



EARLY CHINA SEMINAR
LECTURE SERIES

Understanding Xunzi and Zhuangzi through Hui Shi

從莊子荀子對惠施的評論看二家的學說

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The Qing scholar Zhang Xuecheng 章學誠, based on earlier assertions from the Tang, made the claim that “Xunzi and Zhuangzi were both followers of the Zixia school 荀莊皆出子夏門人.” The Republican scholar Zhang Binglin 章炳麟 thought that such speculations were far-fetched. Zhang Binglin was probably right, but the bond between Xunzi and Zhuangzi is also unmistakable, which has more to do with the nature of their quest to understand the source of morality than with the question of their spiritual progenitor. This is not to say, however, that they arrived at the same terminus. The track split somewhere along the way. This paper charts the course of their journey. It also lets in a third person, Hui Shi 惠施, whose use of paradoxes in arguments elicited strong and precise responses from Xunzi and Zhuangzi. And it is in their critiques of Hui Shi that one can perceive more clearly where Xunzi and Zhuangzi come together and where they part.

December 9th, 2016 (Friday) 4:30-6:30pm

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Columbia University**

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