

EREMITISM IN CHINA TO 220 A.D.

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This thesis is based entirely on  
my own original research.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Aat Vervoorn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent flourish at the end.

Aat Vervoorn

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Although hermits remain aloof from society, it is not advisable for those who study them to do so. Certainly I have benefited greatly from my association with others in the course of my research. This is particularly true in the case of my supervisors, Professor Liu Ts'un-yan 柳存仁, Dr. K.H.J. Gardiner, and Dr. P. Ryckmans, who have provided much advice, criticism and encouragement. Dr. C. Jeffcott found time for many long discussions of my work, in the course of which numerous ideas were generated, issues clarified, and confusions greatly reduced. I have also gained much through my conversations with Chan Man Sing 陳萬成, whose subtle and incisive comments saved me from many a blunder. From Terry Russell also I have received most helpful comments and advice. Lee Cheuk Yin 李卓然 has helped me in many ways, pointing out major references and steering me towards a greater understanding of Chinese philosophy; and it is him I must thank for the fine calligraphy in this thesis. That ultimately my material has attained presentable form is in no small measure due to the excellent work of Caroline Twang: it is she who has expertly and efficiently transformed a rather shapeless manuscript into a thing of clarity and order.

## ABSTRACT

Eremitism in China was a product of the socio-political and intellectual changes of the late Spring and Autumn and Warring States period. The basic philosophical presuppositions of eremitism, relating to individual moral choice and autonomy, were first formulated by Confucius, although there existed certain ideas, practices and individuals before him that can be regarded as having prefigured eremitism. During the Warring States period a wide range of philosophies of eremitism developed, philosophies based on varying premises and aspiring to ideals which frequently were antithetical. With the unification of China, first by the Qin dynasty and then by the Han, the socio-political context in which eremitic ideas had to operate changed drastically; the implications of virtuous withdrawal were more serious when there was no longer a choice of rulers to serve. Hence although what evidence there is indicates that most varieties of eremitism continued to flourish throughout the Han period, in the first hundred years of the dynasty there was little Confucian timely eremitism. However, from that time on a new type of eremitism began to develop, which in the Later Han period became highly fashionable. This was Confucian exemplary eremitism, which was a major element in the scholarly culture generated by the imperial backing of Confucianism and the operation of the recommendatory system for official appointments. The social and political standing of hermits also rose as a result of Wang Mang's policy of honouring worthy men in order to establish the legitimacy of his claim to the throne, a policy which was continued by the emperors of the Later Han. Political events towards the end of the Han - particularly the Great Proscription - resulted in hermits gaining even further social and political prestige and influence, and by 220 A.D. most of the major characteristics of the Chinese eremitic tradition had been established.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

- BIHP Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica (Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊)
- BMFEA Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities
- CSJC Congshu jicheng 叢書集成 .
- DGHJ Dongguan Han ji 東觀漢記 .
- FSTY Fengsu tongyi 風俗通義 .
- FY Fa yan 法言 .
- GSZ Gaoshi zhuan 高士傳 .
- HHJ Hou Han ji 後漢記 .
- HHS Hou Han shu 後漢書 .
- HJAS Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies
- HS Han shu 漢書 .
- JS Jin shu 晉書 .
- LH Lun heng 論衡 .
- LSCQ Lüshi chunqiu 呂氏春秋 .
- LY Lunyu 論語 .
- QJHHS Qi jia Hou Han shu 七家後漢書 .
- SBCK Sibu congkan 四部叢刊 .
- SGZ Sanguo zhi 三國志 .
- SJ Shi ji 史記 .
- SSXY Shishuo xinyu 世說新語 .
- TPYL Taiping yulan 太平御覽 .
- TSJC Gujin tushu jicheng 古今圖書集成
- WX Wen xuan 文選 .
- YWLJ Yiwen leiju 藝文類聚 .
- ZZ Zhuangzi 莊子 .
- ZZTJ Zizhi tongjian 資治通鑑 .