reasons for acquiring a reputation. But most men will hunt after fame regardless of whether there are respectable reasons for doing so, just as they will pursue wealth or power without being asked to. For such people fame is its own reward, and whether it is won by honourable means or for honourable purposes is secondary. Confucius and Mencius were well aware of this and so was Zhuangzi. Seen against this background of both the moral and amoral pursuit of fame, Zhuangzi's distrust of the whole business is readily understandable. To pursue fame is to try to draw attention to oneself, and that, in his opinion, is a mortal mistake. To be a hermit in Zhuangzi's sense is to be completely unknown.

In view of what happened to eremitism after Zhuangzi this must be emphasised. In his own lifetime some extremists such as Chen Zhongzi and the Tillers were taking up farming and aiming at self-sufficiency; others tried to live outside human society altogether. What such actions had in common was that they amounted to a public condemnation of the world and an assertion of the individual's own unblemished virtue. Such public declarations could be sincerely made, but they could also be made from ulterior motives, such as to make a name for oneself as a man of spotless virtue. There is no evidence in the inner chapters that Zhuangzi was singling out these practices for criticism, though he cannot have been ignorant of them. Perhaps they did not seem to him to be sufficiently prevalent or fundamental to require a rebuttal. In the sections of the outer and miscellaneous chapters written by his disciples and followers the issue of physical withdrawal is much more prominent, which suggests that by then ostentatious seclusion had become more popular as a way of winning fame. Such practices received a significant boost when the *Laozi* 老子 went into circulation (probably not much before the middle of the third century B.C.):<sup>134</sup>

132. For example, Mao 235 (*Wen Wang* 文王), 240 (*Siqi* 思齊), 278 (*Chenlu* 振鷲).

133. See, for example, *Mencius* 1A.3, 1A.7, 1B.11, 2A.5, 3B.5, 4A.6-7, 4A.9, 4B.16, 6B.13.

134. It is impossible to deal adequately with this controversial issue here. I believe the arguments presented by D.C. Lau, *Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching* (Penguin, 1963), 147-62, for such a late date to be sound. Certainly there is no allusion to the *Laozi* in the inner chapters (nor in *Mencius*) and it is probably significant that in the inner chapters *Laozi* is always referred to as Lao Dan 老聃, never as Master (*zi* 子), just as Confucius is always referred to in those sections believed to be by Zhuangzi by means of his style Zhongni 仲尼, never as Master. On this latter point see Tang Lan 唐蘭, 'Lao Dan de xingming he shidai' 老聃的姓名和時代, *Gushi bian* 4 (1933), 332-51. The historical reality behind the figure of Lao Dan is a more or less separate issue. Sima Qian obviously felt at a loss when faced with the conflicting stories about him. It is said that Laozi was an older contemporary of Confucius, and both that he was a 'junzi in hiding' (*yin junzi* 隱君子) and that he had a post in the archives of the royal domain of Zhou where Confucius visited him for information concerning the rites (*Shiji* 47/1909, 63/2140. In the first passage Sima Qian qualifies the latter claim by using the tentative particle *gai* 蓋, 'but not in the second'). As we have seen, there is every reason to dismiss the suggestion of a gentleman in hiding in Confucius' time as an anachronism.

doctrines such as 'he who values his body more than the empire can be trusted with the empire'<sup>135</sup> provided good reasons for making a show of indifference to the world. During the Han and Wei-Jin periods the existence of the recommendatory system for appointments to office further encouraged this trend, and even during the Tang dynasty virtuous hermits continued to be one of the types of men officials were expected to recommend for government posts.<sup>136</sup>

I have argued that Zhuangzi was interested only in hiding within society, not outside it. Yet it could be claimed that in the inner chapters there is a passage which advocates withdrawal to a remote mountain environment: that is the story about the spirit man ( *shenren* 神人 ) of Guye Mountain 姑射山 in *Xiaoyao you* 逍遙遊<sup>137</sup> However, consideration of this and related passages will show not only that Zhuangzi was not interested in the idea of physical withdrawal, but also that he was intent on criticising the popular religious traditions of his time, and that those traditions in fact involved a particular sort of physical withdrawal which must have served as a prototype for eremitism. This point is important enough to merit detailed attention.

About the spirit man of Guye Mountain we are told, among other things, that he can protect creatures from sickness, ensure a bountiful harvest and travel beyond the human realm; his control over the natural elements is evident from his imperviousness to heat, his invulnerability to death by drowning and his mastery of the forces of the air. There can be little doubt that Zhuangzi takes over characteristics from *wu* 巫 shamanism to describe his spirit man, for such abilities were regarded as the special skills of *wu* in ancient China just as they were in shamanism the world over.<sup>138</sup> It is

– Gao Heng 高亨, 'Guanyu Laozi de jige wenti 關於老子的幾個問題' *Shehui kexue zhanxian* 社會科學戰綫, 1979(1), 35–39, has argued plausibly that Laozi is to be identified with the Lao Yangzi 老陽子 mentioned in the *Zuozhuan* (Duke Zhao 12, 26), that Lao Yangzi did have a post in the Zhou archives and that when Confucius was seventeen years old he went to him for information. There is reason to believe that the story of Confucius going to Lao Dan for instruction has some historical basis. The story cannot be Daoist in origin, since in Daoist terms it would be nonsensical for Confucius to go to Laozi for information concerning the rites. Nor is it likely that Confucian scholars would invent a tale about Confucius going for advice concerning the rites from a figure supposed to be hostile to the very ideal of ritual and ceremony. Hence the story, alluded to in the *Lüshi chunqiu* and the *Liji* ( *Liji zhengyi* 19/10b–13a), probably refers to an actual event which was recorded by Confucius' followers to show the importance Confucius attached to correct knowledge of the rites, and from the fact that Confucius went to Lao Dan for information we can be sure that Lao Dan was an eminent traditionalist. It may be that Zhuangzi, in whose work the earliest stories about Lao Dan the spokesman for carefree naturalness occur, played a major role in bringing about the radical transformation he appears to have undergone. To bring about such a transformation would have been easy for the philosopher who appears to have transformed the straight-laced Siyue into the irresponsible Xuyou.

135. *Laozi*, ch.13. For the variants of this text see Zhang Songru 張松如, *Laozi jiaodu* 老子校讀 (Jilin 吉林: Jilin renmin chubanshe, 1981) and D.C. Lau, *Tao Te Ching* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1982). Such ideas also occur in some of the later sections of the *Zhuangzi*, though they flatly contradict the philosophy of the inner chapters; for example, 11/13–15, 28/15–18.

136. Shen Defu 沈德符, *Wanli yehuo bian* 萬曆野獲編 (Peking: Zhonghua, 1959), 858–59; Ho Ping-ti, *The Ladder of Success in Imperial China* (Columbia U.P., 1962), 11.

137. *Zhuangzi* 1/28–30.

138. On early *wu* shamanism see Chen Mengjia 陳夢家, *Shangdai de shenhua yu wushu* 商代的神話與巫術 *Yanjing xuebao* 燕京學報, 1936 (20), 486–576 (Chen gathers together much of the material

logical to assume that the spirit man is said to live on his remote mountain because according to *wu* beliefs (as in shamanism in other cultures) mountains were regarded as places of spiritual power whose forces may be tapped by those with the right knowledge,<sup>139</sup> not because he is a hermit who stands aloof from society. In fact, what we know about ancient Chinese religion generally indicates that mountains were commonly worshipped either as gods themselves or as the dwelling place of gods.<sup>140</sup>

As to the attitude Zhuangzi would have us adopt towards this fantastic figure, there is no reason to suppose we have to take it any more or less seriously than any of the other bizarre things mentioned in *Xiaoyao you*, such as the great beasts Kun 鯀 and Peng 鵬, or tortoises and trees with preposterous lifespans. The point of such stories is to open our minds to the strange, the wonderful, to do away with assumptions and

— concerning *wu* for the whole of the pre-Qin period, not merely the Shang dynasty); Chow Tse-tsung 周策縱, 'Zhongguo gudai de wuyi yu jisi, lishi, yuewu, ji shi de guanxi 中國古代的巫醫與祭祀歷史樂舞及詩的關係', *Tsinghua Journal of Chinese Studies*, n.s.12.1-2 (Dec. 1979), 7-59; Joseph Thiel, 'Schamanismus in Alten China', *Sinologica* 10 (1969), 149-204. The best general study of shamanism is still Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), although he relies for his information concerning Chinese shamanism on J.J.M. de Groot, *The Religious Systems of China* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1910).

139. Chow Tse-tsung, 'Zhongguo gudai de wuyi', 46-49 examines the shamanic associations of some individual mountains and their names. Eliade, *shamanism*, 264-74, provides a useful summary of the significance of mountains in many shamanic traditions, especially among the Siberian, Mongol and Turkic peoples. On this theme in Japanese shamanism see Kishimoto Hideo, 'The Role of the Mountains in the Religious Life of the Japanese People', *Proceedings of the Ninth International Conference for the History of Religions* (Tokyo, 1958); and Hori Ichiro, 'Mountains and their Importance for the Idea of the Other World in Japanese Folk Religion', *History of Religions* 6 (1966), 1-23.

140. Mozi was no doubt expressing conventional wisdom when he said that 'In times past and present there have been no spirits other than those of Heaven, those of mountains and rivers, and those of men who have died' (*Mozi* 31/96-97). The *Liji* states that mountains and other natural features are inhabited by gods (*Liji zhengyi* 44/3a), while the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 goes so far as to define 'mountain' (*shan* 山) in terms of a mountain's cosmic power to create and sustain life: '“Mountain” means “exhale”; breath (*qi* 氣) is exhaled and dispersed, giving birth to the myriad things.' (Xu Shen 許慎, *Shuowen jiezi*, 9B) Ge Hong 葛洪 (mid 3rd to mid 4th centuries A.D.) was drawing on an ancient tradition when he wrote that "All mountains, great or small, contain gods and spirits" (*Baopuzi* 抱朴子 [Sibu beiyao] 17/1a). In the *Yao dian* chapter of the *Book of Documents* Shun offers sacrifices to mountains, while in the *Yu gong* 禹貢 chapter Yu's triumphal progress through the empire is in part an expedition aimed at gaining the submission and therefore support of the spiritual powers of mountains, rivers and other local deities. On this type of imperial progress, also evident in the *Book of Songs* (e.g. Mao 296, 'Pan 般'), see David Hawkes, 'The Quest for the Goddess', in Cyril Birch (ed.), *Studies in Chinese Literary Genres* (University of California Press, 1974), especially 54-58. Comments on the spiritual significance of mountains generally also occur in *Hanshi waizhuan* 3/16a-b and *Shuoyuan* 17/13a-b. The literature on specific holy mountains is enormous. Edouard Chavanne, *Le T'ai chan* (Paris: Lerous, 1910), 2-12, has a good discussion of mountain worship; see also Paul Démieville, 'La montagne dans l'art littéraire chinois', *Choix d'études sinologiques, 1921-1970* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973), 364-89. The etymology of the character *xian* 仙, or 'immortal', a pictograph of a man beside a mountain, also indicates a long-standing conceptual link between mountains, superhuman powers and the quest for personal immortality (see the entry for *xian* in *Shuowen jiezi*; also Démieville, 'La montagne dans l'art chinois', 367). Thus Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 (179-177 B.C.) is reported to have remarked to Emperor Wu that 'traditions concerning famous immortals have them living amidst mountains and swamps' (*Shiji* 117/3056).

convictions. *Wu* shamanism, like all the other conceptions of the world current in his time, Zhuangzi dismisses as 'petty understanding (*xiao zhi* 小知)'; the spirit man of Guye Mountain can only be comprehended by great understanding. A shaman may go to a mountain in order to draw spiritual power from it, and in retiring to such an isolated place provide a model for hermits who retire for other reasons, but for Zhuangzi's sage, as we shall see, eremitism is a state of mind, something which does not depend on physical location. The spirit man of Guye Mountain sees no point in becoming involved in the affairs of the world, but that is not the *reason* he lives on his mountain.

If mountains were objects of great religious significance in ancient China, the same was true of trees, which were associated with the gods of the soil.<sup>141</sup> Shamanistic elements abound in the passages concerning trees in the inner chapters. In *Renjian shi* the tree seen by Carpenter Shi 匠石 is no ordinary tree.<sup>142</sup> It is the arboreal equivalent of the sage, so vast and full of spiritual power that it transcends all normal categories of thought and expectation; its perfect uselessness is of a sort only a sage can hope to achieve. Nor is it mere coincidence that this tree is located near a village shrine, for this establishes beyond question its connection with the power of the god of the soil. The divine power of big 'useless' trees is equally evident in the story about Ziqi of Nanbo 南伯子綦<sup>143</sup>, who finds that licking a leaf from the huge tree growing on the Hill of Shang 商之丘 is enough to blister his mouth and sniffing it makes him drunk for three days. The spiritual power of the tree overcomes the powers of speech and ratiocination; like a shamanic medium who goes into a trance when in contact with the spirits, Ziqi is put into what in best psychological jargon is called a state of altered consciousness, simply by licking and smelling the tree's leaves. But compared with Zhuangzi's sage or spirit man a shaman is a bungling ignoramus, as Huzi's 壺子 treatment of Liezi's 列子 shaman mentor shows.<sup>144</sup>

I have stressed the presence of shamanic elements in the inner chapters, and Zhuangzi's view that shamanism is inadequate, in order to set in perspective his views on physical seclusion and withdrawing into the mountains and forests to obtain spiritual power. Zhuangzi's philosophy presupposes a tradition of turning to nature divinities for power as well as a tradition of running off into the mountains and forests for refuge from danger. It is only the existence of such popular practices that gives any point to his humour and satire.<sup>145</sup>

In the most general terms, Zhuangzi's own ideal was not very different from that of the other philosophers of ancient China: it was to acquire true understanding and

141. See, for example, *Lunyu* 3.21; *Mozi* 31/50-51; *Baihu tong* 白虎通 (Sibu congkan ed.), 2/4b; Chavanne, 'Le Dieu du sol dans la Chine antique', *Le T'ai chan*, esp. 466-76; W.H. Hudspeth, 'Tree Worship', *China Journal*, 7 (1927), 206-08; Henri Maspero, *China in Antiquity*, trans. Frank A. Kierman Jr. (Folkestone, Kent: Dawson, 1978), 99; Lao Gan 勞幹, 'Handai shesi de yuanliu 漢代社祀的源流', *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 11 (1943), 49-60.

142. *Zhuangzi* 4/64-75.

143. *Zhuangzi* 4/75-79.

144. *Zhuangzi* 7/15-31; also see 4/81-83.

145. The continuing existence of these two traditions was neatly confirmed by Ge Hong some six hundred years after *Zhuangzi*: 'All those who concoct medicines in their quest for the Way and those who live in hiding to escape (political) disorder go into the mountains' (*Baopuzi* 17/1a).

then make that understanding so much part of oneself that all actions issue from it spontaneously. The difference lay in his conception of what amounts to true understanding. Zhuangzi's sage is he who knows that ceaseless change is the only reality, that joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, life and death follow each other without end. Change is inevitable and the sage knows to accept with equanimity those aspects of existence man is powerless to control. All phases of change are the same for him, so in that sense everything becomes one. Life and death, self and not-self – the sage regards these as just so many instances of the eternal transformation of things. Yet within the process of change there is an order or principle, and it is with that that the sage identifies so completely that the self, as far as he is concerned, ceases to exist. Having done away with self-identity, the sage does not construct an image of the world in terms of his personal prejudices and call it 'reality', nor does he try to trap things in the web of his emotions. At one with change, he is as free of limitations as change itself.<sup>146</sup>

How does such a person fit into the human world? It is the sage's outlook that gives him his radical freedom. Unfettered wandering is a concept that is at the core of Zhuangzi's philosophy, but wandering is to be understood above all as an affair of the mind.<sup>147</sup> There is no suggestion that the sage, though free to wander through the universe, would ever forsake the world of men. Quite the contrary. 'He has the body of a man, therefore he gathers together with other men.'<sup>148</sup> Physically he is the same as other men, therefore he stays in society to satisfy his basic needs and associate with his own kind. What enables him to do this without coming to harm is the fact that he has done away with the desires and feelings that entangle others in the quest for riches, power and fame: 'he does not have the affective nature (*qing* 情) of a man, therefore "right" and "wrong" cannot get at him'.<sup>149</sup> If Mengsun Cai 孟孫才 cries when his mother dies it is because he is a sociable being and other men cry, not because he regards death as an occasion for grief.<sup>150</sup> The sage may have certain preferences, but he adapts to all circumstances with easy indifference; it is his inner calm, his tranquility of spirit which keeps him at a distance from others.<sup>151</sup>

Such was Zhuangzi's ideal. Whether many men could hope to completely bring about such a transformation of their conception of reality and themselves is debatable. It seems fairly clear that Zhuangzi regarded it very much as an ideal to be aspired to, and that this is why so much of his teaching is directed at those still struggling towards the ideal. For such people – virtually everyone – it is Zhuangzi's more 'prosaic' strategies, such as the eradication of desire,<sup>152</sup> the cultivation of uselessness and

146. See especially *Zhuangzi* 2/13–31, 37–40, 71–73, 84–96, 5/43–46, 54–55, 6/4–9, 20–28.

147. Wang Shumin 王叔岷, 'Zhuangzi tonglun 莊子通論', in *Zhuangxue guankui 莊學管窺* (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan 藝文印書館, 1978), 179–222.

148. *Zhuangzi* 5/54.

149. *Ibid.*, 5/54.

150. *Ibid.*, 6/75–80.

151. *Ibid.*, 6/4–17, 27–28, 67–71.

152. Zhuangzi was by no means the only philosopher to advocate the eradication of desire. The idea is present in the *Lunyu* (2.4, 5.11, 12.18, 14.12), in Mozi's doctrines of frugality and self-restraint, and was also developed by thinkers such as Song Jian 宋鉞 and Shen Dao 慎到. It was only Zhuangzi, however, who went so far as to compare the mind of the sage to 'dead ashes' (*Zhuangzi* 2/2).

perfection of anonymity, that have the most immediate relevance. Therefore it is not surprising that it was these aspects of his thought which were to attract most attention in the centuries which followed.

The outer and miscellaneous chapters of *Zhuangzi*, which date from approximately Zhuangzi's death to the early Han,<sup>153</sup> contain a considerable amount of material relating to eremitism which cannot be examined in detail here. Some of this material faithfully follows and elaborates the ideas of Zhuangzi himself. Important examples of this are the Autumn Floods tale, which explains how the sage merges with the crowd rather than setting himself apart from it, safe from harm thanks to his grasp of basic principles,<sup>154</sup> and the passage concerning Liezi in *Dasheng* 達生, which states Zhuangzi's central point explicitly: 'the sage hides himself in Heaven, therefore there is nothing that can harm him'.<sup>155</sup> Other sections, however, expound ideas quite different to those of the inner chapters. I shall refer to some of these in the brief survey of other significant developments in the philosophies of eremitism of the Warring States period which follows.

The doctrines of the *Laozi* differ in some important respects from those of the *Zhuangzi*, even though the outer and miscellaneous chapters of the latter contain some passages identical to parts of the *Laozi*. In fact, it is all too easy to allow the existence of those identical passages to lead one to exaggerate the similarities between the *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi* – a tendency which is greatly reinforced by the traditional view that the *Laozi* contains the teachings of the divine sage-founder of Daoism, formulated many years before *Zhuangzi*. One fundamental difference between the two texts is that, unlike *Zhuangzi*, the *Laozi* is essentially a political tract.

The political emphasis of the *Laozi* is evident in one of the themes it shares with the doctrines of the School of the Tillers, namely that of a primitive utopia, a simple, small, self-sufficient society in harmony with the natural world and devoid of any artifice or luxury that might inflame men's desire.<sup>156</sup> One major difference between these two schools of thought is that, according to the Tillers, the ruler must work in the fields alongside the common people, whereas the *Laozi* prescribes complete aloofness and passivity on the part of the ruler. A.C. Graham has argued that unlike the Daoist utopia, that of the Tillers depended on hard work to make it function.<sup>157</sup> But to suggest that there was no work to be done in the ideal society of the Daoists is misleading: it is just that it is not the ruler who is called upon to do it. Why make the

153. On this complex question see especially Luo Genze 羅根澤, 'Zhuangzi wai-zapian tanyuan 莊子外雜篇探源', *Zhuzi kaosuo* 諸子考索 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1958), 282–312; Guan Feng 關鋒, 'Zhuangzi wai-zapian chutan 初探', *Zhuangzi neipian yijie he pipan* 莊子內篇譯解和批判 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1960), 319–58; Zhuang Wanshou 莊萬壽, 'Zhuangzi xueshu 莊子學述', *Guoli Taiwan shifan daxue guowen yanjiusuo jikan* 國立台灣師範大學國文研究所集刊, 14(1970), 309–417; A.C. Graham, 'How Much of Chuang-tzū Did Chuang-tzū Write', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 47.3S (1979), 459–502.

154. *Zhuangzi* 17/24–28. That the sage hides among the people is also stated in 11/57–59, 20/33–34, 25/34.

155. *Ibid.*, 19/14–15.

156. *Laozi*, esp. Ch.80, but also 3, 19, 53, 57.

157. Graham, 'The Nung-chia', 93.



people weak-willed and strong-boned if not to make them willing workers?<sup>158</sup> The difference between the two schools can be better expressed as follows: the Tillers took a personal philosophy of farming as an alternative to serving in office and turned it into a universal socio-political doctrine which applied to the ruler as much as to the *shi*; the *Laozi* school took a personal philosophy of complete withdrawal from the sordid world and turned it into an art of ruling<sup>159</sup> by means of which the ruler becomes invisible to his subjects and by non-interference in affairs sets the country to rights.

It could be said that there is nothing in *Laozi* that deals explicitly with eremitism, yet at the same time the whole text is pervaded with the ideal of disregarding the self and doing away with desires.<sup>160</sup> But it is an ideal which is meant to apply only to the ruler. Again and again eremitic principles are presented as political arts, as ways of winning power and success. Thus, to be unacclaimed is said to be the perfect acclaim; <sup>161</sup> the sage wins the empire by not interfering<sup>162</sup>; the best ruler is one of whose existence the people are unaware,<sup>163</sup> someone who can take his place over the people without harming them.<sup>164</sup> Seclusion and quietism are the means by which the ruler brings harmony and stability to his state, but they are not an option for the common people.

It is illuminating to compare the *Laozi* both with the *Hanfeizi* and the *Liushi chunqiu*, texts from much the same time but differing in important ways. Thus Han Fei's ideal ruler too is hidden from his subjects, and from concealment observes the conduct of his underlings,<sup>165</sup> and Han Fei Says clearly that the way of the ruler is not the way of his subjects,<sup>166</sup> but unlike the teachings of the *Laozi* Han Fei's doctrines include an essential ingredient of deviousness and duplicity. The difference is fundamental, for unlike Han Fei's Legalist ruler, the sage ruler in the *Laozi* is what he seems: passive, emotionless, void. He genuinely must be disinterested in political power and worldly affairs; he really must be blockish, devoid of scheming cleverness. To this extent the sage in the *Laozi* is Zhuangzi's sage. But according to the *Laozi* it is precisely those sagely qualities that will win him the throne. 'He who values his body more than the empire can be entrusted with the empire'.<sup>167</sup> Moreover, once

158. *Laozi*, 3.

159. Even if we allow for the fact that a quietistic concept as important as that of nonaction (*wuwei* 無為) may have originated as a political principle in the works of Shen Buhai 申不害 (see H.G. Creel, 'On the Origin of Wu-Wei', in *What is Taoism? and other Studies in Chinese Cultural History* [University of Chicago Press, 1970], and *Shen Pu-hai: a Chinese Political Philosopher of the Fourth Century B.C.* [University of Chicago Press, 1974]), the quietism and self-effacement advocated in the *Laozi* in spirit is closer to the inner chapters of *Zhuangzi*. On the political aspects of *Laozi* see also Liu Ts'un-yan 柳存仁, *On the Art of Ruling a Big Country: Views of Three Chinese Emperors* (Canberra: The Australian National University Press, 1973).

160. For example, *Laozi* 1, 7, 9, 12, 13, 19, 34, 44, 46, 57.

161. *Ibid.*, 39; cf. *Zhuangzi* 18/11.

162. *Ibid.*, 35, 45, 48.

163. *Ibid.*, 17.

164. *Ibid.*, 66.

165. *Hanfeizi* 1/11a, 2/8b.

166. *Ibid.*, 2/10b; cf. *Zhuangzi* 13/18–20.

167. *Laozi* 13; also 35, 45, 48.

this eremitic sage is on the throne his benign influence will flow down to the people just as surely as if he was a Confucian sage-king, and like their ruler the people will be rid of their cravings for worldly things.<sup>168</sup> The end product of this process could be described as an eremitic society.

In the *Lüshi chunqiu* the differences between what is appropriate for the ruler and what is appropriate for his subjects are developed at length; those differences underlie the entire political and social vision propounded in the work. The ruler, it is argued, must value his life above all other things and let all his actions be determined by enlightened self-preservation; the way that the self is preserved is by forgetting all about it, by doing away with all partiality or subjectivity (*si 私*) and attaining the selflessness of Heaven.<sup>169</sup> All the terminology of the *Laozi* relating to simplicity, selflessness, quietude and non-action is applied to the ruler in the *Lüshi chunqiu*.<sup>170</sup> One major difference, however, is that like Xunzi,<sup>171</sup> Lü Buwei's scholars believed in educating and redirecting desires rather than attempting the impossible task of eradicating them completely. It is by self-cultivation, not suppression, that the ruler becomes completely selfless.<sup>172</sup> Still, 'the conduct of the ruler of men is different to that of the common people'.<sup>173</sup> Again and again it is said that the ruler is dependent on his virtuous and industrious subordinates.<sup>174</sup> Where are such subordinates to be found? Having struck the dark times of the late Warring States period, worthy men have naturally gone off into seclusion, hence it is in remote and obscure places that the ruler must look for them, in the mountains and forests, by the rivers and seas.<sup>175</sup> And how is the ruler to make use of such men if he is fortunate enough to find them?

... the more desires men have the more they can be used, the less desires men have the less they can be used; those who have no desires cannot be used at all ... He who is good at ruling is able to make men to have endless desires, hence the use he can make of them is also endless.<sup>176</sup>

The only hermits considered as good models for a ruler's subjects in the *Lüshi chunqiu* are those who have withdrawn for moral reasons.<sup>177</sup> Such men make good subjects because if necessary they would be willing to die for the right ruler.<sup>178</sup> Hermits of the Zhuangzi mode, whose eremitism is based on selflessness and lack of desire for worldly things, are mentioned primarily in order to set them up as examples to be emulated by the ruler himself.<sup>179</sup>

Although the doctrines of selflessness and desirelessness, simplicity and quietude

168. *Ibid.*, 19, 57.

169. *Lüshi chunqiu* 1/9a, 2/11b; also 12/10b, 13/11a, 15/2a-b, 15/8b-9a, 19/20a.

170. For example, 3/8a-b, 5/4b, 17/4b, 17/9a, 25/6a.

171. *Xunzi* 19/1-13, 22/55-67.

172. *Lüshi chunqiu* 4/7b-8a, 5/4a-b.

173. *Ibid.*, 20/14b.

174. For example, 11/5b, 12/3a-b, 14/1a-b, 14/3b, 16/3b-4a, 22/8a-b.

175. *Ibid.*, 13/10b, 14/9b, 16/4b.

176. *Ibid.*, 19/14b-15a, amended as suggested by Sun Jiangming 孫鏞鳴. See Xu Weiyu 許維遜, *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi* 呂氏春秋集釋 (Beijing: Wenxue guji kanxingshe 文學古籍刊行社, 1955), 902.

177. *Lüshi chunqiu* 8/9b, 11/5a, 12/3a-b.

178. For example, 12/3b-4a, 12/5a, 12/6b-7a.

179. For example, 2/3b, 15/8b, 19/1b.

were developed in the *Laozi* in relation to the ruler only, their influence in Han and later times was much wider than that. Thanks partly to the tremendous prestige the text enjoyed, particularly after the deification of Laozi in the Later Han,<sup>180</sup> and partly to the fact that its teachings could to some degree be reconciled with Confucian principles, it was the *Laozi* rather than the *Zhuangzi* that became the most important source of such doctrines for any would-be hermits of later periods.

One other theme of the *Laozi* which is important in relation to the history of eremitism and also demonstrates the continuity of ideas between the *Laozi* and aspects of Confucian thought is that of timeliness. This concept, which is also crucial to the Ten Wings of the *Book of Changes* (which appear to date from much the same period), provides a way of finding room for both periods of dutiful service and periods of lofty withdrawal in the individual's relationship with ruler and society. The essence of this outlook was already present in Confucius, but in the *Laozi* and more especially the Ten Wings such behaviour is slotted into a cosmo-logical framework. In this way eremitism ceased to be a type of conduct which *prima facie* required moral justification and became something natural and inevitable, a part of the eternal order of things.

Timeliness, it should be noted, is an issue which was to become of major significance after the Qin unification of the empire. When the destruction of the other states ended the option of moving from the domain of one ruler to another, change in time replaced change in place as the main source of hope for those dissatisfied with the status quo.

In the *Laozi*, timeliness in withdrawing is expressed in terms of knowing contentment, of knowing when one has enough, of recognising that things begin to ebb as soon as they have reached fullness, that a rise is always followed by a decline.<sup>181</sup> Change is the only thing that can be counted on and the sage finds contentment in following along with the unfolding to the *dao* 道. 'To retire when things have been accomplished is the way of Heaven'.<sup>182</sup> In the Ten Wings of the *Book of Changes*, as was pointed out in the first section of this monograph, eremitism was introduced into the schematic representation of the cosmic process of change by the hexagrams when those passages in the hexagram and line texts which advocated inaction, caution or withdrawal were interpreted in terms of the eremitic ideas the commentators brought to the text.

This sort of integration of eremitism with cosmology is also to be found in sections of the outer and miscellaneous chapters of *Zhuangzi* dating from the early Han period. The *Keyi* chapter, for example, contains a five-fold classification of *shi*: there

180. On the divinisation of Laozi see Anna K. Seidel, *La divinisation de Lao tseu dans le Taoisme des Han* (Publications de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient 68, Paris, 1969). On the Daoist influences in the Former Han, see Wang Mingsheng 王鳴盛, *Shiqi shi shangjue* 十七史商榷 (*Congshu jicheng* ed.), 6/51; Zhou Shaoxian 周紹賢, 'Huang-Lao sixiang zai xihan' 黃老思想在西漢; *Guoli Zhengzhi daxue xuebao* 國立政治大學學報, 26 (1972), 85-102; Xiong Tieji 熊鐵基, 'Cong "Lushi Chunqiu" dao "Huainanzi": lun Qin-Han zhi ji de xin daojia' 從《呂氏春秋》到《淮南子》: 論秦漢之際的新道家; *Wenshizhe*, 1981(2), 73-78, 88; Zhang Weihua 張維華, 'Shi "Huang-Lao" zhi cheng' 釋"黃老"之稱; *Wenshizhe* 1981(4), 13-24.

181. *Laozi*, 32, 33, 44.

182. *Ibid.*, 9.

are moral extremists who condemn the world and withdraw to isolation in the mountains and valleys; scholars who devote themselves to learning and teaching, hoping to transform the world with their doctrines of benevolence, righteousness, loyalty and fidelity; scholars who make a name for themselves in the affairs of court and state, establish social order and propriety and devote themselves to government; carefree idlers who are indifferent to world affairs and withdraw to a life of non-action and quietude by the rivers and seas; and those who practice the arts of longevity, aspire to immortality and have no interest except to nourish their bodies.<sup>183</sup> In this system, eremitism is given a place in the cosmic scheme of things, not in terms of the necessity of responding to changing circumstances, but in terms of psychological differences which are the result of the operation of the Five Phases (*wu xing* 五行) in individual personalities and social affairs. The relevant correlations may be set out as follows:<sup>184</sup>

Phase	Type of Shi	Type of Government
Earth	Moral Fanatic	Pervasive
Fire	Moral Teacher	Enlightened
Metal	Man of Action	Vigorous
Water	Man of Nonaction	Quietistic
Wood	Seeker of Longevity	Relaxed.

Other five-fold classifications of social types are to be found in other texts. For example, *Xunzi* contains two different classifications of men according to degree of enlightenment<sup>185</sup>. Somewhat later, Huan Tan 桓譚 (43 B.C. – 28 A.D.) in his *Xin lun* 新論 included a five-fold classification of spiritual men, in which hermits (*yinlun* 隱論) ranked second after divine immortals.<sup>186</sup> It is impossible to ascertain how widely any such classifications were accepted, but perhaps their authority is less important than the fact that they were obviously very much a topical concern at the time when Five Phases theory was influential, and that they helped to establish a place for eremitism in what was regarded as the eternal scheme of things.

Up to this point I have not discussed the views of Mencius and Xunzi separately, because their position with regard to eremitism is essentially the same as that of Confucius himself. In view of their influence in later times, however, it may be appropriate to conclude by mentioning their specific contributions to the history of eremitism.

183. *Zhuangzi* 15/1–6.

184. The correlations for type of government are taken from *Huangdi neijing suwen* 黃帝內經素問 (*Suwen Wang Bing zhu* 素問王冰注, *Sibu beiyao* ed., 20/12b); see also Alfred Forke, *Lun-hêng* (2nd ed., rpt. New York: Paragon Book Gallery, 1962), 2/448; Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol.2 (Cambridge U.P., 1956), 263. According to Zhang Xinzhen, *Weishu tongkao*, 978, the *Suwen* dates no later than early Former Han. Evidence of similar correlations is also to be found in the *Guanzi* 14/4b–9a (trans. Needham, 2/248–49), which dates from approximately the same period.

185. *Xunzi* 3/39, 31/5–6.

186. Huan Tan, *Xinlun* (fragment); commentary to *Wenxuan* 12, trans. T. Pokora, *Hsin-lun (New Treatise) and Other Writings by Huan Tan (43 B.C.–28 A.D.)*, Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies No. 20 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1975), 150–51.

Mencius reiterates that the first duty of a *junzi* is to resign from his post if by staying he will not positively further the Way: 'someone whose responsibility it is to give advice will leave if he is unable to do so'.<sup>187</sup> But this did not mean that he believed a *junzi* should resign quickly – he himself delayed his departure from Qi to the extent that he was criticised for being unrealistic.<sup>188</sup>

However, there are two other ideas related to eremitism which Mencius was the first influential figure to state. One is the idea, already mentioned in connection with the Five Phases theory, that whether or not someone withdraws from a given situation depends to some extent on individual personality:

The actions of the sages are not always the same: some keep their distance from the world, some involve themselves in it, some resign their positions, some do not resign; for all it amounts to being set on remaining undefiled.<sup>189</sup>

It is not just that men respond differently to different situations, but that men respond differently to similar situations. Yi Yin, Boyi, Liuxia Hui 柳下惠 and Confucius were all sages, says Mencius, but they responded differently to the one basic dilemma because of their different personalities. Confucius was the sage whose actions were timely and was unflinching in his judgement, but Mencius still admires the others for doing what they believed was right.<sup>190</sup> Such a position opens up the possibility of defending a hermit's decision to remain in seclusion by reference to his psychological make-up rather than by reference to objective circumstances.<sup>191</sup>

The other important idea formulated by Mencius is that even if their actions are not always completely perfect, the conduct of hermits can serve as a model and inspiration to later generations if their lives are recorded and praised. Thus, he refers to Boyi and Liuxia Hui as 'teachers of one hundred generations' who by force of example continued to transform the character of those who came after them: 'one hundred generations ago they set their example and for one hundred generations those who have heard about them have all been inspired by them'.<sup>192</sup> Ban Gu 班固 restated this idea in *Hanshu* 漢書 72, the chapter devoted to the lives of hermits and other figures who refused to compromise their ideals,<sup>193</sup> and this chapter served as the prototype for the chapters on hermits which came to be included in the majority of the standard histories.

As we might expect, Xunzi takes a rather stern view of eremitism. He condemns impractical idealists and moral extremists such as Shentu Di 申徒狄 and Chen Zhongzi as mere sensationalists out to make a reputation for themselves.<sup>194</sup> Nevertheless, he accepts that there are times when withdrawal is necessary to preserve

187. *Mencius* 2B.5.

188. *Ibid.*, 2B.10.

189. *Ibid.*, 5A.7.

190. *Ibid.*, 2A.2, 5B.1.

191. A witty and famous example is Xi Kang's letter to Shan Tao ('*Yu Shan Juyuan juejiao shu* 與山巨源絕交書'), *Wenxuan* 43; *Xi Kang ji jiaozhu* 112–131.

192. *Mencius* 7B.15.

193. *Hanshu*, 72/3055.

194. *Xunzi* 3/1–2, 50. His rejection of hermits who withdraw in order to avoid the world's distractions and cultivate quietude (21/61–63), though more humorously expressed, is just as total.

personal integrity, and a great Confucian can win deserved fame through virtuous retirement.<sup>195</sup> Xunzi's main contribution in this context is to state clearly and explicitly the principle that when circumstances force him to retire the sage devotes himself to clarifying the Way, to scholarship and teaching:

When what he advocates is practised the world is set in order; when it is not he illumines the Way but obscures his whereabouts.<sup>196</sup>

Xunzi does not elaborate this principle any further, but clearly it follows directly from his belief that it is through learning that men acquire goodness. To give up learning is to become a beast.<sup>197</sup> For a *junzi* to withdraw from society and revert to quietism and simplicity would be to destroy his own integrity as a responsible being as well as to undermine the moral foundation of society. To say that Xunzi invented this idea is perhaps too much, since Confucius' whole career demonstrates it in action. But Xunzi formulated it explicitly, and as a result throughout the history of imperial China men found it easier to devote themselves with a clear conscience to study and teaching when involvement in state affairs was out of the question. It goes without saying that this alternative was to prove more attractive to most of those from scholarly families than either going out in person to break the soil and plough the fields or living a primitive, solitary life in the wilderness.

## VI.

What is striking about the range of attitudes and principles that are involved in early Chinese philosophies of eremitism is not just its extent but also its cohesiveness, the way that philosophical positions quite distinct from each other often share underlying assumptions and key concepts as well as a set of values and a terminology. To attempt to explain these similarities or continuities simply by saying that all Chinese eremitism is the product of the social and economic conditions of the late Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods and therefore could be expected to exhibit a certain cohesiveness is not really satisfactory. What must be stressed over and above this is that the philosophies outlined in this paper developed in response to each other as much as in response to a particular environment, that they are attempts to refute or transform the doctrines of competitors. It is this which explains why the ideas of one school so frequently appear as mirror images of those of another: identical in outline but back-to-front. Hence, when faced with a situation in which an individual can become a hermit both in order to win fame and in order to avoid it, to win the world and to escape from it, we must be careful not to dismiss as sophistry or hypocrisy what is really a result of the fullness and sophistication of the philosophical tradition to which Chinese eremitism belongs.

The great philosophers of the late Zhou period formulated a wide range of ideals of personal understanding and conduct, and it was not only as a result of opposing

195. *Ibid.*, 8/11–15; also 8/88–89, 12/27; cf. *Zhuangzi* 13/8–10.

196. *Xunzi* 22/43–44.

197. *Ibid.*, 1/27–28.

doctrines propounded by competing schools that those ideals could entail conflicting demands and priorities. For example, the Confucians stressed the goals of self-cultivation and social order, of knowledge and action. It would be wrong to label those ideals as 'polarities in Confucian thought'<sup>198</sup> if that is meant to imply that the individual was conceived as being in a position to choose between them, to direct his life towards one pole rather than the other. According to Confucian teaching, self-cultivation was pointless unless it led to social order, while social order was considered unattainable without self-cultivation; similarly, knowledge and action were regarded as essentially complementary. We can go some way towards understanding eremitism by considering it as a series of strategies for reconciling conflicting ideals in such a way as to make those ideals attainable.

But more important still for an understanding of Chinese eremitism is the conflict, not between the various ideals themselves, but between those ideals and social reality. If the early philosophers had very firm ideas of what the perfect society was to be like, they were also painfully aware of how remote it was from the violent, chaotic world they inhabited. However, the ideals of personal conduct they espoused were not predicated upon the prior existence of that perfect society. To live up to ideals in an imperfect world is an arduous task, and one which requires, in a sense, a compromise – not personal compromise, but a compromise in what the individual can realistically hope to achieve.<sup>199</sup> Eremitism represents the greatest achievement possible for a man of principle in adverse circumstances; it represents the accommodation of high moral ideals to a harsh, refractory reality.

198. See Benjamin Schwartz, 'Some Polarities in Confucian Thought', in Arthur F. Wright, *Confucianism and Chinese Civilization* (Stanford U.P., 1975), 3–15.

199. This is a point clearly developed in texts as different as the *Lunyu* and the *Zhuangzi*: see *Lunyu* 8.13, 14.3 *Zhuangzi* 4/86–87.



## 中國隱逸思想的發源

文 青 雲

( 中文摘要 )

孔子以前，中國沒有隱逸觀念。《書》、《易》、《詩》、《論語》中的隱逸觀念都是戰國時代才出現的。古代的風俗，例如入山避難或到山林中求神仙異能之術雖已啓示隱逸思想，但從哲學角度來看，要到孔子講個人道德的自由以後，才有隱逸的可能。孔子主張：若諸侯不德，事之而犯道，那麼君子寧可退而游天下，另找懷道之主。君子把事道看得比事公侯更重要，於是有游士的出現，有的游士不任官，卻是諸侯的師友，齊國的稷下館把這種游士之風制度化了。另一方面，有人以為天下的諸侯都是暴戾的，事諸侯則非犯道不可，所以游天下也沒有用處，油然有退隱之意，於是隱士開始便出現了。他們認為篤志之士必絕迹避世或去事就農（例如陳仲子和農家）。莊子主張輕富貴，蔑功名。他認為真正的隱逸是人類最高的理想，而並非不遇於時的結果。他又以為隱逸就是處世而心遠，養生而絕俗。這幾種思潮混合起來，便給後世隱退之士提供了豐富的理論根據。

