EREMITISM IN CHINA TO 220 A.D.

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June 1984

A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

of The Australian National University
CHAPTER ONE

THE ORIGINS OF EREMITISM AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

IN THE WARRING STATES PERIOD

1. Eremitism and the Earliest Texts

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 the first section of this chapter, 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 (Shang shu 尚書), the hexagram and line texts of the Book of Changes (Yi jing 易經), and the Book of Songs (Shi jing 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 漢 times), there are two passages which came to be construed as relating to eremitism. One of these is the passage in Yaodian 児典 in which Siyue 四岳 declines to accept the position of emperor when offered it by Yao 尧. 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 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'. 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 鄉) or suburbs (huangjiao 壤郭).
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, which states that such behaviour may be enough to elude men but not spirits, and also by Zhuangzi.

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 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 Zuo zhuan indicate that even before Confucius it was referred to for philosophical wisdom as well as for divinatory purposes, but of course it was the expositions contained in the Ten Wings (shi yi) 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. 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 (guoci and yaoci) 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. 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 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" in this context. 'Dun' ('to retreat', 'to withdraw', 'to hide') is given an amplified meaning in the commentaries Tuan zhuan 輯傳, Daxiang zhuan 大象傳, and Zagua zhuan 離卦傳. 'Dun indicates retiring', comments the latter, while the commentary on the image is:

...the superior man keeps the inferior man at a distance, Not angrily but with reserve.9

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 遁, 'to retreat', probably is a substitute for dun 隨, meaning 'piglet'.10 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.11

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 emphasised 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. 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 神, song 聖 and gen 毅.

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 鬲:

translated by Wilhelm/Baynes as 'He does not serve kings and princes, sets himself higher goals'. Even Gao Heng comments that this line refers to 'staying in seclusion and not serving in office'. 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). The hexagram as a whole relates to the handling of affairs, and the individual lines are all said to refer specifically to
handing 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.16

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 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 愚無正) 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 (Si yue 四月) is the complaint of an official 'exhausted' by his duties who receives nothing but misfortune for his pains. Mao 205 (Bei shan 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 (Bei men 北門), 184 (He ming 鹤鸣) and 193 (Shi yue shi jiao 七月 事故): 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 (Wu jiang da ju 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' (Bo ju 部駟), which as well as articulating a distaste for official duties contains the term xiaoyao 遁逸, 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.\textsuperscript{17} 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.\textsuperscript{18} With little more justification, other commentators have taken it as an invitation to become a recluse, interpreting the verbs yi 㚜, you 㚜 and dun 㚜 in the particular eremitic sense they subsequently acquired.\textsuperscript{19} This is anachronistic distortion of the same sort as that which attributes eremitic ideas to the hexagram and line texts of the \textit{Book of Changes}.

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 \textit{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.20

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 (Wu jiang da ju), 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 违, 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' (Wu yi 無逸) and yi is cited as the cause of the downfall of King Zhou 武王 of the Shang.21 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 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. As Du Zhengsheng has shown in his excellent study of Zhou feudalism, '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 rulers, which made kinship the basis of government and conceived their 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 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.

2. The Pivotal Role of Confucius

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. 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
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 - the gentleman, 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.

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. When Confucius said, 'Is benevolence really so distant? The moment I want it it is there', he was making the point, 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 gentleman 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 gentleman 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.\textsuperscript{28} To judge what is 'right' requires great moral sensitivity and discernment, but once the gentleman 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 that duty should easily be set aside. His basic principle is simple to state but far from simple to put into practice: the gentleman 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.\textsuperscript{29} It was for his sensitivity and discretion in knowing the right moment to take office or retire that Mencius praised Confucius.\textsuperscript{30}

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 gentleman 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',\textsuperscript{31} presupposes a situation in which a choice is possible. Eremitism, as we shall see, was very much tied up with the 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.\textsuperscript{32} 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 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 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 who has his mind set on a sedentary life is not fit to be considered a shi'. 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 gentleman 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. 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 烏; 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 into 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.34

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 家 family ruling Lu wanted to make Min Sun 孟孫 (Ziqian 子禽) the steward of Bi 子, the disciple said: 'Decline politely on my behalf. If anyone comes to ask me again I'll make sure I'm crossing the Wen 沃 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 did not have the immediate significance of 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?"\(^{35}\)

It appears to be this passage which inspired the proclamation by Emperor Zhao of the Former Han in 80 B.C. announcing that the virtuous recluse Han Fu, 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'.\(^{36}\) The only place I have come across it specifically used as an excuse for retirement from office, however, is in Pan Yue's (247-300) 'Fu on Living in Idleness' (Xian ju fu).\(^{37}\) But as we shall see, this general attitude was to become of the utmost importance during the Han period.

The passages from the Lunyu I have discussed indicate that the development of eremitic ideas was closely related to the emergence of the yuushi, 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 and Jieni, and the old man carrying a basket on a staff both appear in Book 18 (Weizi), a section of the text which almost certainly dates from around the time of Mencius and Zhuangzi, when the social and intellectual world was quite different to that in which Confucius moved some two hundred years earlier. 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, the madman of Chu, which also appears in Book 18, 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. It is only in later versions of the story that he is transformed into a model hermit with all the necessary
Similarly in the brief anecdotes concerning the keeper of the Stone Gate (shi men nong 石門農) and the man from Wei carrying a basket (he kui zhe 華橐愬), there is nothing to indicate that they were hermits, even if they subsequently came to be categorised as such. 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 and Shun 舜, such as Xuyou and Chaofu, Shanjuan 善卷 and Puyizi 蒲衣子 - I shall say nothing except to point out that the entertaining stories about them are not to be found in any text that dates from before the beginning of the third century B.C., 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. A good illustration of this type of transformation at work is the somewhat later case of Xian Gao 玺高, according to the Zuo zhuan 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. 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. Huangfu Mi enlarges on this still further in Gaoshi zhuan 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 and Qin.

Also from the Zuo zhuan comes the account of Jie Zitui (or Jie Zhitui). There, all we are told is that when his lord Prince Chonger 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.

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 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.
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 杜鴻 are. 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, 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 deference, 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. 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 邊陽山, 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 Shi ji, 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. Another 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. 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'.

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. 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.

3. Social Change and Eremitism in the Warring States Period

Before Confucius there were little more than vague intimations of eremitism. Han Feizi, 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'. 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. 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 was 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 and daifu, but as one of the *si min* or 'four professions'. In other words, *shi* ceased to indicate a social rank and was used instead as an occupational category, along with farmer (*nong*), craftsman (*gong*) and merchant (*shang*).

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.

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

While Professor Yu'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) 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 Yu'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 邂俠, or 'knight-errant' category.62

Minor talents also had their hour of glory, if we can believe some of the tales recorded by Sima Qian. Lord Mengchang's 尹蒙之 employment of a petty thief and a mimic has long been referred to contemptuously by Chinese scholars,63 and Lü Buwei 呂不韋 (d.235 B.C.) is said to have used a certain Lao Ai , who had genitalia of such generous proportions that when appropriately displayed they served to arouse the lust of the Empress-Dowager of Qin.64 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 — especially Marquis Wen of Wei 魏文侯 (446-395 B.C.), Lord Mengchang of Qi, Lord Pingyuan 平原君 of Zhao (d.251 B.C.), Lord Xinling 信陵君 of Wei (d.243 B.C.) and Lord Chunshen 春申君 of Chu (d.238 B.C.), as well as Kings Wei and Xuan 宣 of Qi, during whose reigns (356-320, 319-301 B.C.) the Jixia 禹下 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. This is the type of relationship alluded to in *Zhuangzi* when Duke Ai 周公 of Lu says, 'Confucius and I are not subject and lord, we are friends in virtue, that's all'. Thus at the court of Marquis Wen of Wei the distinguished figures of Zixia 子夏, Tian Zifang 田子方 and Duangan Mu 襄子木 cast themselves in the role of mentor and friend, refusing to accept official posts or regular salaries, 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', they nevertheless received the sinecure rank of daifu for their service to the state.

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 in relation to Tian Pian, one of the prominent figures at Jixia:

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 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.

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 focussed on a moral dilemma which faced all wandering scholars, especially those as famous as Mencius.

In a passage in Mencius, Peng Geng (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?' 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. 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. 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 to 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 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', by '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'.74
The charge that youshì were parasites who lived off society without contributing to it is one which recurs frequently in Legalist writings. More important here, however, is the fact that it was a charge that was taken seriously by some shì 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 youshì 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 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 杨无恤, who according to the Zhuangzi lived in the mountains and forests on a diet of nuts and wild plants. That such figures continued to occur after the Warring States period is evident from the scornful comments about them made by Lu Jia 陆贾 (d. c.178 B.C.) in his Xin yu 新语, and the Ke yi 戾 chapter of Zhuangzi, where they are described as 'men of mountain and valley who condemn the age'.

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. 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.80

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 says 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?

The best and apparently most historically reliable example of the extremes to which this sort of attitude was taken is that of Chen Zhongzi (also known as Wuling Zizhong 令子仲 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.
(r.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. But if this conversation is 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* 翳 , 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. 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 攔 received an emolument of ten thousand zhong from Ge 禹, 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.

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?84

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 农家), together with the belief that this had actually happened during the reign of Shennong, 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,85 has argued that its doctrines originated in the coming together of some rather homespun peasant wisdom and the more sophisticated ideas of declasse 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.86 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 that 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 gentleman should become involved in tilling the land. This was not just because a gentleman should be prepared to go hungry if necessary, but also because as a shi he knows nothing about farming anyway 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. 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.

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 who lives among the common people, farming in summer and making pottery in winter, and compares himself to Shun. Mozi criticises him because as a gentleman it is his
duty to teach about what is right, not just to practice it himself.90

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 Guo Yu, 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.91

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.92 While admitting that he had many skills,93 Confucius specifically denied any practical knowledge of agricultural matters, as was pointed out above, and rejected the idea that a gentleman should become involved in such matters. It is 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 Tiller_*s 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.94

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'.95 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.96 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 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.97
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.98

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.99 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 as 594 B.C.100 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.101 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 蒙 who was to be blamed for it.\textsuperscript{102} 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.\textsuperscript{103} 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.\textsuperscript{104}

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. 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, corvee overseers and conscription officials.

4. Philosophies of Eremitism in the Warring States Period

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 reactions 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. 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.

If Mozi rejected Confucius' moral individualism and aspired to the selflessness of Heaven, Yang Zhu in turn rejected Mozi's selflessness, 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 by itself. Self-sacrifice
of the sort demanded by both Confucius and Mozi he rejected on principle.\textsuperscript{108} 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'.\textsuperscript{109} Hence he refused to pull out even one hair from his body in order to benefit the world.\textsuperscript{110} 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 for Mencius' complaint that 'Yang is all for himself, which amounts to denying his ruler'.\textsuperscript{111}

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 \textit{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 \textit{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, 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 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. The same point is made even more strongly in Ying diwang: 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 these two creatures!

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 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.¹¹ Four Boyu 蔣伯云 tells Yan He 頭宣 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.¹¹ Five Ding the Cook (Bao Ding 包丁) also advocates caution, especially in dangerous situations.¹¹ Six

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.¹¹ Seven 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.¹¹ Eight 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 is able to keep himself alive thanks to his malformed body, but 'how much better if he had crippled virtue!' 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.

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 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.121 'A gentleman hates the thought of passing away and his name dying with him'.122 By this, of course, Confucius did not mean that a gentleman should hunger for fame per se - he taught that a gentleman should be more concerned with deserving fame than acquiring a baseless reputation123 - but rather that a gentleman 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.124
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 the state hymns in the Book of Songs. 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, 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 Tilers 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.):

127 doctrines such as 'he who values his body more than the empire can be trusted with the empire' 128 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.129

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 道遁遊.130 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 shamanism to describe his spirit man, for such abilities were regarded as the special skills of Wu in ancient China just as they were of shamanism the world over. It is 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 could be tapped by those with the right knowledge, 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.

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 and Peng, 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 convictions. Wu shamanism, like all the other conceptions of the world current in his time, Zhuangzi dismisses as
'pet: y understanding (xiǎo zhī, 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.134 Shamanistic elements abound in the passages concerning trees in the inner chapters. In Renjian shì the tree seen by Carpenter Shi is no ordinary tree.135 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, who finds that licking a leaf from the huge tree growing on the Hill of Shang 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 treatment of Liezi's shaman mentor shows. 137

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. 138

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 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.139

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 Zhuanzi's philosophy, but wandering is to be understood above all as an affair of the mind.140 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.'141 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) of a man, therefore "right" and "wrong" cannot get at him'.142 If Mengsun Cai 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.143 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.144

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 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, the cultivation of uselessness and 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, 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; and the passage concerning Liezi in Da sheng, which states Zhuangzi's central point explicitly: 'the sage hides himself in Heaven, therefore there is nothing that can harm him'. 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. 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. 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 people weak-willed and strong-boned if not to make them willing workers?

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 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 the 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. 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; the sage wins the empire by not interfering; the best ruler is one of whose existence the people are unaware, someone who can take his place over the people without harming them. 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 Han Feizi and the Lushi 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; and Han Fei says clearly that the way of the ruler is not the way of his subjects. 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'. Moreover, once 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. 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 ë* ) and attaining the selflessness of Heaven.\(^{162}\) All the terminology of the *Laozi* relating to simplicity, selflessness, quietude and non-action is applied to the ruler in the *Lüshi chunqiu*.\(^{163}\) One major difference, however, is that like Xunzi,\(^{164}\) Lu 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.\(^{165}\) Still, 'the conduct of the ruler of men is different to that of the common people'.\(^{166}\) Again and again it is said that the ruler is dependent on his virtuous and industrious subordinates.\(^{167}\) 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.\(^{168}\) 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.\(^{169}\)

The only hermits considered as good models for a ruler's subjects in the *Lüshi chunqiu* are those who have withdrawn for moral reasons.\(^{170}\)

Such men make good subjects because if necessary they would be willing
to die for the right ruler. 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.

Although the doctrines of selflessness and desirelessness, simplicity and quietude 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, and partly due 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 cosmological 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. Change is the only thing that can be counted on, and the sage finds contentment in following along with the unfolding to the dao. 'To retire when things have been accomplished is the way of Heaven.' In the Ten Wings of the Book of Changes, as was pointed out in the first section of this chapter, 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 Ke yi chapter, for example, contains a five-fold classification of shi: there 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 practise the arts of longevity, aspire to immortality and have no interest except to nourish their bodies. 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Type of Shi</th>
<th>Type of Government</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Moral Fanatic</td>
<td>Pervasive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>Moral Teacher</td>
<td>Enlightened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Man of Action</td>
<td>Vigorous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Man of Nonaction</td>
<td>Quietistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>Seeker of Longevity</td>
<td>Relaxed</td>
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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. Somewhat later, Huan Tan 漢譚 (43 B.C.-28 A.D.) in his *Xin lun* 新論 included a five-fold classification of spiritual men, in which hermits (yinlun 隱倫) ranked second after divine immortals. 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 Phase 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.

Mencius reiterates that the first duty of a gentleman should be 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',180But this did not mean that he believed a gentleman should resign quickly - he himself delayed his departure from Qi to the extent that he was criticised for being unrealistic.181

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 Phase 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; but for all it is simply a question of being set on remaining undefiled.182

It is not just that men respond differently to different situations, but that men respond differently to similar situations. Yi Yin, Boyi, Liuxia Hui 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 unfailing in his judgement, but Mencius still admires the others for doing what they believed was right. Such a position opens up the possibility of defending a hermit's decision to remain seclusion by reference to his psychological make-up rather than by reference to objective circumstances.

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'. Ban Gu restated this idea in the chapter devoted to the lives of hermits and other figures who refused to compromise their ideals, 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 and Chen Zhongzi as mere sensationalists out to make a reputation for themselves. Nevertheless, he accepts that there are times when withdrawal is necessary to preserve personal integrity, and a great Confucian can win deserved fame through virtuous retirement. 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.189

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.190 For a gentleman 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.

5. Conclusion

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 chapter 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 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' 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.¹⁹² Eremism 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.
NOTES


2. See, for example, LY 3.7.


6. On the date of the Ten Wings, see Qian Mu 阮慕, 'Lun shiyi fei Kongzi zuo 論十四非孔子作', Li Jingchi 李鏡池, 'Yizhuan tanyuan 易傳探源', and 'Lun Yizhuan zhuzuo shidai 論易傳章作時代', all in Gushi bian 古史辯 3 (1931); Dai Junren 戴君仁, Tan Yi 譚易 (Taipei: Kaiming shudian, 1961) 25-30; Zhang Dainian 張岱年, 'Lun "Yi dazhuan" de zhuzuo de niandai yu zhexue 論易大傳的章作與時代與哲學' in 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 謝子 more than any other text. His comment (p.1) that the Changes is best regarded as a congshu 誼書 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 詩經傳 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 魏吉 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 observation that the commentaries contain a number of major concepts characteristic of the late Warring States period.

7. Zhou Yi 周易 (SBCK ed.), 7/3a,4b.


11. *Zhou Yi* 4/3b-4a; Wilhelm/Baynes 553.

12. See note 6 above. It remains to be seen whether the Mawangdui text of the *Book of Changes*, when finally published, will confirm Gao Heng's argument by having in place of . The use of 'substitute' characters is one of the notable features of that text. See Yan Lingfeng, *Mawangdui boshu Yi jing chu bu yan ji* (Taibei: Chengwen chubanshe 1980). Of course, the use of in the Mawangdui text would not invalidate Gao Heng's argument.


15. This is stated in the *Xugua zhuan* (Zhou Yi 9/5b), and is forcefully argued by Wang Fuzhi (1627-1679), *Zhou Yi baishu* (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe 1980), cited by Gao Heng, *Zhou Yi gujing jinshu*, 68.

16. This argument is not weakened by Liu Baimin's observation, *Zhou Yi shili tongyi* (Taipei: Xue bujuan zhai 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.


19. 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.


22. C. 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 Zuo zhuan, 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 to a mere 9 per cent in Jin. He concludes that while kinship could be a help in obtaining office in states such as Song, Zheng, Chu, and Lu, in states such as Jin, Qi and Zhou 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 5 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.


24. Such an idea is implicit, for example, in LY 2.18, 2.19, 2.20, 4.14, 5.6, 5.16 6.8, 12.22, 13.2, 13.13, 15.32. Liu Jiyaq, '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.


26. LY 2.4, 6.18, 7.33, 12.1.
27. **LY 7.30.**

28. **LY 4.10**; also **9.4, 14.32, 15.37.**

29. **LY 11.24.**

30. **Mencius 2A.2, 5B.1.**

31. **LY 8.13.**

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

33. **LY 14.2.** For the term "shi" as it was used in the pre-Han period - meaning nobleman, soldier and scholar all at once, with sometimes one, now another element dominating - it is impossible to find a satisfactory English equivalent. Hence in this chapter I prefer to leave it untranslated. As far as the Han period is concerned, however, the translation of "shi" as 'scholar' is much less inadequate than it is in relation to the earlier period. Accordingly in the chapters which follow I use 'scholar'. For the sake of uniformity, but with reluctance, I translate 'junzi' as 'gentleman'.

34. **Han Yu 'Hou ershijiu ri fu shang shu' 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.

35. **LY 2.21.**

36. **Han shu 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962; hereafter HS), 72/3083; also Huangfu Mi 皇甫謐 (215-282), Gaoshi zhuan 高士傳 (SBBY ed.; hereafter GSZ); B/9b.**

37. **Wen xuan 文選 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977; hereafter WX), 167/3b.**

38. **Cui Shu 崔述 (1740-1816), Shusi kaoxin lu 某氏考信錄 4/28-30; Lunyu yushuo 論語釋說, 20-22 (Cui dongbi yishu 崔東壁遺書 [Shanghai: Yadong tushuguan, 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 胡適 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 Qi lun 墨論 and Lu lun 貴論 respectively, which were combined by Zhang Yu 張禹 in the reign of Emperor Yuan 原 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
Lunyu pianzhang zhuzheng, originally published in Dalu zazhi 31.7-9 (1965) 23-26, 27-31, 30-36, and Lunyu pianzhang zhuzheng pianzhang, originally published in Kong Meng xuebao 12 (1966), 153-96. For my purpose here it is not necessary to accept all of Hu Zhikui’s ambitious argument concerning the Qi lun and Lu lun, but only his evidence that sections of the text in which the anecdotes about the hermits occur dates 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.

39. LY 18.5.


41. See, for example, Hanshi waizhuan 韓詩外傳 (SBCK ed.) 2/12b-13a; Lienü zhuan 列女傳 (SBBY ed.) 2/9 a-b; GSZ A/9a-b.

42. LY 14.38 and 14.39.

43. Huangfu Mi, GSZ A/8b-9a; also Xi Kang 漢書 (223-262), Gaoshi zhuan, in Xi Kang ji jiaozhu 漢書集校注, ed. Dai Mingyang 戴明揚 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1962), 401.

44. The main sources are Zhuangzi, the inner chapters of which date from the time of Zhuangzi’s death approximately 286 B.C., and the outer and miscellaneous chapters frequently much later, and the Lushi chunqiu 吕氏春秋, which contains a postface dated 239 B.C.

45. 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 (Shi ji 史記 [Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959; hereafter SJ] 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 博爾, Wu Guang 惑公, Ji Te 管仲 and Shentu Di 斛思. Material relating to Yi Yin as hermit is examined in the interesting little article by Dan Tao 丹卓, ‘Yi Yin de chushen: shi chufu haishi chushu? ’ (北京: Huaguang 1.3 (1939), 4-6). On Bian Sui, Wu Guang, Ji Te and Shentu Di see ZZ 6/13, 26/46-48, 28/70-78, 29/42; Lushi chunqiu (SBCK ed.; hereafter LSCQ) 19/2a-b; Hanshi waizhuan 1/12b; Xun xu 新序 (SBCK ed.), 3/9b, 7/13a.

47. Huainanzi (SBBY ed.) 18/10a-b. The basic Zuo zhuan account is repeated in 13/11a, as it is in LSCQ 16/10a-b.

48. GSZ A/5b.

49. Duke Xi, 24; Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhu 417-18.

50. See ZZ 29/42-43; LSCQ 12/5a-b; Han Feizi (SBBY ed.) 8/11b; Fanshi waizhuan 7/4a; SJ 39/1660-62; Shuo yuan (SBCK ed.) 6/4a-5a, 8/17a, 17/12a; Liexian zhuang (Guojing yishi 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 魏旭賢, 'Jie Zitui 葛之矩 走隱考', Shuowen yuekan 論文月刊 2.6-7 (1940), 103-09.

51. LY 5.23, 7.15.


53. SJ 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 呼弗癸 (Ousted Duke Zhe 脫公鉞) and his father Kuai Kui 劉葵 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, Lunyu zhengyi 論語正義 (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1930), 7741-43. On the events involving Ousted Duke Zhe and Kuai Kui (subsequently Duke Zhuang 足) see Chunqiu 春秋, Duke Ding 定 14, Duke Ai 艾 16; Zuo zhan, Duke Ding 14, Duke Ai 2, 7, 15, 16; Yang Bojun, Chunqiu Zuo zhan zhu 1594, 1597, 1612-13, 1640, 1694-98.

54. SJ 61/2123.

55. LSCQ 14/7a-b; also ZZ 28/78-86, which derives from it.

56. Han Feizi 4/17b; Huainanzi 11/13b; Shuo yuan 8/19b.

57. 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 SJ 4/115, 31/1445-46.

58. Han Feizi 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.

59. Hsu, 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 in the fiftieth anniversary publication of the Institute of History and Philology of Academia Sinica, Zhongguo shanggu shidai dinggao 中国上古時代紀要 (1978), rpt. in Professor Yü's Zhongguo zhishi jiecheng shilun,

61. Ibid., 30-38. For different perspectives on the rise of the shi to social prominence see also Hsu, Ancient China in Transition, 24, 34-37; Hou Wailu, 使外義，Zhongguo sifixiang tongahi 中國思想通史 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1957), 1/40-47; Cao Xisheng 喬希聖，Bianshi yu youxia 辨士與遊俠 (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1970).


64. SJ 85/2511.

65. Yu 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 Guo yu 国語 and Zhanguo ce 戰國策, but see especially SJ juan 75-78. On the Jixia Academy see Hu Jiacong 胡家樞, 'Jixia xuegong shi gouchen 戰國學宮史鈔', Wen shi zhe 文史哲, 1981(4), 25-33.

66. ZZ 5/49.

67. IScQ 15/9b-10a, 19/19b, 21/4a; Huainanzi 19/4a; SJ 44/1838-39; Xin xu 4/2b; Yu 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.

68. Yantie lun 赤鐵論 (SBBY ed.) 2/10b.

69. SJ 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 Yu Ying-shih, 'Gudai zhishi jieceng', 63-66.

70. Zhanguo ce (SBCK ed.) 4/16b.

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 許論 in the Shishuo xinyu 志異新編 (SBBY ed.; hereafter SSXY) 3A/13b.

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

Mencius 3B.4.

For example, Shangjun shu 上君書 (SBBY ed.), 1/4a-5a, 7b-8a, 10b-11a, 13b-14a, 5/6a; Han Feizi 19/8a-b, 11a-b.

22 24/1-25.


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).

SJ 82/2457. It has been suggested that Wang Zhu is to be identified with Yan Chu 項鸞, another hermit from Qi (mentioned in Zhanguo ce 4/12a; Shuo yuan 9/2a; GSZ B/4b-5a). However, both names are included in Ban Gu's Gujin renbiao 舊管人表 (HS 20/945,948). See commentary to Zhanguo ce (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1978), 408.

Zhanguo ce 4/64b.


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

Mencius 3B.10. According to Shuo yuan 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 吳陵子 which is supposed to be the work of Chen Zhongzi, but it is a late and uninteresting forgery. See Zhang Xinzeng 張心誠, Weishu tongkao 魏書通考 (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 吳陵子' . However, it seems strange, not only that a work presented by Liu Xiang is not mentioned in the Han shu bibliography, but also that a person such as Chen Zhongzi would write a book at all.

86. Compare the argument by Fung Yu-lan, A Short History of Chinese Philosophy (New York: Press Press, 1948), 37, updating a theory put forward by Liu Xin (53 B.C.-23 A.D.), that it is to hermits as a group that we owe Daoist teachings.

87. LY 15.32.

88. LY 13.4.

89. 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 41 above, and the various versions of the Xuyou legend.

90. Mozi 49/40-54.


92. Hu Cho-yün, Ancient China in Transition, 8, suggests that some shi must have worked the land personally, citing as evidence the Liji (Liji zhengyi 梁記工義), in Shisan jing zhushu 十三經注疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 35/785B, 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" (zheng xiaoli 子小) 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.

93. LY 9.6, 9.7.

94. Guanzi 管子 (SBBY 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.

95. SJ 70/2279.

96. SJ 79/2425. On the poverty experienced by youshi, see also Yu Ying-shih, 'Gudai zhishi jieceng', 82-83.

97. Mencius 4B.3.

98. Yunmeng Qinjian zhengli xiaoou 雲蒙秦簡整理小組, 'Yunmeng Qinjian shiwen (er) 禽蒙秦簡釋文 (二)', Wenwu 文物 1976(7), 9; Yu 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 (SJ 85/2510) without being charged with subverting the law, and many of them must have come from other states. Certainly according to SJ 75/2361 youshi continued to go to Qin.

99. See the comments by Davis, 'The Narrow Lane', 4, 9-12.

100. Zuo zhuang, Duke Xuan § 15; Chunqiu Zuo zhuang zhu, 766; Hsu, Ancient China in Transition, 108.


102. HS 24A/1126, 1137.

103. SJ 66/2230.

104. 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 SJ (68/2232, 79/2422) includes 'doing away with 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 HS 99B/4129-30, which records an official's attempt to dissuade Wang Mang from trying to reinstate 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.


107. Mencius 7B.26; Huainanzi 13/7b.


111. Mencius 3B.9.

112. ZZ 4/4-6.

113. ZZ 7/6-7.

114. ZZ 4/34-53.

115. ZZ 4/53-60.


117. ZZ 7/13.

118. ZZ 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 黃易 ) and Lu Jia's Xin yu (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 (Han Feizi 2/14a-b) he was not recommending silviculture as a royal hobby.

119. ZZ 4/86.

120. ZZ 7/31-33.

121. Possibly no-one in ancient China was more aware of this than Sima Qian. See SJ 61/2129, 130/3299-3300; HS 62/2735.

122. LY 15.20.

123. LY 4.5, 12.20, 14.30, 15.19; also Mencius 6B.6, 7B.11.

124. This principle is clearly stated in the Xiao jing 小經 (SBCK ed.) 3b, 13b. On the early development of the concept of filiality see Harry Hsin-i Hsiao 蕭新怡 '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.

125. For example, Mao 235 (Wen Wang 文王 ), 240 (Si qi 我家 ), 278 (Chen lu 楚麟 ).

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

127. 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 Zhongzi 仲尼, never as Master. On this latter point see Tang Lan 譚琳, 'Lao Dan de xingming he shidai 洛丹的姓名和時代', 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 'gentleman 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 (SJ 47/1909, 63/2140. In the first passage Sima Qian qualifies the latter claim by using the tentative particle gai 質, 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. Gao Heng 高亨, 'Guanyu Laozi de jige wenti 聯子之偽問題', Shehui kexue zhanxian 社會科學戰線, 1979(1), 35-39, has argued plausibly that Laozi is to be identified with the Lao Yangzi 兰陽子 mentioned in the Zuo zhuan (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, which serves as the basis for a number of episodes in Zhuangzi and is alluded to in the Lushi chunqiu (LSCQ 2/10a) and the Li ji (Li ji zhengyi 19/172C-173C), 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. (A similar view is argued by A.C. Graham, 'The Origins of the Legend of Lao Tan', Guoji Hanxue huiyi lunwen ji [Proceedings of the International Conference on Sinology on the Occasion of the Seventieth Anniversary of the Foundation of the Republic of China], 9/59-72).

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.

128. Laozi, Ch.13. For the variants of this text see Zhang Songru 張松如, Laozi jiaodu 聯子校讀 (Jilin: 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.

129. Shen Defu 沈德符, Wanli yehuo bian 萬曆野獲編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 858-59; Ho Ping-ti, The Ladder of Success in Imperial China (Columbia U.P., 1962), 11.
130. ZZ 1/28-30.


133. 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 Li ji states that mountains and rivers are inhabited by gods (Li ji zhengyi 22/197C), while the Shuowen jiezi 説文解字 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' (Ku 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 拔穢子 [SBBY ed.] 17/1a). In the Yao dian chapter of the Book of Documents Shun offers sacrifices to mountains, while in the Yu gong 禹贡 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 琴'), see David Hawkes, 'The Quest for the Goddess', in Cyril Birch (ed.), Studies in Chinese Literary Genres (University of California Press, 1974), especially 34-58. Comments on the spiritual significance of mountains generally also occur in Hanshi waizhuan 3/16a-b and Shuo yuan 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 Diemerville, 'La montagne dans l'art litteraire chinois', Choix d'études sinologiques, 1921-1970 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973), 364-89. The etymology of the
character xian 安, 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 Demieville, 'La montagne dans l'art chinois', 367). Thus Sizaa Xiangru 西奚如 (179-117 B.C.) is reported to have remarked to Emperor Wu that 'traditions concerning famous immortals have them living amidst mountains and swamps' (SJ 117/3056).

134. See, for example, LY 3.21; Mozi 31/50-51; Bo hu tong 伯虎通 (SBCK 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 Mespero, China in Antiquity, trans. Frank A. Kierman Jr. (Folkestone, Kent: Dawson, 1978), 99; Lao Gan 劳軒, 'Handai sheshi de yuanli_han 代江梅的漂流', BIHP 11 (1943), 49-60.

135. ZZ 4/64-75.
136. ZZ 4/75-79.
137. ZZ 7/15-31; also see 4/81-83.

138. 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).


141. ZZ 5/54.
142. ZZ 5/54.
143. ZZ 6/75-80.
144. ZZ 6/4-17, 27-28, 67-71.

145. 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 宋鶴 and Shen Dao 沈道. It was only Zhuangzi, however, who went so far as to compare the mind of the sage to 'dead ashes' (ZZ 2/2).

146. On this complex question see especially Luo Genze 洛根澤, Zhuangzi wai-zapian tanyuan 莊子外雜篇譯注 'Zhuangzi wai-zapian tanyuan 莊子外雜篇譯注' (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1958), 282-312; Guan Feng 關豐, 'Zhuangzi wai-zapian chutan 初探', Zhuangzi nei-pian yijie he pipan 莊子內篇譯解和剖 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1960), 319-58; Zhuang Wanshou 莊萬
That the sage hides among the people is also stated in 11/57-59, 20/33-34, 25/34.

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.C. 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 刘存仁, On the Art of Ruling a Big Country: Views of Three Chinese Emperors (Canberra: The Australian National University Press, 1973).

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

Laozi, 39; cf. ZZ 18/11.

Laozi, 35, 45, 48.

Laozi, 17.

Laozi, 66.

Han Feizi 1/11a, 2/8b.

Han Feizi, 2/10b; cf. ZZ 13/18-20.

Laozi 13; also 35, 45, 48.

Laozi, 19, 57.

LSCQ 1/9a, 2/11b; also 12/10b, 13/11a, 15/2a-b, 15/8b-9a, 19/20a.

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

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

LSCQ 4/7b-8a, 5/4a-b.
166. LSCQ, 20/14b.

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

168. LSCQ, 13/10b, 14/9b, 16/4b.

169. LSCQ 19/14b-15a, amended as suggested by Sun Jiangming 孙江鸣. See Xu Weiyu 許維逾, Lushi chuqiu jishi 史氏 虑秋集釋 (Beijing: Wenxue guji kanxingshe, 1955), 902.

170. LSCQ 8/9b, 11/5a, 12/3a-b.

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

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


174. Laozi, 32, 33, 44.

175. Laozi, 9.

176. ZZ 15/1-6.

177. The correlations for type of government are taken from Huangdi neijing suwen 黄帝内经素问 (Suwen Wang Bing zhu 素問 王冰 註, SBBY ed., 20/12b); see also Alfred Forke, Lun-heng (2nd ed., rpt. New York: Paragon Book Gallery, 1962), 2/484; Joseph Needham, Science and Civilisation in China, Vol.2 (Cambridge U.P., 1956), 263. According to Zhang Xinzheng, 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.


180. Mencius 2B.5.


182. Mencius 5A.7.

183. Mencius 2A.2, 5B.1.

184. A witty and famous example is Xi Kang's letter to Shan Tao (’Yu Shan Juyuan juejiao shu 山巨源與山巨源集交書'), WX 43/1b-7b; Xi Kang Ji jiaozhu 112-131.
185. Mencius 7B.15.

186. HS 72/3055.

187. 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.

188. Xunzi 8/11-15; also 8/88-89, 12/27; cf. ZZ 13/8-10.

189. Xunzi 22/43-44.


192. This is a point clearly developed in texts as different as the Lunyu and the Zhuangzi: see LY 8.13, 14.3; ZZ 4/86-87.
CHAPTER TWO

THE FORMER HAN AND THE WANG MANG PERIOD

1. Received Wisdom About the Han

In the late Warring States period hermits were numerous. In the Later Han Period (25-220 A.D.) eremitism was also a conspicuous social phenomenon. As we shall see, every kind of eremitism found in earlier times flourished, and one or two new varieties besides. Yet as far as the Former Han period (206 B.C.-8 A.D.) is concerned, the initial impression is of an almost total absence of eremitism. Thus the author of one recent article on Chinese eremitism goes so far as to state that although in the Han dynasty the issues associated with the choice between public service and eremitism continued to crop up in the lives of a few individuals, as far as the thought of the period is concerned those issues were not important.¹

A traditional and influential picture of the Former Han is of a sober, orderly period which fell into decline only towards the end, a time of general commitment to the imperial system which had replaced the turmoil of the preceding centuries, a time when there was little reason for withdrawing from the socio-political order and cultivating one's virtue in seclusion. It was in those terms that Chinese scholars of later ages often looked back nostalgically upon the Han—especially the Former Han—when troubled by the disorder of their own times, and it is a view still held by many modern western as well as Chinese scholars.² This image of the Han dynasty as one which enjoyed the enthusiastic support of the intellectuals of the time is so pervasive that even those who as a rule are not given to careless generalisations find it difficult to escape its influence. Thus we
find Hsü Cho-yün using the following terms to describe what is alleged to have been a sharp shift in the attitudes of intellectuals to the question of involvement in public affairs: "By and large, scholars of the Qin period could not realise their aspirations in that age, and so hid in seclusion to await the (right) time... During the shift from Qin to Han and the beginning of the Han, the hidden scholars re-emerged in droves'.³

In this chapter I shall show that while this view is not to be dismissed lightly, it has its limitations, and there is evidence that the eremitic tradition - or traditions - which flourished during the Warring States period continued throughout the Former Han. Far from being a period of uniformity and universal support for the empire, the Former Han was a time in which the extent of social and political involvement remained ultimately a matter of individual choice, and if many intellectuals did commit themselves to participation in the established order there were still others who felt such participation would be personally foolhardy or morally reprehensible.

Moreover, it was during the Former Han that developments occurred which were to play a crucial role in determining many aspects of the role eremitism was to play in Chinese culture throughout the entire imperial period. As we shall see, those developments were closely linked to some of the major political and intellectual innovations of the Former Han; in particular, the establishment of Confucianism as state orthodoxy and the institution of the recommendatory system for appointments to government posts.

So little work has been done on this aspect of the Former Han period that much of this chapter is perforce devoted to setting down the available information and examining the differences in outlook...
held by those who did in some way or other set themselves apart. I have been able to locate only one previous study which claims to survey aspects of the eremitism of the period, and that is a rather rambling piece of work which, although bringing together information concerning some important hermits of the Former Han, omits more than it includes. It also suffers from a failing common to more traditional treatments of this topic, namely that of reducing all eremitism to a dualism of Confucianism and Daoism. I believe that a more detailed study of the sources will show that an adequate account of eremitism in the Former Han requires that more precise distinctions be drawn.

2. The Bias of the Sources

One of the problems in getting an accurate picture of the social and intellectual world of the Former Han is that, perhaps more than we realise, our perception of it is coloured by the major sources on which we are forced to rely for information: Sima Qian's Shi ji and the Han shu of Ban Gu. For this reason it is sometimes difficult to see that, at least to some degree, the apparently radical differences between the world of the late Warring States period and that of the Former Han are illusory, the result of a difference in sources rather than historical reality.

For our knowledge of the Warring States period we rely not only on the Shi ji and works such as the Guo yu, Zhanguo ce and the Shuo yuan, but also a series of brilliant and varied philosophical texts. The result is that intellectual diversity is built into our very perception of that period. It appears that in the Former Han dynasty there were no philosophers of the stature of Mencius, Zhuangzi, Kunzi or Han Feizi. However, it is one thing to accept that the Former Han
was not a period of great philosophical inventiveness, it is quite another to assume it was therefore a period of intellectual uniformity in which everyone held the same ideas. What matters here is that in the almost total absence of major philosophical works from the Former Han we are forced to rely largely on Sima Qian and Ban Gu for information concerning eremitism in the period, and unfortunately those two great historians were not particularly interested in hermits. Luckily the man who has some claim to being the greatest intellect of the Former Han dynasty - Yang Xiong (53 B.C.-18 A.D.) - was interested in eremitism. As will become evident, it is to Yang Xiong, either directly or indirectly, that we owe most of the extant information concerning eremitism in the later part of the Former Han.

Before going any further I should justify my assertion that neither Sima Qian nor Ban Gu could muster much enthusiasm for hermits. It will be objected, for example, that Sima Qian demonstrated the social and historical significance he attached to eremitism by making his account of Boyi and Shuqi the first of his 'exemplary lives' (liezhuān 我 7 ), while Ban Gu in fact criticised his predecessor for not giving virtuous hermits their proper due. Nevertheless, the evidence that neither historian held hermits in very high esteem is clear and unambiguous.

The primary reason Sima Qian began his liezhuān with the biography of Boyi and Shuqi was not so much because of his unbounded admiration for their noble self-immolation on behalf of what is right, as to contrast their conduct with his own life and work. Boyi and Shuqi chose death rather than compromise, but in Sima Qian's eyes death was the easy way out of a moral conflict: he himself chose to live with the gross humiliation imposed on him by Emperor Wu 武.
in order that he might complete his history, and by recording the lives of men such as Boyi and Shuqi continue to inspire men of later generations to strive for goodness. The trouble with eremitic types such as Boyi and Shuqi, he believed, was that no matter how upright they were, or how lofty the principles that led them to withdraw, by going into seclusion they closed themselves off from the eyes of the world and so destroyed any possibility of exercising further influence. Their names 'dissolved' unless they happened to be associated with another famous man or had their deeds recorded by someone like Sima Qian himself. Hence he contrasts their passivity in the face of adversity with his own unabating efforts on behalf of what is right. Truly great men, when the times are against them, are not content with remaining passively in seclusion; they write, and through their writings continue to influence the course of the world. Sima Qian's position in this matter is essentially that of Xunzi: when the ideas that he holds are not practised by the world a man of principle 'illuminates the Way but obscures his whereabouts'.

It is against this background that we must interpret the passage in the chapter on 'knights-errant' (youxia) which led Ban Gu to complain that Sima Qian 'places recluses to the rear and gives prominence to cunning louts'. Men such as Ji Ci (Gongxi Ai) and Yuan Xian (Zisi), says Sima Qian, did indeed have the highest principles and accepted poverty and low status as a consequence of refusing to compromise with their times. But they were merely laughed at by their contemporaries, while later generations got to know of their virtues only because their followers continued to write about them. In contrast, the actions of the wandering knights spoke of themselves and had an immediate impact on their time; their contribution to society was not dependent on
someone else's mediation. For this reason the influence of the likes of Ji Ci and Yuan Xian on their own time cannot be compared with that of the knights.12

If Sima Qian was critical of the way hermits were dependent on others in order to influence the world in any way, he was also aware of the hypocrisy and deception that could be associated with eremitism. Indeed, he goes so far as to state that the reason men retire to live in mountain caves and establish a reputation for blameless conduct is that they want to become rich.13 It is fairly clear from the context, however, that this comment is not to be taken completely literally. Sima Qian was not one to deny that men will sometimes make a stand, even to the death, on behalf of what they hold is right. It is just that this is less common than is often believed; human motives generally are not what they seem. Even an apparent determination to withdraw from the world in order to avoid compromise can derive from ulterior motives. And just as there are 'untitled nobility' (sufeng 素封) - men so rich they can live as lords, who do not have to have dealings with the world and so can conduct themselves with the righteousness of a disengaged scholar (chushi) - so too there are men who try to claim merit for living in lowly squalor despite the fact that they are devoid of any principles which might allow others to attribute a moral purpose to the life they lead.14

Such was Sima Qian's sceptical view of hermits. Ban Gu criticised him for slighting such men, yet Ban Gu's own opinion of them was not as high as this criticism would imply; or, more precisely, his full approval extended only to those forms of eremitism which had been incorporated into the imperial system. The Han shu
contains a chapter (juan 72) which was to serve as prototype for the chapters on the lives of hermits included in most of the subsequent standard histories, but Ban Gu's purpose in writing this was primarily to praise the deeds of men of integrity prepared to involve themselves in the government of the empire. Such men in Ban Gu's eyes were better models for behaviour than Boyi and Shuqi, the Four Silverhairs from the beginning of the Han, or the uncompromising hermits praised by Yang Xiong in Fa yan - men of the calibre of Zhuang Zun 莊遵 (also known as Yan Junping 嚴君平) and Zheng Pu 鄭樸 (Zizhen 子真). In the Lunyu Boyi and Shuqi are referred to as 'men who retired' (yimin 遁民); Ban Gu places these men of the Han period in the same category. But just as Confucius himself aimed at going one better than the yimin by regarding any given action as neither necessarily permissible nor necessarily impermissible, so Ban Gu wanted to record the deeds of men as flexible as this in their conception of when to serve and when to retire, when to take part in affairs and when to stay in seclusion. Although Boyi and Shuqi regarded King Wu's action in overthrowing the last Shang ruler as reprehensible, the virtue of the Zhou was nonetheless highly acclaimed. In this matter Boyi and Shuqi's judgement was wrong. Ban Gu believed that the Four Silverhairs, Zhuang Zun and Zheng Pu were just as mistaken in dissociating themselves from the Han court. The men he praises did not make that mistake.

Ban Gu's ideal is evident from his evaluation at the end of his chapter:

...men of the mountain forests go but are unable to turn back, men of the halls of court enter but are unable to withdraw; both have their own particulars shortcomings. From the high officials of the various states of the Spring and Autumn period to the generals, chancellors and famous ministers of the rise of Han, there have been many who were so preoccupied with salaries and besotted with winning
favour that they were thereby lost to their age. This is the reason that men of purity and integrity came to be treasured. But the great majority of these were only able to regulate themselves, they were not able to regulate others.18

The men whose actions he recorded were able to regulate the conduct of others because they remained in the socio-political system and withdrew only to the extent that was absolutely necessary. Therefore they came closer to perfection than even the hermits mentioned in the preface to his chapter.

3. **Encountering Propitious Times**

For Sima Qian and Ban Gu, generally speaking, the Former Han period represented a time of comparative peace and order in which the empire was fortunate enough to be ruled by emperors who were relatively enlightened. It was a time, they believed, in which it was possible for all men of principle to take part in the great task of creating and maintaining social order and prosperity, and consequently one in which there was little justification for withdrawing from society. The view of the Former Han as a time of peace and enlightenment has a lot of historical weight behind it. It is an elementary point, but one which must be stressed here, that the shortlived Qin and more particularly the Han did bring unity, peace, and a stable and effective system of government to the empire. The contrast with the late Warring States period can scarcely be exaggerated. While during the early Han rebellions did occur and both territorial expansion and border defence made large-scale military activity necessary, there is no doubt that for the great majority of the Chinese people the unification of the empire brought peace, security and stability.
In the long history of imperial China it was to become a standard rhetorical flourish to refer to one's good fortune in living in age of peace and order under an enlightened emperor. Yet there is good reason to believe that for most of the men of the Former Han this remark was more than just a polite embellishment. In the early part of the dynasty the disorder and violence of the Warring States period and the civil wars following the collapse of the Qin empire were matters of living memory. Hence anyone with any historical sense at all living, say, during the reign of Emperor Wen (179-157 B.C.), cannot but have been acutely aware of how new, how short and apparently fragile was the period of peace and security they were experiencing in comparison with the hundreds of years of turmoil which preceded it. To be relieved and thankful at being able to experience such a time, would have been a natural and genuine response. It is to be expected that this would lead to many intellectuals being not only willing but eager to take part in government. Even those with personal reservations or distaste for public affairs would still see quite clearly the benefits conferred on everyone by keeping the system in operation.

This historical sense on the part of intellectuals of the early Former Han, their awareness of living in fortunate times, must be a major factor behind the apparent lack of enthusiasm for one major variety of eremitism. This was the mode of eremitism which derived from Confucius: that of withdrawing in adverse times in order to be able to serve the Way in another place or another time.

Towards the end of the Warring States period intellectuals had become very much preoccupied with the concept of timeliness, that is, the need to fit actions and ideas to the circumstances of the moment,
to adjust conduct and outlook according to the changing disposition of things. They tended to take up that concept in a negative way, using it to explain, for example, why it was impossible for them to take office and be involved in state affairs, or why it was necessary to resort to rule by law rather than rule by virtue. During the Former Han period the concept of timeliness became, if anything, even more important. This trend is evident in, and partly attributable to, the growing influence of the *Book of Changes* and the *Laozi*, both of which expound the principles of timely action and adaptation to change. What is more, when Former Han intellectuals invoked the concept of timeliness in relation to political and social circumstances, they frequently did so in a positive way, in reference to having been fortunate enough to meet with good times which allowed them to assist the Emperor in the great task of bringing security and prosperity to the people. One striking thing about major intellectual figures of the time, such as Lu Jia 隰賈 (f.c.190 B.C.), Jia Yi 賈誼 (200-168 B.C.), Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179-104 B.C.), Sima Qian (c.145-87 B.C.), and Liu Xiang 劉向 (77-6 B.C.) is the way their commitment to the socio-political order remained firm despite the frequent personal difficulties and injustices they experienced as a result of that commitment. The problem is to determine how representative these men were of the intellectuals of their time. In terms of intellectual ability they were clearly exceptional; lack of evidence makes it impossible to determine whether their essentially Confucian sense of political and social responsibility was widely shared by the many thousands of less talented scholars about whom we know virtually nothing.
The best example of this acute sense of socio-political responsibility is that of Sima Qian, who despite having suffered severely at the hand of Emperor Wu was still able to write movingly in his letter to Ren An 任安 of the sense of anguish and inadequacy he felt at having failed during his twenty years service to make any significant contribution to the state. A similar attitude is evident in the case of Jia Yi. It was as a result of jealousies and intrigues that Jia Yi lost his favoured position at court and was sent off to remote and unhealthy Changsha 長沙, yet according to Sima Qian he died as a result of the intense grief and self-reproach he felt over the death of his charge, King Huai of Liang 梁懷王 (Liu Ji 劉姬), the youngest and much loved son of Emperor Wen. Seen against his life and career, Jia Yi's fu - especially 'The Owl' (Runiao fu 鶴鳥賦) - seem to be less heartfelt expressions of the aloofness and detachment from the world he associated with figures like Qu Yuan and Zhuangzi than attempts to cultivate those attitudes as an antidote for his acute sense of social and political responsibility.

In connection with this strong commitment to the socio-political on the part of these leading Former Han intellectuals it is helpful to consider the conception they had of the emperor's role in relation to their own. It was widely believed that the character and conduct of the ruler was the basic factor which determined the well-being or otherwise of the whole socio-political system. In itself this was an old idea, discussed by Confucius and variously developed by Warring States philosophers as different as Mencius and Han Feizi. But in the context of the multi-state polity of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods it had remained in a sense a fairly theoretical notion: as long as there were a number of competing states ruled by men whose
powers were limited by the existence of other centres of power, and intellectuals could move from state to state in an effort to win political influence, the concern of the intellectuals remained more on what they themselves should do and the theories they should espouse than on the character of a given ruler. The unification of the empire under one man whose claim to the Mandate of Heaven was undisputed clearly made the disposition and actions of that ruler a matter of the greatest practical consequence. For intellectuals with a sense of social and political responsibility the overwhelming question now became that of how to influence the emperor and lead him along the right path.

Here again, Jia Yi provides an excellent example. Much of his Xin shu can be understood as an elaboration of the principle that it is the nature of the emperor that determines the condition of the entire body politic. Thus he declares that if the ruler of men is righteous and everything in the state is done according to correct principles, his subjects will all be obedient; if the ruler of men keeps to the rites and everything in the state is correct, his subjects will all be respectful; if worthy men are promoted the people will become good, and if able men are employed officials will carry out their duties properly. As far as Jia Yi is concerned the chain of responsibility is clear: it is the fault of the officials if the people fail to do what they should, but it is the fault of the emperor if the officials fall short. Thus the ability of the populace to attain goodness is dependent on the emperor's ability to do so. Lu Jia expressed the same idea in terms of an analogy: if we want to change a shadow to a particular shape the only way is to alter the shape of the object which casts it. Like things influence like, and the people model themselves on their ruler. Dong Zhongshu held a
similar view. According to his biography in the Han shu he drew Emperor Wu's attention to the irresistible effect the ruler had on his subjects by invoking the famous simile from the Lunyu: 'Let the wind blow over the grass and it is sure to bend'.26 He argued that 'The lord of men corrects his heart in order to correct the court, corrects the court in order to correct the numerous officials, corrects the numerous officials in order to correct the myriad people, and corrects the myriad people in order to correct the whole world'.27 It is an idea around which much of the Chunqiufanlu 舜秋繁露 turns.28

One consequence of such a view of the socio-political order is to make the issue of eremitism a highly derivative one. Since everything in a sense is predetermined by the disposition of the emperor, as long as the emperor conducts himself in the proper manner the question of eremitism should not arise; whether men of principle come to him or whether they withdraw into virtuous seclusion is ultimately a matter decided by the emperor alone.29 Hence because King Zhou of the Shang was violent and tyrannical, Dong Zhongshu argued, worthy men such as Boyi and Taigong Wang dwelt in seclusion, whereas sages and worthies flocked to assist Yao in his imperial task because he was virtuous and hard-working.30

It might be thought that this stress on the paramount importance of the emperor's character and conduct in determining the condition of the entire socio-political system would lead to an unhealthy fatalism on the part of men of integrity, an inclination to sit back and wait and see what the emperor was going to do. In fact, intellectuals who held this view reacted in precisely the opposite way. For although the emperor influences everything that happens below him, the emperor himself is also susceptible to influence, and his decisive social and
political impact makes it all the more vital for those with access to the emperor to guide him, to urge him on to do good and to remonstrate fearlessly with him when he does wrong, to educate him in the principles of the true Way. That this situation could give rise to an acute sense of urgency and anxiety in those who believed their task was to guide the emperor in this way will become evident in what follows.

As I have already pointed out, it is difficult to know how prevalent a strong sense of socio-political commitment was among Former Han intellectuals. The half-dozen or so great names I have mentioned, who have long been honoured precisely for their adherence to Confucian teachings (though Lu Jia and Jia Yi especially were also influenced by non-Confucian ideas), inevitably dominate all accounts of the period. Yet it is clear that other schools of thought—particularly Daoism—flourished throughout the Former Han period (and indeed the Later Han too). The Daoism of the Han period was primarily that known as 'the teachings of Huang-Lao', i.e. the Yellow Emperor and Laozi. Or, to express the point more accurately, most of the information we have concerning Han Daoism relates to the Huang-Lao school. The reason for this is simple: Huang-Lao Daoism was as much a political doctrine as a personal philosophy. This is one reason why it was popular with the early Han rulers as well as a considerable number of the leading figures of the time. On the other hand, we have very little information concerning the influence of Zhuangzi at this time. The only major figures said to have been interested in his teachings come from towards the end of the period: Zhuang Zun, Yang Xiong, and Ban Gu's uncle Ban Si.
Many scholars have commented on the strong Daoist and Legalist influences in early Han Confucianism. Huang-Lao thought could be combined with Confucianism fairly easily. This is hardly surprising, since the Daoist influence is already quite strong in Xunzi and it was Xunzi's version of Confucianism which was particularly influential during the Han. Confucianism also left its mark on Daoism. In fact Sima Tan 師丹 went so far as to say that strength of the Daoist school was its ability to select the good points of the other schools and use them in a higher synthesis. Certainly this sort of eclecticism is demonstrated by the Huainanzi, which dates from more or less the same time, i.e. the middle of the second century B.C.

Probably the most historically important devotee of Huang-Lao doctrines in the Former Han was Emperor Wen's consort Dou 邓 (d. 135 or 129 B.C.), for as empress dowager she not only made her son Emperor Jing 景 study those doctrines, but also attempted to impose her preferences on her grandson Emperor Wu. Paradoxically, it may be asserted that the establishment of Confucianism as the state creed by Emperor Wu was due partly to the strength of the Daoist influence at the court when he came to the throne. The young Emperor Wu had to struggle for a long time against the power of his domineering grandmother, who removed from power leading Confucian officials to whom the emperor turned in order to win some measure of independence. By making Confucianism the state creed, Emperor Wu was able to free himself from the influence of his grandmother and the high officials sympathetic to her views, as well as winning the loyalty of a significant part of the bureaucracy.
But it was only gradually from this time on that the influence of Confucianism began to permeate all sectors of the imperial government. This was partly due to the power of two of the major innovations of Wu's reign: the Imperial Academy (taixue 太學), with its over-growing number of Erudites (学士) and students, and the establishment of a formal recommendatory system for official appointments. I shall be discussing the scholarly ethos which these institutions nourished later in this chapter, when considering the close of the Former Han dynasty. What I wish to do here is to insist on the intellectual variety of the Western Han period, and suggest that there was room for more than one view concerning whether or not a man should involve himself in public affairs. Huang-Lao Daoism did not necessarily lead to withdrawal from public life, but - as we shall see - neither did Confucianism necessarily lead to political participation. Other doctrines which found adherents, including those of Zhuangzi and the School of the Tillers, emphatically rejected socio-political commitment. The continuity of such schools of thought was in no small measure due to the widespread practice of private teaching which flourished throughout the Han period. Reference is made in the histories to literally hundreds of men who gave instruction to students in a private capacity. The majority of those whose names are recorded, inevitably, were Confucian scholars, but the Confucian classics were frequently taught alongside ideas from other schools and together with less 'reputable' skills such as divination, astrology and other occult arts. Private teaching was one of the few occupations available to intellectuals who flinched at the idea of an official career, consequently it is to be expected that not a few of these private teachers in the Han were men who espoused eremitic ideas of various sorts, retaining their personal independence at the same
time as making a major contribution towards intellectual vitality and freedom within the empire.38

4. Individual Choice in the Unified Empire

The fact that many intellectuals of the Former Han dynasty were strongly committed to the socio-political system, partly as a result of their belief that they had encountered fortunate times, did not make them blind to the drawbacks of living and working in a unified empire. The intellectuals of the late Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, their dismay at the instability and disorder of their time notwithstanding, had been very much aware of the advantages of freedom of choice and movement, the alternatives for employment and influence, that the numerous states of the period offered.39 The men of the Former Han, in turn, were aware that in exchange for the new found peace and order they enjoyed they had lost something of those earlier freedoms. In this section I shall examine some of the evidence relating to their misgivings and dissatisfaction in regard to the imperial system.

One major Former Han figure who was obviously highly conscious of the disadvantages of the living in the unified empire was Sima Qian. This is the reason why in his biography of Qu Yuan he is critical of the great poet's suicide, which struck him as pointless and irresponsible. A man with the talents of a Qu Yuan could go from one feudal lord to another and always be sure of being welcomed as a retainer wherever he went, so it was unjustifiable for him to commit suicide merely because his ruler ignored him: there were still many untried opportunities to do good in other states.40
Sima Qian's observation has some force and this makes it all the more necessary to reflect to the fascination Qu Yuan held for Former Han intellectuals, both as a poetic model in the development of the sao and as a legend which aroused a strong personal response in them. Sao were written by men such as Wang Bao (d.61 B.C.) and Liu Xiang, whose sense of political commitment cannot be questioned. Despite the highly formal and ritualistic elements characteristic of the sao genre, it would be wrong to assume that for Han writers sao were no more than formal exercises in composition or demonstrations of technical virtuosity. The psychological core of the sao is a mingled sense of isolation, impotence and despair which derives from the poet's image of himself as a solitary loyal subject isolated from his ruler by a phalanx of sycophants and deceivers. It is this which leads to withdrawal into a wild, mysterious landscape and the contemplation of suicide as the ultimate political protest and expression of personal despair. On the part of someone in Qu Yuan's position such a response might seem excessive or unwarranted, as Sima Qian suggested, but men of the Former Han clearly felt that in their own situation such an action would be readily understandable. They believed that everything depended on the disposition of the emperor, and therefore everything was won or lost according to who had access to the emperor and was in a position to influence him. Alienation from the ruler in the unified empire of Han had drastic implications which even Qu Yuan could not have anticipated. Hence, to the extent that sao were expressions of genuine feeling, it seems that they were written by men who were not the type to wander off into wild mountain regions or embrace heavy stones and hurl themselves into rivers. Rather, they were written by men who felt the decisive significance of their standing vis-a-vis their ruler so acutely that when their access
to or influence over the ruler was threatened they were filled with anxiety. For such men the ideal of timely withdrawal, advocated by Confucius at a time when a conscientious shi could choose which ruler to serve, had lost much of its relevance.

The same type of concern underlies the closely related poetic category of fu which Hellmut Wilhelm has called fu on 'the scholar's frustration'. Major examples of this genre are those by Jia Yi, Dong Zhongshu and (possibly) Sima Qian. From these poems, in which the writer's predicament is presented without the mythological trappings characteristic of the sao, it becomes readily apparent that Former Han intellectuals were very much alert to the limitations and dangers of the system they supported. There is surely considerable justification for assuming that, as far as their writers were concerned, these poems served as a form of catharsis: they are expressions of frustration and dissatisfaction which to some extent served as a substitute for principled withdrawal. Such poetry—more especially the sao—also played a major role in the development of later eremitism by fixing its vocabulary and iconography for later writers: the phrases and imagery of these early works continuously recur in the voluminous literature on eremitism of subsequent periods.

Up to this point I have focussed on the fundamental issue of the unification of the empire and the implications for eremitism of the new imperial order. However, it is possible to exaggerate the extent to which the unification of the empire limited freedom of choice and opportunities for employment. At least until the middle of Emperor Wu's reign a substantial measure of independence was enjoyed by the kingdoms (wangguo 王国) parcelled out to princes of the dynastic line and (initially by Han Gaozu) to outstanding loyal supporters and
imperial relatives. These kingdoms had sufficient autonomy and power to be able to threaten the stability and cohesion of the empire until they were stripped of most of their powers and brought under the control of the central government after the Seven Princes Rising of 157 B.C. To some degree they represented a range of competing potential employers for talented men. Moreover, the vastness of the empire and the administrative system of xian and jun authorities made it inevitable that the great majority of official positions continued to occur at a fairly localised level; only those with the greatest talents or the best connections found a place in the capital. It should also be noted that the custom of rich and powerful men keeping guests or retainers is something which did not die out in the Han. On the contrary, if anything it became even more widespread, with even some commoners keeping retainers. It appears in fact that the very popularisation of the practice helped to bring about the gradual lowering in the status of retainers which is discernible in the Han and Three Kingdoms periods. Thus it is easy to make too much of the claim that in Han China there was really only one employer.

But it cannot be suggested for a moment that the Han emperor was no more than a figurehead or that the central government was insignificant. As we have seen, Han intellectuals were much concerned with the implications of a unified system of government, and no-one can have lost sight of the fact that if they worked for a county or commandery administration or held a post at the court of a wangguo, ultimately they were the subject of only one emperor, to whom even the kings owed allegiance and whose power extended to all corners of the empire. A decision not to take part in that government amounted to a decision to refuse political participation altogether.
An important illustration of the perceptions of intellectuals concerning the implications of the unified political system of the Han is that involving Sir Shen (Shen Gong 申公). Sir Shen was appointed tutor to Liu Mou 毛 , heir apparent of the kingdom of Chu, but Liu Mou disliked study and hated Sir Shen, and on becoming king had his former teacher chained as a convict. Mortified, Sir Shen returned to his native state of Lu, where he lived out his life giving instruction in the Book of Songs, turning away guests and never venturing out of his gate except when summoned by the king of Lu himself. As far as Sir Shen was concerned, therefore, it was not a question of having suffered wrong at the hands of the king of Chu and so going elsewhere to take office. The unjust treatment he received was an indictment of the whole imperial system, something which in Sir Shen's eyes could be erased only by proper action on the part of the emperor. This Emperor Wu did by inviting Sir Shen to court with presents of silk and jade and highest ceremonial honours, including being carried in an 'easy carriage' (an che 安車) with wheels padded with rushes to lessen to rigors of the journey.47

Another official who was acutely aware of the difference between serving the Han and the situation of those employed by the states of the Eastern Zhou period was Gong Sui 孔伋, who served as Prefect of Palace Gentlemen 郎中令 under King He 懿 of Changyi 昌邑. When the latter was put on the throne following the death of Emperor Zhao 炎帝 in 74 B.C., and became even more dissolute and irresponsible than he had been before, only the extremely conscientious Gong Sui and Wang Ji 三吉 continued to remonstrate fearlessly. Gong Sui is recorded as having commented on the dangerous predicament in which he found himself:
In antiquity regulations were liberal and even a great minister could retire. For me to leave my post now is impossible, and I fear that a pretence of madness would be detected, while to take my own life would be to disgrace myself before the age - so what can I do?

He obviously felt that the system in which he worked demanded a more total commitment than that in times past and did not leave much room for personal decision to withdraw. Whether or not there were regulations governing retirement in antiquity is debatable - it is unlikely that things were ever codified to that extent. But what matters here is Gong Sui's perception of his position relative to that of the officials of antiquity, his belief that options available to those of former times were not open to him. Whether those options were removed through the implementation of different laws or simply as a result of shifts in conventions and uncodified rules is beside the point.

From the foregoing, then, it is evident that while many of the leading intellectuals of the Former Han believed themselves fortunate in having met with orderly times which allowed them to participate in government without fear of moral compromise, they were not blind to the pressures and dangers that the imperial system could present for men of integrity. Nor must it be thought that their concept of timeliness was so crude that it required them to characterise their time as either wholly good or wholly bad, without leaving room for consideration of personal circumstances. It was an essential aspect of the notion of timeliness that it applied to the microcosm as much to the macrocosm, to the life of the individual as much to the age in which he lived. Thus in the life of individuals too there was a time for progressing and at time for retreating, for serving in office and for withdrawing into obscurity.
The theme of timely action in the life of individuals is present in the *Shi ji*, and there can be little doubt that this was an integral part of Sima Qian's own view of the world. 'Things reach fullness and then decline; seasons run their course and revolve again', he comments. Fortune and well-being depend on being alert to changing circumstances and acting in harmony with the disposition of the moment. This is a lesson Sima Qian finds demonstrated in the lives of men such as Zhang Liang (d.185 B.C.) and Dong Zhongshu.

The *Han shu* also records the lives of famous men who lived according to this principle. Thus Shu Guang, who served as Grand Tutor to the heir apparent under Emperor Xuan (r.73-49 B.C.) resigned after five successful years in his post because he knew that a period of success must inevitably be followed by decline. On return to his native district he frittered away the gold he was given on his departure rather than run the risk of his sons and grandsons being corrupted by wealth. Better known is the case of Yang Yun, a son of Sima Qian's daughter, who for his role in exposing the plot of the Huo clan was enfeoffed as Marquis of Pingtong in 66 B.C. He rose to the high post of Palace Superintendent before being dismissed and reduced to a commoner. It was then, when he had to resort to farming to make a living, that he wrote his famous 'Letter Replying to Sun Huizong', which ranks beside his grandfather's 'Letter to Ren An' as one of the epistolary masterpieces of the Han period. It is a work pervaded with the sense that all things have their proper season, that in human affairs as in all else rise is followed by decline and a man must find contentment in whatever situation presents itself. Yang Yun did not choose to take up a life of rural simplicity and hard labour, and cannot be classified as a hermit, yet his is a masterly
evocation of the pleasures to be found in such a life; it is also an eloquent refusal to mourn what he has lost:

Human emotions which cannot be stopped the sages did not attempt to repress. Therefore a ruler or father, someone who commands our utmost respect or affection, is mourned for a fixed period when his life ends. But three years have already passed since I was punished.53

Unfortunately in this case a willingness to adjust to changing times was not enough to guarantee survival: Yang Yun was executed not long after writing his letter, in 55 or 56 B.C.54

The lives of other men also show that general commitment to the socio-political order and a sense of living in a relatively enlightened age did not preclude the possibility of having to endure individual hardship or making a personal decision to withdraw. Thus Zhu Yun 芝云, who had a reputation for strength and bravery before becoming a scholar, was recommended as 'proper and correct 乃正' in the time of Emperor Yuan 元 (r.48-33 B.C.), received a position as magistrate, was jailed as a result of factional struggles, and barely avoided execution for his outspoken comments against a favourite of Emperor Cheng 成帝 (r.32-7 B.C.). Subsequently he never again took office, retiring instead to the country and devoting himself to teaching.55 Others were not granted that option. Wang Zhang 王章, who served as Grandee Remonstrant 賢大夫 under Emperors Yuan and Cheng had the audacity to speak out against Commander-in-Chief Wang Feng's 王鳳 (d.22 B.C.) excessive power. Emperor Cheng accepted his views but failed to curb Wang Feng, and Wang Zhang died in jail as a result.56 These examples and the others mentioned earlier are sufficient to show that in the world view of the intellectuals of the Former Han period, strongly influenced as it was by the notions of cosmological change developed in the Book of Changes.
and Five Phase Theory, there was little room for simplistic or totalistic judgements about what sort of response the age demanded of them. In a world in which change is the only inevitability, the possibility of a personal crisis which might require total withdrawal from affairs is ever-present.

5. **Timely Withdrawal**

Given the general commitment to the socio-political system on the part of intellectuals already described, it is hardly surprising that for much of the Former Han there appear to have been few cases of timely withdrawal by men of principle determined to remain untainted and await the arrival of more auspicious times. Such cases as are recorded, which will be discussed here, relate largely to the beginning of the dynasty.

Mention should first be made of several figures who strictly speaking do not fall within the period of the Han empire but were so closely associated with famous men involved in the establishment of the dynasty, and feature so prominently in later legend and mythology, that they cannot be overlooked. Master Dongguo 東郭芝和 Lord Liangshi 梁石居 were two disengaged scholars (chushi) from the state of Qi. Ashamed at having been forced by the ruler Tian Rong 天龍 to take part in an offensive against Xiang Yu 項羽, they went deep into the mountains to live in seclusion. It was Cao Can 曹參 (d.190 B.C.) who, during his term as Prime Minister of Qi before Liu Bang's 刘邦 conquest of the empire, followed the advice of his persuasive friend Kuai Tong 馥通 and with utmost courtesy invited them to Qi, where on their arrival they were treated as honoured guests.57 Master Dongguo appears to have passed into popular mythology very quickly. Chu Shaosun 車少愷 added a story about
him to the Shi Ji which is set in the reign of Emperor Wu, some seventy years after the incident mentioned above. There he is referred to as a master of the occult (fangshi 了) from Qi who, before being summoned to court and appointed to a high post, was so poor he walked in the snow with shoes which no longer had soles.58

Master Anqi 安期生 was another acquaintance of Kuai Tong who may originally have been historical but was quickly mythologised. According to the Han shu both he and Kuai Tong refused fiefs offered them by Xiang Yu.59 Elsewhere it is recorded that the master of the occult Li Shaojun 李少君 told Emperor Wu that in the course of his travels on the seas around the mythological realm of Penglai 迦陵 he once met Master Anqi, who fed him on jujubes as big as gourds.60 A similar claim is said to have been made by Luan Da 調大, another master of the occult highly regarded by Emperor Wu.61

If figures such as these inspire little historical conviction, there would appear to be less reason to doubt the actuality of what is probably the most celebrated case of eremitism in the Former Han dynasty: that of the Four Silverhairs. Yet the facts of this case have been the subject of lively debate among Chinese scholars for over a thousand years.

According to Sima Qian62 these four old men had withdrawn into the hills because they disapproved of the uncouth manner in which Han Gaozu treated scholars and believed it would not be right to serve him. When in the eleventh year of his reign (196 B.C.) Gaozu decided to name a new heir apparent, Zhang Liang hit upon the strategy of securing the position of the present heir (the future Emperor Hui, who reigned 194-188 B.C.) by instructing him to invite these four men to court with all due ceremony.63 Zhang Liang believed that because
Gaozu had not been able to win the Four Silverhairs to his cause, if the heir apparent was able to do so this would make a favourable impression on the emperor and convince him his son was fit to rule.

From Sima Qian's account it is clear that the Four Silverhairs went into seclusion because of Han Gaozu's lack of civility to scholars: he records them telling Gaozu as much when they come to court in response to the heir apparent's respectful overtures. Ban Gu, in his own biography of Zhang Liang, reproduces the Shi ji account almost verbatim, but elsewhere in the Han shu asserts that the Four Silverhairs fled into the mountains to escape the evils of the Qin dynasty. This latter version, which ignores Sima Qian's unambiguous assertion that it was Han Gaozu's shortcomings that caused these four hermits to withdraw, was eventually widely accepted. It obviously reflects the increasing reverence with which the founder of the Han period came to be regarded in later times, and this reverence for Han Gaozu largely explains the subsequent refusal of some of the greatest Chinese intellectuals to accept that the Four Silverhairs could have been genuine hermits.

Sima Guang (1019-1086) rejected Sima Qian's whole account as implausible, believing it was just one more example of the Grand Historian's 'fondness of the bizarre'. If, as Sima Qian asserts, the eloquent and well trusted Zhang Liang could not dissuade the headstrong Gaozu from naming a new heir apparent, what hope was there that four old hermits would influence his decision? Sima Guang's contemporary Feng Jing (1021-1094), on the other hand, declared the four men to be the equals of Lu Zhonglian, the great hermit and hero of the close of the Warring States period (a figure about whom Sima Guang also had misgivings). Zhu Xi
^^^^ (1130-1200) sided with Sima Guang, condemning the Four Silverhairs as unprincipled schemers and plotters.69 Qian Qianyi 钱谦益 (1582-1664) and Quan Zuwan 金祖望 (1705-1755) criticised them in similar terms, the former saying roundly that they 'were not hermits', the latter dismissing them as 'no more than retainers of the Eastern Palace who advanced and withdrew en chorus'.70 However, the Four Silverhairs found another defender in Wang Zhichang 王之昌 (1837-1895), who labelled them 'true heroes' whose case can only be understood in terms of the importance Han Gaozu attached to making use of good men.71 And as recently as 1982 Hong Anquan defended their good name, reasserting the view that they were virtuous men and were valued by Han Gaozu because he was a worthy ruler.72

The most interesting of all the discussions of the Four Silverhairs is that by Wang Yangming 王阳明 (1472-1529), in a substantial essay which appears to have been overlooked by the compilers of his collected works.73 The great Ming philosopher stresses the impossibility of uncovering the facts concerning events which occurred well over a thousand years ago, observing that if the Han historians could not get to the bottom of the matter there is surely little hope for the lesser lights of later times. He too accepts the view that the Four Silverhairs went into seclusion during the Qin period (citing a popular saying as evidence) but does not regard Han Gaozu as blameless. Wang Yangming's position is that the Four Silverhairs cannot be regarded as genuine hermits as their conduct was not consistent with what he regards as the two basic categories of eremitism. If theirs was the unconditional eremitism of a Xuyou or a Chaofu, then they would have remained in seclusion to the end of their days; if, however, they were hermits of the same sort as Yi Yin (early Shang dynasty) or Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 (181-234), who
remained in seclusion only as long as the times were adverse, they would have responded only after having been invited with gifts three times. The alacrity with which the Four Silverhairs responded to their first summons, says Wang Yangming, is laughable, especially since the same crude, uncivil ruler who is said to have offended them was still on the throne. He suspects that the 'Four Silverhairs' were in fact imposters supplied by Zhang Liang, who, taking advantage of the fact that the real Four Silverhairs had been in hiding so long that nobody would recognise them, dressed up four other old men and presented them to Han Gaozu to plead the heir apparent's case.

Of course all these arguments by later scholars are inconclusive. Their primary interest here is perhaps as testimony of the keen interest which eremitism continued to arouse in Chinese intellectuals throughout the ages. Certainly some of the problems of interpretation they raise are very real and show how difficult it is to get a correct understanding of events about which we know so little. Nevertheless, most of the objections raised against the Four Silverhairs can be avoided if we refrain from trying to insist on the sageliness either of Han Gaozu or the Four Silverhairs themselves. Then the episode as originally described by Sima Qian seems quite credible, though we may continue to doubt whether presence or absence of such men at court would have greatly concerned Gaozu in any way. Yet here again there is something in Wang Zhichang's argument that Han Gaozu did attach importance to employing capable men, and in terms of the beliefs of the time, such venerable hermits were very useful politically.

Underlying Zhang Liang's strategy to make the heir apparent's position secure was the belief, first, that the Four Silverhairs were exceptional men, and, second, that by honouring these exceptional men
and winning their support the heir apparent would win considerable prestige and enhance his claim to the throne. In other words, it presupposes a widely held belief that by honouring worthy men - especially virtuous hermits who have set themselves apart from the corrupting influence of the world - a ruler or would-be ruler demonstrated his fitness to be in power. This idea, which had ancient roots, was to become especially important at the end of the Former Han, during Wang Mang's rise and fall, and I shall return to it later. Here it should be pointed out while Han Gaozu may have had a low opinion of men he regarded as virtue-preaching pedants, he was politically most astute. If there was political advantage to be gained by summoning to court even the most tiresome windbags, we may be sure that Han Gaozu would not have hesitated to do so. And as to his son's ability to win over the Four Silverhairs, Gaozu may not have been very impressed by the hermits themselves, but would have been impressed if their presence at court established the legitimacy of the heir apparent's claim to the throne in the eyes of the educated elite on which he relied for the administration of the empire.74

More general information concerning the response of Confucian scholars to the foundation of the Former Han dynasty is contained in the biography of Shusun Tong 叔孫通, who in the fifth year of Han (202 B.C.), when Liu Bang had defeated his opponents but was becoming exasperated with the riotous, drunken behaviour of his followers, contrived to get the new emperor to agree to invite scholars from Lu (i.e. Confucians) to assist in establishing a proper court, with rituals more in keeping with his newfound dignity. Shusun Tong invited more than thirty scholars; of these only two refused to come, writing in reply:
You have served wellnigh ten rulers, flattering each to his face in order to gain intimacy and prestige. Now the possession of the empire has just been settled, the dead have not yet been buried and the wounded have not yet recovered, but still you want to establish rites and music. It is only after the accumulation of virtue for over a century that rites and music can rise and flourish. We could not bear to do what you are doing. What you are doing is not consonant with antiquity and we will not come. Go; do not defile us.75

Thus the objection of these men seems to have been against what they regarded as Shusun Tong's unseemly haste rather than any distaste for serving the commoner-turned-emperor Liu Bang.76 What evidence there is indicates that for the Confucian scholars who came after them there was even less to stand in the way of serving the Han emperors. Nevertheless, Ban Gu states at one point that it was Emperor Wu, by giving Confucian teachings imperial sponsorship and institutional backing, who was able to 'make literature and learning flourish, and bring forward and promote those hiding in seclusion'.77 In other words, in the ideologically uncertain early reigns of the dynasty even some Confucian scholars had their doubts about the appropriateness of taking office. Concerning the attitudes of those of other philosophical persuasions we can only speculate.

6. Eremitic Advisors

If there are few recorded cases of intellectuals refusing to take part in affairs of state during the Former Han because they felt the times were not propitious, there is nevertheless considerable evidence to be found of hermits for whom withdrawal was not so much a matter of timely action as a response to factors they considered more or less inevitable and unchanging, such as the human craving for wealth, power and fame, or the prospect of personal extinction. To such figures I shall turn presently. There was one type of hermit, however, that may be regarded as a transitional group falling between unconditional
hermits of this sort and the socio-politically committed intellectuals discussed in earlier sections. These were what can best be called eremitic teachers and advisors, men who refused to take office but nevertheless regarded political involvement as a duty rather than something to be studiously avoided. For such men the evils to be evaded were those entailed in being the subject of a particular ruler: being a subject brought with it the duties of subordination, obedience and personal loyalty, which made it difficult to put justice and righteousness above all else. Hence these men cast themselves in the role of friend or advisor, and by so doing placed themselves in a tradition which went back at least to Zixia, Duangan Mu and Tian Zifang at the court of Marquis Wen of Wei (d.396 B.C.), and was institutionalised at the Jixia Academy during the reigns of Kings Wei (r.356-320 B.C.) and Xuan (r.319-301 B.C.) of Qi.78

Eremitic advisors of this sort from the Former Han include Sir Ge and Master Wang, both of whom are said to have been students of Huang-Lao. When Cao Can was appointed Chancellor of Qi in 194 B.C. he soon became frustrated by the conflicting advice he received from Confucian scholars. Hearing of Sir Ge, from Jiaoxi in Qi, he invited him to the Qi court with generous gifts. By putting into practice Sir Ge's teachings on governing through purity and quietude and letting the people find tranquility unhindered, Cao Can was able to bring nine years of peace and harmony to Qi. Sima Qian does not state directly that Sir Ge was a hermit, but he does place him in a line of transmission of teachings coming from such eremitic figures as the Man on the Yellow River (Heshang zhangren) and Master Anqi.79 Huangfu Mi says that of all the scholars of Qi, Sir Ge alone did not rush off to involve himself in the civil wars that followed the collapse of the Qin dynasty, but
remained in seclusion and did not serve in office.80

Master Wang is described by Sima Qian as a recluse who discoursed ably on the doctrines of Huang-Lao. Following the death of Emperor Wen in 157 B.C., the Commandant of Justice Zhang Shizhi was afraid that when Emperor Jing came to the throne he might seek redress for the fact that when heir apparent he had been reprimanded by the Commandant of Justice. By following the advice of Master Wang, however, Zhang Shizhi was able to defuse this potentially dangerous situation. Subsequently, when Master Wang was invited to visit the court, in front of the assembled officials he asked Zhang Shizhi to do up his shoe for him, confident that Zhang Shizhi's willingness to comply would enhance the Commandant of Justice's reputation for humility.81

This same strategy is also said to have been used by the mysterious Sir Yellow Stone to test the character of Zhang Liang when they first met, apparently during the reign of Qin Shihuang. However, Sir Yellow Stone's teachings appear to have been of a political rather than philosophical nature: the text he handed on to Zhang Liang concerned military and political strategy and was intended to make its recipient a teacher of kings.82 According to Sima Qian, Sir Yellow Stone also had the gift of prophecy and the ability to transform himself - or be transformed into - the yellow stone from which his name is taken.83

Whatever we might think of Sir Yellow Stone, it is clear that by no means all the men who declined to take office during the Former Han cultivated an attitude of moral aloofness or sought quietude and philosophic detachment. There were also those with military skills and inclinations, heirs as much of the knight-errant as of the
eremitic tradition. But not all of them were able to attract disciples as illustrious as Zhang Liang; nor were they always as ready as Sir He or Master Wang to establish contact with powerful men.

The Han shu contains a letter to King Xian of Huaiyang (one of the sons of Emperor Xuan) from Zhang Bo, a cousin on his mother's side, which raises the subject of eremitic advisors. In this letter Zhang Bo reports that when travelling in Yan and Zhao in search of 'scholars in hiding' (youyin zhi shi 陽隱之士) he heard that in Chu there was a Master Si who was an expert on The Sima's Art of War (司馬兵法) and had the ability to become a great general. He went to see him and was most impressed by his knowledge, for he had gathered in himself all the arts of the Way and there was no text he did not possess (i.e. this was no ignorant soldier living in rustic squalor). Zhang Bo also mentions another worthy of outstanding ability living by the North Sea, but expresses misgivings about the possibility of persuading him to come to court. If the king could indeed employ such men, Zhang Bo declared, he would be able to accomplish great things. Apparently the king was delighted with the plan, but there is no evidence that it was followed up.

Also in this category of eremitic advisors must go the rather exceptional figure of Mei Fu, even though the advisory role he adopted was quite unlike that of the more traditional type of mentor mentioned so far. Mei Fu was appointed Commandant of Nanchang during the reign of Emperor Cheng, but resigned from his post and returned to his native place. There he made a point of investigating any unusual phenomena said to have occurred in the district, going to the place in person to make full enquiries and then submitting a
report. He also wrote to Emperor Cheng in protest against the Commander-in-Chief Wang Feng's abuses of power. When the Emperor ignored his protestations on this and other matters, Mei Fu remained in seclusion at home, devoting himself to study. When Wang Mang came to power in the Yuanshi period (1-5 A.D.), Mei Fu left his family and vanished. It was said that he had become an immortal, and there were reports that he was living incognito in Kuaiji.

With the possible exception of Mei Fu, the figures discussed in this section are known to us only through their connections with powerful and famous men. They were what might paradoxically be called high-profile hermits. For they had qualms not about being near the centre of power as much as the constraints that actually holding office would place on them. But for others eremitism was a rather more stringent affair.

7. Unconditional Eremitism

What then of those who really did try to live in seclusion and anonymity, to keep themselves at a distance from the quest for power, wealth and fame? The only times when information about such men becomes available is when someone else is moved either to criticise or to praise them. It is to these figures that I will now turn.

When the early Han statesman and thinker Lu Jia described the social evils of his time in his work Xin yu, he made reference to both the obsession with immortality and eremitism. On the one hand there are people, he complained, who venture far into the mountains in search of gods and immortals, forsaking their families and cutting themselves off from both proper bodily and spiritual nourishment; on the other there are hermits who live in isolation and obscurity
because of their disdain for what they regard as human artifice and the corrupting influence of society. The latter type Lu Jia regarded with a mixture of disapproval and contempt:

As to throwing away one’s clothes and tousling one’s hair, climbing high mountains and living on fruit and nuts: look at such people and they have no carefree, relaxed expression, listen to them and they have nothing to say about benevolence and righteousness. They are as muddle-headed as madmen. Push them and they will not go, pull them and they will not come. Their contemporaries receive nothing from their efforts, those of later times will see no evidence of their talents. Their lord might fall but they would not go to his assistance, their country might be in danger but they would not come to its aid. They are solitary and have no neighbours; in their isolation they sleep alone. They could be said to shun the world, but it could not be said that they have their minds set upon the Way. To destroy one’s body in order to shun danger is not reasonable; to have one’s mind set upon the Way and yet shun the world is not loyalty. This is the reason a gentleman who lives in an age of disorder unites with the Way and virtue, cleaves even to the smallest good and shuns even the smallest evil, cultivates propriety between father and son and extends this as the model for propriety between ruler and subject.86

That during the Former Han as in the Warring States period there were those who physically withdrew from society in order to protect their purity is also evident from the later chapters of Zhuangzi. The Keyi chapter includes among its five categories of scholars those who withdraw to mountain valleys out of moral indignation and disdain for the world; those who withdraw to rivers and seas to live in carefree indifference to it; and those preoccupied with the quest for immortality.87 The continuing occurrence of men who sought physical isolation in order to remain unsullied by the world is also confirmed by the magnificent poem composed at the court of Liu An (179-122 B.C.), King of Huainan, circa.124 B.C., 'Summoning a Hermit' (Zhao yin shi 招隱士). This work, which was to inspire a long series of poems on the same topic, is constructed around the poet's perception of the awful, intolerable wilderness in which the
hermit has chosen to live. While there is evidence that during the Former Han and even in the Warring States expressions such as 'scholars of the mountains and forests' (shanlin zhi shi 山林之士) and 'scholars of the cliffs and caves' (yanxue zhi shi 峭穴之士) were sometimes used synecdochally to refer to the general category of men committed to high ideals of personal conduct,88 this poem must be interpreted literally - anything less would make it virtually meaningless:

The cassia trees grow thick
In the mountain's recesses,
Twisting and snaking,
Their branches interlacing.
The mountain mists are high,
The rocks are steep.
In the sheer ravines
The waters' waves run deep.
Monkeys in chorus cry;
Tigers and leopards roar.
One has climbed up by the cassia boughs,
Who wishes to tarry there.
A prince went wandering
And did not return.
In spring the grass grows
Lush and green
At the year's evening,
Comfortless,
The cicada sings with
A mournful chirp.
Wildly uneven,
The bends of the mountain:
The heart stands still
With awe aghast.
Broken and wild,
Chilling the heart,
In the deep wood's tangle,
Tigers and leopards spring.
Towerng and rugged,
The craggy rocks, frowning,
Crooked and interlocked
The woods' gnarled trees.
Green cypress grass grows in between,
And the rush grass rustles and sways.
White deer, roebuck and horned deer
Now leap and now stand poised.
Sheer and steep,
Chill and deep:
Baboons and monkeys
And the bears
Seek for their kind
With mournful cries.
Tigers and leopards fight,
And the bears growl.
Birds and beasts, startled,
Lose the flock.
O prince, return!
In the mountains you cannot stay long.89

The passage by Lu Jia quoted above is of course also directed against physical withdrawal from society, but there is good reason to believe that his criticisms applied to all those who turned their backs on the world, even when they did not go to the trouble of removing themselves physically. For there were also hermits who chose to live in society, cultivating an attitude of sublime indifference to the world rather than lofty disdain. Such hermits, who drew inspiration especially from Zhuangzi, lived in obscurity and anonymity, earning their living by menial occupations, and thereby found the freedom to devote themselves to lofty ideals.

As I have already pointed out, it is to Yang Xiong above all that we owe what information we have concerning unconditional eremitism in the later part of the Western Han period.

The hermits praised by Yang Xiong were not moral extremists of the type criticised by Lu Jia and in the Keyi chapter of Zhuangzi; they were socially orientated men for whom withdrawal from the world was ultimately a state of mind rather than physical isolation. The only one who could be said to have had something of the world condemning extremism of a Chen Zhongzi in him was Zheng Pu. Yang Xiong says that because he refused to lower his aspirations he farms for a living, and despite the fact that he did not have noble rank 'his name shook the capital'.90 Ban Gu also comments that he 'would not wear clothes not his own nor eat food not his own'.91 However, this cannot be taken to mean that he tried to achieve
complete independence from society by producing his own food and clothing, in the manner of Chen Zhongzi or other Warring States extremists associated with the School of the Tillers. For Ban Gu's remark applied also to Zhuang Zun, and as we shall see, Zhuang Zun was certainly not interested in self-sufficiency or avoiding all contact with the world. Probably Ban Gu merely meant that Zheng Pu would not accept an emolument in return for official service and insisted on earning his living directly by his own labour. That Zheng Pu was not a world-condemning fanatic is also evident from the comments about him in Chang Ju's (4th century A.D.) Huayang guozhi. There it is said that he guarded the Way in darkness and quietude, was completely virtuous in his conduct and taught that 'loyalty, filiality, love and respect are the supreme virtues in the world'. This is hardly the teaching of a man who sets himself above the world. During the reign of Emperor Cheng, Commander-in-Chief Wang Peng invited him to court with the appropriate ceremonial gifts, but Zheng Pu refused to accede to his request. After his death a shrine was built in his honour, which according to Huangfu Mi was still in use in his day.

There is some evidence that in the Warring States period there had been men who, in accordance with ideas such as those developed by Zhuangzi, lived eremitically within society and sometimes literally were 'shi yin', hermits of the market place. Not only is it unlikely that all the stories about such types in Zhuangzi are entirely fictional, but Sima Qian also mentions a hermit who worked as a gate-keeper, another who was a butcher, and yet others who associated with gamblers and soup vendors. It appears that hermits turned to all sorts of trades to keep themselves alive. One profession not mentioned in this context before the Han period,
however, was that of diviner or fortune teller. It may be that the appearance of hermits working as diviners in the Former Han is a reflection of the fascination cosmological influences on human affairs had for Han intellectuals. What seems to have been a characteristic Han idea is expressed in the chapter on diviners in the Shi ji (believed by some scholars to be the work of Chu Shaosun rather than Sima Qian). There Jia Yi is recorded as observing that 'the sages of antiquity, if not at court, were sure to be found among diviners and healers'.

This same chapter in the Shi ji is devoted to a portrait of one such sage of the market place, Sima Jizhu 郭瑀. Probably this portrait is a fictional one, a stage-setting for the ideas Sima Jizhu is made to expound so eloquently. But this is no reason to assume that Sima Jizhu himself is equally fictional, or that he did not hold the type of ideas attributed to him. In the course of his harangue Sima Jizhu refers to both Laozi and Zhuangzi, and his philosophy of eremitism shows the influence of the latter especially:

...occupying a lowly position, a gentleman withdraws to avoid the multitude, hides himself away to avoid social relations; lest he be harmed by the crowd he allows only a trace of his virtue and complaisance be seen; by illumining his heavenly nature he assists the ruler and sustains the ruled, enhancing their merit and interests without seeking honour or praise for himself.

The information concerning another diviner-hermit of the Former Han is much more reliable, and this is the man who is the most important as well as the most attractive of all the hermits of this period: Zhuang Zun, styled Junping, commonly known also as Yan Junping, the name used by Ban Gu in Han shu to avoid the tabooed personal name of Emperor Ming 明帝 (r.58-77 A.D.). Zhuang Zun had been Yang Xiong's teacher in Chengdu 成都 before Yang Xiong
left for the capital, and in Fa yan his former student praises him most eloquently:

Zhuang of Shu is profound and serene. Zhuang of Shu's treasure is his genius. He does nothing that might attract improper attention, handles nothing that might bring improper gain; he remains in obscurity without altering the principles to which he holds. What could (the pearl of) Sui[ Hou] and (the jade of) Bian add to this? Raise up this man and follow him, for is he not a treasure? Zhuang is our treasure. He practises what is difficult to accomplish. If it is not Xuyou that he emulates it must be Boyi, so what desires could he possibly have?

Zhuang Zun worked as diviner in the market place in Chengdu. It was a lowly profession, he believed, but one which nevertheless enabled him to benefit the common people:

When it is a question of things incorrect or evil, I say what would be advantageous or harmful according to the tortoise and milfoil. Sons I advise according to [the requirements of] filiality, younger brothers according to deference, subjects according to loyalty. Taking into account their particular circumstances, I guide them toward goodness, and more than half do as I say.

Having seen several people and earned the small amount he needed to keep himself, he would close his stall, lower the blind, and give instruction on Laozi. He was so widely read, Ban Gu informs us, that there was nothing of which he did not have a thorough understanding. He wrote a work of more than 100,000 characters, drawing on the doctrines of Laozi and Zhuangzi (a large part of it is still extant), but continued to practise his trade until his death at the age of more than ninety. One illustration of Zhuang Zun's encyclopedic knowledge is given in Yang Xiong's letter to Liu Xin (53 B.C.-23 A.D.) concerning his compilation of Fang yan. There Yang Xiong comments that Zhuang Zun and another scholar from Shu called Linlu Wengru were the only men in the empire familiar with the documents which in former times had
been submitted to the throne by the 'light carriage envoys' (youxian zhi shi 轩軒之使), but had been scattered when the Zhou and Qin buildings in which they were stored were destroyed.\textsuperscript{102} In parenthesis, it should be noted that the Linlu Wengru mentioned in this letter, whom Yang Xiong says was related to his mother's family, is described in \textit{Huayang guozhi} as a hermit-scholar similar to Zhuang Zun. There his name is given as Linlu and his style Gongru 公孺, and it is said that after giving Yang Xiong the instruction which enabled him to compile \textit{Fang yan} he went into seclusion and was never heard of again.\textsuperscript{103}

Ban Gu further records that a certain friend of Yang Xiong, Li Qiang 李襁 from Duling 杜陵, when appointed magistrate of Yizhou 益州, happily told his friend that now he would have the opportunity to persuade Zhuang Zun to come to court. Yang Xiong discounted the possibility, but Li Qiang nevertheless went off full of hope. On his arrival in Chengdu he was granted an interview by Zhuang Zun, yet when face to face with this venerable man he did not dare even to mention his reason for coming to see him, let alone attempt to persuade him.\textsuperscript{104}

From Ban Gu's brief sketch Zhuang Zun emerges as a most sympathetic character able to combine the highest personal ideals with a considerate attitude towards others. He epitomises some of the best features of Zhuangzi's philosophy: the pursuit of sageliness without setting oneself apart from the common people; the quest for contentment in a life of simplicity and anonymity; acceptance of the fact that the lives of the majority of people are subject to the demands of family and government, and helping them to cope with those pressures despite an unwavering personal commitment to an ideal beyond
the requirements of everyday life. It is not difficult to believe Ban Gu's statement that 'the people of Shu loved and respected him and he is praised there to this day'. Certainly the comments about him in the Huayang guozhu confirm this image of Zhuang Zun. There he is described as having 'a noble nature, a tranquil manner enhanced by learning', a man whose subtle guidance altered manners and changed customs and spread kindness and harmony around him.

The only other person Yang Xiong praised with the type of superlatives he used in relation to Zhuang Zun was Li Hong (styled Zhongyuan ). Li Hong also came from Shu and he too was Yang Xiong's teacher, but in some aspects of character and conduct he was the antithesis of Zhuang Zun. So high was Yang Xiong's regard for him that he characterised him in terms of the description Confucius gives of himself in the Lunyu as someone who not only would neither lower his aspirations nor demean his person, but who further believed that there was no course of action which was either necessarily permissible or necessarily impermissible, that each action had to be continually evaluated anew according to the circumstances of the moment. Yang Xiong says:

[Li] Zhongyuan is a teacher to the age. Look at his bearing and it is dignified, listen to his speech and it is solemn, observe his conduct and it is majestic. I have heard of him bending others to his virtue, I have never heard of him, in the name of virtue, bending to others. Zhongyuan fills men with awe... He will not look upon what is not correct, will not listen to what is not correct, will not say what is not correct, will not do what is not correct. It is this ability to correct his sight and hearing, speech and conduct, that fills me with awe for my former teacher.

Yang Xiong provides no further personal details concerning Li Hong; in the Han shu he is not mentioned at all. According to Gaoshi zhuan his example transformed the people of his locality, to
the extent that those whose hair was going white were no longer expected to carry loads, and men and women when walking maintained a proper distance from each other. Once he was on the point of acceding to a request to take up a post as county prefect, but when the local people gathered to send him off he could not bring himself to leave them. What began as a sad farewell turned into a joyous celebration lasting more than a month, until the provincial governor sent someone to order Li Hong to come. At this point he 'made himself scarce'. Other texts, however, give different accounts of his relations with the authorities. The Huayang guozhi says that he served for one month in the commandery Bureau of Merit before resigning; the Sichuan tongzhi states that he was recommended as 'prolific talent' but did not heed the imperial summons.

From these accounts it would be rash to draw any conclusion more precise than the general one that Li Hong was a man of high integrity who was uninterested in wealth, power or status, who refused to become involved in political affairs, but as a model and teacher had a great influence on those around him. There is one other story about him related by Chang Ju, however, which had an authentic ring to it. As well as demonstrating Li Hong's rigorous moral standards, it also shows that the personal influence of even such a great man as this was not always as strong as either he himself or his biographers might have hoped:

[Li Hong’s] son Zhui killed a man for what he regarded as an insult. The Grand Administrator said, "The son of a worthy man should not kill anyone", and released him. Zhui himself informed his family of this miscarriage of justice. When Hong sent him away to avoid the legal proceedings against him, the Grand Administrator was angry and questioned Hong about it. Hong answered respectfully: 'Zhui is a bandit who has killed a man. It is clear that the Commandery, out of partiality to me, has subverted the
law. A gentleman does not encourage (wrongdoing) but eradicates it. Shi Que's murder of his son Hou is censured in the Chunqiu. Confucius says that father and son should cover up for each other, that this constitutes uprightness. I did in fact send Zhui away.

It seems unlikely that anyone intent on glorifying a virtuous man would invent a story in which he could be said to fail in his role as father. The situation of a greatly respected man profoundly influencing the conduct of others yet being unable to instill high principles in his own son is an aspect of human experience as touching as it is commonplace.

At this point it is appropriate also to mention a number of other hermits from the Former Han whose biographies are included in Huangfu Mi's Gaoshi zhuan, some of them of rather dubious veracity. The most interesting of these is a certain Zhi Jun, who according to Huangfu Mi was a friend of Sima Qian. From Chang'an, Zhi Jun (styled Boling) chose to cultivate his virtue in solitude rather than follow Sima Qian's example of pursuing a career at court, and retired to live at Xing Mountain. The biography quotes a letter from Sima Qian rebuking him for his failure to make better use of his talents:

I have heard that there are three aspects of the Way that a gentleman regards as important: of these the foremost is to establish his virtue, next comes establishing his doctrines, and finally comes establishing his personal merit. I would venture to submit that, since your talents far outstrip those of others and you set yourself the highest aspirations, correcting yourself so as to be as clear as ice, as pure as jade, and your reputation is not burdened by imputation of even the slightest improprieties of conduct, your name is certainly distinguished already. However, you have not as yet accomplished completely that which leads to the highest good. I would like you to give this matter some consideration.

To this Zhi Jun replied:

I have heard that the gentleman of old took part in affairs
according to the level of their ability and remained at home according to the measure of their virtue. In this way they kept themselves free from regret. Profit cannot be got from nothing, fame cannot be acquired by improper means. Ever since the rise of Han the imperial Way has been much in evidence; it has also been a time when able men have profited, while worthless men have built a screen around themselves. According to the Book of Changes, when a great lord holds the Mandate petty men are not used. I wish for nothing more than to lie on my back gazing upwards, without a care whiling away my remaining years.

Zhi Jun does not appear to have been mentioned in any text before Gaoshi zhuang. This, plus the neatness of the contrast drawn by Huangfu Mi between Sima Qian suffering the humiliation of castration on the one hand, and Zhi Jun's long and carefree life on the other, suggests that perhaps this account perhaps owes more to Huangfu Mi's imagination than to historical fact. Why would he fabricate such a biography? Huangfu Mi's disciple was the poet and literary critic Zhi Yu (d.c.312 A.D.) who came from Chang'an. It would not have been out of character for a man with Huangfu Mi's generous nature and lively historical fancy to compose a biography of a distinguished ancestor for a highly regarded disciple, and we would expect the details of such a biography to reflect the values of both the master and his disciple.

Other hermits of the Former Han mentioned by Huangfu Mi are Sir Cheng, Anqiu Wangzhi, Song Shengzhi and Zhang Zhongwei. What is recorded about Sir Cheng makes him seem rather improbable. Emperor Cheng is supposed to have gone in person to visit him, only to be rebuffed in a most impertinent way. Instead of losing his life for this impertinence however, Sir Cheng was given the opportunity to present the emperor with his work on government affairs in thirteen chapters. Anqiu Wangzhi is said to have refused all together to see Emperor Cheng. A student of
Laozi, he used the strategy of becoming a shaman to make himself ineligible for public office, then devoted himself to study and writing and founded his own school of interpretation of Laozi.121 Song Shengzhi (d.3 A.D.) lived a life of selfless devotion to virtue. Rather than pursue an official career he became a shepherd, and maintained his humble lifestyle despite being summoned to court in person by Chancellor Kong Guang (65 B.C.-5 A.D.).122 Similarly, Zhang Zhongwei (together with a certain Wei Jingqing who came from the same commandery) devoted himself to the cultivation of virtue in retirement rather than taking up an official career. A man with literary interests, he lived in the poorest, most undistinguished circumstances, in such strict seclusion that he was almost unknown to his contemporaries - only Liu Gong was familiar with him.123

Other than what is said about Sir Cheng, there is nothing to suggest that these accounts are necessarily fictional. Nor is there reason to doubt the historicity of Han Fu, a famous hermit from Zhuo commandery who in 80 B.C. was summoned to court by Emperor Zhao in honour of his virtue. There he was presented with a letter of bestowal announcing of a gift of silk. The imperial proclamation stated:

We consider it would be a grievous thing to burden him with the affairs of office. His duty shall be to cultivate the conduct of a filial younger brother for the edification of his district. When travelling he shall be entitled to stay in official hostels and county authorities en route shall supply him with meat and wine and provide for his entourage and horses. As in the case of senior officials, every year in the eighth month he shall be presented with one sheep and two measures of wine, so that his life will not come to an untimely end. Should the misfortune of his death occur, a double coverlet and sacrificial pig shall be presented.124
To the end of his life Han Fu did not hold office, Huangfu Mi tells us, and to this extent he could be regarded as similar to Zhuang Zun, Zheng Fu or Li Hong. Yet there is a fundamental difference: whereas someone like Zhuang Zun tried to avoid fame and prestige, and by plying an ordinary trade earned what little he needed to live simply and inconspicuously, Han Fu was prepared to respond to the imperial summons, to be honoured at court and to accept the emperor's largesse. His eremitism was fully incorporated into the established socio-political order, as is shown by the recognition he received from the supreme authority. What is more, his refusal to take office does not appear to be linked to any particular objection to the moral qualities of the person occupying the throne or the integrity of his government. As far as can be determined, Han Fu had no desire to do anything more than cultivate the virtues of a Confucian gentleman in a private capacity, 'taking part' in the government of the empire only by transforming those around him by the force of personal example. According to the *Lunyu* this was a perfectly valid contribution to society, and Emperor Zhao's proclamation appears to allude to this view approvingly.125

Han Fu represents a type of eremitism which circa.80 B.C. was still rather new (indeed, because the date of his invitation to the court is fixed, it is tempting to treat him as its beginning). Yet the change he represents is absolutely crucial to an understanding of the development of eremitism, in terms of both variety and prevalence, not only in the Han period but also the Period of Division that followed. For Han Fu's eremitism is a manifestation of the scholarly ethos or culture which evolved steadily over a period of some three hundred years from the reign of Emperor Wu. It is an ethos which was profoundly influenced by two factors in particular: imperial
sponsorship of Confucianism and the operation of the official recommendatory system. Together these factors generated an obsession with exemplary personal conduct of an ostensibly Confucian mode. Eremitism in the style of Han Fu was one of the outcomes of this. Aspects of the development of this scholarly ethos and its attendant type of eremitism will be considered in the following section.

8. The Recommendatory System and the Rise of Exemplary Eremitism

The growing influence of Confucianism in Han government and the increasing imperial support it received has been discussed by many scholars from Sima Qian onwards. Official sponsorship of Confucianism centred on the Imperial Academy, to which an ever-increasing number of Erudites were appointed to provide authoritative interpretations of the classics, advice (frequently ignored) for the emperor and his government, and instruction for students who by the reign of Emperor Cheng numbered some three thousand. This whole politico-philosophical-cum-educational endeavour was based on jingxue, the study of the classics, which consisted largely of elaborate textual commentary and philological analysis. The main results of this activity were, first, a proliferation of schools of interpretation of the various texts, with the production of 'chapter and verse' (changju) commentaries to ensure the continuity of these schools of interpretation, and second, the dissemination of some knowledge of the texts throughout the elite (that is, those with sufficient resources and aspirations to provide their children with an education). As an educational endeavour the Imperial Academy tended to remain 'academic' in the pejorative sense: it stressed bookish knowledge of the texts rather than inculcating a fiery determination to put into practice the
frequently radical ideals contained in them. Nevertheless, it did help Confucian ideas to be diffused throughout the educated stratum of society.127

The official recommendatory system, on the other hand, directly affected the everyday conduct of individuals (though, again, not always for the best) because its operation depended, at least in theory, on the identification by the authorities of individuals who had demonstrated ability and virtuous qualities in their behaviour within the community. Detailed accounts of the Han recommendatory system have been provided elsewhere,128 so I shall not attempt to repeat them. My only aim will be to highlight the important role played by the recommendatory system in creating a social climate in which a reputation for impeccable personal conduct was of paramount importance and providing machinery to draw such conduct to the notice of the world at large. Without it, the history of eremitism in China would have been very different.

Some of the criteria according to which men were recommended had political utility of a direct and obvious sort— for example, 'the ability to speak frankly and remonstrate candidly', as specified in Emperor Wen's seminal edict of 178 B.C. Others invoked ideals of personal conduct of a less specific nature, such as that of being 'worthy and good, proper and correct', mentioned in the same edict.129 It was in 134 B.C. that Emperor Wu ordered each commandery and kingdom to recommend one person of 'filial and blameless' character, and this was to develop into the most important category of recommendation, the major criterion for annual recommendations to the court. But from time to time other criteria were also specified. Thus Emperor Yuan's edict of 43 B.C.
stipulated the four categories of 'honest and unaffected', 'genuine and sincere', 'self-effacing and deferential', and 'exemplary conduct'. These criteria were re-invoked by Emperor Guangwu in 36 A.D., and in the course of the Later Han dynasty were supplemented by still more categories including the more highly rated 'prolific talent'.

Hence many of the criteria according to which men were to be recommended for office were of a fairly open nature and could be satisfied by a variety of types of action or demeanour. Accordingly, there developed along with the recommendatory system a range of what might best be termed personal styles, styles of conduct aspiring to the ideals institutionalised by the recommendatory system. Eremitism was one of these personal styles. But to understand the particular qualities of that eremitism it is helpful to consider it together with some of the other modes of behaviour generated by the recommendatory system.

At least since Sima Guang (1019-1086), Chinese scholars have been very much aware of the efforts of a significant number of Later Han scholars to conduct themselves in an exemplary fashion, to embody Confucian ideals of personal conduct and show moral courage in their socio-political involvement. The locus classicus is Gu Yanwu's (1613-1682) statement that, the political decline of the period notwithstanding, 'from the Three Dynasties down, customs have never been finer than in the Eastern Capital'. Accounts of what brought this about differ. Sima Guang and Gu Yanwu, for example, trace it back to Emperor Guangwu's respectful treatment of scholars and his successors' continuance of that policy; the twentieth century scholar Chen Dongyuan 陳東原 places more emphasis on the reaction
of Eastern Han scholars to the political evils of their time—the power of the imperial relatives and eunuchs. The explanation which is most relevant here, however, is that given by Zhao Yi (1727-1814): he argues that it was primarily the outcome of the recommendatory system, which spurred men to establish a reputation for virtuous conduct since such a reputation alone could lead to a recommendation for office and an official career. 'It appears that those recommended or imperially summoned in this period were invariably chosen according to their reputation, therefore whoever was able to obtain a reputation was sure to pursue it with all their might'. This view has been accepted, without its implications being fully explored, by some modern scholars.

The observation that personal reputation was the basis of the operation of the entire recommendatory system is of course not to be taken as an argument that scholars of the Han period were motivated in whatever they did solely by a hunger for personal renown. While there certainly were such people, there is no reason to assume that they were more numerous than in any other period. It is rather that, given a situation in which hope of an official career depended largely on ability to acquire a reputation for virtuous conduct, scholars were alert to the impression their conduct might make on others and the consequences that might flow from it; they were constantly on the lookout for individuals who embodied the ideals of their culture and against whom their conduct could be evaluated, both by themselves and others. What I wish to stress here is that the system which helped to generate this climate operated for well over one hundred years in the Former Han as well as in the Later Han, and that the styles of conduct it helped to generate were already well established by the time Wang Mang took the throne.
What were the modes of exemplary behaviour the recommendatory system helped to generate? The list is considerable and includes: comporting oneself as a worthy subject in one's relations with the local Grand Administrator (the man responsible for recommendations by the commandery); honouring distinguished and learned men as one's teachers; filial conduct (including ritually correct mourning of one's parents); refusal of material rewards or emoluments; conscientiousness in repaying favours or kindnesses; yielding hereditary rank to another relation; determination in avenging wrongs (particularly against one's family); exhibiting moral courage in dangerous or intimidating circumstances; and, finally, exemplary eremitism, which often entailed several of the other modes of conduct listed, as well as a resolve to remain aloof from public affairs which generally was less due to a negative assessment of the state of the political system than to a wish to demonstrate personal detachment from the worldly concerns of wealth, status and power.136

Although not as fully developed as in the later part of the Eastern Han, the cultivation of all these personal styles under the influence of the recommendatory system is discernible in the last century of the Former Han—from approximately the time Emperor Zhao honoured the hermit Han Fu. To demonstrate this fully for each type of conduct is out of the question here, but, drawing heavily on Zhao Yi's work, I shall briefly consider the custom of ceding hereditary aristocratic rank, which dovetails nicely with the eremitism I shall go on to discuss.

Zhao Yi rightly points out that as a strategy for generating personal renown, yielding hereditary rank to another relative had great potential. This was something which could only be done with the
approval of the emperor, and naturally the mere request for such an approval in itself was enough to draw the court’s attention to the supplicant. Zhao Yi slyly observes that with a bit of luck the supplicant could have his cake and eat it too: the emperor would refuse his request, so that in the end he would have his fame and keep his rank into the bargain. Cases of ceding aristocratic rank during the Later Han cited by Zhao Yi are: Ding Heng 丁鵬 (not approved by Guangwu), Deng Biao 鄧彪 (approved by Emperor Ming c.60 A.D.), Huan Yu 欢愈 (permission denied by Emperor Ming, c.60 A.D.), Liu Qi 劉期 (78 A.D.), Xu Heng 徐衡 (108 A.D.), and Guo He 郭賀 (in 129 A.D.). Heading his list, however, is the case of Wei Xuancheng 華玄成, who c.61 B.C. feigned madness in an attempt to cede the title he inherited from his famous father Wei Xian 韋賢.137

It would be silly to try to build too much of a case around this solitary example of yielding aristocratic rank from the Former Han, but surely it is no accident that the date of Wei Xuancheng’s attempt to cede his title came within twenty years of Han Fu being honoured at court for his exemplary eremitism. It was at approximately this time - the end of Emperor Zhao’s reign and the beginning of the reign of Emperor Xuan - that the effects of imperial backing for Confucianism and the operation of the recommendatory system began to show themselves. The semi-official scholarly ethos was beginning to acquire its distinctive characteristics.138 One of the interesting aspects of the custom of ceding aristocratic rank is that if it is indeed partly the product of the recommendatory system, it cannot be regarded simply as an attempt to get a well-paid official position: hereditary rank brought a secure income of a sort no post in government could yield. It is difficult to make sense of the practice of yielding aristocratic rank unless we are prepared to see it at
least partly as an attempt to realise the ideals of the evolving scholarly ethos. The same is true of eremitism.

The type of eremitism which the recommendatory system helped to generate was essentially eremitism in quest of fame, not eremitism to escape from fame (the sort advocated by Zhuangzi). It was based firmly — if selectively — on Confucian teachings: for example, Confucius' insistence that the gentleman be more concerned about developing his moral nature than personal profit, more about possessing the qualities that would qualify him for office than about actually holding office, and the idea that simply by being a filial son and a good brother a man can be said to participate in government affairs; also Xunzi's dictum that a great Confucian can win renown through virtuous retirement, obscuring his whereabouts but illuminating the Way. How was this eremitism justified in light of the fundamental Confucian principle that a gentleman must serve in office unless to do so would result in moral compromise? By emphasising not so much the corruption of contemporary government as the loftiness of the hermit's ideals: it is not that ruler and his government are so bad, it is just that the hermit is so strict in the demands he makes of himself that even in this relatively enlightened age it would be impossible to remain true to his ideals. As Yang Xiong argues in Fa yan, eremitism is not just a question of meeting the wrong time, it is also a question of having high ideals. This is why Confucius found remaining in office out of the question when most of his colleagues had no qualms about it whatsoever. The phrase which constantly recurs in accounts (including those in imperial edicts) of refusals by these exemplary hermits to heed an imperial summons to take office is that from Lunyu 18.8: 'they would not lower their ideals' (bu jiang qi zhi 不降其志). Clearly in the autocratic empire of Han it
was better for everyone, emperor as well as hermits, to focus attention on ideals perhaps impossibly high rather than on allegations of evil and depravity in government. One further point which should be made is that while this type of exemplary eremitism was essentially Confucian, it could also draw on ideas from the Laozi for support, and frequently did so: for example, the principle that he who is indifferent to the empire can be entrusted with the empire, and the doctrine of 'knowing what is enough' (zhī zuò 僞足).

Of the hermits of the Former Han period I have mentioned so far, the only one other than Han Fu who could be said to illustrate this Confucian exemplary eremitism is Li Hong, praised so highly by Yang Xiong. But in this context Ban Gu's Han shu chapter on men of lofty principles (juan 72) is particularly important, for Ban Gu's views regarding eremitism were very much the product of his time, the late first century A.D., when the exemplary eremitism encouraged by the recommendatory system was flourishing again after the shock waves of the Wang Mang period had died away.

Ban Gu's chapter cannot be regarded as a complete account of eremitism in the period. Nor was it meant to be one. In it Ban Gu's primary interest lies in those who, on the one hand, did not commit what he considered to be the error of refusing to serve the house of Han, and on the other did not make the error of serving under the 'usurper' Wang Mang. To Ban Gu this represented the proper sense of timeliness in advancing and withdrawing. He reserved his highest praise for Wang Ji and Gong Gu 郭重 (d.44 B.C.), remarkable men of strictest principles who served their ruler and despite the dangers of their position continued to remonstrate fearlessly in an attempt to guide his conduct. The Two Gongs - Gong Sheng 郭勝 and
Gong She 贓言 - he ranks a little lower, for at times they were less inclined to serve.

It is important to note that in ranking men such as Wang Ji and the Two Gongs higher than Zhuang Zun and Zheng Pu, Ban was consciously reversing the judgements of Yang Xiong in Fa yan, in order to advance the claim of another conception of personal integrity - one in which the duty of a subject to his ruler carried a lot more weight. Whereas for Yang Xiong eremitism ultimately represented the detachment of the self from the political order and conventional values generally, in Ban Gu's eyes eremitism could be justified only by reference to the fundamental values of the political order, and so had to be entirely integrated with it. But equally important is the fact that all the men Ban Gu singles out for discussion were 'discovered', as it were, through the recommendatory system, and embodied the personal styles it fostered, including exemplary eremitism.

The biography of the Two Gongs allows Ban Gu to demonstrate both of the crucial aspects of eremitism as he conceived it: serving the Han by endeavouring to keep the emperor on the correct path, and refusing to serve Wang Mang when he came to power. Gong Sheng served Emperor Ai (r.6-2 B.C.) as Grandee Remonstrant and Imperial Household Grandee, and Gong She served very briefly as Grandee Remonstrant, but most of their lives they spent in their native district in Chu, devoting themselves to scholarship and being treated with the courtesies appropriate to teachers even by high officials. Of course it would be easy to explain their refusal to stay in office for long by reference to the rapid political decline of the time, the evil machinations of Wang Mang, and so forth, but this is not the impression which emerges from their biography. If these
were their reasons for not serving then why did they ever hold office at all? What makes their case so significant in terms of anticipating the developments of the Later Han is that as far as their refusal to take office is concerned we are given nothing very specific in the way of rationale or justification; it is just that they have high ideals, no more. In this and in their history of repeated imperial summonses and calls to office, coupled with refusals or reluctant acceptances quickly followed by resignations, they are representative of the hermits fostered by the recommendatory system, the hermits who were almost always described as 'chushi' or 'disengaged scholars'.

Before leaving the subject of the significance of the recommendatory system in relation to eremitism, there is one further point which needs to be considered, and that is the relationship of the recommendatory system to the contemporary world view based on the Five Phase theory. I have pointed out elsewhere that the cosmology created out of Five Phase theory and the *Book of Changes* helped to turn eremitism from something which by its nature required justification to something which was an inevitable, unavoidable feature of the eternal order of things. But if eremitism was cosmologically necessary, so was bringing hermits out of hiding. From its inception, one of the functions of the recommendatory system was, by means of leading virtuous and talented men into government affairs, to restore cosmological harmony. Emperor Wen's call, in the second year of his reign (178 B.C.), for men who were worthy and good, proper and correct, able to speak frankly and remonstrate candidly, was occasioned by a solar eclipse. Thereafter edicts ordering the recommendation of worthy men were frequently made in response to portents such as solar eclipses and earthquakes. The reasoning behind this is clarified by Kong Guang's account of eclipses to
Emperor Ai in 2 B.C.: just as the sun is the ultimate source of all yang forces, so the ruler is the ultimate embodiment of all that is venerable; if the ruler's virtue declines, this causes the yin forces to rise up and encroach on the brilliance of the yang, an eclipse results, and this can be remedied only by the ruler setting his mind solely on good government, employing worthy officials and caring for the people. Bringing virtuous men out of hiding was a way of nourishing the yang and therefore helped to restore the equilibrium of the cosmos. There can be no doubt that for the people of the Han period the cosmological function of the ruler's actions in bringing such men out of hiding was as important as their political function in bringing order and stability to government. Ultimately, of course, in terms of the beliefs of the time no distinction could be drawn between cosmological and political functions, and it is the insistence on that distinction in modern thought which makes it difficult for contemporary scholars to appreciate the centrality of cosmological concerns in Han political life.

9. Wang Mang and the Reaction Against Him

The development of the sort of exemplary eremitism described in the previous section was brusquely interrupted by the events associated with Wang Mang's rise and fall. The political machinations, social chaos and military ravages of the period that began with the reign of the puppet emperor Ping 平 in 1 B.C. and ended with Guangwu's defeat of Gongsun Shu 公孫述 in 36 A.D. provided men of principle with circumstances which amply justified withdrawal. The response of scholars to the events of the time show that, while in the more settled times exemplary hermits in the Confucian mode may have had something of a prima donna quality about
them, this did not mean that the ideals they professed were empty ones. Information has survived concerning a very large number of men from this time who remained true to their ideals in the face of acute personal suffering and even death.

Perhaps no-one illustrates the outlook of such men better than Gong Sheng, for he actually embodies this shift from the exemplary but rather theoretical Confucian eremitism of the last part of the Former Han to the equally exemplary but deadly serious Confucian eremitism of the Wang Mang period and its aftermath. (Gong She, who had been more inclined than Gong Sheng to stand on the loftiness of his principles and refuse office in earlier times, died before Wang Mang came to power).

Soon after Wang Mang took the throne in 9 A.D. he sent an envoy to coax Gong Sheng to court with gifts and ritual honours, but Gong Sheng excused himself on grounds of illness. When the envoy began to apply pressure and bully him into going, Gong Sheng came to the conclusion that death would be the only way out for him. He said to his sons:

I have been shown great kindness by the house of Han without having been able to repay it. Would it be proper, now that I am old and the day of my burial is imminent, with this one body to serve two dynasties and have to face our former ruler below?

Then he gave his funeral instructions, refused all food and drink, and died fourteen days later. Then he gave his funeral instructions, refused all food and drink, and died fourteen days later.148

Before going on to consider the other scholars who are said to have refused to serve Wang Mang, it is necessary to consider the rationale behind Wang Mang's attempts to woo men such as Gong Sheng to court, for if the Wang Mang period is of major significance for the
development of the Chinese eremitic tradition - and there can be no
doubt about this - this is at least as much because of Wang Mang’s
attitude towards scholars as because of the attitude of scholars
towards Wang Mang.

Confucius, Mencius and Xunzi taught that a gentleman values
virtue more than profit, that if by serving a ruler he would
compromise his integrity he withdraws, and in seclusion cultivates his
virtue. At the same time, they believed that one of the ways a ruler
demonstrates that he is fit to be served is by honouring and employing
worthy men. By being able to win to his court virtuous men
(particularly those who have withdrawn in protest from the political
jurisdiction of others), a ruler gives proof that in the eyes of men
of the highest integrity it is he alone who has the virtue
indispensable to the supreme authority.

These ideas were well established before the Han dynasty, and both Han emperors and Han scholars made use of them. I have
already referred to the case of the Four Silverhairs during Gaozu’s
reign, in which these concepts played a major role. The honours
extended by Emperor Zhao to Han Fu are another example of imperial
feting of worthy men. But it was above all with Wang Mang’s rise to
power that such practices became of crucial significance.

Wang Mang came to the throne with minimal use of force. His rise
to power was due to his ability to exploit his connections with the
imperial household (especially his aunt, the Empress-Dowager Wang),
his political acumen in gathering allies in the top levels of
government, and his awareness of the importance of establishing the
legitimacy of his claim to the throne in the eyes of an elite whose
outlook by now was dominated by Confucian principles. Wang Mang
realised that he lived in a time when military strength was no longer enough to guarantee political success, that unless he had the support of the guardians of the doctrines on which any claim to political legitimacy had to be based - those same men who supplied much of the expertise on which the administration of the realm depended - he could not hope to succeed. He knew he had to be seen doing the right things at the right time in order to win the support he needed, and demonstrating respect for the appropriate sort of eremitic sentiment was part of this.

Very early in his career Wang Mang was already supporting famous scholars, cultivating the friendship of generals and high officials, and with gifts inviting worthy and talented men to join his staff. It is recorded that in 4 A.D. he combed the empire for men of ability, constructed thousands of residences for scholars, and generally increased government support for learning. Not only did he make an effort to support talented men and draw them into service, but in his personal conduct also he cultivated a style which was in complete accord with the ideals of the scholarly ethos - especially the ideals of filiality, self-effacement, deference, and indifference to power and glory. Such ideals are directly linked to the more extreme positions of eremitism, and Wang Mang made much of them. He repeatedly declined the honours heaped upon him, resisting with a display of modesty and humility until it appeared he had no choice but to accept. This type of conduct prompted memorials to the throne such as that of 3 A.D. by Chen Chong, in which Wang Mang's virtues were lauded, his disinterest in worldly things and devotion to principle extolled. According to Chen, Wang Mang

in purity and quietude delights in the Way, is considerate towards his inferiors, kind to old acquaintances, true to his teachers and friends. Confucius said, "when poor he is
content, when rich he cares about the rites". This describes the Duke [who Brings Peace to the Han 安 公].

Not only that, he is said to be 'always modest and retiring, advancing his sincerity but yielding his position', reforming the customs of the people by his virtuous conduct.

It is a little difficult to square this apparent modesty and disinterest in worldly gain with Wang Mang's undoubted ambition, and we get some suggestion of his awareness of the importance of a whole array of Confucian virtues for public relations purposes from little details such as Chen Chong's comment that 'there is no-one in the populace who does not know that within his private apartments he (manifests) the virtues of filiality and fraternity'. Yet it is impossible to shrug off Chen Chong's memorial as a political ploy and the view of Wang Mang it expresses as crude lobbying. That such a view of Wang Mang was fairly widely held at the time is evident from the fact that when in 4 A.D. he declined to accept the estate of Xinye 新 谊 in addition to his other fiefs and honours, a total of 487,572 officials and private individuals memorialised the throne urging that he be granted this reward for his services. Such a figure, if correct, means that before taking the throne Wang Mang enjoyed wide popularity indeed, and that glowing accounts of his virtue and sagacity cannot be dismissed as the ruses of faction politics.

Wang Mang, it is clear, was expert at winning people to his side. Being a product of the scholarly ethos of the time, he knew that men with reputations as exemplary hermits were essential to his purpose. It has of course long been the Confucian view that Wang Mang's efforts to attract worthy men were no more sincere than his filiality,
deference or humility; Wang Mang, it is argued, 'used the message of
the classics to dress up his treachery'. But it becomes difficult
to understand the reforms Wang Mang attempted to introduce - against
the obvious economic interests of the elite on whose support he
depended - unless we are prepared to believe he was in earnest about
at least some of the ideas and principles he professed. His abortive
attempt to re-establish the well-field system and his very Confucian
dream of 're-establishing antiquity', for example, are surely
evidence that he had absorbed many of the ideas which flourished in
the scholarly milieu of the time, despite the fact that his
class characteristic did not correspond to the humble, modest, deferential facade
he liked to present to the world. In fact, Wang Mang's fall is to be
partly understood in terms of the conception he had of himself as a
sage-king who really was capable of restoring antiquity. It was this
image of himself which led him to try to push through his reforms
regardless of protests or difficulties, and it was the arrogance this
belief in himself engendered which led him to suppose that once
emperor he could dispense with the support of those who had carried
him to power.

The ideal of restoring antiquity, which had been central to the
thought of Dong Zhongshu, was very much 'in the air' by the end of the
Former Han. It featured in the 'salt and iron' policy debates of
81 B.C. In his memorials to Emperor Yuan the high-minded official
Gong Yu also stressed the idea of 'reformation by the restoration of
antiquity' (jiao fu gu hua ). One interesting example
of the type of development to which this could lead was the
appointment of the leading scholar Zhang Yu to the position of
'Teacher' to Emperor Cheng, and the appointment of Kong Guang and Jin
Qin as 'Teacher' and 'Friend' respectively to Emperor
It would appear that the creation of these posts was part of an attempt to recapture what was believed to have been the spirit of courts in the time of Confucius and later (e.g. Marquis Wen of Wei), when wandering scholars of high ideals adopted the roles of friend and teacher of the ruler rather than subject. (Their titles notwithstanding, there is nothing to suggest that these Han officials were encouraged to think of themselves as anything but their ruler's subject). Wang Mang's honouring of virtuous hermits was also part of the attempt to re-establish antiquity. Not since the Warring States period had such attention, both political and intellectual, been focussed on hermits, and by bringing this about Wang Mang became perhaps the major single influence shaping the attitudes of Chinese rulers towards hermits for the next five hundred years. Once Wang Mang had relied extensively on hermits to establish his legitimacy, so too did those who came after him - especially Liu Xiu, the founder of the Later Han.

Gong Sheng is one important example of Wang Mang's attempts to win worthy men to his side; another is Xue Fang 雪方. Xue Fang had ignored an imperial summons from the Han ruler, and when Wang Mang came to power he showed Xue Fang the elaborate courtesy of sending for him by easy carriage. Xue Fang declined to go, saying:

Yao and Shun occupied the high position, Chaofu and Xuyou the low. Now that our brilliant sovereign's virtue exceeds that of Tang 唐 (Yao) and Yu 禹 (Shun), this paltry subject wishes to retain his purity in the manner of [Xuyou of] Jishan 羚山.161

According to Ban Gu, Wang Mang was delighted with this reply, and it is not difficult to see why. Despite the ulterior motive behind it, the compliment was not a negligible one. Wang Mang was able to utilise this remark for propaganda purposes and further demonstrate
his imperial virtue by not attempting to coerce Xue Fang into coming to court. The idea that a truly great ruler is one who is prepared to respect the principles even of those misguided enough not to want to serve him was also one which was taken over by Guangwu. Wang Mang only sometimes found it suitable for his purposes; Gongsun Shu, who proclaimed himself emperor of Shu during the wars that followed Wang Mang’s collapse, had no time for the idea at all. (This will be discussed in the following chapter).

Ban Gu mentions a number of other men with reputations for learning and exemplary conduct who were sought out by Wang Mang. Some, such as Ji Qun 稹, Tang Lin 唐林, and Tang Zun 唐尊, did go to court to serve him, and accordingly are condemned by Ban Gu; others, such as Guo Qin 郭欽 and Jiang Xu 江騫, declined the honours extended to them and so win Ban Gu’s approval. There is good reason to believe that the great majority of men were not particularly troubled at the thought of serving Wang Mang. Nevertheless, the number who refused to do so seems to have been considerable – certainly far more than Ban Gu’s brief treatment of the topic might suggest.

Describing the response of scholars to Wang Mang taking the throne, Fan Ye 范曄 in the Hou Han shu says that their righteous indignation was so strong that the number of those who resigned in protest ‘was wellnigh beyond counting’. No doubt this remark contains an element of rhetorical exaggeration. Nevertheless, it is indisputable that despite Wang Mang’s sensitivity to the need to win the support of the educated elite and his initial popularity, there was widespread protest when he actually took the throne. I have already mentioned some of the men known to have refused to take office
under Wang Mang, such as Mei Fu, Gong Sheng, Xue Fang, Guo Qin, Jiang Xu, Anqiu Wangzhi, Song Shengzhi and Zhang Zhongwei. In his excellent compilation of material on this topic, Rao Zongyi has gathered information concerning seventy-eight men who chose to go into seclusion rather than take office while Wang Mang was in power, as well as twenty-six others who chose to die rather than submit to his authority.164 This is an impressive figure, even if we allow for the fact that the meagre sources which exist are strongly biased against Wang Mang.

However, Rao's list raises a number of problems. He fails to include at least one of the names mentioned in the sources and wrongly includes others. More important is the fact that available information about the men he lists shows that there was considerable variation in their reasons for refusing to serve Wang Mang, and therefore to lump them all together as evidence of the widespread indignation and revulsion Wang Mang's actions caused is quite misleading. There is good reason to believe, for example, that the outlook of those who refused to take office under Emperor Guangwu as well as under Wang Mang was quite different to that of the men who refused to have anything to do with the latter but eagerly took office under the former. Hence I shall here briefly consider which of the names in Rao's list fall into either one of these two groups, as well as those which fall into a third, namely those about whom little more is known than that they refused to serve under Wang Mang. In this last group I shall include those who died before Guangwu gained control of the empire and whose attitude towards him is therefore unknown.
To take the last-mentioned group first: thirty-seven of the figures listed by Rao fall into this category. Even within this category there are significant differences to be observed. For example, while most of these men resigned from their official posts after Wang Mang declared himself emperor, others, such as Yang Bao and Ren Wengong, already found the idea of holding office intolerable when his power grew excessively during the reigns of Emperors Ai and Ping. There is also the case of Cao Jing, who resigned from his post in protest against Wang Mang but gave his loyalty to Liu Xuan, who ruled as the Gengshi emperor in 23-25 A.D. After being imperially summoned by Liu Xuan to become Chancellor and be enfeoffed as marquis, Cao Jing committed suicide when the Red Eyebrows took Chang'an in 25 A.D. Cao Jing's case merits attention because it underlines the point that at the time even the most virtuous and perspicacious of men, even if they found Wang Mang to be very obviously in the wrong, were sorely troubled when it came to deciding which combatant in the armed chaos after Wang Mang's fall was to be regarded as the legitimate ruler. Guangwu's legitimacy, after all, was 'established' only by his eventual success.

This group also includes two men for whom the idea of serving any ruler was out of the question and who cannot be assumed to have had any particular objection against Wang Mang as such. One of these, Anqiu Wangzhi, I have already mentioned as having refused to have anything to do with Emperor Cheng and devoting himself to the study of Laozi; the other is the intriguing figure of Longqiu Chang. Longqiu Chang lived in seclusion in Taimo, refusing to respond to every imperial summons during the Wang Mang period. The Chief Commandant of Kuaiji, Ren Yan (appointed in
23 A.D., the first year of Gengshi, at the age of nineteen), who was an exponent of the doctrines of quietude, purity and non-action, compared him with Yuan Xian and Boyi, and rejected as absurd the idea that he might be summoned to office. However, he did send Merit Officials to pay his respects, wrote letters to him, and sent physicians and messengers with medicines so frequently they met each other en route. After a year of this Longqiu Chang arrived at Ren Yan's gate one day in a palanquin, saying that before he died he wanted to register his name for employment, and by taking office work off the debt he felt he had incurred by accepting Ren Yan's generosity. Ren Yan tried to decline his offer, but after the third time he finally relented and appointed him Libationer in the Bureau of Consultation 謝祭酒, following which Longqiu Chang died of illness, presumably in 24 or early 25 A.D.168

Quite distinct from this first group included in Rao Zongyi's list is the second category, about whom it is said that they refused to serve Wang Mang but did take office under Guangwu. Twenty-five of the names fall into this category.169

The model of what quickly came to be established as the proper Confucian protest against Wang Mang is someone like Xuan Bing 宣秉 (died 30 A.D.), who had already refused to serve during the reigns of Emperors Ai and Bing because of the Wang clan's power and went into seclusion deep in the mountains, ignoring repeated calls to take office. He took office under Guangwu in the first year of his reign, and Guangwu praised him as being superior even to the Two Gongs of Chu.170
Many of the men who rebuffed Wang Mang but served Guangwu were singled out for high honours by the latter. Zhuo Mou 趙茂, who had already had a distinguished career before Wang Mang, was appointed Grand Tutor by Guangwu and enfeoffed as marquis.¹⁷¹ Liu Xuan 劉玄, who is said to have made off into the forest clutching the classics to his breast during Wang Mang's reign, was also rewarded by Guangwu with a fief.¹⁷² Much the same is said about Huan Rong 恽榮. He is described as returning home at the beginning of Wang Mang's reign (there is no mention of him holding office at the time) and during the upheavals at the end of it making off into the hills with his students, taking the classics with them. In 44 A.D. he was summoned to become Tutor to the heir apparent, was much honoured as teacher by Emperor Ming and given the rank of Marquis of Within the Passes.¹⁷³ Wang Dan 王丹 also rose to be Grand Tutor to the heir apparent, Kong Fen 孔奋 was given the rank of Marquis of Within the Passes, while Wen Qi 文帝, Ding Gong 丁恭 and Xi Guang 隰光 all received marquisates.¹⁷⁴

In this category too a few exceptions should be noted. Strictly speaking, Xue Fang 許方 did not serve Guangwu, but it appears that he died while en route to Guangwu's court in response to an imperial summons, so his attitude towards Guangwu was probably favourable.¹⁷⁵ More complex is the case of Guo Dan 郭丹, who, having refused to have anything to do with Wang Mang, remained loyal to Liu Xuan and his family in their claim to the throne. It was not until the thirteenth year of Guangwu that he accepted a post as provincial Shepherd from the latter.¹⁷⁶
Perhaps most interesting of all the men recorded as having served Guangwu after refusing Wang Mang is Ji Yun. Ji Yun was a man of such energy and zeal that it was impossible for him to live quietly in seclusion or fail to speak out, even when to do so bordered on the suicidal. He had the audacity to write to Wang Mang after the latter had taken the throne informing him there was still time to repent of his actions:

The Liu clan enjoys Heaven's lasting mandate, [ming] and if Your Majesty were to comply with the times of (the Liu clan's) strength and decline, taking (the mandate) in accordance with Heaven and returning it in accordance with Heaven, (Your Majesty) could be said to know Heaven's decree [ming]. Should you fail to plan to do this at the earliest opportunity you will not be able to avoid (the charge of) having stolen the throne. Yao and Shun did not regard as their own the distinction Heaven bestowed on them, therefore they ceded the empire (to Shun and Yu); why is Your Majesty so anxious to burden yourself with distinction not brought by Heaven? Heaven is Your Majesty's stern father, I am Your Majesty's filial son. A father's instruction cannot be ignored, a son's remonstrations cannot be brushed aside. If only Your Majesty would heed them.\textsuperscript{177}

Not surprisingly, Wang Mang found this treasonable and had him thrown into jail. But because he needed Ji Yun's knowledge of the classics and portents, Wang Mang sent someone from his private staff to coerce Ji Yun into pleading that he had suffered from a fit of madness and did not know what he was saying. Ji Yun responded to this proposal indignantly: 'What I have uttered is all the writ of Heaven and the ideas of the sages, it is not something a madman could make up'. Fortunately he was released in an amnesty, and with his friend Zheng Jing went into seclusion.

After Wang Mang's fall Ji Yun's career continued to be just as stormy as before. In the third year of Guangwu's reign (27 A.D.) he joined the staff of General of Seried Crossbows Fu Jun 禿弩將軍傅俊, going home (to Xiping in Runan 汝南) four years
later and obtaining a position in the Bureau of Merit under Grand Administrator Ouyang Xi 罧陽敟. His outspokenness soon brought him into conflict with Ouyang Xi, so much so that his friend Zheng Jing, who had also joined Ouyang's staff, said that he could not bear any longer to witness the way he was putting his life in danger with his fearless but futile criticisms of the senior official. Zheng Jing turned his back on the world of politics and went off into the Yiyang Mountains 猿陽山, where he was joined several months later by Ji Yun after matters had gone much as Zheng Jing had predicted. A month or so of rural quiet was as much as Ji Yun could tolerate, however, and he asked Zheng Jing to come with him: they had to decide whether they would follow the example of Yi Yin and Lü Shang 易št or Chaofu and Xuyou. For Zheng Jing the parting of the ways had come. He chose the latter course, while Ji Yun went off to Jiangxia 猿夏, where he set himself up as teacher, was recommended by the commandery as 'filial and blameless' and so began his court career. There too he continued to speak out fearlessly, his remonstrations bringing him both respect and provincial postings to keep him out of the emperor's hair. When dismissed from his last position as Prefect of Changsha he returned home, where he devoted himself to teaching and writing until his death.178

The different roads chosen by Ji Yun and Zheng Jing indicate the different attitudes and personal positions with which disapproval of Wang Mang could be associated. Ji Yun's 'aspirations lay in political involvement',179 but Zheng Jing's did not. Nor did those of the seventeen other people recorded as having refused to serve both Wang Mang and Guangwu.180 Clearly in their case the refusal to serve under Wang Mang signifies something quite different from the outlook of those included in the previous category, hence it is necessary to
distinguish them sharply from the other figures listed by Rao Zongyi.

For one thing, as already mentioned, when Guangwu began his move for the throne there was little to distinguish him from a number of other figures in the power struggles of the time. Even after he declared himself emperor in 25 A.D. his victory was far from assured, and there was no particular reason to assume that he would be able to put an end to the bitter fighting that had been going on for years. Given this chronic political instability, it is to be expected that the simple wish to keep out of trouble would feature in the motives of those who found the prospect of serving Guangwu just as distasteful as holding office under Wang Mang. But keeping away from danger by itself cannot be regarded as eremitism; for it to count as something more than just self-preservation it has to be linked to a moral or philosophical position, such as indifference to wealth, fame and power. This certainly seems to have been true of Zheng Jing, who when refusing Ji Yun’s request to go with him expressed satisfaction at having been able to preserve himself, tend the graves of his ancestors and devote himself to scholarship. Furthermore he counselled Ji Yun in terms which owe much to Zhuangzi and Laozi: ‘do not harm your nature by burdening your spirit’. I shall be discussing the outlook of the hermits who lived in Guangwu’s reign, together with Guangwu’s attitude towards them, in detail in the following chapter.

The conclusion which must be drawn here is that the response of intellectuals to Wang Mang’s taking of the throne cannot be interpreted simply as a welling up of indignation which led to widespread withdrawal to await more auspicious times. Certainly there was such indignation and such timely withdrawal, but there is considerable evidence that other sorts of attitudes and other
varieties of eremitism were also involved. Although it is largely because of the interest of Confucian historians in demonstrating the 'correct' response of scholars to Wang Mang that this evidence survives, the evidence itself shows that among the scholars of the time there were in fact many different outlooks and that not everyone was equally committed to participation in public affairs.

The variety of outlook evident among scholars around the time of Wang Mang suggests that the paucity of information concerning eremitism in the preceding period is due less to the non-existence of hermits than to the failure of those who compiled the major histories of the period to take an interest in them. In this context the case of Yang Xiong is illuminating. Yang Xiong was interested in hermits, and within the confines of his native district managed to uncover a number of most impressive ones, such as Zhuang Zun, Li Hong and Zheng Pu. Perhaps it is unrealistic to suppose there would have been a Zhuang Zun living in every city the size of Chengdu in the first century B.C., yet it is reasonable to assume there must have been many others who tried — with varying degrees of success — to live the sort of life he lived, but failed to attract the attention of those who were to determine the image of the period preserved in the histories.

Although to sigh over what might have been is not very productive, it is fruitful nevertheless to reflect on the ways in which an awareness of a strong tradition of eremitism in the Former Han modifies the picture we have of the period. It enables us to begin to see it as a time in which there were many different schools of thought about what was right for the individual and society, as a time when the intellectual life of the empire was by no means limited to the court and its immediate environs, and when individuals
continued to assert their right to live according to their own conscience, protesting against political situations they condemned and divorcing themselves from social conditions they deplored, while attempting to create a microcosm of order within their own lives.

The events of Wang Mang's reign and the upheavals which followed his fall resulted in hermits gaining unprecedented political and social status. This, plus the continuing interaction during the Later Han of the scholarly culture and the official recommendatory system, was to lead to a great vogue for eremitism.
NOTES


2. For example, Paul Demieville, 'La pénétration du bouddhisme dans la tradition philosophique chinoise' (1956; rpt. in Paul Demieville, Choix d'études bouddhiques [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973], 242), describes the Han as a 'period of pragmatic imperialism in the Roman mode'. Alexander Soper, 'Early Chinese Landscape Painting', The Art Bulletin 23(1941), 143, writes that 'the realistic mood of the age gave little encouragement to anti-social dreaming'. These judgements are taken over by Arthur F. Wright, Buddhism in Chinese History (Stanford U.P., 1959), 9-10. Michael Loewe, Everyday Life in Early Imperial China (1968; rpt. London: Transworld Publishers, 1973), 27, refers to the Han as 'a time of cultural dissemination and conformity'. According to James K. Fairbank and Edwin O. Reischauer, China: Tradition and Transformation (1973; rpt. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1979), 69, the increased prominence given to Confucianism in Han government meant that 'men of education became supporters rather than opponents of the state'. Etienne Balazs, 'Political Philosophy and Social Crisis at the End of the Han Dynasty', in Balazs, Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1964), 195, states that 'During the long and comparatively peaceful reign of the Han, there was no need for any of the extremist [philosophical] systems of antiquity. Minds did not seek to inquire beyond the limits of Confucian pragmatism, and the various schools of ritual were absorbed in petty squabbles for priority'.


4. Hong Anquan, 'Liang Han rushi de shiyin taidu yu shenhui fengqi', Kong Meng xuebao, 42(1981), 115-39 and 44(1982), 221-54. Far more thorough is Rao Zongyi 覃宗義, 'Xi Han jieyi zhuan 出漢節義傳', Xinya xuebao 新亞學報, 1.1(1955), 157-208. However, Rao Zongyi is concerned almost solely with those who refused to serve the 'usurper' Wang Mang, which is a matter best considered independently, though the rise of Wang Mang and the response of scholars to him can only be understood as a consequence of developments in the Former Han. I examine Rao's work in detail in the final section of this chapter when discussing the Wang Mang period. Here it should be noted that Rao intended it to supplement the earlier Xi Han jieyi zhuan by Li Yesi 李懿姙 (1622-1680). Li Yesi was a Ming loyalist who refused to take office under the Manchu conquerors and devoted himself to study instead. Obviously he identified closely with those who remained loyal to be Han dynasty by refusing to have anything to do with Wang Mang.

6. SJ 61/2121-29; HS 62/2738. Ban Gu follows the judgement of his father, Ban Biao 班彪 (see HHS 40A/1325). That Sima Qian gave the first place in his 'exemplary lives' to Boyi and Shuqi in order to praise hermits is stated, for example, by Hong Anquan, op.cit., 42(1981), 115, and 44(1982), 221, though he recognises that Sima Qian also had other reasons for his choice.


8. SJ 61/2127.


10. Xunzi 22/43-44.


12. SJ 124/3138, 3183.

13. SJ 129/3271.

14. SJ 129/3272.

15. The Four Silverhairs, Zhuang Zun and Zheng Pu are discussed in Section 7 below.

16. LY 18.8.

17. HS 72/3055-56.

18. ES 72/3097. That men of the halls of court and men of the mountain forests both have their limitations appears to have been a piece of popular wisdom in the Han dynasty, expressed in a saying of which various versions are to be found. Han shi wai zhuan 5/17b has: 'Men of the halls of court want a salary, therefore they enter and do not leave; the men of the mountain forests want fame, therefore they go and do not turn back; to enter and also be able to leave, to go and also be able to turn back, is to understand changing [one's position] and have unchanging sageliness'. See also Fengsu tongyi 風俗通義 (SBBY ed., hereafter FSTY), 3/3b, 5/5b, 10/2a.

19. This and other characteristic attitudes of Former Han intellectuals are discussed in general terms by Hsu Cho-yim, 'Qin Fan zhishi fenzi', 483-514.

20. For evidence of the influence of the Laozi in the Former Han period (as an element in 'Huang-Lao 黃老 thought) see note 31 below. The Book of Changes had wide influence partly as a result of 'jingxue 經學' or 'study of the classics', the dominant mode of Confucian activity in the Han period which received imperial backing. (On jingxue see also note 127 below). Specifically on the Book of Changes see Ji Lei 經禮 (Qing dynasty), Hanru chuan Yi yuanliu 漢儒馮易源流 (Wuxing congshu 偉興叢書 ed., 1929); also Lu Deming 陸德新 (556-627), Jingdian shiwen 經典釋文 (CSJC ed.), 1/12-17; Xu Fuguan 徐復觀, Zhongguo jingxue de jichu 中國經學的基礎, vol.1 (Taipei: Taipei xuesheng shuju, 1982), 83-104. Gao Hualin 高懷林, Liang Han Yixue shi 漢易學史 (Taibei:...
Zhongguo xueshu zhuzuo jiangban weiyuanshe, 1970), while gathering together some useful material, offers some very dubious arguments and interpretations.

22. SJ 84/2491-2503.
23. Jia Yi, Xin shu (SBBY ed.) 8/3b.
24. Xin shu 9/3b; also 9/5b-6a.
25. Lu Jia, Xin yu A/5a, 7b.
26. HS 56/2501; LY 12.19.
27. HS 56/2503.
28. Chunqiu fanlu (SBBY ed.), see esp. 6/7a-8a, 11/5a-7b. The essential idea is clearly stated on 1/8a: 'If the father is not a proper father, then the son will not be a proper son; if the lord is not a proper lord, then the minister will not be a proper minister'.

29. This view is to be found in some of the imperial edicts and proclamations of the time. Thus a proclamation by Emperor Cheng in 19 B.C. concerning the need to select worthy men for office stated that because in antiquity the empire was governed with the help of worthies, 'in office nothing was left undone, below there were no men in retirement [yimin], the edifying influence circulated, wind and rain were timely, crops thrived, the populace was happy in its tasks, and everything was well and peaceful'. (HS 10/317).

30. ES 56/2508-09.
31. There are numerous references to the 'Huang-Lao' sympathies or policies of early Han rulers: Empress Lu and Emperor Hui, SJ 9/412, HS 23/1097; Emperor Wen, SJ 23/1160, 121/3117, HS 5/137, 23/1097, 88/3592; Emperor Jing, SJ 49/1975, 121/3117, HS 88/3592, 97A/3945; Empress-Dowager Dou, SJ 12/452, 49/1975, 107/2843, 121/3117, 3122-23, HS 22/1031, 25A/1214, 52/2379, 88/3592-93, 3608, 3612, 97A/3945. Figures from the Former Han referred to as students of the teachings of Huang-Lao or described in ways which indicate they were advocates of those teachings include the following:

- Anqi Sheng 安其生 SJ 80/2436, HS 25A/1228
- Bu Shi 卜式 SJ 30/1431-42; HS58/2624-28
- Cao Can 曹參 SJ 54/2028-30, 130/3319;
  HS 23/1097, 39/2018
- Cao Yu 曹禺 HS 30/1731
- Chen Ping 陳平 SJ 56/2062; HS 40/2038
- Deng Zhang 鄧章 SJ 101/2748; HS 49/2303
- Ge Gong 盖公 SJ 54/2029, 130/3319; HS 39/2018
- Huang Sheng 黃生 SJ 121/3122-23, 130/3288;
  HS 62/2709, 88/3612
- Ji An 江黔 SJ 120/3105; HS 50/2316
- Le Jugong 樂巨公 SJ 104/2775 (SJ 80/2436

HS 878/3583 quotes Huan Tan 灑譚 (c.30 B.C.-c.41 A.D.) to the effect that 'Formerly Lao Dan 老聃 wrote down his views on emptiness and nonbeing in two parts, slighting benevolence and righteousness, condemning the rites and study, and those of subsequent times who were fond of them regarded them more highly than the Five Classics; from the Han rulers Wen and Jing to Sima Qian they all held this view'. Wang Mingsheng points out that whatever the accuracy of these remarks as a characterisation of the philosophical climate of the early Han period, the view that Sima Qian was more sympathetic to Daoism than Confucianism (in which Huan Tan agrees with Ban Biao and Ban Gu) is unwarranted. A similar conclusion is reached by Watson, Ssu-ma Ch'ien, Grand Historian of China, 34-35.

The discovery of texts relating to Huang-Lao thought in a tomb at Mawangdui which appears to date from 168 B.C. (i.e. Emperor Wen's reign) has provided further evidence of the prominence of this branch of Daoism at this time, as well as valuable information concerning its doctrines. For transcriptions of these texts see Mawangdui Han mu boshu zhengli xiaozu 應陽漢墓博物館, 15(1974), 34-42; revised in the appendix to Tang Lan, Mawangdui chutu "Laozi" yiben juanqian gu yi shu shiwen 應陽漢墓出土 "老子"本篇前古書文字論文 , Wenwu 文物, 1974(10), 30-42; revised in the appendix to Tang Lan, 'Mawangdui chutu "Laozi" yiben juanqian gu yi shu de yanjiu "老子"本篇古書文字研究', Kaogu xuebao 考古學報, 1975(1), 7-38. For discussion of these texts see Tang Lan, op.cit., and Tang Lan, 'Huangdi sijing' chutan 黃帝四經初探 , Wenwu, 1974(10), 48-52; Cheng Wu 程武, 'Han chu Huang Lao sixiang he fajia lujian 漢初黃老思想和法家儒學', Wenwu, 1974(10), 48-52.

32. Zhuang Zun is discussed in section 7 below; the influence of Zhuangzi on Yang Xiong is discussed in Chapter 4. On Ban Si, see HS 100A/4204-05. SJ 127/3215-21 gives an account of Sima Jizhu 賽子, a fortune-teller and hermit of the market place said to have been a contemporary of Jia Yi (200-168). Sima Jizhu is made to expound the ideas of both Zhuangzi and Laozi, but it is impossible to determine how historically accurate this is (Sima Jizhu is also discussed in section 7).

33. For example, see Shen Gangbo 申康伯, 'Qin Han de ru 敦漢的儒 ', Dalu zazhi 大陸雜誌 38.9(May 1969), 277-82; Fu Lecheng 謝承程, 'Han fa yu Han ru 當法與儒儒 ', Shihuo Yuekan 評史月刊, 5.10 (January 1976), 449-61; Xia Changpu 夏長波, Liang Han ruxue yanjiu 梁漢儒學研究 (Taipei: Taiwan National University, 1978), esp. 3-11; Benjamin E. Wallacker, 'Han Confucianism and Confucius in Han', in David T. Roy and Tsuem-hsuen Tsien (eds.), Ancient China: Studies in Early Civilization (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1978), 215-28.

34. SJ 130/3289.

35. This has led Dai Junren 戴君仁 (following Hu Shi 胡適) to develop the argument that the term 'zajia 雜家' ('eclectic school') was in fact no more than another term for the Daoist school of this time. See his article 'Zajia yu Huainanzi 杂家與淮南子', 1967, rpt. Xiang Weixin 祥維新 and Liu Fuzeng 劉福增 (eds.), Zhongguo zhexue siyi luji 中國哲學思想錄集, Vol.3 (Taiwan: Mutong chubanshe, 1976), 3-34. A similar argument is presented by Xiong Tieji, 'Cong "Lushi chunqiu" dao "Huainanzi"'.

36. SJ 49/1975, 121/3117; HS 97A/3945.

37. On Empress-Dowager Dou's anti-Confucian moves at court and Emperor Wu's reaction (particularly after her death) see SJ 12/452, 101/3118, 3123, 107/2843, 121/3121-23; HS 6/157, 22/1031, 25A/1214, 52/2379, 88/3592-93, 3608, 3612. This is not to say, of course, that Emperor Wu did not also have many other reasons for backing Confucianism. Some of those other reasons are mentioned by John K. Shryock, The Origin and Development of the State Cult of Confucius (1932, rpt. New York: Paragon Book Reprint Co., 1966), 38-42.

38. On private teaching in the Han period, see Yu Shilun 余士論, 'Liang Han slixue yanjiu 濟漢私學研究', Shida Xuebao 天學報, 1.1(1966), 109-47. Yu Shilun lists references to over two hundred private teachers.

39. For example, see LY 4.11, 6.9, 8.13, 14.2, 14.37; Mencius 2A.2, 3B.3, 5B.1, 5B.4.
40. SJ 84/2503.

41. Wang Bao's 'Jiu huai 九懷' and Liu Xiang's 'Jiu tan 九穀' are included Chu ci 蕭錦 (SBCK ed.), 15/1b-14a, 16/1b-36b. On their careers see HS 36/1928-67, 64/2821-30.

42. On the significance of Qu Yuan in relation to the reaction of Former Han intellectuals to politics in the unified empire, see also Xu Fuguan, 'Liang Han zhishi fenzí dui zhuanzhì zhengzhi de yìliàng 梁漢知識分子對專制政治的壓力', Zhou Qin Han zhengzhi shehui jiegou zhì yanjiu (Hong Kong: New Asia College, 1972), 281-94.


44. Jia Yi, 'Han yun fu 旱雲賦', and Dong Zhongshu, 'Shi buyu fu 史卜諭賦', in Han Wei liuchao baisan mingli ji 漢魏六朝百三名集, Xinshu tang 信書堂 ed., 1879), ce 1/1a-3b, 3/1a-2b; Sima Qian, 'Bei shi buyu fu 北史卜諭賦', in Yan Kejun 葉可均 (1762-1843), Quan Han wen quan 彙全 (Fuwen zhai 富文齋 ed., 1894 ed.), 26/4a-5a. For translations of Dong Zhongshu's poem and that attributed to Sima Qian, see James R. Hightower, 'The Fu of T'ao Ch'ien', Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, 17(1954), 197-203.


46. On retainers see Ju Qingyuan 朱清源, 'Sanguo shidai de "ke" 三國時代的 "客"', Shihuo, 3.4(1936), 15-19; Tao Xisheng 湯西聖, 'Xi Han shidai de "ke" 西漢時代的 "客"', Shihuo, 5.1(1937), 1-6; T'ung-tsu Ch'ü, Han Social Structure (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972), 130-35.

47. SJ 121/3121; HS 6/157, 88/3608.

48. HS 89/3638.

49. SJ 30/1442.

50. See SJ 55/2048, 121/3127-28.

51. HS 71/3039-40.

52. HS 66/2889. For an account of this plot, see Michael Loewe, Crisis and Conflict in Han China (London: Allen and Unwin, 1974), 131-39.

54. HS 66/2897-98. See also Homer H. Dubs, History of the Former Han Dynasty (Baltimore: Waverly Press, 1938-1955), 2/249, note 19.6; Loewe, Crisis and Conflict, 147.

55. See HS 67/2912-16.

56. HS 76/3238-39.

57. HS 45/2166-67. An almost identical account occurs in Hanshi waizhuan 7/2a-3a.

58. SJ 120/3208.

59. HS 45/2617; also GSZ B/6a-b. There is another 'biography' of Master Anqi in Liexian zhuan (Gujin yishi 古今逸史, ed.) A/13b.

60. SJ 128/1385; HS 25A/1216-17.

61. HS 25A/1223.

62. SJ 55/2045-47. In their interview with Han Gaozu the four men give their names as Dongyuan Gong 東園公, Qili Ji 崔里季, Xiahuang Gong 夏黃公 and Jiaoli Xiansheng 雅麗仙生. This corresponds with GSZ B/7a-b, though HS 72/3056 has 東園公 instead of 東園公. On this and other minor discrepancies in their names see Wang Rongbao's commentary in FY 666-69.

63. Yan Kejun, Quan Han wen 14/2a-b, reproduces a letter supposedly from Zhang Liang to the Four Silverhairs, together with the Silverhairs' reply, contained in Yin Yun's 殷芸 (Liang 梁 dynasty) Xiaoshuo 小說. As Yan Kejun points out, however, they are obviously forgeries. Lu Xun also includes the letters in his compilation of fragments from Xiaoshuo in Gu xiaoshuo goushen 雅 小說總論. (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1951), 82-83.

64. HS 40/2033-36.

65. HS 72/3056. Mention is also made of Gaozu's attempts to summon them with gifts in HS 18/677.

66. Huangfu Mi follows Ban Gu's account in GSZ B/7a-b, as do most of the scholars mentioned in the following notes. However, Xun Yue 聯育 (148-209), [Qian] Han ji [前] 演紀 (SBCK ed.), 4/9a-10b, follows Sima Qian.


69. Zhu Xi, Yuzuan Zhuzi quanshu 調詣之子全書 (Guxiang zhai 古香齋 ed., 1713, rpt. 1884) 61/16b.

70. Qian Qianyi, 'Sihao lun', Youxue ji 有學集 43/2a-3a, in Qian Muzhai quanji 講義集成 (Shanghai: Wenming shuju, 1925); Quan Zuowang, 'Sihao lun', Jiji ting ji 節祭亭集 29,
Quanzuwang (p.1227) refers to a hermit called Ying Yao said to have been a contemporary of the Four Silverhairs, who alone did not respond when summoned to court. Ying Yao is also mentioned in the Yangzhou fuzhi (cited in TSJC vol.617/54b) as being imperially summoned along with the Four Silverhairs, but not going.

71. Wang Zhichang, 'Sihao lun', *Qingxue zhai ji* (Beijing: Jiangsu wenkui zhai, 1931), 14/6a-7b.

72. Hong Anquan, 'Liang Han rushi de shiyin taidu yu shehui fengqi', Part 2, 235.


74. One other treatment of the incident of the Four Silverhairs, which should be mentioned here is that in the late Tang text *Wunengzi* (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1981), 26-27. According to the Master Devoid of Ability, when Empress Lu tried to honour the Four Silverhairs with noble rank for having secured her son's position, the Four Silverhairs declined, saying they had come to court not because they wanted to but only to avoid a crisis. Refusing to become further embroiled in court politics, they returned to seclusion in the mountains. When Zhang Liang learned of their departure he went into retirement too. (Wang Ming, *Wunengzi jiaozhu* [Beijing: Zhonghua, 1981] , 15-18). However, it appears that the Master Devoid of Ability had a habit of recreating 'history' according to his conception of what should have happened (cf. his treatment of King Wen's meeting with Taigong Wang and King Wu's encounter with Boyi and Shuqi, 15-18).

75. SJ 99/2722. The passage in HS 43/2126-27 is almost identical, as is GSZ B/8a.

76. This is stressed by Zhu Xi, *Yuzuan Zhuzi quanshu* 61/16a. Wang Yangming, 'Sihao lun' argues that since the two scholars of Lu did not respond to an invitation to come to court, their contemporaries, the Four Silverhairs, if genuine, would not have responded either. Wang Anshi (1021-1086) wrote a poem in their praise (Wang Linchuan ji [SBBY ed.], 32/8a). They are also discussed in the most laudatory terms by Wang Zhichang, *Qingxue zhai ji* 14/19a-20b.

77. HS 18/677.

78. See LSCQ 15/9b-10a, 19/19b, 21/4a; *Huainanzi* 19/4a; SJ 44/1838-39; Xin xu 4/2b; Yü Ying-shih, *Zhongguo zhishishi jieceng shilun*, 57-59.


80. GSZ B/7a.

81. SJ 102/2756; HS 50/2312.
82. SJ 55/2034-35; HS 50/2312.
83. SJ 55/2048; also GSZ B/7a-8a.
84. HS 80/3313.
85. HS 67/2917-27. Ling Yangzao 涙 嘉 (1760-1845), Lishuo bian 线 嘉 (CSJC ed.) 9/147-48, praises Mei Fu's loyalty to Han and laments the fact that in the eyes of the public being an 'immortal' was regarded as something more remarkable than being 'loyal' (zhong 真).
86. Lu Jia, Xin yu A/11b.
87. ZZ 15/1-6.
88. For example, see Han Feizi 11/9b-10a, 14/6b-7a; SJ 68/2235; Sima Qian's 'Letter to Ren An', HS 62/2727.
89. The translation is that by David Hawkes, Ch'u T'zu, 119-20. There is an earlier translation by A.E. Erkes, 'The Chao-Yin-Shi: "Calling Back the Hidden Scholar", by Huai-Nan-Tze', Asia Major 1(1924), 119-24. For Chinese text see Chu ci 12/4a-4a; WX 33/20b-22a.
90. Wang Rongbao, FY 256.
91. ES 72/3056.
93. ES 72/3056; GSZ B/12a; HYGZ 10C/163.
94. SJ 77/2378-79, 2382.
95. SJ 127/3215. It may be observed that this maxim receives some confirmation from the HHS, for in that text many hermits are indeed found among the 'diviners and healers'. Chu Shaosun (probably writing c.40 B.C.) remarks at the conclusion of this chapter that in the course of his perambulations around Chang' an at the time when he was Gentleman he saw with his own eyes such worthy diviners, who had 'the air of gentlemen'. He adds that 'Ever since antiquity, among worthy men shunning the world there have been those who dwell in the wild, those who dwell among the people keeping their mouths shut and not speaking, and those who live in seclusion among diviners in order to preserve themselves' (SJ 127/3221).
96. SJ 127/3219/20. The account of Sima Jizhu included in Xi Kang's Gaoshi zhuang (Xi Kang ji jiaozhu, 413-14) obviously derives from the Shi ji, but the Daoist text Zhen gao 真 話 (compiled by Tao Hongjing 道解景 [456-536]) includes a lengthy account of Sima Jizhu's activities relating to the arts of longevity. See Zhen gao (Daozang 道藏 [Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1925-1927]), 14/12b-14b.
97. FY 305-06. The epithet 'profound and serene' was also applied to Zhuang Zun by Yang Xiong's disciple Hou Ba 侯芭. See commentary to Wang Yuanchang 王元長, 'Sanyue sanri qushui shi xù 三月三日曲水序', WX 46/13b.

98. HS 72/3056.

99. Ch'ü, Han Social Structure, 125, implies that Zhuang Zun had to make do with one hundred cash per day because customers were few and far between. But clearly the point of the Han shu account is that he could have earned much more had he been interested in material gain.

100. It would appear that here Ban Gu was referring to Zhuang Zun's Daode zhenjing zhigui 道徳真經指歸. Half of this early commentary on the Laozi has been preserved in the Daozang, with commentary by the Master of the Spirit of the Valley (Gushenzi 神子). This was dismissed as a forgery by the compilers of the Shu quanshu zongmu 史倉書總目, Quan Zuwang (Chu Daode zhigui 道德指歸, Jiji ting ji waibian 善喜亭記外編, 34), Shao Yichen 高潔 (Zengding siku jianming mulu biaozhu 增定四庫簡明目録提要), and Zhang Xinzheng 鄭信正 (Weishu tongkao 玩書通考), but more recently scholars have argued convincingly that it is genuine, despite a number of dubious insertions and accretions. See Yan Lingfeng, 'Bian Yan Zun "Daode zhigui lun" fei weishu 異言班遺 "道德指歸論" 非遺書', Dalu zazhi 29.4(1964), 107-13; Wang Liqi 王麗, "Daozang ben Daode zhigui tiyao 道藏本道德指歸要", Zhongguo zhexue 4(1980), 337-60. It is argued by Chen Zhi 沈芝, Han shu xinzheng 漢書新正 (Tianjin: Remin chubanshe, 1979), 231, that, contrary to Quan Zuwang's argument against the work's authenticity, it is in fact listed in the Han shu's bibliographical section: the Chen Junzi 謝居子 in two sections mentioned there (HS 30/1731) is a mistake for Chen Junping 謝君平, and the 'two sections' referring to parts 1 and 2 of the Daode jing. Further evidence to support this is presented by Wang Liqi, op.cit., 346-47.

101. HS 72/3056-57. Even if Zhuang Zun did live to be more than ninety it is not very likely that he was still alive when Wang Mang took the throne in 9 A.D. Assuming that Zhuang Zun was at least 30 years older than Yang Xiong, this would mean he would have been at least 93 years old in 9 A.D. The Gushenzi commentary to the 'Junping shuo erjing mu 蘭平說二經目' says that 'when Wang Mang usurped government (Zhuang Junping) went into seclusion with equanimity' (Daode zhenjing zhigui, [Daozang, ce 375]) and it is on the grounds of this supposed righteous protest against Wang Mang that Rao Zongyi includes Zhuang Zun in his 'Xi Han jieyi zhuans 陜漢eyer傳', Xinya xuebao 1(1955), 183. But even if we allow that Zhuang Zun may still have been alive at the time, it would go against everything else recorded about him to accept he would have regarded serving Wang Mang as a moral and philosophical problem quite distinct from serving any other ruler. It appears that the Gushenzi commentary, like other texts, confuses Zhuang Zun with Yan Guang 阮光 on this point. Yan Guang was a famous hermit who was also a close friend of Emperor Guangwu, and is said in the Kualji dianlu 吳將軍地圖, cited in the commentary to SGZ 57/1326, to have refused to serve Wang Mang (though he also
refused to serve Guangwu). See also notes 165 and 180 below.

102. Yang Xiong's letter, together with Liu Xin's to which it replies, is appended to most editions of Fang yan and has been translated by David R. Knechtges, 'The Liu Hsin / Yang Hsiung Correspondence on the Fang Yan', Monumenta Serica 33(1977-78), 309-25. The authenticity of this correspondence has been questioned by some scholars, one reason being that in his letter Yang Xiong refers to Yan Junping rather than Zhuang Junping, which he would have had no reason to do. However, as argued by Dai Zhen 戴震 (1724-1777), Fang yan shuzheng 方言疏证 (SBBY ed.) 13/10b, the fact that the name of another person mentioned in the letter, Yang Zhuang 杨庄, has not been changed suggests that Zhuang Junping's name was altered by a later copyist or editor at a time when he had become widely known as Yan Junping. Knechtges' further arguments for the letters' authenticity I believe to be fairly conclusive. The passage relating to Zhuang Junping and Linlu Wengru 諧游果 was paraphrased by Ying Shao in his preface to Fengsu tongyi, ib. For a translation see Knechtges, 322. Ying Shao explains that the 'light carriage envoys' were sent out by the Zhou and Qin rulers each year in the eighth month to gather information on local sayings and expressions.

103. HYGZ 10A/131.
104. HS 72/3056-57.
105. HS 72/3057.
106. HYGZ 10A/129.
107. LY 18.8.
108. FY 721-22.
109. FY 722-23.
110. GSZ B/12a-b.
111. HYGZ 10A/130. It also says that Li Hong's will was strong enough 'to temper metal or stone'.
112. Sichuan tongzhi, cited in TSJC vol.617/55a. This is unlikely, however, since the annual recommendation of scholars as xiucai did not begin until 36 A.D. in the reign of Emperor Guangwu. But there were occasional calls for men of flourishing talent in the Former Han, such as those in 110 B.C., 86 B.C., 47 B.C. and 35 B.C. It could be that there were other such calls in the reigns of Emperors Cheng and Ai and that Li Hong was recommended in response to one of them.
114. LY 13.18.
115. HYGZ 10A/130.
116. GSZ B/9a.

117. GSZ B/9b.

118. There is a biography of Zhi Yu in the Jin shu (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974; hereafter JS) 51/1419-27. HS 91/3694 does not mention a rich man from the capital named Zhi Gang, so evidently the Zhi family had long been established in Chang'an.

119. Huangfu Mi's generosity is evident in his readiness as respected scholar to write a preface for Zuo Si's 沂山集 (see JS 92/2376); his historical fancy enabled him to work out a chronology of the legendary emperors in Diwang shiji 帝王世紀. The preface to Sandu fu is included in WX 45/26a-31b.

120. GSZ B/10a. Yao Zhengzong 姚振宗, Han shu yiwen zhili shibu 漢書文注釋補 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Provincial Library, n.d.) 2/1b, has "twelve chapters", but since he presumably got his information from Gaoshi zhuan it must be a mistake. Sir Cheng's lack of moderation was criticised, among others, by Zhang Shu 張澍 (d.1847), "Ni Fan Weizong "Yimizhuang lun" 推未周論 "逸民傳論", Zhang Jiehou suo zhu Zhang yi lun shu, vol.3/736-38, in Qu Wanli 丘萬里 and Liu Zhaoyou 劉兆 HOUR (eds.), Ming Qing weikan gao huibian chujji 明清文學稿 稚編初集 (Taibei: Lianjing chubanshe, 1976).

121. GSZ B/10a-b. See also HHS 19/703; Xi Kang's Gaoshi zhuan (Xi Kang ji jiaozhu, 413). According to the Hou Han shu, Wang Ji 王紀 (a cousin of Wang Mang) and Geng Kuang 晁况 studied the Laozi under him. The strategy of claiming to have had shamans in the family was also used during Wang Mang's reign by Xu Yang 許陽 and in the Later Han by Gao Feng 高鳳. See HHS 82A/2710-11, 83/2768-69.

122. GSZ B/10b.

123. GSZ B/10b-lla; also Sanfu juelu zhu 三輔决錄注, cited in commentary to WX 39/23a. Liu Gong was either the son or nephew of Liu Xin and lived to the age of 70, probably dying late in the reign of Emperor Ming (58-75 A.D.). It is likely therefore that Zhang Zhongwei would have still been alive in the reign of Emperor Guangwu and no doubt refused to serve him as well. See HHS 30A/1041-1046-47.

124. HS 72/3083. The account in GSZ B/9b derives from the Han shu.

125. LY 2.21.

126. For example, SJ 121/3117-18; HS 22/1030-35, 88/3592-96; also the studies cited in note 33 above. Xia Changpu, Liang Han ruxue yanjiu, 51-80, provides a handy table of significant events in the history of Han Confucianism.

127. On the Imperial Academy in Han times see Zhou Guangzhu 周光祖, Jiu Lianghu 劉良厚, 'Liang Han taixue xuesheng kao 漢桓太學學生考', Shidi xuebao 史地學報, 3.1(1924), 75-104. On the intellectual trends associated with the Academy, see particularly Qian Mu 錢穆, 'Liang Han boshi jiafa kao 漢桓博士家法考' (1943), rpt. in Qian Mu, Liang
Han jingxue jingu wen pingyi (Hong Kong: New Asia College, 1958); Tjan Tjoe Som, Po Hu T'ung: The Comprehensive Discussions in the White Tiger Hall (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1949), 82-185.


129. HS 4/116.

130. HS 9/287; also Emperor Cheng's edict of 14 B.C., HS 10/323.

131. On the categories of recommendation used in the Later Han, see de Crespigny, 'The Recruitment System of the Imperial Bureaucracy of Later Han', 69-72; Hans Bielenstein, 'The Restoration of the Han Dynasty IV', BMFEA 51 (1979), 31-32.

132. See Sima Guang, ZZTJ 68/2173-74; Gu Yanwu, 郭燕武 (1613-1682), Ri zhi lu jishi 日知錄記事 (SBBY ed.), 13/3a-4a; Zhao Yi, 趙翼 (1727-1814), Nianer shi zhaji 廿二史劄記 (CSJC ed.), 5/89-91; Chen Dongyuan, 陳東源, 'Dong Han zhi shiqi 東漢之時紀', Jiaoyu zazhi 教育雜誌, 24.2(1934), 95-104; Huang Liangming, 黃良明, 'Dong Han shidaifu zhi qijie 東漢始大夫之極', M.Phil. Thesis, Taiwan Normal University, 1972).

133. Rizhi lu jishi 13/3a. In fact Gu Yanwu is following ZZTJ 68/2173-74 fairly closely.

134. Zhao Yi, Nianer shi zhaji 5/89. The comment that scholars were 'invariably' chosen according to their reputation of course describes how the recommendatory system was supposed to function rather than how it did function. But abuse of a system is only possible as long as that system continues to fulfil its function and is regarded as legitimate.

135. For example, Wang Zhaohui, Liang Han chaju zhidu, 110-15; Chen Dongyuan, 'Liang Han zhi shiqi' 101, observes that 'Under the operation of the Han recommendatory system, it was necessary to win a reputation, for only then was there a way into public affairs'; also Huang Liangming, 'Dong Han shidaifu zhi qijie', 38-57.

136. On the types of exemplary conduct in the Eastern Han, see Zhao Yi, Nianer shi zhaji, 5/89-91; Wang Zhaohui, Liang Han chaju zhidu, 110-15; Huang Liangming, 'Dong Han shidaifu zhi qijie' 105-17.

137. See HHS 37/1263, 44/1495, 37/1254, 39/1306, 44/1500, 46/1545; HS 73/3108-09; Yuan Hong, 楊宏, Hou Han ji 后漢紀 (SBCK ed.; hereafter HHJ) 9/6b, 13/13a-b. It is striking that all these cases occurred in the first few years of the reign of a new emperor. This strongly suggests that part of the motivation behind them was the attempt to attract the new emperor's attention by virtuous action of a dramatic kind.
138. Evidence of the growing political influence of Confucianism at this time is provided by the Salt and Iron Debates of 81 B.C. The text of Yantie lun shows both that in government circles Confucianism had become a force to be reckoned with, and that it by no means had the field to itself. In 51 B.C. Emperor Xuan ordered an assembly of Confucian scholars in the Stone Drain Pavilion (Shiqu ge 石綻閣) to debate varying interpretations of the classics, with the emperor himself taking part as adjudicator. Unfortunately little information remains concerning this major event, which as a precedent was more historically important than the comparable White Tiger Hall debates of 79 A.D. One of the scholars who took part in 51 B.C. was Wei Xuancheng. See HS 8/272, 73/3113; Tjan, Po Hu T'ung, 91-94, 128-36.

139. LY 2.21, 4.14, 13.13, 15.32; Xunzi 8/11-15, 22/43-44.

140. FY 251, 386.

141. HS 72/3058-80. On Wang Ji and Gong Yu see also Loewe, Crisis and Conflict in Han China, 140-41, 159, 165, 177-80, 210, 234, 277; Chu, Han Social Structure, 278.

142. FY 305, 722.

143. HS 72/3080 also refers to Ning Shou 尼壽 of Kongfu 仿父, who was recommended by Gong Sheng (along with Gong She and a certain Hou Jia 侯嘉) when Gong Sheng served as Grandee Remonstrant. Ning Shou refused to come to court, excusing himself on grounds of illness. Pleading illness was also to become a standard ploy by hermits who wished to remain where they were but also wanted to avoid any impression that they were critical of the emperor and his government.

144. HS 4/116.

145. References to these edicts are collected together by Xu Tianlin 徐天麟 (fl.1205), Xi Han huiyao 西漢會要 (Shanghai: Renmin chubanshe, 1977), 44/509-11, 516-18; Wang Zhaohui, Liang Han chaju zhidu, 23-29.

146. HS 81/3359-60. See also Kuang Heng's jin hui memorial on the same subject to the young Emperor Yuan, HS 81/3333-37, as well as Cai Yong's 蔡邕 (132-192) advice to Emperor Ling 陵 帝, EHS 60B/1994-95.

147. TPYL 501/6b cites Yi feihou 易稽侯 by Jing Fang 景芳, the Former Han interpreter of the Book of Changes: 'In order to know where worthy men are hiding, look in all directions (for a place that) always has great clouds of all five colours but which produce no rain. There under, worthy men will be in hiding'. This handy information must also be understood in terms of Five Phase and yin/yang theory: the worthy's hidden virtue (yang) gives rise to an atmospheric condition in which the yang force is also dominated by the yin (clouds), but because the yang he embodies is present even if not made manifest, the yin force is not able to dominate completely and produce rain.
148. HS 72/3084-85. On Gong Sheng and Gong She see also Wang Zhichang, "Chu liang Gong lun 酬良公論", Qingxue zhai ji 16/9b-11a. According to HS 72/3085, among the hundreds who came to mourn Gong Sheng there was an old man from Pengcheng 郭城 who wept grievously and exclaimed: 'Alas! Incense burns itself up with its fragrance, oil consumes itself with its brightness. Ultimately Gong Sheng brought to a premature end the years Heaven gave him. He is no disciple of mine!' (see also GSZ B/1b). These sentiments are very similar to those expressed in ZZ 4/89-91.

149. See LY 2.19, 2.20, 8.13, 12.22; Mencius, 1A.7, 2A.4, 2A.5, 6B.14; Xunzi 8/100-02, 9/1-6, 22-23, 51-54.

150. On the honouring of virtuous hermits by rulers before the Han, see ZZ 24/61-65; Han Feizi 11/9b-10a (also the parallel passage in Zhanguo ce 10/17b); SJ 68/2235.

151. HS 99A/4040-41.

152. HS 99A/1069.


154. ES 99A/4054. The allusion is to LY 1.15.

155. ES 99A/4055, 4058.

156. ES 99A/4054.

157. ES 99A/4070; on the support for Wang Mang, see also Loewe, Crisis and Conflict, 286-306.

158. Zhao Yi, Nianer shi zhaji, 3/68.

159. On the re-institution of the well-field system, see esp. HS 99B/4110, 4129-30. Just how strongly Wang Mang's thought and reforms reflect the Confucianism of his day is shown by He Lingxu 程凌虚, 'Wang Mang gaizhi yu xi Han rujia zhengzhi sixiang 王莽改制與西漢儒家政治理想', Shehui kexue luncong 社會科學論叢, 16(1966), 75-127.

160. HS 68/2964, 81/3351. For Gong Yu's memorial see HS 72/3070. On the idea of restoring antiquity generally in Han Confucianism see also He Lingxu, op.cit., esp. 75-89. The concept of re-establishing antiquity appears in Xunzi 9/51.

161. HS 72/3095-96.

162. HS 72/3095-96.

163. HS 83/2756.

164. Rao Zongyi, 'Xi Han jieyi zhuan'. Adding Kong Pen 孔子及 and Yan Guang 喻固, overlooked by Rao, brings the total to eighty men. This makes it rather difficult to accept Hans Bieilenstein's dismissive comments about the 'handful' of men who refused to serve office under Wang Mang (See Bieilenstein, 'The Restoration of the Han Dynasty IV', 30).
I omit from Rao's list Zhuang Zun, Zheng Pu and Gong She. Certainly Gong She, and probably Zhuang and Zheng as well, had died before Wang Mang took the throne. Everything that is known about them, however, makes it clear that they would no more have served Wang Mang than they would have served any other ruler. As I suggested in note 101, the inclusion of Zhuang Zun in this list is the result of the widespread confusion between him and Yan Guang (see note 180 below for further consideration of this point). Men known to have refused to serve Wang Mang are:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Source(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anqiu Wangzhi</td>
<td>HHS 19/703; GSZ B/10a-b</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bing Han</td>
<td>HSS 72/3083</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cai Mou</td>
<td>HHS 26/907</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cai Xun</td>
<td>HHS 25/872, 60B/1979</td>
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<td>Cao Jing</td>
<td>HSS 72/3096</td>
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<td>Chen Xian</td>
<td>HHS 10B/403</td>
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<td>Dai Zun</td>
<td>HHS 83/2772-73</td>
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<td>Fan Fu</td>
<td>JS 91/2346</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fei Yi</td>
<td>HHS 81/2668; HYGZ 10B/156</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feng Xin</td>
<td>HYGZ 10B/147</td>
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<td>Gong Sheng</td>
<td>HSS 72/3080-85</td>
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<td>Guo Qin</td>
<td>HSS 72/3096</td>
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<td>Guo Xianbo</td>
<td>HHS 26/908</td>
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<td>Guo Youjun</td>
<td>HHS 26/908</td>
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<td>Han Qian</td>
<td>Xin Tang shu 新唐書</td>
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<td>(Beijing: Zhonghua, 1975), 73A/2854</td>
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<td>Hou Gang</td>
<td>HYGZ 10A/138</td>
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<td>Hu Gang</td>
<td>HHS 44/1504</td>
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<td>Jiang Xu</td>
<td>HSS 72/3096; HHS54/1759</td>
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<td>Kong Xi</td>
<td>HS 99A/4043; HSS 25/8/2</td>
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<td>Kong Zijian</td>
<td>HHS 79B/2560</td>
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<td>Li Zong</td>
<td>HSS 72/3096</td>
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<td>Li Ye</td>
<td>HHS 81/2668-70; HYGZ 10C/173-74;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>HHJ 3/3b; Dongguan Han ji 東觀漢記</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longqiu Chang</td>
<td>HHS 76/2461</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nan Rong</td>
<td>HSS 72/3083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nai Fu</td>
<td>HS 69/2917-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qiao Xuan</td>
<td>HHS 81/2666-68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qiu Jun</td>
<td>Guang yun 墨緣 (SBCK ed.)</td>
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<td>187: 47b.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Een Wengong</td>
<td>HHS 82A/2707-08</td>
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<tr>
<td>Een Yong</td>
<td>HSS 81/2670; HYGZ 10B/156</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shen Jing</td>
<td>Xin Tang shu 74A/3146</td>
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<td>Shi Zhongzhou</td>
<td>Guang yun 墨緣 2b</td>
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<td>Shu Mengda</td>
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<td>Su Zhang</td>
<td>HSS 72/3096</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wang Hao</td>
<td>HSS 81/2670; HYGZ 10A/136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Jia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yang Bao</td>
<td>HHS 54/1759</td>
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<td>Zhang Ming</td>
<td>HYGZ 10A/138</td>
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</table>

166. HS 72/3096.

167. According to the commentary, now Longqiu xian in Wuzhou 吴州 存州. It cites the Dongyang ji 東陽記: "In the Qin period (the name) was changed to Taizhou. There is a Longqiu Mountain to the
east on which there are nine particularly prominent, red-coloured rocks, which when seen from afar resemble a lotus flower. In the place where Chang hid there is a cliff cave like a window, which contains a stone bench that could be used to sleep on.

168. HHS 76/2461. Longqiu Chang must have died towards the end of the Gengshi period, because at the beginning the Jianwu period (25 A.D.) control of Kuaiji had gone to Guangwu, and Ren Yan asked his new ruler for permission to resign (HHS 76/2462). The biography of Ren Yan in DGHJ 15/6a-b collaborates most of the Hou Han shu account, but unfortunately makes no mention of Longqiu Chang. See also Xie Cheng's Hou Han shu in Wang Wentai

169. Zao Xian 陳嚴 HHS 79B/2570-71
Chen Xuan 陳玄 HHS zhi 15/3307, citing Xie Cheng's HHS
Jing Gong 丁恭 HHS 79B/2578; DGHJ 16/7b
Gao Gong 陶恭 HHS 79B/2569
Gao Xu 陶軍 HHS 79B/2569; DGHJ 16/7b
Gui Dan 戴詧 HHS 79A/2551; DGHJ 16/6b
Guo Dan 郭丹 HHS 27/940-42; DGHJ 17/1b; HHJ 9/15a-b
Guo Xian 郭玄 HHS 82A/2708-09
Buan Rong 柴榮 HHS 37/1249-53; DGHJ 16/3b-4a; HHJ 9/6a
Ji Yun 郭雋 HHS 29/1023-32; DGHJ 15/3b-4b; HHJ 7/13b-16b
Kong Feng 孔繁 HHS 31/1098-99; DGHJ 15/5a (overlooked by Rao)
Liu Kun 劉昆 HHS 79B/2549-50; DGHJ 16/6b
Liu Mou 劉茂 HHS 81/2671; DGHJ 16/9a
Liu Xuan 劉玄 HHS 25/872
Nou Chang 劉昌 HHS 79B/2557; DGHJ 16/7a
Sheatu Gang 申屠剛 HHS 29/1011-17; DGHJ 15/3a-b
Wang Dan 王丹 HHS 27/930-32; DGHJ 15/20b-21a; HHJ 5/8a
Wang Liang 王亮 HHS 27/932-33, 83/2762
Wang Xing 王興 HHS 27/932-33, 927-28, 933-34
Wen Qi 文帝 HYGZ 5/69, 10C/173
Xi Guang 鄭光 HYGZ 2/18-19
Xu Yang 徐揚 HHS 82A/2710-11
Xuan Bing 宣秉 HHS 27/927-28, 933-34
Xue Fang 孫方 HS 72/3095-96
Zhuo Mou 章茂 HHS 25/869-73; DGHJ 10/6b-7a

170. HHS 27/927-28, 933-34.
171. HHS 25/869-73; DGHJ 10/6b-7a.
172. HHS 25/872.
173. HHS 37/1249-53; DGHJ 16/3b-4a; HHJ 9/6a-b.
174. HHS 27/930-32, 31/1098-99, 76/2462, 79B/2578; HYGZ 10C/173; HHJ 5/8a. The number of marquisates and high offices attained by this group would seem to refute the claim by Bielenstein, 'The Restoration of the Han Dynasty IV', 30-31, that those who had
refused to serve Wang Mang were neither especially favoured by Guangwu nor had particularly successful careers as a result.

175. HS 72/3096. There is some doubt about this however, for according to HHS 83/2757 Xue Fang refused to respond to Guangwu's summons.

176. HHS 27/940-42; HHJ 9/15a-b.

177. HHS 29/1025. The version of the submission in HHJ 7/14a-b is quite different in expression but similar in spirit.

178. HHS 29/1026-32; HHJ 7/13b-16b. See DGHJ 15/3b-4b; QJHHS 7/15a.

179. HHS 29/1029.

180. Those recorded as having refused to serve Wang Mang and Guangwu are:

Feng Meng 邓萌 HHS 83/2759-60; DGHJ 16/11b-12a; HHJ 5/9b-10a
Li Tan 李谭 HHS 83/2760
Yin Gong 隐公 HHS 53/1740; DGHJ 16/12a-b; HHJ 5/7a-b
Qin Qing 秦卿 HS 72/3096; HHS 83/2759
Qiu Zhong 裴仲 Xi Kang's Gaoshi zhuan, 416
Tan Xian 田贤 HHS 83/2762
Wang Ba 王霸 HHS 83/2762, 84/2782-83; HHJ 5/9b
Wang Zun 王遵 HHS 83/2760; Xi Kang's Gaoshi zhuan, 418
Yan Guang 袁光 HHS 83/2763-64; DGHJ 16/12a; HHJ 5/8b; SGZ 57/1326.
Yan Zhong 袁仲 Xi Kang's Gaoshi zhuan, 416
Yin Mo 殷牧 HHS 83/2762
Xiang Chang 向常 HHS 83/2758-59
Xu Fang 徐防 HHS 83/2760
Xun Ren 旬论 HHS 53/1740-41; HHJ 8/18b-19a
Zheng Jing 郑敬 HHS 29/1025, 1028-29; HHJ 7/15a-16a
Zhou Dang 周党 HHS 83/2761-62; DGHJ 16/12b-13a

Rao Zongyi also lists:
Zhang Zhongwei Zhang仲伟 GSZ B/10b-11a
Han Shun 汉顺 GSZ B/11b-12a

But neither of these two men is explicitly said to have refused to serve Wang Mang. Yan Guang is not said either in HHS or HHJ to have refused to serve Wang Mang. However, according to his biography he was sometimes known as Yan Zun, and SGZ 57/1326 states that Yan Zun of Yuyao 胥姚 in Kuaiji (i.e. Yan Guang's native district) refused to take office under both Wang Mang and Guangwu. As pointed out in note 101 above, Yan Guang appears to have been confused with Zhuang Zun (Yan Junping).

181. HHS 29/1029; HHJ 7/16a; DGHJ 15/4a. Xie Cheng's Hou Han shu, cited in the commentary to HHS 29/1031, states that he lived at leisure and did not seek social contact, that he served briefly as Merit Officer under the Chief Commandant of Xinqian 谌暹 (also known as Xincai 新泰), then resigned to live in seclusion at Epo 薛陂, where he passed his time in a thatched hut, chatting, drinking wine, playing the qin and reading, without responding when summoned by Guangwu.