

CHAPTER ONE

The *Laozi* the Book

We have stated in the introduction that Sima Qian was possessed of some degree of certainty concerning the person Lao Zi and his book. Whether or not his opinion and his record are correct is another question, with which I will deal in Chapter Two of this work. In Chapter One, we will be content to examine the book called *Laozi*. In this study the bamboo slips *Laozi* discovered in 1994 at the Jingmen archaeological site has been referred to.

The problems surrounding the *Laozi* 老子 or the *Daodejing* 道德經, are complex and controversial. Chan Wing-Tsit says: "Perhaps it is more so because it deals with such intangibles as literary style and ideas, and as a book it has many irregularities."⁵⁷ Many scholars differ concerning the versions, the titles and structure, the authorship, the date, and the entire nature of the book. These are all problems with which we must concern ourselves in this work.

The *History of the Former Han Dynasty* mentions the *Laozi* in the ancient script,⁵⁸ but no one knows now what constituted the work to which this history refers. When Liu Xiang 劉向 and his son Liu Xin 劉歆 (c. 46 BC—AD 23) compiled the first Chinese bibliography, *Qilüe* 七略, in the first century BC, the *Laozi* was included,⁵⁹ but we know nothing of its text or structure.

1.1 The editions of the *Laozi*

Before the discovery of the Mawangdui 馬王堆 silk *Laozi* in 1973, various editions of the *Laozi* were in circulation, but the earliest principal versions were referred to as "the traditional version" and "the ancient version". The former refer to the versions, which were those associated with the commentaries of Yan Zun 嚴遵 (fl. 53-24 BC), Wang Bi 王弼 (AD 226-249), and He Shang Gong 河上公. This dated traditionally from the reign of Emperor Wen of the Han 漢文帝 (179-157 AD), though many set the date at the third or fourth century AD.⁶⁰ The latter refer to the versions of Fu Yi of the Tang Dynasty and Fan Yingyan of the Song Dynasty, which were later versions that were based on those written as early as 200 BC.

Below are considered the five principal versions of the *Laozi*. They are given in chronological order:

⁵⁷ Chan 1963: p. 61.

⁵⁸ Ban Gu's *Hanshu* 漢書, ch. 53, second biography.

⁵⁹ Liu Xiang's *Qilüe*. This was completed by his son, Liu Xin. It now exists only in fragments.

⁶⁰ See He Jiejun and Zhang Weiming 1982: pp. 86-87. Cf. Robert G. Henricks 1993: xvii.

1.1.1 Five principal transmitted versions of the *Laozi*

1.1.1.1 The Yan Zun 嚴遵 version

The Yan Zun version of the *Laozi* text was originally accompanied by a commentary in essay form by Yan Zun called *Daode zhigui lun* 道德指歸論. Extant now is only the *Dejing* of the text. When the present work refers to the 'Yan Zun version' or the 'Yan Zun *Laozi*' it means only that this is the text of the *Laozi* that has been transmitted together with the Yan Zun essays *Daode zhiguilun*. It does not mean to imply, much less to claim, that Yan Zun himself had any hand in editing the *Laozi* text, or in establishing the version that accompanies his *Zhiguilun*. This is also the meaning of the 'Yan Zun version' when the term is generally mentioned.⁶¹

Yan Zun was a figure of the end of the Former Han Dynasty. Apart from short citations of the *Laozi* in other Former Han works, that of Yan Zun can claim to be the earliest transmitted version of the *Laozi*.⁶² Some argue, however, that Yan's version and his commentaries are false.⁶³ Concerning the details of this writing, the present work will discuss it in the section on "the commentaries of the *Laozi*", which will be included in the next stage.

1.1.1.2 The Heshang Gong 河上公 version

The Heshang Gong *Laozi* is the version that has been transmitted with the Heshang Gong commentary, *Laozi Heshang Gong zhangju* 老子河上公章句. As with the Yan Zun version, no one named Heshang Gong had anything to do with the actual editing of the *Laozi* text. In fact, the name Heshang Gong is probably fictional.⁶⁴ Nothing is known about the person responsible for the Heshang Gong commentary. Its details will also be discussed in the section on "the commentaries of the *Laozi*".⁶⁵

1.1.1.3 The Wang Bi 王弼 version

Unlike the circumstances of the Yan Zun and Heshang Gong commentaries, there is no doubt that Wang Bi commentary is the work of the famous and the third century scholar Wang Bi (226-249), who is best known perhaps for his commentary to the *Yijing* 易經 "Book of changes". He was one of the most important figures of the post-Han intellectual milieu. The Wang Bi *Laozi* has 81 chapters, but no names⁶⁶ are given to them as titles.

These three versions are called "the traditional versions of the *Laozi*".

⁶¹ Cf. Loewe 1993: pp. 271-272.

⁶² Cf. Loewe 1993: p. 272.

⁶³ Cf. *Zhongguo da baike quanshu: zhexue* 1. 1987: p. 451.

⁶⁴ Boltz says: "In fact the name Ho-shang Kung is, like the name Lao tzu, clearly fictional..." Cf. Loewe 1993: p. 273. But in this case Boltz has no clear evidence to support his assumption. Concerning Lao Zi the person, I show in chapter two that Lao Zi was not a fictional character.

⁶⁵ See *Zhongguo da baike quanshu: zhexue* 1. 1987: p. 451. Cf. Loewe 1993: pp. 273-274.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*



《老子》甲本（部分）

Sample of version A of the Mawangdui Laozi text.

1.1.1.4 The Guben 古本 version

There are two distinct but closely related redactions of the so-called *Guben* ("old text" or "ancient version" of the *Laozi*): A) One is edited and established by Fu Yi 傅奕 (c.558-c. 639) of the Tang 唐 Dynasty, and, B) the other is edited and established by Fan Yingyuan 范應元 of the Song 宋 Dynasty.

A. The Fu Yi 傅奕 redaction

Fu Yi served as Taishiling 太史令 "Grand Astrologer" in the court of the early Tang Dynasty. He had a reputation for being avidly interested in the *Laozi* text and is reported to have gathered as many different versions of the text as he could. Xie Shouhao 謝守灝 (1134-1212), says in his *Hunyuan shengji* 混元聖紀 (the *Daozang* 道藏, HY 769), "among the versions of the *Laozi* text to which Fu Yi had access there was one which was reputed to have come from the tomb of Xiang Yu's 項羽 consort, which had been opened in 574. Xiang Yu died in 202 BC, and it is likely that his consort died before him, otherwise she would probably not have had a tomb of any note".⁶⁷ If we can trust Xie Shouhao's report, then, Fu Yi would have had access to a manuscript copy of the *Laozi* dating probably from slightly before 200 BC, a version of clear importance in establishing a critical edition.

The Fu Yi text is preserved in the *Daozang* as HY 665 and is reproduced in facsimile in Yan Lingfeng's 嚴靈峰 *Wuqiu beichai Laozi jicheng*, first series, volume 17. Bi Yuan 畢沅 (1730-1797) relied heavily on the Fu Yi text in the course of preparing his *Daodejing kaoyi* 道德經考異.

B. The Fan Yingyuan 范應元 redaction

Fu Yi's *Guben Laozi* was edited anew in the Song Dynasty by Fan Yingyuan, a person sometimes described as a "Daoist master" (*daoshi* 道士) but otherwise an obscure figure about whom little is known. The opening page of Fan's redaction of the *Guben Laozi* identifies him as the "former Instructor-in-charge at the Yulong wanshou temple" (前玉隆萬壽宮掌教), and the "Senior Lecturer of the Shouning Abbey at Nanyue" (Hengshan 衡山) (南岳壽寧觀長講). Fan provides his redaction with collated notes and exegetic comments in connection with the Yan Zun, Wang Bi, Heshang Gong, and Fu Yi versions of the text. He also provides notes reflecting other, later commentators, including Liang Jianwen Di 梁簡文帝 (503-551), Lu Deming 陸德明, Cheng Xuanying 成玄英 (fl. 630-660), and Su Zhe 蘇轍 (1039-1112). The title of his work is *Laozi Daodejing guben jizhu* 老子道德經古本集注.

Boltz says:

Fan's redaction of the *Ku pen Lao tzu* differs from the Fu I *Ku pen* text in about one hundred places, according to Wagner's study (1989 p. 37). At least one of the reasons that Fan's version differs from Fu Yi's is that Fan uncritically adopted a number of Hsüan tsung's idiosyncratic emendations to the text.

⁶⁷ Cf. J. Boltz 1987b: pp. 133-134.

(See, e.g., Chu 1975, 1 for an example from ch.20.) In spite of these differences between the two *Ku pen* versions, Wagner correctly observes that 'their common deviation against other extant texts is substantially higher (in number of variants, than between each other)'. These two examples, in other words, define a single line of transmission distinct from all others.⁶⁸

Fan's *Guben Laozi* was published by the Han fen lou 涵芬樓 library of rare books in volume 17 of the *Xugui congshu*. This text was based on the Song woodblock print that was in the Jiang'an Fushi Shuang qian lou 江安傅氏雙鑑樓 collection, i.e., the personal library of Fu Zengxiang 傅增湘 (1872-1949). He is known to have provided a number of rare Song and Yuan woodblock prints to the Han fen lou for facsimile reproduction in the early part of this century.⁶⁹ The text of Fan's *Guben Laozi* is not included in the *Daozang*. For a facsimile of the *Xugui congshu* copy, see *Wu qiubei chai Laozi jicheng*, vol. 59. Apart from Wagner's study discussed above, which identifies the *Guben Laozi* with the original Wang Bi text, the most extensive modern study of the *Guben* version is that of Lao Jian in 1941.⁷⁰

1.1.1.5 The Tang yu zhu 唐御注 “Imperial commentary” version

The so-called “bibliographic controversy” at the court of Tang Xuan Zong 唐玄宗 (cf. Hung, 1957) involved, a competition between the commentary of the Wang Bi *Laozi* and that of the Heshang Gong *Laozi*. Because no clear criterion emerged at the termination of the debate for choosing between these two, Xuan Zong 玄宗 opted to produce his own commentary and sub-commentary (*shu* 疏). These were published in 735. At the same time he established an “edited” version of the *Laozi* text based largely on his personal choice of readings from either the Heshang Gong version or the Xiang Er 想爾 version (cf. below). Concerning the value of this version, Boltz says:

Because his text was not critically established in any scholarly way, and combines readings capriciously from other versions, it has no independent value for the establishment of a critical edition (Shima 1973, summarized in Herforth 1989 (1980), p.19). Still, because of the nature and stature of the source of the Imperial commentary, Hsüan tsung's *Lao tzu* supplanted both the Wang Pi and Ho-shang Kung versions for Tang civil service examination purpose, and to a considerable general extent as well (Hung 1957, n.146).⁷¹

To enforce his order that *Yuzhu Laozi* should be the version of choice Xuan Zong had both text and commentary inscribed on an eight-sided stone *zhuang* 幢 and erected it in 738 in front of the Long xing guan 龍興觀 of Yizhou 易州. (This relic is not to be confused with the *bei* 碑 of 708 found at the same site, which carried only the text of the *Laozi*. Nor should it be confused with the *zhuang* carrying both the text of the *Laozi* and the Imperial commentary which was erected in 739 at the Long xing guan of Xingzhou

⁶⁸ Loewe 1993: p. 279.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Loewe 1993: p. 280.

邢州). High quality photographs of these stone inscriptions can be found in Ho, 1936.⁷² Xuan Zong's *Laozi yuzhu* and his *shu* "sub-commentary" can be found in the *Daozang*, HY 677 and 678/9 respectively.

These are the five principal textual versions of the *Laozi* proper. However, as Henricks says, "all traditional versions of these three editions are 'received' texts, having been copied many times over the centuries and thus passed down to the present."⁷³ The copies of these "early" texts which we possess today, therefore, undoubtedly do not represent the text as it was seen by the commentators whose names they bear.⁷⁴

1.1.2 The Mawangdui 馬王堆 silk text of the *Laozi*

Before the discovery of the Jingmen bamboo slips in 1994, the Mawangdui 馬王堆 silk version was the earliest edition of the *Laozi* and dates from around the beginning of the second century BC. These were the oldest extant manuscripts which we know to be free of later errors or other changes. In December of 1973 in a Han tomb at Mawangdui in Hunan 湖南 province two manuscript copies (designated *jia ben* 甲本 "A" and *yi ben* 乙本 "B" by modern editors) of the *Laozi* were discovered. Of these two manuscripts, A observes no Han taboos at all, while B observes as taboo only the character *bang* 邦. This means that A was probably made before the death of Gao Zu 高祖 in 195 BC, and that B was made before the death of Emperor Hui in 180 BC. And the possibility that A was made before the Han cannot be ruled out. These two manuscripts thus antedated the Tang stone inscriptions by 900 years and the earliest fragment by nearly 500 years.⁷⁵

Boltz says, texts A and B "represent a genuine textual lineage, rather than being just an isolated textual anomaly."⁷⁶ Gao Heng 高亨, Chi Xizhao 池曦朝⁷⁷ and Xu Kangsheng 許抗生⁷⁸ argue that A and B do not come from the same textual tradition. The evidence is mainly as follows: 1) At the end of the first part of B are the character *de* 德 and the number character representing "three thousand and forty one"; at the end of the second part of Book B are the character *dao* 道 and the number character representing "two thousand four hundred twenty six". Book A lacks these characters. 2) The text in B is not divided into chapters at all. But in A, dot markings seem to be a sign for the division of the text into sections.⁷⁹ 3) The two texts A and B read differently in

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Robert G. Henricks 1993: xvii.

⁷⁴ For this point, see the article by William Boltz 1985.

⁷⁵ D. C. Lau 1982: p. 156.

⁷⁶ Loewe 1993: p. 284.

⁷⁷ Cf. Mawangdui hanmu boshu zhengli xiaozu 1976: pp. 109-128.

⁷⁸ Xu Kangsheng, 1985: pp. 136-137.

⁷⁹ D. C. Lau argues that "The curious fact is that the practice in the two books of the A, text is very different. In the *te ching* there are 15 such marks, but only one at the beginning of the *tao ching*. Of the 15 marks in the *te ching*, 11 coincide with chapter division in the transmitted text while 3 are found within chapters." Cf. D.C. Lau 1982: p. 161. I think, however, that Lau's argument cannot deny the

about one hundred and **eighty** places.⁸⁰

Gao Heng and Chi Xizhao, therefore, draw the conclusion that a number of versions belonging to different **textual** traditions were probably in existence at that time. Thus, the two early Han **manuscripts**, though only two, cannot be said to be closer to the original.⁸¹ D.C. Lau as well agrees with Gao and Chi on this point.⁸²

Yan Lingfang, **however**, thinks that the Mawangdui form of the text is simply the result of packaging. As Robert G. Henricks has noticed, Yan suggests that the Mawangdui texts or their predecessors "were copied from texts written on strips of bamboo that were tied together in **bundles**, one for part I of the text and one for part II. But when the copyist was finished, **he put** the part I bundle into a box first with part II on top of it; the next copyist opening **the box** would naturally begin with the bundle of slips on top, which would be the **part II** bundle."⁸³ This is a possibility, but it has not yet been proven.

D. C. Lau does **not agree**, however, that texts A and B come from two different traditions. He centers **his argument** around three points:

1) Lau interprets **the differences** in the reading of texts A and B as a contamination from another textual **tradition** and thinks that they do not necessarily constitute evidence that A and B coming **from** different traditions.⁸⁴ He then divides the differences in reading between A and B into two kinds: "They involve either particles or the use of loan characters. Besides **these**, there are cases where a passage is missing in one or other of the manuscripts."⁸⁵

Lau lists as well **some** examples which he believes illustrate his case. But Lau's argument here is weak, **since** without proper evidence the question remains open whether this difference in the **readings** is in fact due to contamination from another textual tradition. His argument, **then**, cannot be used as a basis for attacking the theory of Gao and Chi. Xu Kangsheng, based on certain observations concerning these differences, has drawn the conclusion that text A is closer to Yan Zun's 嚴遵 *Daode zhigui* 道德指歸; and B, similarly, is **closer** to Fu Yi's 傅奕 version.⁸⁶

difference between the **A and B** texts. Thus, the theories of Gao, Chi and Xu are right.

⁸⁰ D. C. Lau also agrees **with this** number of the differences between texts A and B. Cf. D. C. Lau 1982: p. 156.

⁸¹ Cf. Mawangdui hanmu **boshu zhengli** xiaozu 1976: pp. 109-128. Cf. Nikkilä 1992: p. 15.

⁸² D. C. Lau 1982: p. 184 reads: "There probably existed at the same time a number of versions belonging to independent **textual** traditions. That being the case, we cannot hope that with the discovery of two early Han **manuscripts** we are nearer to the original, if, indeed, we can talk about an original. "

⁸³ Henricks 1993: xx. See also Yan Lingfang: *Mawangtui boshu shitan* (Yan 1976): pp. 8-13.

⁸⁴ D. C. Lau 1982: pp. 158-159.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*: p. 156.

⁸⁶ Xu Kangsheng 1985: p. 137.

2) Lau says, "Far more significant than these differences are cases where A and B share the same mistakes."⁸⁷ He then lists some examples from chapters 2, 11, 23, and 57.⁸⁸ Finally, he says: "That A and B share these mistakes in common argues strongly for their having been descended from the same exemplar. This argument far out weighs the counter-argument from differences in the two texts, for, as has been pointed out, the differences could have come from textual contamination. Since A and B come from the same textual tradition, it is justifiable to conflict the two texts. This gives a reasonably complete text with only the occasional lacuna to be filled with the help of the transmitted text."⁸⁹

However, this position is weak as well, since the earlier version that is the source of texts A and B may contain these so-called "same mistakes". This statement, of course, is an unwarranted assumption; but in that respect my position is equal to that of Lau. And clearly one cannot propose one possibility in order to deny another without any further evidence.

Possible, then, is that some other ancient manuscript possessed these "mistakes". And when they were copied, different readings were introduced into different copies. Under these circumstances Lau's argument could still hold, but the "same exemplar" to which he referred must have existed long before. The crucial question, however, concerns the differences between the "mistakes" and the "different readings". If the "mistakes" have something in common, something which separates them as a group from the "reading", then Lau's argument holds. D.C. Lau, however, did not succeed in proving this.⁹⁰ On the other hand, if the "different readings" are considered "mistakes", then the two books of the Mawangdui manuscripts must have been descended from two different exemplars. In other words, if the "mistakes" are only different "readings", which happen to be the same in A and B, then statistically Lau's argument is wrong, for many different "readings" emerge compared to the "mistakes".

This issue needs to be studied in details, and Lau's statement remains still open, since nearly two hundred reading differences can be found in comparison to the few similar mistakes that obtain between texts A and B.

3) Lau's third argument is weaker than the above two, because he tries to deny the difference in the division of chapters between texts A and B.⁹¹ I will show in this chapter, however, in the section entitled "The chapter division" that, in the silk text, Book A has chapter divisions (in the first part), while Book B has no chapter divisions.

Before the discovery of the Mawangdui silk text, the oldest text in existence was

⁸⁷ D. C. Lau 1982: p. 159.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*: pp. 159-160.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*: p. 160.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*: p. 161.

inscribed in 708 on a tablet in the Long xing Temple in Yizhou, Hubei province.⁹²

The book as it stands now is divided into two parts, the first consisting of 37 chapters and the second of 44 chapters. Of the two common texts, the one used by Wang Bi for his commentary has no titles for either the two parts or the chapters. The one used by Heshang Gong for his commentary, however, calls the two parts the "Classic of *Dao*" and the "Classic of *De*", respectively, and has a title for each chapter.⁹³

In comparing the Mawangdui texts of *Laozi* to these and later editions, they appear in the main similar. Henricks says, "let us state clearly at the outset that the Mawangdui texts do not differ in any radical way from latter versions of the text. That is to say, there are no chapters in the Mawangdui texts that are not found in later texts and vice versa, and there is nothing in the Mawangdui texts that would lead us to understand the philosophy of the text in a radically new way."⁹⁴ Concerning the difference among them, Henricks says, "The differences tend to be more subtle. A different word is used here and there, or a word, phrase or line is added in or left out, or the syntax of a phrase or line is not the same. One of the striking features of the Mawangdui texts of *Laozi* in fact is that they are much more "grammatical" than later editions, using many more grammatical particles than later editions, but for that very reason being grammatically much more precise."⁹⁵

1.1.3 The bamboo slips of the *Laozi* discovered in No. 1 Chu State Tomb in Guodian Village, Jingmen, Hubei province.

The earliest version of *Laozi* is the new archaeological discovery of the *Laozi* written on bamboo slips discovered in 1994 in No. 1 Chu State Tomb in Guodian Village, Jingmen, Hubei province.⁹⁶ The texts are written in classic Chinese character, which was an old style of writing used in the Zhanguo Period and was formally between the ancient character (*guwenzi* 古文字) and the "small seal" (*xiao zhuan* 小篆). (The small seal was abandoned in the Han dynasty.) This version is presently in the process of being studied, and thus far we know concerning it only: that it is shorter than the normal version possessed by us, and that this *Laozi* is from a version which was similar to the Mawangdui silk *Laozi*.⁹⁷

Many reports such as that found in the *Beijing review* and the *Zhongguo wenwubao* have said the Bamboo Slips *Laozi* is in the form of dialogue. However, according to the interview of the leader of the Jingmen museum Liu Zuxin 劉祖信 by Chinese senior

⁹² For a list of inscriptions on the tablet *Laozi*, cf. Yan Lingfeng: pp. 371-373. He Shichi, *Guben Daodejing jiaokan*, Vol. III, contains photographic reproductions of the Yizhou and other tablets.

⁹³ These titles have been translated by Wilhelm, Carus, Heysinger, Au-young Sum Nung, Old, Lin Yutang, etc., in their translations. See Chan 1963: p. 90 note 106.

⁹⁴ Henricks 1993: xviii-xix.

⁹⁵ Henricks 1993: xix.

⁹⁶ See *Zhongguo wenwu bao* 中國文物報. 19 March 1995. No. 11 (Whole number 425).

⁹⁷ See also *Beijing Review*, Apr. 3-16, 1995: p. 33.

lecturer Huang Xiuli 黃秀禮 (information possessed by the present author personally), reporters have made mistakes in reporting the form of the Bamboo Slips *Laozi*. Liu Zuxin said that the Bamboo Slips *Laozi* was not in the form of dialogue but poetry, and it is similar to the version of Mawangdui *Laozi* and probably comes from the same tradition.⁹⁸ This *Laozi* consists of over two thousand characters, and the bamboo slips varied in length from 20 to 40 cm.⁹⁹

The normal versions of the Wang Bi, Heshang Gong and Yan Zun, which are usually called "the traditional versions" in this work, all have the *Daojing* before the *Dejing*. The Mawangdui silk texts of the *Laozi*, however, has the *Dejing* before the *Daojing* and was probably completed around 200 BC during the latter part of the Warring States Period.¹⁰⁰ The version of Fu Yi was based on the ancient version. The Bamboo Slips *Laozi*, however, is the oldest version yet discovered. One can reasonably suppose, therefore, that the silk texts and the Fu Yi version of the *Laozi* were from two different traditions. They are, however, from the same tradition as the Mawangdui text and the traditional version of the *Laozi*.¹⁰¹ According to the report, the Bamboo Slips *Laozi* dated at least to the middle of Warring States Period.¹⁰² Thus, in this case, the Bamboo Slips *Laozi* was earlier than both Silk texts and the Fu Yi version of the *Laozi* or at least was completed in the same period as they were. One can suppose, then, that the silk text and Fu Yi version were developed from the Bamboo Slips *Laozi*.¹⁰³ We cannot decide yet, however, whether or not this assumption is true, since we cannot know whether the Jingmen Bamboo Slips *Laozi* was a part of the *Laozi*'s traditional version or its earlier version. Needed here is a new study and translation of the *Laozi* based on the Bamboo Slips texts, which is the task of forthcoming analysis.

1.2 The titles and structure of the *Laozi*

1.2.1 The titles

The *Laozi* 老子, called as well the *Daodejing* 道德經 (Classic of the Way and Its Virtue), is a comparatively short work. It is sometimes called the *Wu qian wen* 五千文 "The Five thousand character (classic)", and is in fact of about that length. "The number of its words varies from 5227 to 5722, although it is usually called 5000-word classic."¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ Huang Xiuli interviewed Liu Zuxin, the leader of the Jingmen Museum, on October 16th, 1995 in Jingmen city, Hubei province. The present author was given this information by Huang on the 23rd of October, 1995 by telephone.

⁹⁹ See also *Zhongguo wenwubao* 20. Aug, 1995. No. 33 (Total 447).

¹⁰⁰ See He Jiejun and Zhang Weiming 1982: p. 85. and *Zhongguo wenwubao*, 20. Aug., 1995, No. 33 (total. 447).

¹⁰¹ See footnote 43.

¹⁰² *Hubei ribao* 湖北日报 1994年12月15日.

¹⁰³ *Zhongguo wenwu bao*. 1995年6月25日 (25 June 1995.) No. 25. Total No. 439.

¹⁰⁴ Chan 1963: p. 61.

The followers of the Daoist religion have actually made attempts to reduce the number to exactly 5000.¹⁰⁵

In the Mawangdui *Laozi*, the two parts of the B text end, one with *De* and the other with *Dao*, but do not use the term *jing* (classic). The A text has no titles at all. In Sima Qian's *Shiji*, he calls them simply *shangxia pian* 上下篇 (the Former and Lower parts).¹⁰⁶

Chan Wing-Tsit says, the book was merely called the *Laozi* and not a classic (*jing* 經) up to the beginning of the Han Dynasty.¹⁰⁷ According to Jiao Hong, it was called a classic during the reign of Emperor Jing 景 (reigned 156-141 BC).¹⁰⁸ Whether or not this statement is true, we know that the bibliography compiled by Liu Xiang lists three commentaries on the *Laozi* as those on the "classic," although the *Laozi* itself is not listed.¹⁰⁹ This is repeated in the bibliographical section of the *Hanshu*, i.e., the History of the Former Han Dynasty, by Ban Gu 班固 (32-92), where Yang Xiong 楊雄 (53 BC—AD 18) has been quoted as saying that Lao Zi wrote the *Classic of Dao*.¹¹⁰ In the same book the *History of the Former Han Dynasty: the Biography of Yang Xiong*, Huan Tan 桓譚 has been quoted as saying: "Once Lao Dan wrote the words of void in two *pian* 篇 (parts)."¹¹¹ Here the *Laozi* was called *liang pian* (two parts) other than *jing* (classic). Ma Xulun says that the title *Daodejing* appears in a number of works in the Former Han Period (206 BC—AD 8).¹¹² The Heshang Gong version of the *Laozi*, which we have today, uses the name *Daodejing*; and Heshang Gong is said to be a figure in the Former Han Dynasty (the period of Jing 景 Emperor), though his version cannot be found in Ban Gu's *Hanshu*. Xu Kangsheng says that the present Heshang Gong version dates probably from the time of the Latter Han Dynasty, though this statement cannot be taken as evidence. The earliest title upon which we can rely today, therefore, is that of the B text of the Mawangdui silk *Laozi*, called *Daopian* and *Depian*.¹¹³

¹⁰⁵ For the variation of the numbers, see Chan 1963: pp. 83-84 note 1. Cf. Jiao Hong (1541-1620), *Laoziyi*, 5:13a; Kimura Eichi, *Rôshi no shinkenkyû* (New Study of the Lao Zi): pp. 219-220; Takeuchi Yoshio, *Rôshi no kenkyû* (Study of the Lao Zi), I, 127, 131, 136, 220; and Kojima Kenkichi, *Shina shoshi hyakkako* (Inquiry on the Hundred Schools of Ancient Chinese Philosophy), p. 142. The Heshang Gong text, SPTK (1929), has 5268 words, and the Wang Bi text, SPPY (1927), has 5281. In reducing the total number to 5000, Daoist followers replaced the phrase *sanshi* 三十 ("thirty") with the colloquial *sa* 卅 ("thirty") in the *Laozi* (ch. 11). For further information on the reduction to 5000 words, see Rao Zongyi 饒宗頤, *Laozi xiangerzhu jiaojian*: p. 4.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Xu Kangsheng 1985: p. 135.

¹⁰⁷ Chan 1963: p. 74.

¹⁰⁸ Jiao Hong a.s.: 5:11b.

¹⁰⁹ Ban Gu's *Hanshu*, ch. 30, cf. the section on the Daoist school.

¹¹⁰ Li Fang: *Taiping yulan*, 191:7a.

¹¹¹ Xu Kangsheng 1985: p. 135.

¹¹² Ma Xulun 1956 (Revision of 1924): p. 7.

¹¹³ Xu 1985: p. 135.

1.2.2 The structure

There are two issues concerning this point: parts and chapters.

1.2.2.1 The two parts: *Daojing* 道經 and *Dejing* 德經

The text of the *Laozi* is divided into two parts. The first is known as Book I, the Former Part, and is also called the *Daojing* (nos.1-37). The second, Book II or the Lower Part, is called the *Dejing* (nos. 38-81). And this division of the *Laozi* into books is responsible for the alternative name *Daodejing* 道德經 for the work as a whole. All of the chapters are short; none are more than two printed pages, and most are less than one. The division of the work into the *Daojing* and the *Dejing* does not vary from edition to edition, though the Han silk manuscript versions from the Mawangdui 馬王堆 reverse their order and vary the sequence of a few of the individual chapters.¹¹⁴

As already indicated, in his biography of Lao Zi, Sima Qian refers to the *Laozi* as consisting of two parts (see the introduction to the present work). The "Xiang Er" commentary, which may antedate Wang Bi's commentary, also divides the text into two parts.¹¹⁵ Thus, the division into two parts goes back to early times. In both A and B of the Mawangdui silk text, the order is reversed, the *Dejing* coming before the *Daojing*. Neither text designates the books as *Dejing* and *Daojing*, though in B the end of the first book is marked by the character *de* 德, and the end of the second book by the character *dao* 道.¹¹⁶

Gao Heng and Chi Xizhao say, according to the records before the Qin Dynasty, there were probably two kinds of versions of the *Laozi*: in one, influenced by the Daoist tradition, the *Daojing* precedes the *Dejing*. According to this tradition, *Dao* is always discussed before *de*. And this is the case also in the *Zhuangzi*. In the other type, influenced by the legalist tradition, the *Dejing* comes before the *Daojing*. Chapter 20, the *Jielao* 解老 of the *Hanfeizi* 韓非子, for example, comments on the *Laozi* text in the following order, according to the numbering of chapters in the transmitted (traditional) text: 38, 58, 60, 46, 1, 50, 67, 53, 54. Because the *Jielao* begins with chapter 38, which is the opening chapter of the *Dejing*, some have thought that in the *Laozi* text used by the author the *Dejing* probably came before the *Daojing*.

D. C. Lau argues, however, that the *Jielao* perhaps cannot stand on its own as evidence for the order of the two books of the *Laozi*.¹¹⁷ He says: "This is by no means certain. First, the chapters quoted are not in strict sequence. Second, chapter 1 is quoted amongst chapters that all belong to the *te ching*. If this is originally so in the *Chieh Lao*, then we cannot argue that for the author the whole of the *te ching* comes before the

¹¹⁴ See Mawangdui hanmu boshu zhengli xiaozu 1976: pp. 109-128. Cf. He Jiejun's and Zhang Weiming 1982: pp. 84-93.

¹¹⁵ This has been reproduced in Rao Zongyi's *Laozi Xiang Er zhu jiaojian*.

¹¹⁶ See Mawangdui hanmu boshu zhengli xiaozu 1976: pp. 109-28. Cf. He Jiejun's 何介鈞 and Zhang Weiming's 張維明 1982: pp. 84-93. Cf. D. C. Lau 1982: p. 160.

¹¹⁷ D. C. Lau 1982: pp. 160-161.

whole of the *tao ching*. If the passage containing the quotation from chapter 1 got in by mistake, then the *Chieh Lao* could have been a commentary on the *te ching* alone, there being perhaps, a separate commentary on the *tao ching*. If that were the case, then *Chieh Lao* on its own cannot be used as evidence for the order of the two books of the *Lao Tzu*. Whatever the case with the *Lao Tzu* text used by author of the *Chieh Lao*, the fact is, in A and B the *te ching* comes before the *tao ching*. There is a suggestion that this might have been the order in the Legalist tradition, but as this was made probably with some ulterior political motive, it is best taken with due reservation.¹¹⁸

Despite what modern scholars may argue, however, the Mawangdui silk text still has the *Dejing* coming before the *Daojing*. And the tradition of the *Daojing* preceding the *Dejing* must also have appeared in the middle or later period of the Former Han Dynasty. For according to the quotation in Dong Sijing's 董思靖 *Daode zhenjing jijie xu* 道德真經集解序, Liu Xin's 劉歆 *Qilüe* 七略 says: "Liu Xiang 劉向 sets two books (*pian* 篇) in eighty-one chapters, the former classic is thirty-four chapters, the Lower is forty-seven chapters."¹¹⁹ Examining the *Laozi*'s chapters and contents, one finds that the Former classic set by Liu Xiang is probably the *Daojing*, and the Latter classic the *Dejing*.¹²⁰

1.2.2.2 The chapter division

As to the division into chapters, since the bibliography section of the *History of the Former Han Dynasty* does not in mentioning the Heshang Gong commentary give the number of chapters,¹²¹ and since no chapter division is found in Lu Deming's 路德明 (556-627) *Laozi yinyi* 老子音義 (Pronunciation and Meanings of the *Laozi*), many scholars believe the division originated in the Sui 隋 (581-618) or Tang 唐 (618-907) Dynasty.¹²² The discovery of the Mawangdui silk text of the *Laozi* in 1973 has supported this theory.

In neither the A or B texts of the silk *Laozi* is the text divided into numbered chapters; but while in B the text is not divided into chapters at all, in A dots are placed in a manner which seems to be a sign for division of the text into sections. Curious, however, is that the practice in the two books of the A text is very different. D.C. Lau remarks that the *Dejing* possesses 15 such marks, but only one at beginning of the *Daojing*.¹²³ And this lack suggests that no chapter division were ever made in the

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ He Jiejun and Zhang Weiming 1982: pp. 84-93.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ Chan 1963: p. 75. Cf. Mawangdui hanmu boshu zhengli xiaozu 1976: p. 117.

¹²² Chan 1963: p. 75.

¹²³ D. C. Lau 1982: p. 161. But some say that there are 17 such marks altogether: see He Jiejun and Zhang Weiming 1982: p. 88.

Daojing.¹²⁴ Lau says: "Of the 15 marks in the *te ching*, 11 coincide with chapter divisions in the transmitted text while 3 are found within chapters."¹²⁵ He Jiejun and Zhang Weiming say: "there are six places which are different in the chapter division in the transmitted version."¹²⁶ Gao Heng and Chi Xizhao say: "The exceptions are (1) chapter 24 is found between chapters 21 and 22, (2) chapter 41 is found between chapters 38 and 39, and (3) chapters 80 and 81 are found between chapters 66 and 67."¹²⁷

The *Laozi* consists of eighty-one *zhang* 章 (section or chapter). And this is the division in the traditional versions of Heshang Gong 河上公 and Wang Bi 王弼, etc.¹²⁸ According to tradition, Heshang Gong divided Part One into 37 chapters to conform to the odd number of heaven and Part Two into 44 chapters to conform to the even number of earth.¹²⁹ Yan Zun 嚴遵 (fl. 53-24 BC) divided the book into 72 chapters in view of the notion that 72 the product of eight, the way of *yin*, (the passive force of the cosmos), and nine, the way of *yang* (the cosmic active force).¹³⁰ He thus proposed 40 chapters for Part One and 32 for Part Two. Ge Hong 葛洪, supposing heaven to consist of the four seasons and earth of the *wuxing* 五行 (the Five Agents or Elements, which are Water, Fire, Wood, Metal, and Earth) assigned 36 chapters (4x9) to Part One, and 45 (5x9) to Part Two. In this way, he got the number 81, the product of 9x9. This scheme was followed by Emperor Minghuang of the Tang Dynasty 唐明皇 (reigned 713-55), who, in his *Daodejing zhujie* (Commentary on the Classic of the Way and Its Virtue), further grouped chapters 1-9, 10-18, 19-27, and 28-36 of Part One in a way which corresponds to the four seasons. He grouped chapters 37-45 of Part Two in a way which corresponds to the general notions of humanity, propriety, righteousness, wisdom, and faithfulness (which correspond to the Five Agents). Some say that he was the first to fix the order of the chapters and their sentences.¹³¹

Wu Cheng (1249-1333) combines in his commentary chapters 5 and 6, 17 to 19, 23 and 24, 30 and 31, 39 and 40, 42 and 43, 57 and 58, 63 and 64, 66 and 67, 68 and 69, 70 and 71, and 73 and 74. He does this because they deal with similar subjects, and he

¹²⁴ D. C. Lau 1982: p. 161. Cf. He Jiejun and Zhang Weiming 1982: p. 88.

¹²⁵ D. C. Lau 1982: p. 161.

¹²⁶ He Jiejun and Zhang Weiming 1982: p. 88.

¹²⁷ Chan Wing-Tsit 1963: p. 75. Cf. Mawangdui hanmu boshu zhengli xiaozu 1976: p. 119. D. C. Lau, 1982: p. 161 says, "In the main, the order of the text within the book is the same as in the transmitted text. The exceptions are (1) chapter 41 is found between chapters 39 and 40,...." This is different from Gao Heng's and He Jiejun's saying, the present work follows the latter, because they have got this conclusion through a study on the original silk text. Cf. Xu Kangsheng 1985: p. 137.

¹²⁸ See Mawangdui hanmu boshu zhengli xiaozu 1976: p. 117.

¹²⁹ See Dong Zijing, *Daodejing jijie*: preface. Cf. Chan Wing-Tsit 1963: p. 75 and Mawangdui hanmu boshu zhengli xiaozu 1976: p. 117.

¹³⁰ In the preface of his commentary. Cf. Chan Wing-Tsit 1963: p. 75.

¹³¹ Jiao Hong, *Laoziyi*, 5:15b. Cf. Chan Wing-Tsit 1963: pp. 75-76.

gives us a total of 68 chapters.¹³² The *Daode zhenjing zhu* (Commentary on the *Pure Classic of the Way and Its Virtue*) by Emperor Taizu 太祖 (reigned 1368-98) of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), however, gives a total of only 67 chapters.¹³³ But Yao Nai's *Laozi zhangyi*, still gives 81 chapters, 31 in Part One and 50 in Part Two.¹³⁴ Ma Xulun has divided the book into 114 chapters, the shortest having six words (line 3 of the traditional chapter 70) and the longest having 104.¹³⁵ The newer arrangement, by Yan Lingfeng, has 54 chapters: chapters 1-4 on the substance of *Dao*, 5-8 on the principle of *Dao*, 9-23 on the function of *Dao*, and 34-54 on the technique of *Dao*.¹³⁶

1.3 The nature of the *Laozi*

1.3.1 The style of the *Laozi*

Some scholars argue that all of the chapters are rhymed,¹³⁷ though the rhyming scheme occurs in various patterns.¹³⁸ Most scholars do agree that many rhymes occur in the *Laozi*, though, concerning whether the work has the style of poetry as such, opinions differ.

Ren Jiyu argues that the style of the *Laozi* is poetry. According to Barbara Hendrischke, Ren says: "The *Laozi*, being poetry, is naturally full of metaphors, which has led many interpreters astray who did not bother to reflect on the specific language of this book."¹³⁹

Feng Youlan says that the style of the *Laozi* is clearly that of "canon" *jing* 經.¹⁴⁰ But he is unable to give any standard by which to judge what the style of the canon is. Hu Shi argues that Feng believes the style is that of the proverb; for, except in the case of the dialogues, almost all of the *Analects* are proverbs.¹⁴¹

Qian Mu 錢穆 takes the *Laozi* as rhymed prose (*yunhua zhi sanwen* 韻化之散文) and thinks that the rhymed prose cannot precede the dialogue, such as we have in the

¹³² Chan 1963: p. 76.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Chan 1963: p. 90 note 116 says: "This rearranged text is found in his *Lao Tzu chiao-ku*: pp. 203-16."

¹³⁶ See Chan 1963: p. 76. Cf. Yan's *Laozi zhangju xinbian zuanjian*: pp. 170-184.

¹³⁷ Chapters 31,49,50,61,74, and 75 are not rhymed, while only small parts of chapters 7,11,23,32, 34,42,60,66,72, and 81 are rhymed. Hu Yuanchun, in his *Laozi shiji* (p. 3) goes so far as to say that the whole book is in rhyme. See Chan 1963: p. 84 note 2.

¹³⁸ For a complete list of rhymes, see B. Karlgren, "The Poetical Parts in Lao-Tsi," *Göteborgs Högskolas Årsskrift*, XXXVIII (1932), 6-20, and Chen Zhu, *Laozi jixun*: passim. For some examples of the rhyming scheme, see Qian Mu, *Laozi babian*: pp. 29-34.

¹³⁹ Barbara Hendrischke 1984: pp. 29, 25-42.

¹⁴⁰ Feng Youlan Vol.1, Derk Bodde (tr.) 1952: p. 170.

¹⁴¹ See the quotation in Zhang Chengqiu 1977: p. 85.

Analects.¹⁴²

Gu Jiegang 顧頴剛 takes the *Laozi* as a style of *fu* 賦, which appeared in the end of the Warring States Period.¹⁴³

Ma Xulun 馬敘倫 notes that the brief words of the *Laozi* are like poetry. On one hand it is like the *yao ci* 爻辭 of *Yi* 易 and the *Ya* 雅 and *Song* 頌 of the *Shijing* 詩經; on the other hand, it is like the *Analects* 論語. No paper and ink existed at that time, so brief words were favored. And most of the ancient books were transmitted orally, so they were usually rhymed. The *Laozi* fits both of these two conditions. Therefore, he says, the *Laozi* must have been transmitted before the Warring States Period.¹⁴⁴

Many parts of the *Laozi* are rhymed, but the *Laozi* is not really poetry. Looking the book as a whole, its nature can be described as follows:

The work as a whole is sometimes referred to as poetry, because all of the sections are short, sometimes rhymed, and are sparing in their use of grammatical particles (especially in the transmitted versions). But this style of writing has never been formally classed as a type of poetry in the Chinese tradition. The *Laozi* is found traditionally in the *zi* 子 category of the *sibu* 四部 classification scheme.¹⁴⁵

Its sentences, many containing couplets,¹⁴⁶ may be long or short, difficult or easy, simple or complex, and its expression may be concise or elaborate.

Its several quotations¹⁴⁷ complicate rather than simplify matters, because their sources are not certain and they may not be quotations at all. There is not a single dialogue, historical event, or proper noun to provide a clue concerning its date or author, it contains some repetitions and contradictions,¹⁴⁸ some sayings attributed to Lao Zi in other books are not found here.¹⁴⁹

1.3.2 The issue of anthology

Based on some aspects of the *Laozi*'s nature, some people argue that the *Laozi* is an anthology.¹⁵⁰ D. C. Lau, for example, says:

¹⁴² Qian Mu 1957: pp. 101-102.

¹⁴³ Gu Jiegang 1933: IV: pp. 462-519.

¹⁴⁴ Quoted from Zhang Yangming 張陽明 1985: *Laozi kaozheng* 老子考證: p. 260.

¹⁴⁵ Loewe 1993: p. 269.

¹⁴⁶ See Chan 1963: p. 61. For examples and an analysis, see Tan Chengbi, *Laozi duben*: pp. 10-12, and Kojima: pp. 143-147.

¹⁴⁷ Chapters 22,36,41,42,57,69,78, and 79.

¹⁴⁸ For the repetitions one can refer to Chan Wing-Tsit's notes on the respective parts in his book, *The Way of Lao Tzu*. For a good list of contradictions, real or imagined, see Tsudô, Sôkichi, *Dôke no shisô to sono tenkai* (Taoist Thought and Its Development): pp. 34-35.

¹⁴⁹ Chan 1963: p. 61.

¹⁵⁰ *Laozi zhexue taolun ji*: pp. 6-7.

In my view not only is the *Lao Tzu* an anthology but even individual chapters are usually made up of shorter passages whose connection with one another is at best tenuous; ...It also follows from our view of the work as an anthology that we cannot expect the thought contained in it to be a closely knit system, though the greater part of the work may show some common tendency of thought which can be described as Taoist in the broad sense of the term.¹⁵¹

Kaltenmark has a similar opinion that the *Laozi* is an anthology. He says: "All things considered, the Lao Zi appears to be an anthology of apothegms borrowed partly from the common stock of wisdom, partly from various proto-Taoist schools. The anthology was built up gradually and did not take on a more or less definitive form until the third century BC."¹⁵² Kaltenmark has no clear explanation for his so-called "all things considered". Benjamin I. Schwartz also supports this opinion, saying the *Laozi* "is nothing but a handbook of a prudential mundane life philosophy, a treatise on political strategy, an esoteric treatise on military strategy, a utopian tract, or a text which advocates 'a scientific naturalistic' attitude toward the cosmos."¹⁵³ He has not, however, provided any evidence to prove his hypothesis, either.

As for D. C. Lau, he supports his hypothesis mainly by three items of evidence:

- First, "Many chapters fall into sections having, at times, little or no connection with one another."¹⁵⁴ Concerning this point, Lau gives two examples: one is in chapter five, where it reads:

Heaven and earth are ruthless, and treat the myriad creatures as straw dogs;
the sage is ruthless, and treats the people as straw dogs. (14)

This is followed by

Is not the space between heaven and earth like a bellows?
It is empty without being exhausted:
The more it works the more comes out. (15)

Lau says: "It is a different point that is made in each passage. In the first passage, the point is that heaven and earth are unfeeling, while in the second it is that they are inexhaustible though empty. There is no connection between the two passages other than the fact that they are both about 'heaven and earth'.¹⁵⁵ Another example Lau gives is in chapter 64, which reads:

¹⁵¹ D. C. Lau 1963 and 1982: p.xiv.

¹⁵² Kaltenmark 1965: p. 14.

¹⁵³ Benjamin I. Schwartz 1985: p. 192.

¹⁵⁴ D. C. Lau 1963 and 1982: p. 135.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

Whoever does anything to it will ruin it; whoever lays hold of it will lose it. (154)
Therefore the sage, because he does nothing, loses nothing. (154a)

This is followed by

In their enterprises the people
Always ruin them when on the verge of success.
Be as careful at the end as at the beginning
And there will be no ruined enterprises. (155)

Lau says: "Here we can see that the two passages have been placed together because they both deal with how things come to be ruined and how this can be avoided. But beyond this the point made in each passage is, once again, quite different. In the first passage, the sage avoids failure by not doing anything, while in the second the common people are exhorted to avoid failure when on the verge of success by being as careful at the end as at the beginning. In the one case, action is condemned as the cause of failure, because true success lies in not taking any action at all. In the other, it is assumed that success can be achieved through action, provided that one can be careful throughout the duration of the action. The two points of view are not simply unconnected; they are inconsistent."¹⁵⁶

Since passages which are placed together in the same chapter are sometimes¹⁵⁷ unconnected or even inconsistent, many scholars in the past have felt dissatisfaction with the existing arrangement of the text, and some have even attempted to have the text rearranged. Concerning this one can refer to the section above concerning the division of the chapters. D. C. Lau, however, disagrees with them and says: "... I am unable to share their assumptions that the present text is not in the proper order and that there is a proper order which can be restored by rearrangement."¹⁵⁸ Lau has dealt with this problem by a different method, as he says, "In the translation, the division into chapters in the traditional text has been adhered to, but sections numbers have been introduced. These serve to separate existing chapters into parts which, in my view, need not originally have belonged together." And he also says: "If the reader can see connection between parts that I have separated, he can simply ignore my section marks."¹⁵⁹

Lau's argument here cannot be correct, firstly, what D. C. Lau argues has not been proved as authoritative yet, since it is very possible for other people to see the connection between parts that Lau separates. On the other hand, what D. C. Lau assumes concerning

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*: pp. 135-136.

¹⁵⁷ D. C. Lau 1982: p. 136 reads: "...are very often unconnected or even inconsistent..." This is not true, since contradictions actually occur very seldomly in the *Laozi*. For a good list of contradictions, real or imagined, one can see Tsuda Sookichi, *Dôke no shisô to sono tenkai* (Taoist Thought and Its Development): pp. 34-35.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*: p.xl.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*: p.xl.

the text can also be explained as later additions to the book of *Laozi*.¹⁶⁰

• As a second piece of evidence, Lau says: "In the *Lao Tzu* the same passage is often to be found in different chapters."¹⁶¹ And he gives several examples which show that certain passages do not seem to belong to any context. Chapter 27 of the *Laozi* reads:

When there is not enough faith, there is lack of good faith. (40)

He says, "This is found also in chapter XXIII (53). In neither case is this passage connected with its context. In fact it has more affinity with the passage in chapter XLIX which says,

Those who are of good faith I have faith in. Those who are lacking in good faith I also have faith in. In so doing I gain in good faith. (111)"¹⁶²

Following this he says: "there is the passage which seems to belong to more than one place," and he gives three examples from chapters 4, 52, and 56.¹⁶³ His conclusion is: "As the work is so short it is exceedingly unlikely that a single author should be so much given to repeating himself, but if we look upon the work as an anthology it is easier to see how this could have happened."¹⁶⁴

Lau's conclusion is more like an assumption than a fact, and his conclusion can be denied by regarding the *Laozi* as the book of single author, a book to which later additions have in some cases been appended.¹⁶⁵ This hypothesis is more reasonable than that of Lau. It also fits the traditional opinion concerning Lao Zi, the person. Lau's attempt to deny Lao Zi as a historical figure at all is actually the reason for such a wrong assumption concerning the book of *Laozi*. Concerning Lau's assumption concerning the historic figure Lao Zi, the next chapter of the present work will prove it wrong.

• As a third piece of evidence, Lau says: "there are cases where we find slightly different formulations of what is essentially the same passage." He then gives examples of such varied repetitions from chapters 22 and 24, 70 and 78.¹⁶⁶ But this so-called repetition can also show only that the same saying, in the process of oral and written transmission, assumed slightly different forms in different contexts while retaining essentially the same moral. And thus it only shows that Lao Zi just discussed the same

¹⁶⁰ Zhang Chengqiu 1977: pp. 98-99. Cf. Hu Shi 1919: pp. 49-50.

¹⁶¹ D. C. Lau 1963 and 1982: p. 136.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*: pp. 136-137.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*: p. 137.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*: p. 136.

¹⁶⁵ Zhang Chengqiu 1977: pp. 98-99. Cf. Hu Shi 1919: pp. 49-50.

¹⁶⁶ D. C. Lau 1963 and 1982: pp. 138-139.

things from two aspects. Therefore, D.C. Lau's argument here cannot be relied on as evidence for taking the *Laozi* as an anthology.

If some one argues this part has not demonstrated that Lau's arguments are wrong, it does show that they are not compelling enough to overthrow Sima Qian position maintained concerning the *Laozi's* nature.

1.3.3 The *Laozi* is from one hand rather than many

Departing from D. C. Lau, many scholars, e.g., Feng Youlan,¹⁶⁷ and Zhang Jitong,¹⁶⁸ argue that the *Laozi* is from one hand rather than many, although it has been added to and rearranged by later people.

1.3.3.1 The systematization of the *Laozi's* thought

Many scholars have argued that the thought of the *Laozi* is systematic, though they have had difficulties in employing systematization as a standard by which to describe the nature of the *Laozi*.

Kaltenmark, for example, has a confused opinion concerning the systematic degree of the *Laozi's* thought. In one place, he says: "neither the style nor the thought of the book is internally consistent...As for the content, a considerable number of passages are closer to the tenets of such schools as the Legalists, the Politicians, and the Strategists than to Lao Dan's thought as the ancients understood it, which is the dominant strain of the book. These passages are not clumsy interpolations, however, but a result of the way the *Laozi* was compiled."¹⁶⁹ When in another place he draws his conclusion, however, Kaltenmark says: "Clearly, however, its (the book of *Laozi's*) ideas are carefully worked out and form a coherent whole. We must, then, posit the existence of a philosopher who, if he did not write the book himself, was the master under whose influence it took shape."¹⁷⁰

Related to the *Laozi's* thought system, Benjamin I. Schwartz also says:

Some argue that many of its aphorisms and maxims may have been drawn from a common fund of well-known sayings, and D.C. Lau even calls it an anthology. Yet here again I inclined to remark that, however disarrayed the sources of the text, whoever finally molded it into one composition did succeed in projecting a remarkably unified poetic vision of the world. The recent discovery of what may be the oldest extant versions of the text---the Ma Wang Dui silk scrolls---on the whole affirm this view.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷ Feng Youlan 1964: p. 251 reads: "老子書是一部正式的私人著作。它不是問答式的語彙，而是作者以簡練德文字表述自己的思想。The book of *Laozi* is a real, individual work. It is not a collection of questions and answers, but rather that the author uses his brief language to express his own thought."

¹⁶⁸ See Zhang Chengqiu 1977: p. 87.

¹⁶⁹ Kaltenmark 1969: pp. 13-14.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*: p. 15.

¹⁷¹ Benjamin I. Schwartz 1985: p. 187.

The thought of the *Laozi* is indeed very systematic,¹⁷² its main content concerning the concept of *Dao* and the theory of valuing weakness.¹⁷³ This has been mentioned in the biography of Lao Zi in Sima Qian's *Shiji* and in the *Zhuangzi: tianxia* and, this can also be proven to some extent both by the transmitted version and by the Mawangdui silk texts of the *Laozi*. Thus, the book "has had an influence on Chinese thought through the ages out of all proportion to its length."¹⁷⁴ Lau, however, because of some repetitions and inconsistencies in the book, argues that the *Laozi*'s thought is not systematic.¹⁷⁵ We must keep in mind, however, that the repetitions and inconsistencies are really just a very small part of the book.

Systematization is, after all, a difficult conception to explain. Comparing D. C. Lau's argument with that of his opponents, one finds that none of them can offer satisfactory evidence proving their hypotheses concerning the question of system in the *Laozi*, mainly because different people have different definitions for the term "systematic", each of which varies from the other. Thus, no particular concept of what constitutes "system" can be relied upon to prove that the *Laozi* comes from one hand. Some other means must be found to do that. An investigation into the work's use of the first personal pronoun is just such a way.

1.3.3.2 The use of the first personal pronouns *wu* 吾 and *wo* 我 "I"

The first personal singular pronouns such as *wu* 吾 and *wo* 我 appear many times in the *Laozi*. This fact can be taken as evidence to support the theory that the *Laozi* was from one person's hand rather than many, since these first personal singular pronouns refer to the author himself.¹⁷⁶

A famous Chinese contemporary philosopher Zhang Dainian 張岱年 is of this opinion. He says the pronouns *wu* 吾 and *wo* 我 have been used many times, and most of them do refer to the author of the book.¹⁷⁷ For example, only in chapter 20 of the *Laozi* does the first personal pronouns *wo* 我 appear, and there it appears seven times. We can find in the *Laozi* the following examples:

有物混成 ·
 先天地生 ·

 吾不知其名 ·
 字之曰道 ·

¹⁷² See also Zhang Chengqiu 1977: pp. 98-99.

¹⁷³ Zhang Dainian 1992: in Chen Guying (General ed.) 1992 I: p. 78.

¹⁷⁴ These are the Lau's words concerning the influence of the *Laozi* in China. See D. C. Lau 1963 and 1982: ix.

¹⁷⁵ D. C. Lau 1963 and 1982: pp. 138-139.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*: pp. 74-82. Cf. Chan Wing-Tsit 1963: p. 73.

¹⁷⁷ Zhang Dainian 1992: in Chen Guying 1992 (General ed.) 1992 I: pp. 78-79.

There is a thing confusedly formed,
Born before heaven and earth.
.....
I know not its name
So I style it "the way". (Chap. 25)

吾不知誰之子。
象帝之先。

I know not whose son it is.
It images the forefather of God. (Chap. 4)

These passages show that the concept of the *Dao* was taught by the author of the *Laozi* himself.¹⁷⁸

人之所教，
我亦教之。
強梁者不得其死。
吾將以為教父。

What others teach I also teach.
The violent will come to a natural end.
I shall take this as my percept. (Chap. 42)

吾是以知無為之有益。

That is why I know the benefit of resorting to no-action. (Chap. 43)

我有三寶，持而保之。

I have three treasures
Which I hold and cherish. (Chap. 67)

All of these examples show the author's attitude toward the *Dao*.¹⁷⁹ Both *wu* and *wo* are also used as a genitival attribute to refer to the author's way or words:

天下皆謂我道大似不肖。夫唯大，故似不肖.....

The whole world says that my way is vast and resembles nothing.
It is because it is vast that it resembles nothing... (chap. 67)

吾言甚易知，甚易行。

My words are very easy to understand and very easy to put into practice. (chap. 70)

In this way the author's way and his words can by this means be distinguished from that of others. Therefore, chapter 70 says:

吾言甚易知，甚易行。而天下莫之能知，莫之能行。
言有宗；事有君。夫唯無知，是以不我知。知我者希；
則我者貴。是以聖人被褐懷玉。

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*: p. 79.

My words are very easy to understand and very easy to put into practice,
yet no one in the world can understand them or put them into practice.
Words have an ancestor and affairs have a sovereign.
It is because people are ignorant that they fail to understand me.
Those who understand me are few;
Those who imitate me are honored.
Therefore the sage, while clad in homespun, conceals on his person a
priceless piece of jade. (Chap. 70)

This can be viewed as a complaint by the author', a similar one to that of Confucius and Qu Yuan 屈原. According to *Shiji: the biography of Confucius*, Confucius before he died said: "No one under the heaven can follow me." (天下莫能宗予。)¹⁸⁰ At the end of *Li Sao* 離騷, Qu Yuan says: "There is no one in the state, none know me!" (已矣哉！國無人，莫我知兮！)¹⁸¹ In all these cases, the authors assert that "No one knows or follows me". Therefore, the first personal pronoun in the *Laozi* should be interpreted as referring in a similar manner to the author himself.

These have shown, then, that the *Laozi* was from one person's hand, a person who was an independent thinker.¹⁸²

1.3.3.3 Rhyme as a feature of the *Laozi*

Some scholars who believe that the *Laozi* is the product of a single author emphasize certain consistent features such as rhyme.¹⁸³

Since Wu Yu 吳棫 of the Song Dynasty, many scholars have studied the rhyme of the *Laozi*. The following are examples: Gu Yanwu 顧炎武, Jiang Yong 江永, Jiang Yougao 江有誥, Yao Wentian 姚文田, Deng Tingzhen 鄧廷楨, Bi Yuan 畢沅, Bernhard Karlgren, Luo Zhengyu 羅振玉 and Zhu Qianzhi 朱謙之.¹⁸⁴ And some scholars have pointed out that the rhyme characteristic of the *Laozi* is similar to that of the *Shijing* 詩經; though no one has studied this issue comprehensively.¹⁸⁵

Kaltenmark argues: "Scholars have observed, moreover, that neither the style nor the thought of the book is internally consistent. Some passages are in rhyme and others not; in the rhymed passages there are several very different meters. An examination of the rhymes reveals anomalies that can be accounted for only by assuming that they occur in passages written down in different periods or different regions."¹⁸⁶ Kaltenmark, however, does not give any proof in his book for this assumption.

¹⁸⁰ See Sima Qian's *Shiji: Kong Zi shijia* 史記：孔子世家。

¹⁸¹ Quoted from Lü Huijuan 呂慧娟, Liu Bo 劉波 and Lu Da 盧達 1985: vol. I: p. 69.

¹⁸² Zhang Dainian 1992: in Chenguying (General ed.) I 1992: p. 79.

¹⁸³ Chan 1963: p. 73.

¹⁸⁴ See Liu Xiaogan 1994: in Chen Guying (General ed.) IV: p. 420.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ Kaltenmark 1969: p. 13.

The characteristic and the date of the *Laozi* cannot, however, except perhaps with great difficulty, be established only through the rhyme. For the difference in the finals system (*yun bu xitong* 韻部系統) of Chinese language between the time of *Shijing* and the time of *Chuci* 楚辭 was not very obvious. According to Wang Li 王力, a famous Chinese contemporary linguist, just one part of *dong* 冬 was separated from the part of *qin* 侵.¹⁸⁷ Liu Xiaogan has in view of this linguistic fact concluded from his study of the *Laozi*'s rhyme that its form is much closer to that of *Shijing* than to that of *Chuci*.¹⁸⁸ This will be discussed in greater details in our consideration of the date of the *Laozi*. See 1.5.5.3 C "The *Laozi* is similar to the *Shijing* in its rhyming pattern".

1.3.3.4 The additions by later people to the *Laozi*

Generally believed is that the *Laozi* is the work of one person which has been added to by work of others during the long time of its circulation from generation to generation. Since no paper or printing means existed in ancient times, books were handed down orally and through handwriting. Thus, the *Laozi* could easily come to lose some parts or to have some words added. Some reduplications become possible as well.¹⁸⁹

Chan Wing-Tsit wrote in 1963, "Actually, throughout the whole controversy, it has not always been clear whether the debaters were talking about doctrines, sayings transmitted orally or written down and circulated separately, or sayings collected in book form. The time that had elapsed between the enunciation of the doctrine and the compilation of the book may have been centuries. Certainly that was the case with the *Analects*, the *Mo Tzu*, the *Chuang Tzu*, the *Book of Changes*, and many others. In the process extraneous material, whether ideas or words, must have crept in, through unintentional mistakes and sometimes through deliberate forgery. Practically no ancient Chinese classic is free from these."¹⁹⁰

Considering all of these things, then, the traditional opinion that the *Laozi* came from the hands of Lao Zi should be accepted as truth.

1.3.4 The regional cultural background of the *Laozi*

Barbara Hendrischke says, "there is also the regional cultural background which, according to Ren Jiyu, deserves attention. He explains that during the Chunqiu and Zhanguo Periods China consisted of at least four different cultural regions and that the use of metaphor was particularly common in the state of Chu, where the *Laozi*, the *Zhuangzi* and the *Chuci* originated."¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.* Cf. Wang Li 王力 1980: p. 1.

¹⁸⁸ Liu Xiaogan 1994: in Chen Guying (General ed.) 1994 IV: pp. 419-437.

¹⁸⁹ Kaltenmark 1975: pp. 14-15.

¹⁹⁰ Chan 1963: pp. 72-73.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*: p. 29. See also Zhang Zhengming 1995: the part of Chu characteristic.

1.3.4.1 The characteristics of Chu

Chu was a large state on the southern periphery of the civilized China of ancient times, occupying much of present Henan 河南, Hunan 湖南, Hubei 湖北 and Anhui 安徽. Feng Youlan says, according to the Mencius, "at that time, persons of Ch'u who wished to acquire the Zhou culture, had to travel northward to obtain it."¹⁹²

The chapter on geography in the *Qian Han Shu* states: "Ch'u has an abundance derived from the Chiang (Yangzjiang) and Han rivers, and from streams, marshes, mountains and forests...Its food products are always sufficient. Therefore (its people) make little exertion, delight in life, and neglect to store anything. They have sufficient for food and drink, without thought for cold or starvation; on the other hand, there is no family worth one thousand ounces (of gold). They believe in witches (*wu* 巫) and spirits (*kuei* 鬼), and lay emphasis on excessive sacrifices" (ch. 28b, pp. 3-6).¹⁹³

It was in this state, according to the *Shiji*, that Confucius met most of the recluses who are mentioned in the *Analects*.¹⁹⁴ Feng says: "The Japanese scholar, Koyanagi Shikita, lists a large number of recluses, all natives of Ch'u, mentioned in such works as the *Ch'ien Han Shu*, *Lun Yü*, *Han-fei-tzu*, *Lü-shih Ch'un Ch'iu*, etc. He then goes on to indicate a number of similarities in thought between passages in the *Yüan Yu* and the *Yü Fu* (poems by Ch'ü Yüan or his followers), and between the *Lao-tzu* and *Chuang-tzu*."¹⁹⁵ And "the so-called Taoists who lived during the latter years of the Zhou Dynasty and the beginning of the Ch'in, were also men of this type, and their most important writings are contained in the two books called the *Lao-tzu* and *Chuang-tzu*."¹⁹⁶

Besides Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi, Qu Yuan 屈原 (died c. 288 BC), was also a native of Chu. He has described in his *Li Sao* 離騷, one of China's most imaginative poems, how during his long wanderings he was pulled along by supernatural beings. His attitude toward such beings is poetical rather than religious. The *Tian Wen*, "Questions on Heaven", another poem in the collection of Chu poems of which *Li Sao* forms a part, shows even greater skepticism by asking all sorts of questions about how the universe came into being and about the movements of the sun and moon. Perhaps it was precisely because the people of Chu were fervent believers in witches, shamans, laying much stress on sacrifice, as described in the *Qian Han Shu* quotation, that a certain group of their intellectuals arose in revolt.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹² Feng Youlan, Vol.1, Derk Bodde (tr.) 1952: pp. 175-176.

¹⁹³ Quoted from *ibid*: p. 176.

¹⁹⁴ Feng Youlan Vol.1, Derk Bodde (tr.) 1952: p. 175.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid*: p. 176 note 1. Cf. also Koyanagi's article, "The Ancient State of Ch'u as it appears in Cultural History" (in Japanese), in the *Toho Gakuho*, Tokyo, No.1, March, 1931: pp. 196-228.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid*: p. 176.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid*.

1.3.4.2 The historical records and Lao Zi's Chu 楚 nationality

According to the historical records, e.g., the *Shiji*, Lao Dan was a native of Chu, as will be shown in the following chapter "Lao Zi the Man".

1.3.4.3 The Chu dialect and the *Laozi's* language

Many scholars have noticed the Chu cultural characteristics of the *Laozi*. Zhu Qianzhi 朱謙之, for example, has studied in particular the relationship between the Chu dialect and the *Laozi's* language. Chapter 70 of the *Laozi* reads: "是以聖人被褐懷玉" ("Therefore the sage, while clad in homespun, conceals on his person a priceless piece of jade"). The word *he* 褐 is in the Chu dialect, as can be proved by *Huainanzi*: *Qisu* 淮南子: 齊俗, which says: "楚人謂袍為短褐大衣。" ("The people of Chu use *pao* to denote a short type of coat, normally called *he*.").¹⁹⁸

Liu Xiaogan says that Karlgren referred to the terms *YU* 於 and *yu* 于 as evidence to prove the difference between the dialects of Lu 魯 (the northern language) and Zuo 左 ("Zuo" refers to the non-northern language).¹⁹⁹ They have also been useful in showing that the *Laozi* is also a work of Chu. *Yu* 於 and *yu* 于 appear (respectively) in the following books: 19 and 17 times in the *Zuozhuan* 左傳, 9 and 2 times in the *Guoyu* 國語, 21 and 1 times in the *Analects* 論語, 96 and 1 times in the *Mencius* 孟子, 849 and 1 times in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, and 51 and 0 times in the *Laozi* 老子.²⁰⁰ In the *Laozi* only *YU* 於 (not *yu* 于) is used. Thus, the use of *YU* 於 and *yu* 于 in the *Laozi* shows that it was a work of Chu.

1.3.4.4 The *Laozi* and the custom of Chu

Chapter 31 of the *Laozi* says:

君子居則貴左，用兵則貴右。兵者不祥之器，非君子之器。不得已而用之，恬淡為上。勝而不美，而美之者，是樂殺人者。夫樂殺人者，則不可得志於天下矣。吉事尚左；凶事尚右。偏將軍居左；上將軍居右。

The gentleman gives precedence to the left when at home, but to the right when he goes to war. Arms are instruments of ill omen, not the instruments of a gentleman. When one is compelled to use them, it is best to do so without relish. There is no glory in victory; and to glorify it despite this is to exult in the killing of men. One who exults in the killing of men will never have his way in the empire. (c) On occasions of rejoicing precedence is given to the left; on occasions of mourning precedence is given to the right. A lieutenant's place is on the left; the general's place is on the right. (Chap. 31)²⁰¹

The speech concerning the right and left here was in fact in reference to the custom of Chu. Chan Wing-Tsit says: "It is also true that the custom of honoring the right (31) did not begin in the Warring States Period, but in *Tso chuan* it is remarked that the people

¹⁹⁸ For Zhu Qianzhi's opinion, see Chen Guying (General ed.) 1994: IV: p. 436.

¹⁹⁹ For Karlgren's method, see also Chen Guying (General ed.) 1994: IV: p. 436.

²⁰⁰ Lao Siguang 1968: pp. 152-153.

²⁰¹ Quoted from D. C. Lau 1963 and 1982: pp. 46-49.

of Ch'u, who were barbarians, honored the left,²⁰² implying that Chinese people honored the right."²⁰³ Thus, this passage can be taken as evidence that the *Laozi* is a work of Chu.

1.4 The authorship of the *Laozi*

We must define what we mean by "the authorship of the *Laozi*" and "the date of the *Laozi*". For the various versions of the *Laozi*, without explanation concerning which version is meant, will otherwise give rise only to confusion.

In the following, the terms "the authorship and date of the *Laozi*" will refer to the hypothesis that Lao Dan 老聃, *i.e.*, Li Er 李耳, who was also called Lao Zi 老子 was a real person. He was a contemporary of Confucius, living in the 6th century BC. Furthermore, an original version of *Laozi*, quite possibly different on some points but similar on the whole to the traditional version of the *Laozi*, was a historical entity. The issue concerning the authorship and date of this original *Laozi* cannot be clarified, however, before the second part of this study is completed. Clearly, though, some or most (?)²⁰⁴ of the speeches and words of Lao Zi and the main thought of Lao Zi can be found in the traditional version of the *Laozi*. Concerning this traditional version, this study will deal with it in the following two sections §1.4 and §1.5.

The discussions of many scholars sometimes confuse the question of the authorship of the *Laozi*'s original version with that of the *Laozi*'s traditional version. They usually mean to refer by the terms "the authorship and date of the *Laozi*" to the *Laozi*'s original version, but they handle this subject based usually on the *Laozi*'s traditional version. In more recent times, the Mawangdui version has also been a basis for such discussion. It is my intention in the following to avoid this confusion through a clear statement concerning the meaning of "authorship" and "date" in respect to the *Laozi*.

1.4.1 The meaning of "the authorship of the *Laozi*"

As stated previously, I refer by the terms "the authorship of the *Laozi*" to the author of the original version of the *Laozi*. Unfortunately, as above indicated in the section on "The editions of the *Laozi*", we know nothing about the original version at the present time. We might suppose, however, that the Jingmen Bamboo Slips *Laozi*, which dates to the middle of the Warring States Period (about 350 B.C), is closer to the original version; but as yet we have no specific evidence for this hypothesis.

If the Jingmen Bamboo Slips *Laozi* is the original version of it, and the original version of the *Laozi* was transmitted by the disciples of the master after his death, and they usually reflected his thought quite closely; then the authors of the *Laozi* (original version) were his disciples rather than Lao Zi himself. His thought, however, is well preserved in the *Laozi*. This hypothesis sounds reasonable and has been also supported

²⁰² *Zuozhuan*, Duke Huan, 8th year.

²⁰³ Chan 1963: p. 67.

²⁰⁴ Whether some or most of Lao Zi's speeches or words have been kept in the *Laozi*'s present version is a question that cannot be answered before the study on the Jingmen bamboo Slips *Laozi* is completed. This will be done in the next part of the present study.

by some scholars, such as Zuo Peng.²⁰⁵ But such hypothesis remains in the realm of imagination without sure evidence. And we must await an investigation of the bamboo slips *Laozi* before this issue can be clarified.

Because of this situation, the present work is forced to consider only the authorship and date of the traditional version of the *Laozi*, which refers to that of Yan Zun, Heshang Gong and Wang Bi. For these were usually named the traditional or normal versions before the discovery of the Mawangdui Silk texts (1973) in Hunan province.²⁰⁶

The authorship and date of the Jingmen Bamboo Slips version of the text (and its original version), will be clarified in a later part of this research project.

1.4.2 The various opinions concerning the authorship of the *Laozi*

Concerning authorship, Liang Qichao, Feng Youlan, D. C. Lau, Kaltenmark, and many Western scholars differ from the traditional opinion.²⁰⁷ Some scholars even think that the *Laozi* is an anthology of Daoist writings and sayings created by different persons at different times rather than the work of a single person. Kaltenmark, *e.g.*, is of this opinion;²⁰⁸ However disparate the sources of the text of the *Laozi*, whoever finally molded it into one composition did succeed in projecting a remarkably unified poetic vision of the world.²⁰⁹

Bi Yuan,²¹⁰ Hu Shi,²¹¹ Gao Heng,²¹² and other scholars have insisted that the author of the *Laozi* was Lao Zi, a contemporary of Confucius. Cui Shu thought Lao Zi was a follower of Yang Zhu at the end of the Spring and Autumn Period.²¹³ And Guo Moruo believes the book actually contains the sayings of Lao Zi which were collected by his follower Huan Yüan 環淵, a contemporary of Mencius. Guo's argument is that the *Shiji* says that Lao Zi and Huan Yüan each wrote a book in two parts and that Lao Zi encountered Kuan Yin 關尹 (*i.e.*, Yin Xi 尹喜), the officer at the pass through which Lao Zi was supposed to have gone. Guo thinks that Kuang Yin and Huan Yüan were actually the same person, the two names being pronounced almost alike.²¹⁴ But his theory is more assumption than fact and must be taken as unreliable. Whoever these scholars believe the author to be, however, he lived during the Spring and Autumn Period.

²⁰⁵ *Zhongguo wenwu bao* 中國文物報. 1995年6月25日 (25 June 1995.) No. 25. Total No. 439

²⁰⁶ See He Jiejun's 何介鈞 and Zhang Weiming's 張維明 1982: pp. 84-93.

²⁰⁷ Liang Qichao, *Laozi zhaxue*: p. 1 and *Liang Rengong xueshu yanjiang ji*, I. 18-21. Feng Youlan 1964: p. 249; D. C. Lau 1982: pp. 133-134; Needham 1956: p. 36.

²⁰⁸ Kaltenmark 1975: pp. 14-15.

²⁰⁹ Cf. Schwartz 1985: p. 187.

²¹⁰ Bi Yuan s.a.: Preface, 1b.

²¹¹ Hu Shi 1919: pp. 47-50.

²¹² Gao Heng 1973: pp. 171-174.

²¹³ See Chan 1963: p. 73.

²¹⁴ Guo Moruo 1982: pp. 245-249, 253.

Chan Wing-Tsit says: "Almost without exception, scholars who believe the book was written by one man in the Warring States Period have assigned it to Lao Tan, the fourth-century historian."²¹⁵ Early scholars of this opinion include Ye Shi 葉適²¹⁶ and Wang Zhong 汪中²¹⁷ as well as many contemporary scholars like Luo Genze.²¹⁸

Qian Mu is of the opinion that the author was perhaps Chan Ho or an unknown person who lived in the early third century BC. His idea was that, since the pronunciation of *chan (ho)* in ancient times was "similar" to *dan*, this man was confused by historians with Lao Dan.²¹⁹ Qian was just making assumptions here without any basis in evidence. Related to his theory, Chan Wing-Tsit says: "Ch'ien was at pains to put the author in this period in order to conform to his theory that the book is later than the 'inner chapters' of the *Chuang Tzu*, and he did so reluctantly."²²⁰

1.4.3 The authorship of the *Laozi's* traditional version

The author of this study believes that the *Laozi* is the work of one person rather than many. This opinion is supported by modern Chinese scholars such as Chen Guying 陳鼓應,²²¹ Dong Guangbi 董光璧²²² and Liu Xiaogan 劉笑敢,²²³ who have expressed their opinions as recently as the 1990s.

Below is a summary of D. C. Lau's Chronological Table, which is useful in putting the books which quote the *Laozi* into historical perspective:

Confucius, 551-479 BC,
Mo Zi: the fifth century BC,
Mencius: the fourth century BC,
Yin Wen: from the second quarter to the end of the fourth century BC,
Zhuang Zi: from the middle of the fourth century to the beginning of the third century BC,
Xun Zi: From the latter half of fourth to middle of the third century BC,
Lüshi chunqiu, a postscript dated 240 BC, Hanfei Zi dates it in 233 BC.²²⁴

²¹⁵ Chan 1963: p. 73.

²¹⁶ Ye Shi: 15:1b.

²¹⁷ Cf. the mention of Wang Zhong in the previous chapter of this work.

²¹⁸ Concerning Luo's opinion, see Chan 1963: p. 73.

²¹⁹ Qian Mu 1956: pp. 205-224; and 1952: p. 51.

²²⁰ Chan 1963: p. 73.

²²¹ Chen Guying 1994, IV: pp. 411-418.

²²² Dong 1992: *Dangdai xin daoia* 當代新道家.

²²³ See Chen Guying (general ed.) 1994, Iv: pp. 418-437.

²²⁴ D. C. Lau 1986: p. 143.

One may note here that short periods separate Mencius, Yin Wen, Zhuang Zi, and Xun Zi. In the following, this study will examine the quotations from the *Laozi* found in their books with the intent of clarifying whether Lao Dan was the author of the *Laozi*. For both Lao Zi and Lao Dan have been taken as the author of the *Laozi* during the Warring States Period.

1.4.3.1 Quotations from the *Laozi* in the time of Confucius

The earliest person who formed this opinion was Shu Xiang 叔向, who lived in the period of Jin Pinggong 晉平公 and was a contemporary of Confucius.²²⁵ He was thus a contemporary of Lao Zi, according to traditional opinion. Shu Xiang's 叔向 quote occurs in the time of Confucius. *Shuoyuan* 說苑 reads:

叔向曰：“老聃有言曰：天下之至柔，馳騁乎天下之至堅。又曰：人之生也柔若，其死也剛強。萬物草木生也柔脆，其死也枯槁。”

Shu Xiang says: "Lao Dan has words to say: 'The softest, most pliable thing in the world runs rough out over the firmest thing in the world.' And he (Lao Dan) says again: 'When people are born, they are supple and soft; when they die, they end up stretched out firm and rigid. When the ten thousand things and grasses and trees are alive, they are supple and pliant; when they are dead, they are withered and died out.'"²²⁶

The two passages quoted above can be found in chapters 43 and 76 of the traditional version of the *Laozi*. Shu Xiang was a contemporary of Confucius and was traditionally considered a younger contemporary of Lao Zi. Thus, the quotation by Shu Xiang should be accepted as a contemporary reference to the *Laozi*. Those who argue that the *Shuoyuan* is a later work of Han Dynasty, however, must note that its reliability has been generally accepted by scholars and surely has good grounds when it quotes Shu Xiang's words.

1.4.3.2 Quotations from the *Laozi* from the beginning to the middle of the Warring States Period

The second person who quoted the *Laozi* was Mo Zi 墨子, whose name was Mo Di 墨翟. He lived in the fifth century BC. Mo Zi actually claims that he is quoting the words of Lao Zi. Thus, the *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 531 reads:

墨子曰：“老子故曰：‘道沖而用之有弗盈’”

Mo Zi says: "Lao Zi says: 'The way is empty, yet use will not drain it.'"²²⁷

This quotation can be found in chapter 4 of the *Laozi*'s present edition and indicates that, according to Mo Zi, the sentence is from the book which is called *Laozi*. Thus, Lao Zi is the author of the book.

This quotation, however, cannot be found in the *Mozi*'s traditional version. Gao

²²⁵ Confucius lived from 551-479 BC.

²²⁶ *Shuoyuan*: juan shi 說苑: 卷十.

²²⁷ See the *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽: Bingbu: Sheng 兵部: 胜 531.

Heng says that it must be in the lost part.²²⁸ One can argue with Gao's point here, since no one has proved that this quotation is really in the lost part of the *Mozi*. But his opinion has not been proved to be wrong either, since no one has been able to prove that this quotation in the *Taiping yulan* is false. It is also possible that Mo Zi has quoted this sentence from the *Laozi*, but Mo Zi's disciples did not write this into the book of *Mozi*. Therefore, before we assume that this quotation has been proved a false one, we would be more reasonable to believe *Taiping yulan*'s record and take it as really from the *Laozi*. Professor Xu Kangsheng 許抗生 has argued that Mo Zi might have seen the *Laozi* as an elder man. And this means that the book was written during the Warring States Period, because Mo Zi died c. 380 BC, during the Warring States Period.²²⁹ Mo Zi's 墨子 quotation probably occurred, then, either in the beginning or the middle of the Warring States Period, since he died 91 years after the death of Confucius (479 B.C).²³⁰ If Mo Zi had quoted this passage when he was young, he would have done so at the beginning of the Warring States Period; otherwise, the quotation occurs in the middle of the Warring States Period. Thus, this passage is clear evidence that the *Laozi* had been quoted before the Jingmen Bamboo Slips *Laozi* was put into the Chu State No. 1 Tomb (dated about to 350 B.C).

Other philosophers who lived after Mo Zi and closer to the times of Mencius and Zhuang Zi also mentioned or quoted the *Laozi*. They also prove that Lao Zi is the author of the *Laozi*. The scholars of Jixia 稷下 are examples of these. Song Xin 宋鉞,²³¹ Yin Wen 尹文 visited Jixia during the time of King Xuan of Qi 齊宣王 (319-301 BC).²³² And the quotations that emerge from this visit are remarkable.

1.4.3.3 Quotations from the *Laozi* during the middle of the Warring States Period

A. The quotations in the *Yinwenzi* 尹文子

Yin Wen 尹文 lived from the second quarter to the end of the fourth century BC, not very distant in time from Mencius. The more comprehensive studies of the Mawangdui silk scrolls have shown that the *Yinwenzi* 尹文子 is not a false book. Concerning this issue, one can refer to Hu Jiacong's 胡家聰 studies of 1992 and 1994.²³³ The *Yinwenzi* quotes the *Laozi*'s chapter 57 saying:

²²⁸ Gao Heng 1973: p. 172.

²²⁹ See Xu Kangsheng 1985: p. 143 note 1.

²³⁰ See Zheng Liangshu 1984: p. 1285.

²³¹ See Chen Guying (General ed.) 1994 IV: p. 121.

²³² See Ying Shao 應劭 *Fengsu tongyi: Qiongtong* 風俗通義窮通, says: "孫卿年十五, 始來流學". Sima Qian's *Shiji: Meng Zi Xun Qing liezhuan* 史記孟子荀卿列傳 says: "荀卿, 趙人, 年五十始來游學于齊", which is incorrect. Cf. Hu Jiacong "Yin Wen Huang Lao Sixiang Yu Jixia Baijia Zhengming 尹文黃老思想與稷下百家爭鳴" in Chen Guying (General ed.) 1994 IV: p. 121.

²³³ See Chen Guying (General ed.) 1994: IV.

老子曰：“以正治國，以奇用兵，以無事取天下。”

The *Laozi* says: "Govern the state by being straightforward; wage war by being crafty; but win the empire by not being meddling." (Chap. 57)

The *Yinwenzi* also quotes the words of chapter 74 of the *Laozi*:

老子曰：“民不畏死，如(奈)何以死懼之？”

The *Laozi* says: "When the people are not afraid of death, wherefore frighten them with death?" (Chap. 74)

This quotation shows that Yin Wen believed that Lao Zi was the author of the *Laozi*.

B. Quotations in the *Shizi* 尸子 and the *Wenzi* 文子

Ma Xulun says that both the *Shizi* and the *Wenzi* have quoted from the *Laozi*. Shi Zi lived at the beginning of the Warring States Period and was a guest of Shang Yang 商鞅. Wen Zi was a contemporary of King Ping of Chu 楚平王 and learned from Lao Zi.²³⁴ Thus, clearly Lao Zi lived at the end of the Spring and Autumn Period and was the author of the *Laozi*.²³⁵

C. The Quotations in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子

The *Zhuangzi* quotes directly from the *Laozi*, reporting the very words of Lao Dan (Lao Zi). For instance, the chapter *Tianxia* 天下 reads:

聃曰：知其雄，守其雌，為天下谿；知其白，守其辱，為天下谷。²³⁶

Lao Dan says: 'Know the male, but keep to the role of the female; and be a ravine to the empire; (...) Know the white, but keep to the role of the black; and be a model to the empire.' (Chap. 28)²³⁷

The sources of these quotations can be found in the traditional version of chapter 28 of the *Laozi*. This is further evidence that Lao Dan was the author of the *Laozi*. And Lao Siguang says that the quotations in the *Tianxia* fit those found in the traditional version of the *Laozi*. This coincidence can be explained in only two ways: the author of the *Tianxia* had seen the *Laozi*; or later scholars who had seen the quotations of the *Laozi* in the *Tianxia* added false passages to the traditional version of the *Laozi*. In either case, clearly the text of the *Laozi* existed before that of the *Zhuangzi*. *Tianxia*.²³⁸

The *Zhuangzi*, considered as a whole, clearly shows that Lao Dan was the author of

²³⁴ See the *Wenzi*: *Diwujuan*.

²³⁵ See Zhang Chengqiu 1977: p. 93.

²³⁶ Quoted from Gao Heng 1973: p. 172.

²³⁷ Quoted from D. C. Lau 1963 and 1982: pp. 41-42. (...) occurs in the present version between the *Tianxia*'s quotations.

²³⁸ Lao Siguang 1968: pp. 153-154.

the *Laozi*. Its *Inner chapter Yangshengzhu* reveals a record of the death of Lao Dan, and its *Outer and Complex chapters* records the meeting between Lao Dan²³⁹ and Confucius. Beyond these pieces of evidence, it abounds with quotations which can be found in the traditional version of the *Laozi*. Following are several other passages that are quoted from the *Laozi*.

The *Quqie* 祛箴 says:

故曰：魚不可脫於淵，
國之利器不可示人。

Therefore it is said: The fish must not be allowed to leave the deep;
The instrument of power in a state must not be revealed to anyone.

This can be found in chapter 36 of the *Laozi*. And in the same chapter,

故曰：大巧若拙。

Therefore it is said: Great skill seems awkward.

This can be found in chapter 45 of the *Laozi*.

Zhibeiyou 知北游 reads:

故曰：失道而后德，失德而后仁，失仁而后義，失義而后禮，
禮者道之華亂之首也。

Therefore it is said: when the way was lost there was virtue; when virtue was lost there was benevolence; when benevolence was lost there was rectitude; when rectitude was lost there were therites. The rites are the wearing thin of loyalty and good faith and the beginning of disorder.

This can be found in chapter 38 of the *Laozi*. The following passage is in the same chapter:

故曰：為道者日損，損之又損，以至於無為，無為而無不為也。

Therefore it is said: in the pursuit of the way one does less every day. One loses every day until one does nothing at all, and when one does nothing at all there is nothing that is undone.

This can be found in chapter 48 of the *Laozi*.

Yuyan 寓言 reads:

老子曰：大白若辱，盛德若不足。

The sheerest whiteness seems sullied; Ample virtue seems defective.

²³⁹ The reader can refer to the part of *Zhuangzi*'s record concerning Lao Dan in the next chapter of this work.

This can be found in the *Laozi*, chapter 41.

1.4.3.4 Quotations from the *Laozi* in the later period of the Warring States

A. The mention of Lao Zi in the *Xunzi* 荀子

The *Xunzi*, in the 3rd century BC, reads:

老聃有見於詘，無見於信。

Lao Zi had some insight into bowing down, none into stretching out. (*Xunzi* 17/51)

莊子蔽於天而不知人

Zhuang Zi had a vision limited to Heaven and was ignorant of man. (*Xunzi* 21/22)

Gao Heng says, "有見於詘，無見於信" can be seen in *Zhoulaoji* 籀老籍. This indicates that Xun Zi must have seen the *Laozi*.²⁴⁰

B. The quotations found in the *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋

Lüshi chunqiu has quoted many passages from the *Laozi*. However, Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 views the quotations in the *Lüshi chunqiu* as unreliable. He observes that a "rule" in that book is that, whenever a quotation is made, its source or author is always mentioned. But no such mention is made of Lao Zi, even though "two-thirds" of the *Laozi* has been incorporated into it.²⁴¹ But, as Hu Shi has shown, no "rule" of any kind can actually be found concerning quotations in the *Lüshi chunqiu*. It mentions the Book of Filial Piety in connection with one quotation from it but not with any other. Of the 53 passages which Gu Jiegang has claimed to be identical with or similar to Lao Zi's sayings, only three are actually quotations from the *Laozi*.²⁴² Gao Heng also criticizes Gu. He refers to the following passages in the *Lüshi chunqiu* concerning which he is critical of Gu.²⁴³ *Lüshi chunqiu* says:

老聃貴柔

Lao Dan valued yielding. (*Lüshi Chunqiu* 177: *Bu er* 不二)

孔子學於老聃

Confucius learned from Lao Dan. (*Lüshi chunqiu*: *Dangran* 當然)

These sources do prove that Lao Dan's theory of a government based on a strategy of yielding in order to conquer can be found in the *Laozi*. Therefore, Gu's argument notwithstanding, the *Lüshi chunqiu* has not only quoted from the *Laozi* but has also said

²⁴⁰ Gao Heng 1973: p. 172.

²⁴¹ *Gushibian* IV: p. 481.

²⁴² Hu Shi: "A Criticism of Some Recent Methods Used in Dating Lao Tzu," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* II (1937), 387-397. See also Zhang Chengqiu 1977: p. 89.

²⁴³ Gao Heng 1973: p. 173.

clearly that Lao Dan's thought is that of the *Laozi*. Thus, clearly suggested is that Lao Dan is the author of the *Laozi*.

C. The quotations from the *Hanfeizi* 韓非子

Besides the two parts of the commentary on the *Laozi*, i.e. the *Jielao* 解老 and the *Yulao* 喻老. The chapter of *Liufan* 六反 quotes the *Laozi* as well:

老聃有言曰：知足不辱，知止不殆。夫以殆辱之故而不求於足之外者。

Lao Dan has words to say: "Know contentment, and you will suffer no disgrace; Know when to stop, and you will meet with no danger."

Here the *Hanfeizi* says directly and clearly "Lao Dan has words to say". And this quotation can be found in the traditional version of *Laozi*, chapter 44. Following this quotation is Hanfei Zi's commentary on it.

Neichushuo xia: *Liuwei* 內儲說下: 六微 says:

權勢不可以借人，.....其說在老聃之言失魚，... 古之人難正言，故託之於魚。

Power and right cannot be borrowed from others, ... this theory is from Lao Dan's speech about losing fish. ... It was difficult for the ancient people to express directly, thus it has been expressed in terms of fish.

What Hanfei Zi quotes is from chapter 36 of the *Laozi*, which reads: "魚不可脫於淵" "The fish must not be allowed to leave the deep." And Hanfei Zi says clearly that these are the words of Lao Dan.

Nan san 難三 reads:

老子曰：以智治國國之賊。

Lao Zi says: To rule a state by cleverness will be a boon to the state.

This can be found in the *Laozi*, chapter 65.

These mentions, commentaries, and quotations have indicated that Lao Dan (or, Lao Zi) was the author of the *Laozi*.

D. The quotations from the *Zhanguoce* 戰國策

Zhanguoce: *Qice* 齊策 says:

顏觸曰：老子曰：雖貴必以賤為本，雖高必以下為基，是以侯王稱孤寡不穀是其賤之本與非。²⁴⁴

²⁴⁴ *Zhanguoce*: *Qice*. s.a.

Yan Chu says: Hence *Laozi* says: the superior must have the inferior as root; the high must have the low as base. Thus, lords and princes refer to themselves as 'solitary', 'desolate', and 'hapless'. (.....) is it not?

The quotation here can be found in the *Laozi*, chapter 39. Yan Chu lived in the time of King Xuan of Qi 齊宣王 (320-302 BC), which indicates that the *Laozi* must have existed in that time. And this fact suggests as well that Lao Zi was the author of the book.²⁴⁵

In *Weice* 魏策 when Gong Shu Zuo 公叔座 was mentioned, it says:

故老子曰，聖人無積，盡以為人已愈有，盡既以與人已愈多。²⁴⁶

Therefore, the *Laozi* says: The sage does not board. Having bestowed all he has on others, he has yet more; having given all he has to others, he is richer still.

The quotation here can be found in the *Laozi*, chapter 81. Gong Shu Zuo lived in the time of King Hui of Wei 魏惠王 during the first quarter of the Warring States Period.²⁴⁷

Besides all of the above, the biography of Lao Zi in the *Shiji* is also an important item of evidence proving that Lao Dan was the author of the *Laozi*.

1.4.3.5 Conclusion concerning the authorship of the *Laozi's* traditional version

All the above quotations and references have been strong enough to prove that the thought of the *Laozi's* traditional version stems from Lao Zi, *i.e.*, Lao Dan. Whether Lao Dan was the author of the version of the *Laozi* which we now possess, however, is difficult to know with certainty. For the most recent archaeological discovery²⁴⁸ in Jingmen shows that the version of the *Laozi* that comes from the middle of the Warring States Period (about 350 BC) was shorter than the normal version which we now possess.²⁴⁹

Quite possibly the Jingmen Bamboo Slips *Laozi* came directly from the hands of Lao Dan in the 6th century BC, though the actual writing onto the bamboo slips may have taken place only during the middle of the Warring States Period for the purposes of placing them permanently in a tomb. Possible also is that the bamboo slips *Laozi* date only from the middle of the Warring States Period (about 350 BC). If the latter case is true, then Shu Xiang (a contemporary of Confucius in the 6th century BC) and Mo Zi (died c. 380 B.C) could have not seen this version.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁶ Quoted from Zhang Chengqiu 1977: p. 93.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁸ This was discovered in No.1 Chu state Tomb in Guodian village, Jingmen, Hubei province, in 1994.

²⁴⁹ *Beijing Review*, Apr. 3-16, 1995: p. 33.

In either case, the quotations and references above still prove that a man named Lao Dan 聃, *i.e.*, Li Er 李耳, who was also called Lao Zi 老子, did exist and that he was a contemporary of Confucius (in 6th century BC). Shown also is that a book called the *Laozi*, which was the original version of the present *Laozi*, did exist. It may have been different in some respects from the traditional version, but it was on the whole similar to it. For clearly most(?)²⁵⁰ of the speeches and words of Lao Zi as well as his main thought can be found in the *Laozi*'s traditional version. But we cannot now decide who was the author of the *Laozi*'s traditional version.

The traditional version of the *Laozi* was based on the *Laozi*'s original version, but, the book has also been possibly added to by some other people, and they were quite successful at arranging the passages of the original Lao Zi and at understanding his spirit.

1.5 The date of the *Laozi*

The date of the *Laozi* is an old and difficult question. Why should we concern ourselves with it again today?

One answer is that "the most difficult problem in dealing with the history of Chinese thought in the ancient period is how to establish the approximate dates of the various philosophers and philosophical works so that a rough chronological order may be decided on, which is essential to an understanding of the historical development." D. C. Lau is indicating here that "... given two philosophical works, A and B, the way the thought contained in them is interpreted if A is earlier than B often has to be radically changed if it is shown that B is, in fact, earlier than A."²⁵¹

The interpretation of the *Laozi* is a case in point. If we accept the traditional view that it was written by Lao Zi, an elder contemporary of Confucius, we thus view it as a work of the sixth century BC.²⁵² But if we favor the view of modern scholars like Liang Qichao and Feng Youlan in China and D. C. Lau, Needham, and Kaltenmark in the West, we place the work in the late fourth or early third century BC. The wide difference in dates here makes a difference concerning the question of authorship as well. Thus, this question has been important to reconsider in the 1990s by such Chinese scholars as Zhang Dainian, Chen Guying and Xiao Xiaogan.²⁵³

Concerning the date of the *Laozi*, some scholars such as Feng Youlan²⁵⁴ and D. C.

²⁵⁰ Whether some or most of Lao Zi's speeches or words have been preserved in the *Laozi*'s preset version is a question that cannot be answered before completion of a study of the Jingmen bamboo Slips *Laozi*. This will be done in the next part of the present study.

²⁵¹ D. C. Lau 1963 and 1982: p. 121.

²⁵² See Sima Qian's *Shiji the biography of Lao Zi*.

²⁵³ See Chen Guying (General ed.): 1992-1994, I-IV.

²⁵⁴ Feng Youlan 1964: p. 249.

Lau²⁵⁵ think that it was written not long before 300 BC. The recently discovered bamboo scripts *Laozi* proves that the *Laozi* existed already in the mid-Warring States Period, *i.e.*, about 350 BC (the middle of fourth century BC). For we know that Confucius died in 479 BC and that 100-150 years separate his death from the date of the No.1 Chu State Tomb of Guodian village in Jingmen, Hubei Province. If the book of *Laozi* has been discovered in this tomb, it must have been completed earlier than the date of the tomb. For certainly some period must also separate the completion of such a book and its becoming famous enough to be collected for placement in so important a tomb. Thus, while the exact date of the *Laozi* may be still difficult to know with any certainty, it cannot be later than 350 BC.

Besides this consideration concerning the date of the *Laozi*, the debate concerning ancient history in China (*gushibian* 古史辨) which took place in the 1920s and 1930s has also raised many questions in respect to the history of Chinese philosophy. Books such as *Sunzi bingfa* 孫子兵法, *Yanzi chunqiu* 晏子春秋, *Weiliaozi* 尉繚子 and *Wenzi* 文子, had been considered spurious. But now, since the archeological discoveries of the 1970s in Yinque 銀雀 mountain in Shangdong 山東 province, the discoveries of the silk texts of the Han Dynasty tomb in the Mawangdui 馬王堆漢墓 in Hunan 湖南 province, and the discoveries in Ding county 定縣 in Hubei 湖北 province, these books have been proved not to be spurious.²⁵⁶

Although the hypotheses of Liang Qichao and his followers seem unreasonable today, the doubt they engendered concerning the early date of the *Laozi* remains and continues to be functional in shaping conclusions in the West. And this makes it very difficult to establish the historical order of many other Chinese classics. The present work, therefore, considers vital the resolution of this question.²⁵⁷

1.5.1 The background of the debate concerning the date of the *Laozi*

Concerning the date of the *Laozi*, various opinions abound. For many centuries, however, the tradition that the book was written by Lao Zi in the sixth century BC²⁵⁸ was accepted without question. Skepticism concerning the book grew up much earlier than that concerning the man, for its authorship was questioned as early as the fifth century.²⁵⁹ Later as well, when the Neo-Confucianists raised doubts concerning the dates of Lao Zi

²⁵⁵ *Laozi*'s text, according to D. C. Lau, seems to have been "still in a fluid state in the second half of the third century BC or even later, but by the middle of the second century BC, at least, the text already assumed a form very much like the present one. It is possible that this happened in the early years of the Western Han Dynasty." See D. C. Lau 1982: p. 134.

²⁵⁶ Chen Guying (General ed.) 1994 IV: pp. 411, 415, and 411-418.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁸ See the beginning part of the previous chapter in the present work.

²⁵⁹ By Cui Hao (d. 450), according to Wang Shipeng (1112-71), *Meixi Xiansheng wenji*, 13:17a.

himself, they were forced also to doubt the date of the book.²⁶⁰ Chan Wing-Tsit says, "Wang Chung, Ts'ui Shu, and other eighteenth-century critical scholars carried the skepticism to a higher degree."²⁶¹ Saitô Setsudô (1787-1865) in Japan claimed that the book could not have been written earlier than the Warring States Period, because it contains the combined term *renyi* 仁義 (humanity and righteousness), and this term does not appear earlier than this time. Furthermore, the work opposed ruinous wars and oppressive laws, which would have been too dangerous to speak about at a time when such things were current.²⁶²

These observations had subjected the tradition to serious question, but it was not until 1922, when Liang Qichao threw overboard the entire tradition concerning Lao Zi, that the foundation of the tradition about the book was thoroughly shaken.²⁶³

Liang directed two of his six arguments against tradition specifically at the book. One argument is that the ideas in the *Laozi* are too radical for the Spring and Autumn Period, and the other is that the book contains terms which surely date it in the Warring States Period.²⁶⁴ Since his famous attack, scholars have been divided into two camps: those who place the book in the Spring and Autumn Period and those who assign it to the age of the Warring States. From 1919 to 1936, the main disputants concerning the date of the *Laozi*, are as follows: Liang Qichao 梁啟超, Zhang Xu 張煦, Huang Fanggang 黃方剛, Zhang Shoulin 張壽林, Tang Lan 唐蘭, Gao Heng 高亨, Qian Mu 錢穆, Hu Shi 胡適, Su Chi 素痴, Feng Youlan 馮友蘭, Zhang Jitong 張季同, Luo Genze 羅根澤, Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛, Ye Qing 葉青, Tan Jiefu 譚戒甫, Ma Xulun 馬絨倫, Zhang Fuqing 張福慶, Xiong Wei 雄偉, Guo Moruo 郭沫若.²⁶⁵

Scholars who have favored the later period have each chosen their own date within that period. Indeed, they have tried to outbid each other in proposing as late a date as possible. Some like Luo Genze²⁶⁶ and Hou Wailu 侯外廬,²⁶⁷ have placed the *Laozi* after Confucius (551-479 BC) and Mo Zi (fl. 479-380 BC) but before Mencius (371-289 BC) and Zhuang Zi (between 399 and 295 BC). Chan Wing-Tsit thinks Lao Zi was a contemporary of Confucius but that the book called the *Laozi* was completed during the

²⁶⁰ For the opinion of these Neo-Confucianists, see Luo Genze, *Zhuzi kaosuo*: pp. 258-261.

²⁶¹ Chan 1963: p. 62.

²⁶² Saitô Setsudô: *Rôshi ben* (An Examination on the *Laozi*), sec.5.

²⁶³ See also Chan 1963: p. 62.

²⁶⁴ See his review of Hu Shi's *Zhongguo zhaxue shi dagang*, which is found in *Liang Rengong xueshu yanjiang ji*, I. 1-41. The arguments are presented on pp. 19-21. For Liang's attack on the traditions concerning Lao Zi, see the previous chapter in the present work.

²⁶⁵ Zhang 1977: p. 79.

²⁶⁶ Luo 1958: pp. 267-281.

²⁶⁷ Hou 1950: *Zhanguo gudai sixiang xueshuo shi*: pp. 11-17, 1591-61, and 1957: *Zhanguo sixiang tongshi*, I. 257.

fourth century BC.²⁶⁸

Others have assigned it to the later part of the Warring States Period, or about 250 BC. This group includes scholars like Liang Qichao, Qian Mu, Feng Youlan, Duyvendak (1889-1954), and Arthur Waley. Qian Mu specifically puts it after the completion of the "inner chapters" of the *Zhuangzi*.²⁶⁹ Feng Youlan at first dated it after Mencius, or about 300 BC, but later postponed the date to the time following Hui Shi 惠施 (308-305? BC) and Gongsun Long 公孫龍 (b. 380? BC), or about 250 BC.²⁷⁰ In 1964, in his *Zhongguo zhexue shi xinbian* 中國哲學史新編, he changed his mind and placed Lao Zi in the time following Confucius and Mo Zi, placing the *Laozi* after Mencius but before Zhuang Zi.²⁷¹ Duyvendak dates the *Laozi* after 300 BC, and Waley puts the date at about 240 BC.²⁷² Victor H. Mair puts it also in the 3rd century BC.²⁷³ Gu Jiegang²⁷⁴ has gone so far as to place it between the *Lüshi chunqiu* and the *Huainanzi* 淮南子, or between 200 and 150 BC.²⁷⁵ D. C. Lau, however, says: "Taking all factors into account, I am inclined to the hypothesis that some form of the *Lao tzu* existed by the beginning of the third century BC at least."²⁷⁶

Concerning these various opinions, one can also refer to the table at the beginning of the next chapter.

Departing from those who have denied the traditional views concerning the dates of Lao Zi and the *Laozi*, Hu Shi,²⁷⁷ Guo Moruo,²⁷⁸ Ma Xulun,²⁷⁹ Gao Heng²⁸⁰ and many

²⁶⁸ Chan 1963: p. 74.

²⁶⁹ Qian Mu 1956: p. 224.

²⁷⁰ Fung Yu-lan (tr. Bodde) 1983 (1952, 1973): A History of Chinese Philosophy, I. 170; A Short History of Chinese Philosophy, pp. 93-94. Feng's date for Hui Shi is: fl. 350-260 BC, and his date for Gongsun Long is: fl. 284-259 BC. Concerning this, Cf. the quotation in Chan Wing-Tsit 1963: p. 85 note 17.

²⁷¹ Feng 1964: p. 255.

²⁷² Duyvendak: *Tao Te ching*: p. 6; Waley 1958: p. 86.

²⁷³ Mair 1994: p. 57, where Mair says: "Although the text is held by Taoist believers to have been composed by Lao Tzu in the sixth century BC, the available evidence indicates that it was actually not committed to writing until sometime in the third century."

²⁷⁴ Gu Jiegang 1933 IV: pp. 462-519.

²⁷⁵ Kimura even says that the present text of the *Laozi* did not appear until about 150 BC. See his *Rôshi no shin kenkyu* (New Study on the *Laozi*): p. 164. A similar view is expressed in *Laozi zhexue taolunji*: p. 5.

²⁷⁶ D. C. Lau 1963 and 1982: p. 140.

²⁷⁷ Hu Shi 1919: pp. 49-50. Cf. Hu's "A Criticism of Some Recent Methods Used in Dating Lao Tzu," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, II (1937), 373-397.

²⁷⁸ Guo Moruo 1982: pp. 241-254.

²⁷⁹ Ma Xulun 1924: pp. 18-19.

others have upheld the tradition that the *Laozi* is a product of the Spring and Autumn Period.

Nowadays many scholars in China have begun again to argue for the acceptability of the traditional opinion, simply because the skepticism concerning it created by Liang Qichao and Feng Youlan has never been effective enough to thoroughly disestablish the position.²⁸¹ For the recent discussion of the 1980s and 1990s concerning this issue, one can refer to Chen Guying's *Lao Zhuang xinlun* 老莊新論, *Laozi jinzhū jinyi* 老子今註今譯, and "Laoxue xianyu kongxue 老學先于孔學" in *Zhexue yanjiu* 哲學研究 9.1988; and *Daojia wenhua yanjiu: Diyiji-Disiji* 道家文化研究第一至四輯 1992-1994.

The main questions involved in the debate concerning the date of the *Laozi* are: the contemporary references to the *Laozi*, the terminology of the book, the style of the book, and the ideas expressed in the book. Considering all these things, the author of this work is of the opinion that the *Laozi*'s present version was completed at the end of the Spring and Autumn Period or in the beginning of the Warring States Period. The reasons for taking this position will be clarified in what follows.

First, however, we should avoid misunderstanding the term Chunqiu (the Spring and Autumn Period) and Zhanguo (the Warring States Period). The Warring States Period in the present work is viewed as beginning in 481 BC. Thus, the Spring and Autumn Period is previous to 480 BC.

For the purposes of fixing the date of the *Laozi*, we will explore the question under four rubrics: 1) The contemporary references of the *Laozi* (§1.5.2); 2) The terminology of the *Laozi* (§1.5.3); 3) The idea of the *Laozi* (§1.5.4); and 4) The style of the *Laozi* (§1.5.5).

1.5.2 The contemporary references of the *Laozi*

In regard to the references to the *Laozi* in works that were its contemporary, the sayings of *Laozi* were widely known in ancient China. As we discussed in the section on "The authorship of the *Laozi*", twenty-two of these sayings are quoted in the *Zhuangzi*.²⁸² The *Xunzi*, e.g., criticizes Lao Dan for "having insight about beaming but not about expending,"²⁸³ showing that Xun Zi was familiar with the thoughts of Lao Zi. Han Fei wrote two chapters commenting on Lao Zi's sayings²⁸⁴ and quotes him several times.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁰ Gao 1963: pp. 171-174.

²⁸¹ See Chen Guying (General ed.): 1992-1994, I-IV.

²⁸² See Chan 1963: p. 63, and p. 85 note 25: "Yen Ling-feng, *Lao-Chuang yen chiu* (Studies on Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu): pp. 209-12, lists 29, but 7 of them are at best paraphrases."

²⁸³ The *Xunzi*, ch. 17, SPTK, 11:25a. Cf. Dubs (tr.), *The Works of Hsüntze*: p. 184.

²⁸⁴ *Hanfeizi*, chs. 20-21.

²⁸⁵ Ch. 31, SPTK, 10:1a, alludes to *Laozi*.ch.36 (see Liao (tr.), *The Complete works of Han Fei Tzu*, II, 1); ch. 38, SPTK, 16:3a (twice), 4b, quotes *Laozi*, chs. 63, 17, and 65 (Liao, II, 178, 179, 183); and ch. 46, SPTK, 18:4a, quotes the *Laozi*, ch. 44 (Liao, II, 246).

The *Zhanguo*²⁸⁶ and *Lüshi chunqiu*²⁸⁷ also quote from him. Except the quotations by Shu Xiang and the *Mozi*, however, all of the other works belong to the Warring States Period and not to the Spring and Autumn Period in which tradition has placed the *Laozi*. The *Huainanzi* quotes the *Laozi* 89 times,²⁸⁸ but this book appeared only in the early Han Period. Most of the above mentioned classics were from the beginning, middle or later period of the Warring States.

Many scholars argue, therefore, that no contemporary references were ever made to the *Laozi*. And, on the basis of this supposed lack of references, some scholars deny the traditional date of the *Laozi*. One of Cui Shu's arguments against the traditional date of the *Laozi*, for example, is its lack of contemporary references.²⁸⁹ Liang Qichao has repeated the same argument: "Why is there no trace of it in the *Analects*, the *Book of Mencius*, and the *Mo Tzu*?" he asks.²⁹⁰

I shall deal with the issue of the contemporary references in the following three sections.

1.5.2.1 Contemporary references made to the *Laozi*

We have shown that both Lao Zi and Lao Dan were taken as the author of the *Laozi* during the period of Warring States. The reader can refer to my section on "Lao Zi and Lao Dan" in the present work's next chapter. An examination of the Chinese classics will show clearly that quotations were taken from the *Laozi* both by the contemporaries of Lao Zi and by later scholars.

A. Quotations from the *Laozi* by two contemporaries of Lao Zi

Shu Xiang, a contemporary of Confucius, and Mo Zi, who died c. 380 BC, as well as many other ancient scholars and classics also quoted or referred to the *Laozi*. See my section on "The authorship of the *Laozi*" in the present work.

Many indirect references to the *Laozi* occur as well among Lao Zi's contemporaries. Confucius, for example, made such indirect references.

²⁸⁶ At 11:5a, quotes the *Laozi*, ch.39, and 22:3a, quotes the *Laozi*, ch. 81. The *Zhanguo* was compiled by Liu Xiang 劉向 (77-6 BC), but much of the material long antedated him.

²⁸⁷ Ch.6, sec.4, SPPY, 6:7a, quotes *Laozi*,ch.58; ch.16, sec.5, SPPY, 16:10a, quotes *Laozi*,ch.41; ch.17, sec. 2, SPPY, 17:4a, quotes *Laozi*, ch.47. See Wilhelm (tr.), *Frühling und Herbst des Lü Bu We*: pp. 74, 248, 266, respectively.

²⁸⁸ See the *Huainanzi*, ch.1 (15 times), 2 (3), 6(2), 7(3), 8(2), 9 (5), 11 (4), 12 (52), 14 (1), and 18 (2). But this book appeared in the early Han period. According to Karlgren, no less than 1767 words out of a version of 5247 are quoted in pre-Han and Han texts ("The Poetical Parts in Lao-Tsi", *Göteborgs Högskolas Årsskrift*, XXXVIII (1942), 26).

²⁸⁹ Shu Xiang, a contemporary of Confucius, quotes them and so does the *Mozi*. But Cui Shu did not mention them: perhaps because he had not seen them.

²⁹⁰ *Liang Regong zhexue yanjiangji*, I, 18-19.

B. The Confucian references to the *Laozi*

Confucius made several references to the *Laozi*. These are found in:

a) The *Analects* 論語 *Xianwen* 憲問 says:

或曰：以德報怨，何如？子曰：何以報德？以直報怨，以德報德。

1. Some one said, 'What do you say concerning the principle that injury should be recompensed with kindness?'
2. The Master said, 'With what then will you recompense kindness?'
3. Recompense injury with justice, and recompense kindness with kindness.²⁹¹

Chapter 63 of the *Laozi* uses these words: "報怨以德." Confucian words have been believed as those based on the words of Lao Zi.²⁹²

b) The *Analects*: *Taibo* 泰伯 says:

曾子曰：以能問於不能，以多問於寡，有若無，實若虛，犯而不校，昔者吾友嘗從事于斯矣。

The philosopher Tsang said, 'Gifted with ability, and yet putting questions to those who were not so; possessed of much, and yet putting questions to those possessed of little; having, as though he had not; full, and yet counting himself as empty; offended against, and yet entering into no altercation: formerly I had a friend who pursued this style of conduct.'²⁹³

This statement concerning the practice of life has been attributed to Lao Zi.²⁹⁴ Thus, these words are also believed as those based on the thought of Lao Zi.

c) The *Wei ling Gong* 衛靈公 reads:

子曰：無為而治者，其舜也與？...

The Master said, 'May not Shun be an example of having governed efficiently without exertion? What did he do? He did nothing but gravely and reverently occupy his royal seat.'²⁹⁵

The conception *wuwei* 無為 was first expressed in the *Laozi*, chapters 37 (*Dao chang wuwei er wu bu wei* 道常無為而無不為), 43 (*wuwei zhi youyi* 無為之有益), and 48 (*wuwei er wu bu wei* 無為而無不為), etc.²⁹⁶

²⁹¹ Legge 1935: Volume 1 & 2 p. 288.

²⁹² See Zhang Dainian 1992: in Che Guying 1992 I: p. 75. Cf. Zhang Xu's article in Zhang Chengqiu 1977: p. 81.

²⁹³ Legge 1935: Volume 1 & 2 p. 210.

²⁹⁴ See Feng Youlan 1964: p. 253.

²⁹⁵ Legge 1935: Volume 1 & 2 p. 295.

²⁹⁶ See Zhang Dainian 1992: in Chen Guying 1992 I: p. 75. Cf. Zhang Xu's article in Zhang Chengqiu 1977: p. 81.

d) Lao Zi has also been identified with the person called Lao (or, Lao Peng) to whom Confucius refers. He says:

述而不作，信而好古，竊比於我老彭。

In transmitting and refusing to innovate, and in faithfully caring for antiquity,
I venture to compare myself with our Lao Peng. (Analects 7/1).²⁹⁷

Zhang Xuan 鄭玄²⁹⁸, Wang Bi 王弼 (226-49),²⁹⁹ Ma Xulun 馬敘倫 and many others reason that the Lao or Lao Peng spoken of here refers to Lao Zi. But opinions differ concerning on this point, and no authoritative conclusion has settled the issue concerning the identification between Lao Zi and Lao Peng.³⁰⁰

But if the scholars who support the traditional opinion cannot employ this point concerning identification as evidence, neither can those who are against the traditional opinion afford to ignore it.

e) The *Zhongyong* 中庸 says:

子曰：寬柔以教，不報無道，南方之強也，君子居之。

The Master (Confucius) says: to teach with Dao broadens and makes yielding;
no response without Dao, is the strength of the South, where gentlemen live.

Some scholars say that this idea was prominent in Chu during the time of Confucius. Lao Zi was a native of Chu, and Chu belonged to the South in the time of Confucius. Thus, this teaching possibly refers to the thought of Lao Zi.³⁰¹ Although the *Zhongyong* is a later work, it is a Confucian one and should be reliable when it talks about Confucian speech.

The Confucian references to the Lao Zi and the identification between Lao Zi and Lao Peng, however, may well lack authority for claiming that they come from the *Laozi*. For one can argue that Confucius mentions only the thought or the person of Lao Zi rather than the book of the *Laozi* itself. Thus, this evidence is not strong enough to prove the existence of the *Laozi* in the time of Confucius, though, again, neither can it be ignored.

Just the same, we should not ignore the quotation from the *Laozi* preceded by "Laozi says" in the *Mozi*. This quotation, at least, should be taken as strong evidence to prove the existence of the *Laozi* in the time of Mo Zi (fl. 479-380 BC).

²⁹⁷ Quoted from A.C. Graham 1986: p. 116.

²⁹⁸ Quoted by Lu Deming (556-627) in his *Jingdian shiwen*, ch. 24, explaining Analects, 7:1.

²⁹⁹ Quoted by Xing Bing 邢昺 (932-1010) in his commentary on Analects, 7:1.

³⁰⁰ Cf. the section on "Lao Zi and Lao Peng" in the previous chapter of this work.

³⁰¹ See Feng Youlan 1964: pp. 253-254.

C. Other quotations from the *Laozi*

Concerning the references to the *Laozi* found in *Wenzi*, *Shizi*, *Yinwenzi* and *Zhuangzi*, see my section on "The authorship of the *Laozi*" in the same chapter.

Wei Wuhou 魏武侯 quoted the *Laozi*. *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策 reads:

魏武侯曰："老子曰：聖人無積，盡以為人，己愈有。既以與人，己愈多。"

Wei Wuhou says: "Lao Zi says, 'The Sage accumulates nothing. Having used what he had for others, He has even more. Having given what he had to others, what he has is even greater.'³⁰²

This quotation can be found in chapter 81 of the *Laozi*. Wei Wuhou died in 371 BC, *i.e.*, Zhou Liewang 周烈王 5th year,³⁰³ which was 108 years after the death of Confucius.

Yan Chu 顏觸 quoted the *Laozi*, *Zhanguo ce*: *Qice* 齊策 reads:

顏觸曰：老子曰：雖貴必以賤為本，雖高必以下為基，是以侯王稱孤寡不穀是其賤之本與非。³⁰⁴

Yan Chu says: Hence *Laozi* says: the superior must have the inferior as root; the high must have the low as base. Thus lords and princes refer to themselves as 'solitary', 'desolate', and 'hapless'. (.....) is it not?

The quotation here can be found in chapter 39 of the *Laozi*. Yan Chu lived in the time of Qi Xuanwang 齊宣王 (King Xuan of Qi, ruled 320-302 BC). The latter died in 324 BC,³⁰⁵ so this passage is evidence of the early existence of the *Laozi*.³⁰⁶

1.5.2.2 The reason for the lack of contemporary references

Tang Lan 唐蘭 says that the reason that Mo Zi does not mention Lao Zi³⁰⁷ is that Lao Zi belongs to the Southern school (Chu), while Mo Zi belongs to the Northern school. During the time of Mo Zi, neither the school of Lao Zi nor that of Mo Zi were prosperous; they did not, therefore, contact each other. But Lao Zi's disciple Yang Zhu 楊朱 became prosperous enough to become a representative of his school during the time of Mencius. And, thus, he was a worthy target for the attacks of Mencius.³⁰⁸

³⁰² See *Zhanguo ce*: *Wece* 1 戰國策: 魏策一.

³⁰³ See Zheng Liangshu 1984: p. 1285.

³⁰⁴ *Zhanguo ce*: *Qice*. s.a.

³⁰⁵ See Zheng Liangshu 1984: p. 1285.

³⁰⁶ See *ibid.*

³⁰⁷ Perhaps Tang Lan had not seen the quotation of the *Laozi* by the *Mozi* in *Taiping yulan* when he said this.

³⁰⁸ See Tang Lan "Lao Dan de xingming he shidai kao 老聃的姓名和時代考" quoted in Zhang Chengqiu 1977: pp. 82-83.

Tang's argument here involves assumption and cannot be taken as conclusive. It leaves open considerable room for argument. However, this argument is not necessary any more, since Mo Zi did quote from the *Laozi*, which Tang Lan did not notice, but the present work has made it clear above. Cf. My section on "The authorship of the *Laozi*" in the present work.

1.5.2.3 The logical problem of the methodology

The methodology under discussion here suffers from a logical problem: clearly, merely because book A does not mention book B, such silence cannot prove that book B does not pre-exist book A. Arguments to the contrary are *Ad Ignorantium*.

Tang Lan³⁰⁹ argues, *e.g.*, that Mencius never mentions the *Yi* 易, but this silence cannot indicate that the *Yi* does not pre-exist it. Similarly, the *Zhuangzi* does not mention Mencius, but based on this one would be hard put to conclude that Mencius did not exist in the time of the *Zhuangzi*. On the contrary, Huang Fanggan³¹⁰ says that Mencius was in Liang 梁 from 320-318 BC. Zhuang Zi knew the business of Liang quite well and was a good friend of Hui Zi, often commenting on his work. Why did he never mention Mencius? Does his silence here indicate that Mencius never existed? Related to this argument, Chan Wing-Tsit in 1963 says:

The answer is if one argues that the *Lao Tzu* did not exist because the *Analects*, for example, contains no trace of it, one can also argue the other way, that the *Analects* did not exist because the *Lao Tzu* makes no mention of it.³¹¹

Two other points are germane to this issue. On one hand, many ancient works which might have referred to the work have been lost. Concerning this point, Chan says:

The *Mo Tzu*, for example, once had 71 chapters³¹² but now has only 53. It happens, however, that a missing part of it did quote the *Lao Tzu*.³¹³

On the other hand, cases occur in which quotations are not included in the present text. Mencius quotes sayings of Confucius, *e.g.*, which are not found in the *Analects*.³¹⁴ Chan goes on to say:

We are sure that Mencius and Chuang Tzu lived in the same time but neither one refers to the other. Nor

³⁰⁹ See Zhang Chengqiu 1977: pp. 82-83.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*: p. 83.

³¹¹ Chan 1963: p. 64.

³¹² According to Ban Gu's *Han shu*, ch. 30, section on the Moist school.

³¹³ According to *Taiping yulan*, 322:5b, a saying from *Laozi* ch.4, was quoted in the *Mozi*. Cf. above the section concerning what the *Mozi* has quoted from the *Laozi*.

³¹⁴ *Book of Mencius*, 2A:1,4; 4A:7, 8; 4B:21; and 5A:6.

does Mencius mention Hsün Tzu although Hsün Tzu criticizes him at length.³¹⁵ Neither Mencius nor Chuang Tzu is quoted or mentioned in the *Han Fei Zi* or the *Zhanguo*.³¹⁶

Based on this examination of the logical fallacy involved in such historical thinking, we must judge as well that the argument of Qian Mu is unreasonable. Qian's chief argument is that, since the quotations of the *Laozi* in the "inner chapters" of the *Zhuangzi*³¹⁷ are not found in the present *Laozi*,³¹⁸ and since all quotations from the present *Laozi* occur in the "outer" and "miscellaneous" chapters (8-33), which are generally considered as later works, then the *Laozi* did not exist prior to these later works. This line of reasoning is just an example of the fallacy we have noted above. Besides this, in any case, as Chan Wing-Tsit says: "whether the outer chapters are authentic or not is still an open question."³¹⁹

From the above we conclude that we cannot judge that a work did not exist at a certain time in history simply because contemporary works do not refer to it.

- Summary: The contemporary references to the *Laozi* prove that it is more reasonable to place the date of the *Laozi* during the Spring and Autumn Period. And, though contemporary references are lacking, this lack cannot be viewed as contrary evidence for this dating, since we have noted such thinking is fallacious in regard to historical facts.

1.5.3 The vocabulary of the *Laozi*

Concerning the terminology of the *Laozi*, two questions arise. One concerns the use of certain function words, and the other concerns the use of certain terms.

1.5.3.1 The use of certain function words

Some scholars have argued that certain words used in the *Laozi* prove it to be a product of the third century BC.

Chan says that some Chinese scholars have held that *yu* 于 originally expressed a preposition and *YU* 於 an exclamation, though at beginning of the Spring and Autumn Period both were used interchangeably as a preposition. The term "yu 于," however, appears increasingly less frequently, so that the later the work, the less frequently does "yu" appear in it. Since "YU 於" occurs 52 times³²⁰ in the *Laozi* and "yu" not at all, the

³¹⁵ See *Xunzi*, especially ch. 23.

³¹⁶ Chan 1963: p. 64.

³¹⁷ *Zhuangzi*, chs. 5,7, **SPTK**, 2:36b-37b and 3:31a, respectively (Giles (tr.), *Chuang Tzu* pp. 66 and 87-88.

³¹⁸ Qian Mu 1956: p. 224.

³¹⁹ Chan 1963: p. 64.

³²⁰ Chan says 52 times, but Wei says 51 times. See the part concerning Chu dialect and the language of the *Laozi* in this same chapter above.

argument goes, the *Laozi* must have been written not during the Spring and Autumn Period but during the Warring States Period.³²¹

Zhang Shoulin 張壽林, in his article "Laozi Daodejing chuyu ru hou kao 老子道德經出於儒后考", refers to the terms "YU" 於 and "yu" 于 in his search for the date of the *Laozi*.³²² He claims that, generally speaking, "YU" 於 seldom appeared as a preposition prior to the *Mencius*, though "yu" 于 was so employed. The later the work, however, the more often does "YU" 於 appear as a preposition. Zhang argues that just as "yu" 于 appears very seldom in the *Zhuangzi*, and such is the case also in the *Laozi*, while "YU" 於 appears 51 times in the *Laozi*. Then the *Laozi* cannot have been produced earlier than the Warring States Period.³²³

Zhang Shoulin's argument, however, is not correct. If Zhang's logic is correct, Chan, therefore, says,

If the argument is carried to its logical conclusion, the *Book of Mencius* must have preceded the *Analects* since the latter uses fewer *yu* 's and the *Lao Tzu* must have come even after the *Huai-nan Tzu* of the second century BC, since *yu* is used in it but not in the *Lao Zi*.³²⁴

And the form of this argument to which I shall now pay attention is that of Karlgren, since this theory concerning "YU" and "yu" in fact relies on him. Karlgren devised nine tests through which he found that the *Zhuangzi*, the *Lüshi chunqiu*, the *Zhanguoce*, the *Xunzi*, and the *Hanfeizi* have a common language.³²⁵ One of the nine tests is to determine whether any trace obtains among them of the peculiar distinction between "YU" 於 (on, with) and "yu" 于 (at, to, in).³²⁶ Karlgren employs the "YU" 於 and "yu" 于 distinction as evidence for whether a work is in a dialect of Lu 魯 (northern language) or Zuo 左 (Zuo dialect refers to any non-Northern language).³²⁷

Wei Juxian 衛聚賢 tried to prove the date of the distinction between these two words. Wei says that the appearances of "YU" 於 and "yu" 于 in the following books occur respectively as: 19 and 17 times in the *Zuozhuan* 左傳, 9 and 2 times in the *Guoyu* 國語, 21 and 1 time(s) in the *Analects* 論語, 96 and 1 time(s) in the *Mencius* 孟

³²¹ See *Gushibian*, IV, 326-30. The tabulation there does not agree with the Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series, but it is still true that the *Analects*, *Book of Mencius*, and the *Zhuangzi* use very few "yu" 's but many "YU" 's. See Chan 1963: p. 87 note 52.

³²² See Lao Siguang 1968: p. 152. See also Zhang Chengqiu 1977: p. 82.

³²³ Quoted from Lao Siguang 1968: p. 152.

³²⁴ Chan 1963: p. 67. See also Chan 1963: p. 87 note 53.

³²⁵ B. Karlgren: "On the Authenticity and Nature of the *Tso chuan*," *Göteborgs Högskolas Årsskrift*, XXXII (1926), 63.

³²⁶ Chan 1963: p. 66.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*

子, 849 and 1 time(s) in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, and 51 and 0 time(s) in the *Laozi* 老子.³²⁸ Based on the theory of Zhang Shoulin, as Chan has said above, this analysis should indicate that the *Zuozhuan*, the *Laozi*, and many other works were produced later than the *Zhuangzi*. But clearly this is not true. “YU” 於 and “yu” 于 can be used as evidence to prove what is absurd concerning regional dialects.³²⁹ Thus, the function words “yu” and “YU” are not reliable for establishing the date of the *Laozi*.

Waley found in applying Karlgren's nine tests³³⁰ that the grammar of the *Laozi* is typical of the third century, except for the case of “ssu” in chapter 2.³³¹ But, as Erkes has pointed out, “hu” is not used in the *Laozi* as a preposition at all.³³² Concerning the final interrogative particle “yeh”, it appears only once in the *Zhuangzi*,³³³ which is not enough to be typical. And Karlgren himself admitted that the *Mozi*, a book earlier than these texts by more than a century, has very much the same grammar. He explains this contrary evidence to his theory as a possible instance of editing that took place in the third century.³³⁴ Even if one accepts this extraordinary solution, however, the fact still remains that, according to Karlgren, the language of the *Xunzi* and the Lu dialect in which the *Book of Mencius* written were fundamentally different.³³⁵

Karlgren's method, then, cannot prove that the *Laozi* is a work of the Warring States Period, since the vocabulary issues it raises are supposed to indicate not only the historical characteristics of a work but also its regional characteristics; and this method is not in the case of the *Laozi* effective enough. Beyond this point, the reliability of this method as a whole presents us a big problem, because a few words cannot determine

³²⁸ Quoted from *ibid.*: pp. 152-153.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*: p. 153.

³³⁰ B. Karlgren, "On the Authenticity and Nature of the *Tso chuan*," *Göteborgs Högskolas Årsskrift*, XXXII (1926), 63. See also Chan Wing-Tsit 1963: p. 66: Karlgren showed by using these nine tests that the *Chuang Tzu*, the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*, the *Chan-kuo ts'e*, the *Hsiün Tzu*, and the *Han Fei Tzu* have a common language. (1) they have both “jo” and “ju” for “like” and “as.” (2), (3) They do not employ “ssu” for “then” and “thereupon”, nor they employ this same “ssu” for “this,” both of which are salient features of the Lu dialect in which, he says, the *Analects* and the *Book of Mencius* were written. (4) They have the preposition “hu” and (5), to a small extent, the final interrogative article “yü”. (6) They lack the preposition “chi” for “and”, and (7) they have no trace of the peculiar distinction between “YÜ” (on, with) and “yü” (at, to, in). (8) their first person pronoun is the same as that of the Lu dialect. And, finally, He found (9) their language possesses the final interrogative article *yeh*, which is entirely unknown in the Lu dialect. He says that these facts make it possible to speak of a general third-century literary language.

³³¹ Waley 1934: *The Way and Its Power* : pp. 127-128.

³³² Erkes 1935: "Arthur Waley's *Laotse-Übersetzung*," *Artibus Asiae*, V (1935), 295.

³³³ Ch.21, SPTK, 7:31a. See Giles (tr.), *Chuang Tzu* : p. 201.

³³⁴ Karlgren "On the Authenticity and Nature of the *Tso chuan*," *Göteborgs Högskolas Årsskrift*, XXXII (1926): p. 63.

³³⁵ Chan 1963: p. 66.

with certainty anything about the date of a book when they might well be the product of a later addition. This opinion is also favored by many scholars.³³⁶

1.5.3.2 The use of certain terms

Jiao Hong 焦竑 in his *Jiaoshi bicheng* 焦氏筆乘 says: "兵者不祥之器以下，似古之義疏，雜入於經者。" (chap. 31) was added to by later people. Therefore, some scholars such as Liang Qichao, began to view certain terms as proving that the *Laozi* cannot be a work of the Spring and Autumn Period. The related terms are mainly as follows:

A. The terms *pian jiangjun* 偏將軍, *shang jiangjun* 上將軍 and *sangong* 三公.

These three terms have been employed by Liang Qichao to support his hypothesis.³³⁷

Chapter 31 of the *Laozi* says:

偏將軍居左，
上將軍居右。

A lieutenant's place is on the left;
the general's place is on the right. (chap. 31)

Chapter 62 says:

故立天子，
置三公

Hence, when the emperor is set up
and the three ducal ministers are appointed, ...(chap. 62)

Liang asserted that the term *sangong* (three ducal ministers) was unknown before the Period of the Warring States.³³⁸ But actually this term is encountered many times in the *Mozi*, which was a product of Spring and Autumn Period.³³⁹ As to the other terms here mentioned, Chan Wing-Tsit says: "It is true that there was neither lieutenant general nor senior general (mentioned in chapter 31) in the Spring Autumn Period, but the term "general" was used many times."³⁴⁰

³³⁶ This has been supported by Hu Shi and Zhang Chengqiu. See Zhang Chengqiu 1977: pp. 88-89; and 99. Cf. Chen Guying "Lun Laozi wanchu shuo zai kaozheng fangfa shang changjian de miuwu 論老子晚出說在考証方法上常見的謬誤 — jian lun Liezi fei weishu 兼論列子非偽書" in Cheng Guying (General ed.) IV 1994: p. 415.

³³⁷ See Liang's argument quoted in Zhang Chengqiu 1977: p. 81.

³³⁸ See quotations in Zhang Chengqiu 1977: pp. 80-82.

³³⁹ *The Concordance to Mo Tzu* of the Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series gives 15 instances. For other examples, see He Dunweng, *Laozi xinyi*, Supplement: p. 9. See also Chan Wing-Tsit 1963: p. 67 and p. 87 note 60.

³⁴⁰ Chan 1963: p. 67. See *Zuozhuan*, Duke Zhao, 28th year. For other examples, see He Dunweng, pp. 9-10, and Kano Naoki, *Chugoku tetsugaku shi* (History of Chinese Philosophy): p. 179.

As to the honoring of the right, Chan says: "It is also true that the custom of honoring the right did not begin in the Warring States Period, but in the *Zuozhuan* it is remarked that the people of Ch'u, who were barbarians, honored the left,³⁴¹ implying that the Chinese honored the right. Besides, it is stated in the portion of the *Book of Changes* that when an army operates toward the left, there will be no error."³⁴² For example, the *Zuozhuan: Zhaogong* 左傳: 昭公 28th year reads:

將軍食之而不足。

Generals eat them but they are not enough.

This defense concerning of titles of generals and the custom of honoring the right therefore, is admittedly weak.³⁴³

B. The term *shangxian* 尚賢

Some scholars argue that, since the term *shangxian* (honoring men of worth) in the *Laozi* is a criticism of the thought of Mo Zi, the *Laozi* must be later than the *Mozi*.³⁴⁴ Chapter 3 of the *Laozi* says, for example, "不尚賢，使民不爭。Not to honour men of worth will keep the people from contention."

Chen Guying says concerning this argument that it makes two methodological mistakes. One is a logical mistake, and the other is a fall into subjectivism. In the former case, certain terms which are also found in the Warring States Period cannot prove that the entire book of the *Laozi* stems from that time. For these terms might be later additions. No one can prove or deny either case. Thus, this method does not provide adequate evidence for making a claim about the date of the *Laozi*. Concerning the other mistake, Chen says that modern scholars have in recent times been limited by Hegelian theory, *i.e.*, by the notion that a thesis must be evolved as a synthesis of a former thesis and its antithesis. This antithesis may be spawned from certain books or from the social conditions. Concerning the term *shangxian*, one can say that the *Laozi's* criticism was aimed at certain social conditions at the time already of Confucius, rather than at anything in the book of *Mozi*.³⁴⁵ Chen's argument here is correct, since we know that the conditions which Lao Zi criticized existed long time before him.³⁴⁶ Zhang Dainian notes, for instance, that the saying of *juxian* occurs 舉賢 in the Spring and Autumn

³⁴¹ Cf. above in the same chapter of this work. Cf. *Zuozhuan*, Duke Huan, 8th year.

³⁴² Hexagram no.7. Cf. Legge 1935: pp. 72 and 275. Legge's translation does not bring out the idea of the left. See also Chan 1963: p. 69, and pp. 68-69 note 63.

³⁴³ Chan 1963: p. 68.

³⁴⁴ See also Xu Kangsheng 1985: p. 141.

³⁴⁵ Cf. Chen Guying "Lun Laozi wanchu sho zai kaozheng fangfa shang changjian de miuwu — jian lun Liezi fei weishu" in Chen Guying (General ed.) 1994, IV: pp. 415-416.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*: p. 416.

Period, and Confucius has also noted this in the *Analects: Zilu* 論語子路. Based on this one can see that *shangxian* is current as a conception earlier than its expression in the *Mozi*.³⁴⁷

Thus, the term *shangxian* does not prove that the *Laozi* is a work of Warring States Period.

C. The term *houwang* 侯王

Some people argue that the term *houwang* (barons and kings) is a term of the Warring States Period.³⁴⁸ Referring to chapters 32 and 37 of the *Laozi*, which say, "侯王若能守之" (If barons and kings can hold it), and to 39, which says: "侯王得一以為天下貞 (Barons and kings to the One as the truth of the world)," they take offer these as evidence that the *Laozi* is a work of the Warring States Period.³⁴⁹ This argument is not correct, however, since the *Yizhuan* 易傳, i.e., *shiyi* 十翼 (Ten flies) provides examples of the combined term *wang gong* 王公. For instance,

Yi: kan 易坎 says: "王公被險以守其國 (Kings and dukes bear the dangers to hold their kingdom.)."

Yi: li xiang 易離象 says: "六五之吉，離王公也。"³⁵⁰ (The luck of six and five, is to leave kings and dukes.)

Tradition holds that the *Yizhuan*, i.e., *shiyi*, was given by Confucius, though others argue that the period of this work is difficult to establish.³⁵¹ But scholars are certain, at least, that the *gua* 卦 and *yao* 爻 of the *Yijing* were current before the time of Confucius.³⁵² The *Yijing* Hexagram 易經: 盅卦 says: "上九，不事王侯，高尚其事。"³⁵³ (The highest nine, not serving kings and boons, highly appreciate its things.)

Here the combined term *wanghou* occurs. This is important evidence supporting the traditional opinion and should be beyond question, because the book of *Yijing* was compiled before the time of Confucius. Thus, this term cannot prove the *Laozi* as a later work either.

D. The term *wancheng zhi zhu* 萬乘之主

Some scholars argue that *wancheng zhi zhu* is a term that comes from the Warring States Period. For chapter 26 of the *Laozi* says: "奈何萬乘之主，而以身輕天下;" (How

³⁴⁷ See Chen Guying (General ed.) 1992: I: p. 77.

³⁴⁸ See Zhang Xu's arguments in Zhang Chenqiu 1977: p. 81-82.

³⁴⁹ Liang Qichao 1923b I: pp. 20-21.

³⁵⁰ See Zhang Xu's arguments in Zhang Chenqiu 1977: p. 81-82.

³⁵¹ See Lao Siguang 1968: p. 152.

³⁵² See Zhang Dainian 1992: in Chen Guying (General ed.) 1992, I: p. 77.

³⁵³ Hexagram nos. 18, 29, and 30. See Legge (tr.), *Yi King*: pp. 96, 236, and 305, respectively. Cf. Zhang Chengqiu 1977: p. 82, and Zhang Dainian 1992: in Chen Guying (General ed.) 1992 I: p. 77.

can you do anything for the *wancheng zhi zhu*, because they take the world as unimportant because of their bodies.) Such scholars argue, then, that the *Laozi* is a work of the Warring States Period. Liang Qichao³⁵⁴ and Xu Kangsheng were of this opinion. In the 1980s, based on a study of the Mawangdui silk text of the *Laozi*, Xu says:

傅奕本等第二十六章的萬乘之主，帛書甲、乙本皆作萬乘之王，與諸本異。這說明當時擁有萬乘兵車的諸侯已經稱王。而諸侯稱王一般都是在戰國時期，這又一次證明老子這本書產生於戰國而不能提得太早。³⁵⁵

The *wancheng zhi zhu* (the lords who have ten thousand vehicles) of chapter 26 in the version of Fu Yi, was written as *wancheng zhi wang* (The kings who have ten thousand vehicles), and this is different from that in other versions. This certifies that in that time the people who had ten thousand vehicles had become kings already. And this kind of thing happened only in the period of Warring States. This is to certify again that the book of *Laozi* dated from the period of Warring States.

In another place in the same book, Xu Kangsheng says:

"萬乘" 的出現，只是在戰國時期。墨子書則首先提及到 "萬乘" 一詞 (非攻中說：今萬乘之國)，而后的孟子，孫臏兵法等書就比較廣泛地使用 "萬乘" 一詞了。因此老子一書也就不可能產生於春秋時期，只能出現在戰國時代。³⁵⁶

The appearance of *wancheng* occurred only in the Warring States Period. The *Mozi* mentioned first the word *wancheng* (Feigong reads: Now the state of *wancheng*); then the books of *Mencius*, *Sunbing bingfa*, etc., started to use widely the term *wancheng*. Therefore the *Book of Laozi* could not be from the Spring and Autumn Period but the Warring States Period.

The arguments of Liang and Xu, however, are not conclusive. Zhang Dainian argues that the chapter called *Xianjin* 先進 of the *Analects* already says: "千乘之國，攝乎大國之間。The state of thousand carriages was classed as one among the large countries." Zhang says that when the state of a thousand carriages was not taken as large, Jin 晉 and Chu 楚 were possibly being called "*wancheng* 萬乘 (ten thousands carriages)".³⁵⁷ Important for interpreting this sentence is the verb *she* 攝, which means: "to be close to," "to be classed or to be counted among".³⁵⁸ Based on this definition of the verb, Zhang Dainian is correct when he says the state of thousand carriages was not taken as large. Thus, the arguments of Liang Qichao and Xu Kangsheng do not provide adequate evidence for denying the traditional opinion.

³⁵⁴ See Zhang Chenqiu 1977: p. 80-81.

³⁵⁵ Xu Kangsheng 1985: p. 139.

³⁵⁶ Xu Kangsheng 1985: p. 143.

³⁵⁷ See Zhang Dainian 1992: in Chen Guying (General ed.) 1992 I: p. 77.

³⁵⁸ See Shi Dong 史東 1985: pp. 424-425.

E. The term *renyi* 仁義

Liang Qichao asserts that the combined term *renyi* first began to be used in the book of *Mencius*.³⁵⁹ The *Laozi*, chapter 18, for instance, says: "大道廢，有仁義 (To lose the great Dao, to have benevolence and righteousness)"; chapter 19 says: "絕仁棄義，民復孝慈 (In rejecting benevolence and righteousness, the people again become filthy and kindness)"; and chapter 38 says: "故失道而后德，失德而后仁，失仁而后義，失義而后禮". (Therefore, losing Dao and then having *de*, losing *de* and then having benevolence, losing benevolence and then having righteousness, losing righteousness and then having ceremony.)

Some scholars, Liang Qichao among them, argue that the use of the combined term *renyi* occurs neither in the *Analects* nor in the *Zuozhuan*.³⁶⁰ The use of *renyi* in the *Zuozhuan*, however, has now been found.³⁶¹ Thus, this argument is no longer valid.

The use of the term *renyi* does not originate from the book of *Mencius*. Indeed, the term was already used in the *Mozi*. For instance, the *Mozi: Guiyi* 墨子貴義 says:

子墨子曰：... 必為聖人，必去喜去怒，去樂去悲，去愛，而用仁義。

Master Mo Zi says: ... to be as sage, one must not be joyful or angry, neither happy nor sorrowful, must not love, but should practice *renyi* (benevolence and righteousness).

The *Mozi: feigong* 非攻 says:

...取人馬牛者。其不仁義。

...those who take another's horse and ox do not practice benevolence and righteousness.

And the *Mozi: Shangtong xia* 尚同下 says:

子墨子曰：今天下王公大人土君子，中情將欲為仁義...

Master Mo Zi says: Nowadays in the world, the hearts of kings, dukes, great people and gentlemen are to practice *renyi*...

Liu Jianguo 劉建國 has compared the meaning of *renyi* in the *Mencius* with that in the *Mozi*. His result was that the single term *ren* appears over 120 times in the *Mencius* and over 100 times in the *Mozi*; and the term *renyi* occurs 9 times in the *Mencius* but 19

³⁵⁹ See the quotation in Zhang Chengqiu 1977: p. 81.

³⁶⁰ See Zhang Dainian 1992: in Chen Guying (general ed.) 1992 I: p. 77.

³⁶¹ Cf. Hu, in *Journal of Asiatic Studies*, II (1937): p. 386. See *Zuozhuan*, Duke Zhuang, 22nd year, and Duke Xi, 14th year. Xu Dishan 許地山 (1893-1941), *Daojiaoshi*: p. 26, mentions many ancient texts that quote Confucius in his discussions concerning humanity and righteousness, but he considers these quotations as forgeries. Xu's opinion remains without proof.

times in the *Mozi*.³⁶²

The important point here is that if Mo Zi used the term *renyi*, why could not Lao Zi, who slightly precedes him, have used the same term? Clearly, arguments which reject that the *Laozi* is a work of the end of the Spring and Autumn Period based on the use of term *renyi* in Chinese literature are weak and unconvincing.

Zhang Dainian claims that Zeng Zi 曾子 was the one who began to use the term *renyi*, since the *Mengzi: Gongsun Chou xia* 孟子: 公孫丑下 quoted the words of Zeng Zi, which employs *renyi* as follows:

曾子曰：晉楚之富不可及也，彼以其富，我以吾仁，彼以其爵，我以吾義。³⁶³

Zeng Zi says: The richness of Jin and Chu cannot be reached, they use their richness, and I use my *ren* (benevolence); they use their *jue* (the rank of nobility), and I use my *yi* (righteousness)...

Zeng Zi lived during a time that intervened the end of the Spring and Autumn Period and the beginning of the Warring States Period.³⁶⁴

The term *ren* has been also used in the *Shujing* (Book of Historical Documents) and in the *Shijing* (Poetry Classic).³⁶⁵

No matter who began the first use of the term *renyi*, therefore, it clearly appears before its use in the *Mencius*. Thus, arguments based on a theory concerning the use of the term *renyi* cannot provide enough evidence to deny the *Laozi* as a work of the Spring and Autumn Period.

F. The terms *bang* 邦 and *guo* 國

The two terms *bang* and *guo* have been used together in both Text A and Text B of the Mawangdui *Laozi*. The term *bang* occurs 22 times in Text A of the *Laozi*, but all of these have been replaced by term *guo* in Text B. This replacement indicates that Text A was copied onto the silk text before the accession of Emperor Liu Bang 劉邦, the founder of Han Dynasty. Text B, then was produced after the Emperor, since Text A avoided using Liu Bang's taboo name *bang*.

An examination of the two terms *bang* and *guo* in Texts A of the *Laozi*, will disclose that the two terms have been used in tandem, *guo* being a secondary use: "莫知其極，可以有國。有國之母可以長久。". In over 20 other cases only the term *bang* has been used. But in Text B only the term *guo* appears, and *bang* does not appear at all. Thus, both *bang* and *guo* have been used in Text A, but only *guo* appears in Text B. This structure shows that the *Laozi* was a work of the end of the Spring and Autumn

³⁶² See Liu's explanation in Zheng Liangshu 1984: p. 1316.

³⁶³ See Zhang Dainian 1992: in Chen Guying (General ed.) 1992, I: pp. 77-78.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁵ *Shangshu: Taijia* 商書太甲 reads: "懷於有仁"; *Shijing: Zhengfeng: Shuyutian* 詩經.鄭風. 叔於田 reads: "詢美且仁".

Period rather than one of the period of the Warring States. For from the end of the time of Xi Zhou 西周 (Western Zhou), when the Great Zhou began to be divided into many small states, to the end of Spring and Autumn Period, the term *bang* was employed to refer to the state or the country. In the Dayuding 大盂鼎, for example, which dates from the beginning of Xi Zhou, *bangsi* 邦司 refers to the official head of a big family.³⁶⁶ The *Shijing* 詩經, however, uses the term *bang* to refer to the "country" or the "state", e.g., "王此大邦: to be as the king of such a big state." The term *bang* is in these cases similar to *guo*. The term *bang* was usually employed during the period of West Zhou to refer to the state or the country, and this was continued to the end of Spring and Autumn Period. This use is evident in the Confucian *Analects*, where the term *bang* was employed together with *guo*, and the former term was used more often than the latter.³⁶⁷

The *Analects* and the *Laozi* are similar, therefore, in their use of the terms *bang* and *guo*: at first the two terms were used in tandem; then, the term *bang* was used more often than *guo*. This similar pattern indicates that the *Analects* and the *Laozi* were works of same period, i.e., the end of the Spring and Autumn Period. After the end of Spring and Autumn Period, the term *bang* has been all but abandoned as a reference to the state or the country by all the classics, such as the *Xunzi* and the *Hanfeizi*. In the *Mencius* *bang* appears once, and it was quoted from the *Shijing* directly: "刑於寡妻，致於兄弟，以御家邦。The Poetry reads: Punishment to the widow wife, and to brothers, is to protect the home and the state."³⁶⁸

- Summary: The examination of terms upon which Liang Qichao and his followers rely to deny that the *Laozi* is a product of the Spring and Autumn Period are not effective. Instead, a proper examination of these terms proves that the traditional version of the *Laozi* is a product of the end of that period, i.e., of the fifth century BC.

1.5.4 The idea of the *Laozi*

Some scholars argue as well that the ideas of the *Laozi* date it to the Warring States Period.

Opponents of the tradition feel that the ideas of the *Laozi* are on an absolutely sure ground under this assumption. This argument did not become well known until Liang Qichao's attack on the traditional opinion.

1.5.4.1 Liang Qichao's 梁啟超 argument

Liang spoke with confidence when he said that the attack on filial piety, deep love (chap. 18), and the like in the *Laozi* are "too radical" to suppose that the work was done

³⁶⁶ See Zheng Liangshu 1984: p. 1317.

³⁶⁷ Liu Jianguo says, in the *Analects* that "guo" occurs several times, but "bang" appears over 20 times. Detailed discussion on this point can be found in Zheng Liangshu 1984: p. 1317.

³⁶⁸ Liu Jianguo has been of a similar opinion on this point. See Zheng Liangshu 1984: pp. 1316-1317.

during the Spring and Autumn Period. He believes that the combined term *renyi* 仁義 (humanity and righteousness) was initiated by Mencius; thus, its use in the *Laozi* (chaps. 18,19) reveals its date to be later than that of Mencius.³⁶⁹ He claims that the *Laozi's* opposition to the exaltation of the worthy (chap.3), its attack on law and punishment (chaps. 57-60, 74-75), and its criticism of rules of propriety (chap. 38) seem to be specifically directed against the Moists, Legalists, and Confucianists of the Warring States Period, respectively.³⁷⁰

Concerning the combined term *renyi*, Liang has been proved wrong by our findings concerning the term in *Zuozhuan* and in the *Mozi*.³⁷¹ But his argument that the ideas of the *Laozi* are "too radical" for the Spring and Autumn Period has been pursued by many scholars. Hou Wailu, for example, is of the same opinion.³⁷²

Liang Qichao and his followers are not correct in this argument, however, because they seem to assume that such ideas are limited to this particular period. And this assumption is incorrect. Many ideas of the *Laozi*, such as the exaltation of the worthy, the use of law and punishment, etc., were current also in the Spring and Autumn Period, though perhaps they do not occur so frequently as in the age of the Warring States. Concerning this, two examples can be given here.

The *Zuozhuan* Duke Xuan 宣公, 25th year, records that Bo Zong of Jin 晉伯宗 says: "國君含垢，天之道也。The ruler of the state takes on himself humiliation, which is the way of Heaven." This is similar to the *Laozi*, chapter 78, which reads:

受國之垢，
是謂社稷主；
受國不祥，
是謂天下王。

One who takes on himself the humiliation of the state
Is called a ruler worthy of offering sacrifices to the gods of earth and millet;
One who takes on himself the calamity of the state
Is called a king worthy of dominion over the entire empire. (chap. 78)

Another example is, according to the quotation from the *Zhoushu* 周書 in the *Hanfeizi: Shuolin shang* 韓非子·說林上, the *Zhoushu* says: "將欲敗之，必姑輔之；將欲取之，必姑予之。If you would have a thing fail, you must first help it; if you would take a thing, you must first give to it." This is similar to the *Laozi*, chapter 36, which reads:

³⁶⁹ Liang Qichao 1923b: I. 19-20. Also in his 1923d: pp. 7,56.

³⁷⁰ See Qian Mu 1956: p. 110. This part is not translated in L. T. Chen's translation, *History of Chinese Political Thought During the Early Qin Period*.

³⁷¹ See the section on the "Term *renyi*" in the present chapter of this work. Cf. Hu, in the *Journal of Asiatic Studies*, II (1937), 386. See *Zuozhuan*, Duke Zhuang, 22nd year, and Duke Xi, 14th year. Xu Dishan 許地山 (1893-1941), *Daojiaoshi*: p. 26, mentions many ancient texts that quote the Confucian discussions concerning humanity and righteousness, but he considers these quotations to be forgeries.

³⁷² Hou Wailu (General editor) 1957: pp. 257-263.

將欲欲之，
必固張之；
將欲弱之，
必固強之；
將欲廢之，
必固興之；
將欲奪之，
必固與之。

If you would have a thing shrink,
You must first stretch it;
If you would have a thing weakened,
You must first strengthen it;
If you would have a thing laid aside,
You must first set it up;
If you would take from a thing,
You must first give to it. (chap. 36)

Both *Zuozhuan* and *Zhoushu* were the product of the Spring and Autumn Period. They prove that some thoughts of the *Laozi* have existed already in the Spring and Autumn Period.

Many ancient books have been lost, of course, and perhaps many other examples could be found in the lost books to prove more clearly that ideas such as the exaltation of the worthy and the use of law and punishment were current among other thinkers during the Spring and Autumn Period. But then this same evidence might also prove the opposite theory correct. In any case, one cannot throw overboard the traditional opinion *without evidence*, merely asserting that they are not current in the Spring and Autumn Period. If one argues that this study has not yet provided enough evidence to prove that all of the ideas of the *Laozi* were current during the Spring and Autumn Period, I respond that this issue cannot be closed until the lost books are discovered. And, even if they are found, the non-traditional opinions concerning the *Laozi* would not be supported by any silence they might maintain concerning these ideas.

Further, a methodology based on the notion that any idea contrary to another must stem from an opposition that occurs later in time than the original idea suffers from a logical problem. This notion has already been proved incorrect above and has been criticized recently again by Chen Guying.³⁷³ Chen says as well that, if a contrary idea necessarily means a stated opposition to an idea and implies the conclusion that it occurs later in time, one can argue that Confucius lived after Mo Zi. For the latter advocated serving spiritual beings,³⁷⁴ whereas Confucius puts serving human beings first and prefers not to talk about spiritual beings.³⁷⁵

Again, some scholars such as Liu Jianguo argue that the *Laozi*, as a work of a

³⁷³ Cf. Chen Guying (General ed.) IV 1994: pp. 415-416.

³⁷⁴ *Mozi*, ch.31.

³⁷⁵ *Analects*, 11:11 and 7:20.

certain historical stage, did reflect the situation of the end of the Spring and Autumn Period.

- A. The *Laozi* displays material which reflects war and unrest among many of the states. For example, chapter 46 of the *Laozi* reads:

天下有道，
卻走馬以糞。
天下無道，
戎馬生於郊。

When Dao prevails under the heaven,
Gallop horses are turned back to fertilize (the fields with their dung).
When Dao does not prevail under the heaven,
War horses thrive in the suburbs.³⁷⁶

This was the situation of the end of the Spring and Autumn Period, which has also been reflected in the *Analecets*:

天下有道，
則禮樂征伐自天子出，
天下無道，
則禮樂征伐自諸侯出。

There is Dao under the heaven,
Ceremony, music, and the order of war, come from the King;
There is no Dao under heaven,
Ceremony, music and the order of war, come from the dukes.

- B. The *Laozi* shows the decaying of the high class and their officers. For example, chapter 53 of the *Laozi* says,

朝甚除，
田甚蕪，
倉甚虛。
服文彩，
帶利劍，
厭飲食，
財貨有餘，
是謂盜竽。

The courts are exceedingly splendid,
While the fields are exceedingly weedy,
And the granaries are exceedingly empty.
Elegant clothes are worn,
Sharp weapons are carried,
Food and drink are enjoyed beyond limit,
And wealth and treasures are accumulated in excess.

³⁷⁶ The translation by Ariane Rump 1987: p. 135.

This is robbery and extravagance.³⁷⁷

These lines reflect a similarity to the speech in the *Analects*, when Confucius says, upon observing Ji Shi having Eight Lines dance in his home: "是可忍，孰不可忍也! If this can be accepted, what cannot be accepted?"

• C. The *Laozi* reflects the system of taxation in use at the end of the Spring and Autumn, called "che 徹". Chapter 79, for example, says:

有德司契，
無德司徹。

The one who has virtue uses Qi,
the one who lacks virtue uses Che.

Here the *Laozi* is speaking about the Che tax system, which has also been referred to in the *Analects*. *Yanyuan*:

哀公問於有若曰：“年饑，用不足，如之何？”有若對曰：“蓋徹乎？”曰：“二，吾猶為不足，如之何其徹也？”

Ai Duke asks You Ruo: "In a famine year there is not enough money to buy things. How can I make out?" You Ruo answers: "Why do you not use the tax system of ten percent?" Ai Duke says: "Even in employing the system of twenty percent tax I still feel it not enough. How can I reduce it to the ten percent tax system?"

This passage indicates that "Che" was the tax system of Zhou.³⁷⁸ Zheng Xuan notes, for example, that "Che was the method of taxation of the Zhou Dynasty, which was ten percent."³⁷⁹

These three analyses of ideas and situations contemporary to the *Laozi* shows that the *Laozi* did reflect the situation at the end of the Spring and Autumn Period. Thus, its ideas are surely not too radical to be understood as a work of this period.

1.5.4.2 The arguments of Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 and Feng Youlan 馮友蘭

Since Confucius taught that correcting oneself is the best way to govern,³⁸⁰ and since the *Laozi* teaches the same idea (chap. 57), Gu Jiegang has concluded that the *Laozi* must have derived the idea from Confucius.³⁸¹ Hu Shi says concerning this point that one can

³⁷⁷ Quoted from Rump 1987: pp. 152-153.

³⁷⁸ Zheng Liangshu 1984: p. 1317.

³⁷⁹ See *Lunyu Zheng Xuan zhu: Yan Yuan 論語：鄭玄注：顏淵*.

³⁸⁰ *The Analects*: 12:17.

³⁸¹ *Gushibian* IV: p. 488

argue just as well that Confucius learned from Lao Zi.³⁸²

Feng Youlan placed the date of the *Laozi* after the time of Hui Shi 惠施 and Gongsun Long 公孫龍 because the *Laozi* contains considerable discussion about the *nameless*. He says concerning this point that such a discussion is possible only if men "first have become conscious of the existence of names themselves."³⁸³

Chan says in relation to this point, "He seems to imply that Hui Shih and Kung-sun Lung were the first to become conscious of them. Evidently he has forgotten the Confucian doctrine of the rectification of names, a doctrine he has stressed very strongly. Quite aside from this, his shift is puzzling. Hui Shih and Chuang Tzu were contemporaries. If Fung puts the *Lao Tzu* between the times of Hui Shih and Chuang Tzu and calls the Taoism of Chuang Tzu a later phase than that of the *Lao Tzu*, does that mean that the Taoism of the *Lao Tzu* was formulated or came into maturity some time between Hui Shih's pronouncement of his theories in his youth and Chuang Tzu's pronouncement of his old age? Is this assumption reasonable?"³⁸⁴

1.5.4.3 Qian Mu's 錢穆 argument

Qian Mu has selected 33 concepts from the *Laozi*, such as Dao, Heaven, the One, names, and the eternal. In each case, he has attempted to prove that the concept developed from primitive beginnings to its maturity in the *Laozi*, with the *Zhuangzi* as the transition. In the case of Dao, for example, Qian says that the *Dao*, or the Way to Confucius, concerns only human affairs. The Dao, he points out, is seldom discussed in the *Mozi* and then only superficially. This doctrine, however, he notes, becomes profound and subtle in the *Laozi*. It is well developed in the *Zhuangzi*, of course, but it is still not yet well defined. Hence, he concludes that the *Zhuangzi* serves as a transition.³⁸⁵

Qian has presented his case with profound erudition and extensive learning, as is usual with him, but his thesis relies on the notion that concepts evolve systematically and chronologically. And this thesis remains to be proved. Chan Wing-Tsit says:

By Ch'ien's formula, one can claim that the *Lao Tzu* appeared long before the *Chuang Tzu* because certain concepts are absent in the former but are fairly well developed in the latter. Take that of principle (*li* 理), for example. It is not mentioned in either the *Lao Tzu* or the *Analects*: In the Book of Mencius it is understood as order.³⁸⁶ But in the *Chuang Tzu* it occurs in many places and is understood in a higher sense, namely, that of principle. The same things can be said about concepts of nature (*hsing* 性) and feeling (*ch'ing* 情), both of which are not found in the *Lao Tzu*, but are much discussed in the *Chuang Tzu*.³⁸⁷ One may add that the terms the Great One" (*t'ai-i* 太一), "perfect man" (*chih-jen* 智人), and so

³⁸² Hu Shi: *Journal of Asiatic Studies*, II (1937), 377.

³⁸³ Quoted from Chan 1963: p. 69.

³⁸⁴ Chan 1963: p. 69.

³⁸⁵ Qian Mu 1957: pp. 21-102, 287-314. See especially, pp. 22-23.

³⁸⁶ *Book of Mencius*, 5B:1.

³⁸⁷ These concepts have been advanced by Yan Lingfeng, *Laozhuang yanjiu*: pp. 227-31. In connection

forth are not found in the *Lao Tzu* but are prominent in the *Chuang Tzu* and therefore one could argue that the second must be later.³⁸⁸

Thus, Qian's systematic interpretation of intellectual history is neat and attractive but is not supported by facts. Qian contends that the works of Confucius and Mo Zi should be understood as preceding those of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi. Otherwise, he says, since Lao Zi had already originated the doctrine of Dao preceding the Lord (chap.4), Confucius and Mo Zi should not still have held to the doctrine of the order of heaven and the will of Heaven.³⁸⁹ This conclusion is necessary, he adds, because the thread of thought does not run this (*i.e.*, any other) way³⁹⁰ (than toward this conclusion).

Hu Shi responds to Qian's argument in the following way:

According to your way of inference and conclusion, is it to be declared that after the birth of Lao Zi and Chuang Zi there should be no more talk of Heaven's order and Heaven's will? Is it conceivable that those who in the last two thousand years have talked of Heaven's order and Heaven's will--and the rest--should all be regarded as prior to the time of Lao Zi and Chuang Zi?³⁹¹

Some scholars argue, based on Qian Mu's theory, that the *Laozi* is later than the *Mencius*. They point out that a sort of progress occurs from the individual through the family, the community, to the country and to the world. This progress seems to be defined as a systematic development. This concept is not found in the *Analects*, is only hinted at by Mencius,³⁹² but is quite clear in the *Laozi* (chap. 54). Cao Rulin³⁹³ thinks for this reason that the *Laozi* is later than Mencius. Chan, however, says: "it must not be forgotten that Mencius was quoting what he himself said was a common saying. Who can tell how long it takes for a saying to become common? So far as the basic concepts of the *Lao Tzu* are concerned, they were already known in the Spring and Autumn days. Those of taking no action, Tao, vacuity, and repaying evil with virtue, for example, are all found in the *Analects*."³⁹⁴ Concerning this, Chen Guying's recent research should be mentioned here.

with the concept of li, and one may include that found in the *Hanfeizi*, ch.20, SPTK, 6:7a-8a (Liao (tr.), *The Complete Works of Han Fei Tzu*, I, 191-94), it has developed to an even higher degree, for here principle is definitely a metaphysical concept and has acquired specific characteristics. See Chan Wing-Tsit 1963: p. 88 note 77.

³⁸⁸ Chan 1963: pp. 69-70.

³⁸⁹ *Mozi*, chs. 26-28.

³⁹⁰ Qian Mu 1957: pp. 26-37.

³⁹¹ Hu Shi: *Journal of Asiatic Studies*, II (1937), 377-378.

³⁹² *Book of Mencius*, 4A:5.

³⁹³ This is the claim of Cao Rulin, in his *Zhou Qin zhuzi kao*, pp. 52-53.

³⁹⁴ Chan 1963: p. 71.

1.5.4.4 Chen Guying's 陳鼓應 argument

After studying the *Laozi*'s influence during the middle of the Warring States Period through an examination of books such as *Huangdi sijing* 黃帝四經, *Yinwenzi* 尹文子, *Shenzi* 慎子 and *Guanzi* 管子, Chen Guying says that he is surprised to find that the *Laozi* had a very strong influence in the middle of the Warring States Period. This profundity of influence, he says, must stem from a long term of transmission. The transmission of a philosophical idea also requires quite a long time even in the twentieth century, as we can see in the case of existentialism. This philosophy originated in Europe in the 1930s-1940s, but it did not come to Taiwan until the 1960s or to the mainland of China until the 1980s (Thus taking over 30 to 40 years.). Imagine the time required for a general transmission and shifting down of an idea in ancient times when no paper or means of printing were available. Even if the *Laozi* took only the 40 years that existentialism took to be transmitted in the twentieth century, the book of the *Laozi* should still be classed as a product of the end of the Spring and Autumn Period or at least at the beginning of the Warring States Period.³⁹⁵

- Conclusion: the arguments aiming at establishing a later origin for the ideas of the *Laozi* do not succeed in proving that it is a product of the Warring States Period. Instead, they show that it is a work from the end of the Spring and Autumn Period.

1.5.5 The style of the *Laozi*

To Cui Shu, the style of the book is similar to those which stem from the Warring States Period (480-222 BC) and utterly different from that of the *Analecst*, which stems from the Spring and Autumn Period (722-481 BC).³⁹⁶

Feng Youlan argues as well that the style of the *Laozi* shows that it is a product of the Warring States Period. Feng says it was "generally" believed that the *Laozi* was composed after Confucius, that is, sometime during the Warring States Period.³⁹⁷ But this is not true. When Feng wrote his book in the 1930s, according to Chan Wing-Tsit, "It may safely be said that those who believe Lao Zi lived in the Spring and Autumn Period and those who believe he lived in the Warring States Period are about equal in number."³⁹⁸ And the same point carries in respect to the date of the *Laozi*. According to Zhang Chengqiu's review of the debate on the history of the work, there was no authentic

³⁹⁵ Cf. Chen Guying (general ed.) 1994 IV: p. 412.

³⁹⁶ Cui Shu: *Zhuji kaoxin*, 1:13a-14a.

³⁹⁷ Fung Yu-lan Vol.1, Derk Bodde (tr.) 1952: p. 170 reads: The book known as the *Lao-tzu* 老子, but popularly called the *Tao Te Ching* 道德經, is traditionally said to have been written by an older contemporary of Confucius, Lao Tan 老聃. To-day, however, it is generally believed that the *Lao-tzu* 老子 was composed after Confucius, that is, sometime during the Warring States period. This has already been discussed in detail by many scholars and so need not be gone into at length here.

³⁹⁸ Chan 1963: p. 53.

conclusion concerning the date of the *Laozi*.³⁹⁹

Two reasons can perhaps account for Feng's statement that the opinion that the *Laozi* was composed during a later time is "generally believed". 1) Skepticism in regard to the tradition was in vogue during the 1920s and 1930s. 2) Liang Qichao, who was the pioneer of the new intellectualism in China and influential on scholars was of this opinion. Those who reject the tradition, however, do not have sufficient evidence to support their theories or arguments. Liang's evidence consists of two main items: one is the use of terminology in the *Laozi*, which, as I have already shown, was criticized by many scholars even in the 1920s and 1930s; and the other concerns the radical nature of the ideas in the *Laozi*, which has also been discussed above.

Apart from the above, Feng has also offered three other items of evidence to support his theory. He says:

What has already been said in the present book about conditions in the world of learning in ancient China, moreover, proves that the *Lao-tzu* must be a product of this later time, because: (1) Prior to Confucius there was no one writing in a private, non-official capacity; hence the *Lao-tzu* cannot be earlier than the *Lun Yü*. (2) The literary form of the *Lao-tzu* is not that of question and answer, and therefore, is probably later than the *Lun Yü* and the *Mencius*. (3) The style of the *Lao-tzu* is clearly that of a 'canon' (*ching* 經), for which reason it probably dates from the Warring States Period. If one were to bring forward but one of these three points, in addition to the proofs already give by earlier scholars, one might be justly accused of committing the fallacy of begging the question. Taking them together, however, it is surely no accident that the style and doctrines of the *Lao-tzu*, with the other evidence, all point to its being a product of the Warring States Period.⁴⁰⁰

Feng's three items of evidence which he lists here raise doubts concerning their legitimacy under close scrutiny. They are each discussed below.

1.5.5.1 The various reasons related to style for taking the *Laozi* as a later work

A. The individual authorship of books before Confucius

Feng's argument that before Confucius no one had individually authored a book simply repeats Zhang Xuecheng 章學誠 (1738-1801), who said that the purpose of writing in ancient times was fulfilled in writing down governmental records and that writing was never employed as a private pursuit of authorship.⁴⁰¹ Feng noted that ancient aristocrats did not write, because they had to govern and, therefore, had no time for writing. Besides, he says, writing was a superfluous act, since their ideals were to be carried out in governmental measures.⁴⁰² He dismisses all private writings attributed to ancient writers before Confucius, therefore, as spurious and comes to the bold conclusion that

³⁹⁹ See Zhang 1977: pp. 79-99.

⁴⁰⁰ Fung Yu-lan Vol.1, Derk Bodde (tr.) 1952: p. 170.

⁴⁰¹ Fung Yu-lan Vol.1, Derk Bodde (tr.) 1952: p. 170. Cf. Chan Wing-Tsit 1963: p. 71.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*

there was no private writing took place at all before Confucius!⁴⁰³

Chan says: "Obviously Fung is begging the question."⁴⁰⁴ And Hu Shi pointed out already in the 1930s, "Mr. Fung ought to have proved first that the *Lao Tzu* actually came out after Confucius' time before he advanced the premise that before Confucius' time there was no such thing as individual authorship."⁴⁰⁵ On the other hand, Hu Shi argues, when Confucius was three years old, Shu Sun Bao took *liyan* 立言 (to set up words or to leave words) as one of the three immortalities, saying: "In Lu 魯 there was a previous master who was called Zang Wen Zhong 臧文仲. He died and settled his words (for the later generations)." Hu raises the question, were all of these *liyan* transmitted only orally? And were the quotations from Zhou Ren 周任 by Confucius also only oral? How could this be possible?⁴⁰⁶

Previous to Feng, Luo Genze presented four items of "evidence" to prove the absence of individual authorship before the Warring States Period. He says, first, that no mention occurs of any individual writings in the *Zhuangzi*, *Xunzi*, *Hanfeizi*, and other books of the period. Second, he claims that the individual writings prior to the period that are recorded in the bibliographical section of the *History of the Former Han Dynasty* are false. Third, no books in the early Warring States Period quote any individual writing prior to the period; and, finally, no private writing was employed during the Spring and Autumn days for public instruction. The reasons for the absence of individual authorship, according to him, are that before Confucius all books were kept in official archives and that before the Warring States Period all philosophers emphasized rules of propriety as a means for social reform. Hence, writing was unnecessary.⁴⁰⁷ He later added to this that aristocrats had no need of writing and even opposed it, while serfs were too ignorant to write.⁴⁰⁸

Concerning this argument of Luo, Chan Wing-Tsit is able to criticize it. He says: "Not that ancient writers or books were not mentioned, or ancient philosophers quoted, in the books of the Warring States Period. But the books are regarded by him (Luo) either as official documents or as forgeries, and the quotations as from oral transmission instead of private writings. He is virtually saying, 'There was no private writing, for all private writings are false!'"⁴⁰⁹

Ma Xulun argues, Luo notwithstanding, that the custom of pursuing individual

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁴ Chan 1963: p. 71.

⁴⁰⁵ Hu Shi: *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, II (1937), 374-375.

⁴⁰⁶ See Hu Shi's "Yu Feng Youlan xiansheng lun laozhi wenti shu 與馮友蘭先生論老子問題書" in Gu Jiegang 1933 IV. Cf. the quotation in Zhang Chengqiu 1977: p. 85.

⁴⁰⁷ *Zhuzi kaosuo*: pp. 13-61.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁹ Chan 1963: p. 72.

authorship did obtain during the Spring and Autumn Period. And these books have been recorded very often in the *Hanshu: Yiwenzhi* 漢書: 藝文志; the *Laozi*, considered as a work of individual authorship, is not necessarily later than the works of Confucius.⁴¹⁰

B. The literary form of question and answer

Feng argued as well that, since the literary form of the *Laozi* is not that of question and answer, it is probably later than the *Analects* and the *Mencius*.⁴¹¹

If, as Feng says, the *Laozi* must be later than *Analects* and the *Book of Mencius* because it is not in the dialogue style, then, Hu Shi counters, the ancient odes must be also later.⁴¹² Besides, most of the *Analects* itself is not in dialogue form. As Hu has pointed out, only one of 16 chapters in Book I, one out of 26 in Book II, and seven out of 37 in Book IV are conversations.⁴¹³ Thus, Feng's this argument is not correct.

C. The style of canon

Feng also says that the style of the *Laozi* is clearly that of a "canon" (*ching* 經), for which reason it probably dates from the Warring States Period.

No one really knows, however, what constitutes a "simple style of classic". If chapter one of the *Laozi* does comprise such a style, Hu Shi argues, then *Analects* 2:3 is of the same style.⁴¹⁴

Feng committed an even more egregious error logically when he said: "If one were to bring forward but one of these three points, in addition to the proofs already given by earlier scholars, one might be justly accused of committing the fallacy of begging the question. Taking them together, however, it is surely no accident that the style and doctrines of the *Lao-tzu*, with the other evidence, all point to its being a product of the Warring States Period."⁴¹⁵ For this is the fallacy of composition. Feng thinks that begging the question three times in one statement provides validity for his argument when doing it once would be an error!

D. The employment of rhyme and the practice of beginning the sentence with the subject

Besides these arguments of Feng, some scholars have also contended that the employment of rhyme and the practice of beginning a sentence with the subject originated during the

⁴¹⁰ See Ma Xulun's "Bian Laozi fei zhanguo houqi zuopin 辨老子非戰國后期作品", quoted in Zhang Chengqiu 1977: pp. 92-93.

⁴¹¹ Fung 1952 (tr. by Derk Bodde 1983): p. 170.

⁴¹² See Chan 1963: p. 65.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁵ Fung 1952 (tr. by Derk Bodde 1983): p. 170.

Warring States Period.⁴¹⁶ Since these are features of the *Laozi*, it is argued, it must be a product of that period.

Uncertain, however, is that the use of rhyme began during the Warring States Period. Hu Shi, based on the characteristic of rhyme, argues to the contrary, for example, that "most of the *Laozi* is rhymed. And if we suppose as a general world principle that rhyme precedes prose, then the *Laozi* should be considered as preceding the *Analects*."⁴¹⁷ Chan says also that aside from ancient odes, many passages in the *Book of History* and in the text of the *Book of Changes*,⁴¹⁸ and even some chapters in the *Analects*,⁴¹⁹ are rhymed.

As for beginning the sentence with the subject, many of the *Mozi*'s essays show this feature.⁴²⁰

Thus, the employment of rhyme and the practice of beginning a sentence with the subject did not originate during the Warring States Period. This mean cannot prove the *Laozi* as a product of the Warring States Period.

E. The style of poem and prose

Gu Jiegang contends that since the *Laozi* is in the style of a prose-poem,⁴²¹ it must be a product of the Warring States Period. But he never proves this thesis, so his conclusion is not valid for dating the *Laozi*. On the contrary, as above has indicated, the rhyme of the *Laozi* proves only that it is a work of Chu and does not confirm a date.⁴²²

1.5.5.2 The mistakes of the new opinion

All these arguments above considered together, we can judge that none of the recent, anti-traditional opinions offer good reasons for acceptance. This judgement is based on the following two facts: First, we cannot easily determine the style of the *Laozi*; and, second, we cannot easily determine just when a certain style come into use, for any development of style emerges only after a long period of evolution.

A. The various opinions concerning the style of the *Laozi*

This work lists above, in the section on the style of the *Laozi*, various opinions concerning its style.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁷ Hu Shi 1970 rep.: p. 418.

⁴¹⁸ Many examples are given in He Dunweng, *Laozi xinyi*, Supplement: p. 2.

⁴¹⁹ For examples, *Analects*, 2:1; 11:19.

⁴²⁰ Chan 1963: pp. 65-66.

⁴²¹ Gu Jiegang 1933: IV, 447.

⁴²² See the Part of "the regional background of the *Laozi* " in the same chapter of the present work. Cf. Lao Siguang 1968: pp. 150, and 153.

Some scholars argue that almost all the chapters are rhymed⁴²³ but that the rhyming scheme occurs in many patterns.⁴²⁴ Most scholars indeed accept that many rhymes occur in the *Laozi*, but they all differ concerning their judgment on the overall style of the work. For example,

Ren Jiyu argues that the style of the *Laozi* is poetry.⁴²⁵ Feng Youlan says that the style of the *Laozi* is clearly that of 'canon' *ching (jing)* 經.⁴²⁶ Qian Mu 錢穆 takes the *Laozi* as rhymed prose (*yunhua zhi sanwen* 韻化之散文), and he thinks that such rhymed prose cannot precede the dialogue form that we find in the *Analects*.⁴²⁷ Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 takes the *Laozi* as the style of *fu* 賦, which appeared at the end of the Warring States Period.⁴²⁸ Ma Xulun 馬紱倫 says that the brief words of the *Laozi* are like poetry, though it is also like the *yao ci* 爻辭 of *Yi* 易 and both the *Ya* 雅 and the *Song* 頌 of the *Shijing* 詩經; apart from this, he says, it is like the *Analects* 論語.

In ancient times, brief words were favored over long disquisitions. And, since most of the ancient books were transmitted orally, they were usually rhymed to assist the memory. The *Laozi* is both brief and rhymed. And, since such material was common before the Warring States Period, the *Laozi* must surely have been transmitted before this period.⁴²⁹ The *Laozi* traditionally has been placed in the *zi* 子 category of the *sibu* 四部 classification scheme.⁴³⁰

B. The major premise that these styles belong to the Warring States Period is by no means proved

As stated above, the evolutionary movement of the emergence of style means that we cannot easily determine just when a certain style came into use. This concept of evolutionary development has been generally accepted by scholars such as Hu Shi, Chan Wing-Tsit, Zhang Chengqiu and Tang Lan.⁴³¹

⁴²³ Chapters 31,49,50,61,74, and 75 are not rhymed, while only small parts of chapters 7,11,23,32, 34,42,60,66,72, and 81 are rhymed. Hu Yuanchun goes so far as to say that the whole book is in rhyme. See Hu s.a.: p. 3. Cf. Chan 1963: p. 84 note 2.

⁴²⁴ For a complete list of rhymes, see B. Karlgren, "The Poetical Parts in Lao-Tsi," *Göteborgs Högskolas Årsskrift*,XXXVIII (1932), 6-20, and Chen Zhu 1928b: passim. For some examples of the rhyming scheme, see Ch'en Chu 1928a: pp. 29-34.

⁴²⁵ Hendrischke 1984: pp. 29, 25-42.

⁴²⁶ Fung Yu-lan Vol.1, Derk Bodde (tr.) 1952: p. 170.

⁴²⁷ Qian Mu 1957: pp. 101-102.

⁴²⁸ Gu Jiegang 1933: pp. 462-519.

⁴²⁹ Quoted from Zhang Yangming 張陽明1985: p. 260.

⁴³⁰ Loewe 1993: p. 269.

⁴³¹ Hu Shi: *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*,II (1937): pp. 375-76, 383-85. Chan Wing-Tsit 1963: p. 65. Zhang Chengqiu 1977: pp. 89, 93, 94. See also Tang Lan's "Laozi shidai xinkao 老子時代新考" quoted in Zhang Chengqiu 1977: p. 94.

Zhang Fuqing 張福慶 says in respect to this notion of evolutionary emergence: 1) The evolutionary emergence of a particular style is difficult to determine, since different styles often coexist during the same period. 2) The evolution of style does not always follow the movement of: poem (*shi* 詩) → history (*shi* 史) → argument (*lun* 論). For one must note in regard to such a notion of development, a) that the style of the writings in the tomb of the Shang Dynasty (oracle characters) are all for the purpose of recording (history) and b), that the oldest writings possessed to-day is *Shangshu* 尚書 (*The Book of History*) rather than *Sanbaipian* 三百篇 (*The Book of Poem or Odes*). Thus, history itself refutes the notion of this “straight line” development of poetry to argument. 3) we cannot, therefore, date the *Laozi*, which is brief and simple in style, after the *Zhuangzi* and *Xunzi*, which are long and complex in style.⁴³²

1.5.5.3 Style contrast among the *Laozi*, the *Shijing* 詩經 and the *Chuci* 楚辭

Liu Xiaogan 劉笑敢 has compared the *Laozi*'s style comprehensively with that of the *Shijing* and *Chuci*. He found that the *Laozi* is similar to the *Shijing* in three aspects: the sentence pattern, the method of rhetorics, and the rhyme pattern; at the same time, it differed from the *Chuci* in all three of these aspects.⁴³³

Many scholars have touched on several aspects of the *Laozi*'s style, but none has studied it comprehensively before Liu Xiaogan. And because the previous scholars studied only some aspects of the *Laozi*'s style, various poorly formed opinions developed concerning it, as indicated above in the present chapter.

We can first attend to Liu's comparison of the *Laozi* with the *Shijing*: The basic materials of the *Laozi* employed in Liu's study are its 51 rhymed chapters, *i.e.*, chapters 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 39, 41, 44, 45, 47, 51, 52, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 62, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 73, 78, and 79.⁴³⁴ The characteristic of the rhyming pattern of the *Shijing* is mainly based on Wang Li's 王力 *Shijing yundu* 詩經韻讀; and the rhyme pattern of the *Laozi* is based mainly on Zhu Qianzhi's 朱謙之 *Laozi yunli* 老子韻例.⁴³⁵

A. The *Laozi* is similar to the *Shijing* in the sentence pattern

The *Shijing*'s main sentence pattern is that of including four characters (*sizi ju* 四字句), and *Chuci*'s is mainly that of six and seven characters (*liuyan* 六言 and *qiyan* 七言). In

⁴³² See Zhang Fuqing's "Dui Qian Mu xiansheng cong wenzhang de ticai he xiuci shang kaocha Laozi Chengshu niandai de yijian 對錢穆先生從文章的體裁和修辭上考察老子成書年代的意見", quoted in Zhang Chengqiu 1977: p. 94.

⁴³³ See Chen Guying (General ed.) 1994, IV: p. 419.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*: p. 422. According to Jiang Yougao, 52 of the chapters are rhymed; according to Zhu Qianzhi, over 70 chapters are rhymed, and, according to Karlgren, 75 chapters are rhymed. Liu Xiaogan thinks 51 chapters are rhymed.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*: p. 422.

this aspect, the *Laozi* is similar to the former and is different from the latter.⁴³⁶

The *Shijing* has 305 poems, 152 of which are the poems of the four-character-sentence (*siyan shi* 四言詩). This number accounts for 50% of the whole, 140 of them contain poems of the four-character-sentence as their main patten (though some other sentence patterns are included), and this number accounts for 46% of the whole; only 13 of them are poems of other sentence patterns, which accounts for 4% of the whole.⁴³⁷ The *Shijing* has been rearranged by later scholars, but one can safely assert that the Chinese poem in the time of the *Shijing* was mainly of the type of containing the four character sentence.⁴³⁸ The first poem of the *Shijing*, for example, is representative of this type:

關關雎鳩，
在河之洲，
窈窕淑女，
君子好逑（關雎）。⁴³⁹

Guanguang jujiu, zai he zhi zhou,
Yaotiao shunü, junzi hao qiu. (Guanju)
Over the Guanguan go the ospreys,
The modest, retiring, virtuous, young lady: --
For our prince a good mate is She. (*Junan*)⁴⁴⁰

The *Laozi* is not actually a poem, however, there are 27 chapters containing mainly the sentence of four characters in the general transmitted version.⁴⁴¹ In the Mawangdui silk text version, 23 chapters are rhymed.⁴⁴² These account for nearly 50% of the 51 chapters involved.

The standard for recognizing the sentence of four characters consists of two criteria: one is that the chapter contains mainly sentences of four characters, and the other is that no other neat sentence patterns are found in the text.⁴⁴³ Chapter 45 of the *Laozi* is the standard example:

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*: p. 423.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁹ In this section are several Chinese quotations without English translation. The translations will be added at a later time.

⁴⁴⁰ This translation is quoted from Legge 1935: Volume 4: p. 1.

⁴⁴¹ This is based on Zhu Qianzhi's *Laozi jiaoshi* 老子校釋. These chapters are 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 14, 19, 20, 21, 24, 26, 28, 29, 30, 33, 36, 41, 45, 47, 51, 52, 54, 55, 58, 59, 64, and 67.

⁴⁴² According to Liu Xiaogan, Chapter 1 in the Ma Wang dui silk text version is also rhymed, but chapters 2, 20, 24, 26, and 33 are not rhymed. See Liu Xiaogan "1994: in Chen Guying (General ed.) 1994 IV: p. 423 note 2.

⁴⁴³ See Chen Guying (general ed.) 1994: IV: p. 423.

大成若缺，
其用不敝。
大盈如沖，
其用不窮。
大直如屈，
大巧如拙。
大辯如訥，
其用不屈。(chap. 45)

What is most perfect seems to be incomplete;
But its utility is unimpaired.
What is most full seems to be empty;
But its usefulness is inexhaustible.
What is most straight seems to be crooked.
The greatest skill seems to be clumsy.
The greatest eloquence seems to stutter;
But its usefulness is not crooked.⁴⁴⁴

An example consisting mainly of the four character integrated with other sentence types is as follows:

谷神不死，
是謂玄牡。
玄牡之門，
是謂天地根。
綿綿啊其若存，
用之不斲。
(chap. 6)

The spirit of the valley never dies.
It is called the subtle and profound female.
The gate of the subtle and profound female
Is the root of Heaven and Earth.
Use it and you will never wear it out.⁴⁴⁵

In the general transmitted version 綿綿啊其若存 is also written as 綿綿若存 (four characters-sentence).

Thus, the sentence pattern of the *Shijing* and the *Laozi* is XX XX. If we use 0 to represent particles such as *xi* 兮, *zhi* 之 and *er* 而, the *Lisao*'s 離騷 the sentence pattern is XXX 0 XX 0 (seven characters-sentence), XXX0XX (six characters-sentence).

帝高陽之苗裔兮，
朕皇考曰伯庸。
攝提貞於孟陬兮，
惟庚寅吾以降。

⁴⁴⁴ This translation has been referred to Rump 1987: p. 133.

⁴⁴⁵ This translation is quoted from Rump 1987: p. 21.

(I am) the descendant of the emperor Di,
my father's name was Poyong.
When he was in Mengzou,
(I was) born in the time of Gengying.

In Wang Li's *Chuci yundu* 楚辭韻讀, are 28 poems of *Chuci*, only four of which are poems of the four character sentence. These are *Tianwen* 天問, *Jiuzhang: Jusong* 九章: 橘頌, *Dazhao* 大招 and *Zhaohun* 招魂. Clearly, the four character sentence poem is not the main type of the *Chuci*. The *Chuci* has four characteristics: 1) The poems are usually quite long, a characteristic lacking in the *Shijing* and the *Laozi*. 2) The sentence patterns and rhyme patterns are neat, following the principle of odd sentence rhyming. 3) The *Chuci* does not have the rhetorical method of circular sentences, which will be introduced later. 4) They are not the style of free songs (*ziyou yingchang* 自由吟唱).⁴⁴⁶

In relation to the sentence pattern, then, the *Laozi* is similar to the *Shijing* rather than to the *Chuci*.

B. The similarity between the method of rhetoric used in the *Laozi* and that of the *Shijing*

While the rhetorical method of circular sentences (*xunhuan wangfu* 循環往復) employed by the *Shijing* is not used often in later works or in the *Chuci*, it is quite often used in the *Laozi*.

The rhetorical method of circular sentences refers to the repeated occurrence of certain Chinese characters or sentences in poems or in the chapters of a written work.⁴⁴⁷ For example,

Type one: "XXX 0, YYY0. YYY0, ZZZ 0" and "XX 0, YY 0 0"

The X, Y, and Z refer to the characters which are not changed, and 0 refers to the ones which are changed.

Shijing: Xiangshu 詩經 相鼠 reads:

相鼠有皮，
人而無儀。
人而無儀，
不死何為。(歌韻)

相鼠有齒，
人而無止。
人而無止，
不死何俟。(之韻)

I. Look at a rat, -- it has its skin;
But a man shall be without dignity of demeanor.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*: pp. 424-425.

⁴⁴⁷ This definition is based on Wang Li's *Shijing yundu*: p. 87.

If a man have no dignity of demeanor,
What should he do but die?

2. Look at a rat, -- it has its teeth;
But a man shall be without any right department.
If a man have not right department,
What should he wait for but death?⁴⁴⁸

This can be written as

XXX 0, YYY0. YYY0, ZZZ 0.

XXX 0, YYY0. YYY0, ZZZ 0.

The *Laozi's* chapter 54 reads:

修之身，其德乃真；(真韻)
修之家，其德有余。(魚韻)
修之鄉，其德乃長；(陽韻)
修之邦，其德乃丰；(東韻)
修之天下，其德乃溥。(魚韻)

When one cultivates virtue in his person, it becomes genuine virtue.
When one cultivates virtue in his family, it becomes overflowing virtue.
When one cultivates virtue in his community, it becomes lasting virtue.
When one cultivates virtue in his country, it becomes abundant virtue.
When one cultivates virtue in the world, it becomes universal.⁴⁴⁹

This can be written as XX 0, YY 0 0.

The two books *Shijing* and *Laozi* are similar in this aspect.

Type two: "XXX, YY 0 Y; ZZZZ, YY 0 Y. AA 0 A, BB 0 B" and "XX 0, YY 0, ZZZ 0. ZZZ 0, AAA 0. AAA 0, BBB 0 (0)"

The X, Y, Z, A, and B refer to the characters which are not changed, and 0 refers to the ones which are changed.

The *Shijing*: *Qiangyouci* 牆有茨 reads:

牆有茨，
不可掃也；
中冓之言，
不可道也。
所可道也，
言之醜也。(幽韻)

牆有茨，
不可襄也；
中冓之言，
不可詳也。
所可詳也。

⁴⁴⁸ The translation is quoted from Legge 1935: Volume 4: pp. 84-85.

⁴⁴⁹ Rump 1987: pp. 154-155.

言之長也。(陽韻)

牆有茨·
不可束也;
中媾之言,
不可讀也。
所可讀也·
言之辱也。(屋韻)

1. The tribulus grows on the wall,
And cannot be brushed away.
The story of the inner chamber
Cannot be told.
What would have to be told
Would be the vilest of recitals.

2. The tribulus grows on the wall,
And cannot be removed.
The story of the inner chamber
Cannot be particularly related.
What might be particularly related
Would be a long story.

3. The tribulus grows on the wall,
And cannot be bound together, (and taken away).
The story of the inner chamber
Cannot be recited.
What might be recited
Would be the most disgraceful of things.⁴⁵⁰

This type can be written as "XXX, YY 0 Y; ZZZZ, YY 0 Y. AA 0 A, BB 0 B."
(牆有茨，不可 0 也；中媾之言，不可 0 也。所可 0 也，言之 0 也。)

Chapter 28 of the *Laozi* reads:

知其雄·
守其雌·
為天下谷·
為天下谷·
恆德乃足·
恆德乃足·
復歸於樸。(侯韻)

知其白·
守其黑·
為天下式·
為天下式·
恆德不忒·
恆德不忒·
復歸極。(之韻)

⁴⁵⁰ This translation is quoted from Legge 1935: Volume 4: pp. 74-75.

知其榮·
守其辱·
為天下溪·
為天下溪·
恆德不離·
恆德不離·
復於嬰兒·(歌之通韻)

He who knows the male and keeps to the female
Becomes the valley of the world.
Being the valley of the world,
He will be proficient in eternal virtue.
Such is the essential mystery. (finals *hou*)

He who knows the white and yet keeps to the black
Becomes the model of the world.
Being the model for the world,
He will never deviate from eternal virtue.
But returns to the state of the Ultimate of Nonbeing. (finals *zhi*)

He who knows glory but keeps to humanity
Becomes the ravine of the world.
Being the ravine of the world,
He will never depart from the eternal virtue,
But return to the state of infancy.⁴⁵¹ (Fantails *ge* and *zhi* can replace each other.)

This type can be written as "XX 0, YY 0, ZZZ 0. ZZZ 0, AAA 0. AAA 0, BBB 0 (0)".
(知其 0, 守其 0, 為天下 0. 為天下 0, 恆德不 0. 恆德不 0, 復歸於 0 (0).)
Thus, the two books the *Shijing* and the *Laozi* are similar in this aspect.

Type three consists in turning down the first two characters with the latter two characters.
The *Shijing*: *Qifeng*: *Dongfang weiming* 詩經: 齊風: 東方未明 reads:

東方未明·
顛倒衣裳·(陽韻)
顛之倒之·
自公召之·(霄韻)

東方未晞·
顛倒裳衣·(微韻)
倒之類之·
自公令之·(真韻)

Before the east was bright,
I was putting on my clothes upside down;
I was putting them on upside down,
And there was one from the court calling me.

Before there was a streak of dawn in the east,
I was putting on my clothes upside down;

⁴⁵¹ This translation refers to Rump 1987: pp. 83-84.

I was putting them on upside down,
And there was one from the court with orders for me.⁴⁵²

Chapter 21 of the *Laozi* reads:

道之為物，唯恍唯忽。(脂韻)
忽啊恍啊，中又有象啊。(陽韻)
恍啊忽啊，中有物啊。(脂韻)

The thing that is called Dao is eluding and vague. (finals *zhi*)
Eluding and vague, in it are things. (Finals *yang*)
Deep and obscure, in it is the essence. (Finals *zhi*)⁴⁵³

The two books are similar.

Forty-eight of the 51 chapters of the *Laozi* in Liu Xiaogan's study employ the rhetorical method of circular sentences, which accounts for 94% of the whole. This percentage is similar to that of the *Shijing*, in which at least 271 of the 305 poems have used the rhetorical method of circular sentences, which accounts for 90% of the whole.⁴⁵⁴ This phenomenon is very difficult to find again in later works.

Both the *Laozi* and the *Chuci* are generally accepted as works of the Chu region. But if the *Laozi* does stem from the same period, *i.e.*, the middle or end of the Warring States Period, we are hard put to explain why the *Chuci* has not influenced the *Laozi*. That it has not been understandable if the *Laozi* was transmitted before the style of the *Chuci* had been formed and when the style of the *Shijing* was still current.⁴⁵⁵

C. The *Laozi* is similar to the *Shijing* in its rhyming pattern

The *Shijing* has two types of patterns of rhyme. One is a varying pattern, and the other is a high occurrence of rhyme which cannot be found in the later works.⁴⁵⁶

The rhyme patterns of the *Shijing* can be divided into three kinds: rhyming in every sentence, rhyming in the odd sentences, and the combined form of both of these patterns. Rhymed are 296 of the 305 poems of the work, 80 of which are rhymed in almost every sentence. This number accounts for 27% of the 296; 74 of the poems are rhymed in the odd sentences, which accounts for 25% of the rhymed poems;⁴⁵⁷ the other 142 (accounting for 80%) of the poems are rhymed in the combined form of the previous two patterns

⁴⁵² This translation is quoted from Legge 1935: Volume 4: p. 154.

⁴⁵³ This translation is quoted from Rump 1987: p. 65.

⁴⁵⁴ See Chen Guying (General ed.) 1994: IV: p. 429. Cf. pp. 426-428.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*: pp. 429-430.

⁴⁵⁶ See Wang Li's *Shijing yundu*: p. 41.

⁴⁵⁷ Rhyme in the first, third and fourth sentences has been taken as the rhyme in the odd sentence. The rhyme begins with the first sentence. Rhyme in the second, third, and fourth sentences has been taken as a rhyme in each sentence, discounting the first.

and of a few other patterns. Liu Xiaogan says that no pattern of rhyme had been well formed at the time of the *Shijing* and that the rhyming patterns of "each sentence" and "odd sentence" rhyming were almost equal in number. Neither pattern had achieved prominence over the other, and the combined form of the two patterns of rhyme was the main one.⁴⁵⁸

Almost every poem of the *Chuci* is rhymed in the odd sentences; the few four-character-sentence poems have all been rhymed in the odd sentences without exception; and the "each sentence" pattern of rhyme is almost absent.⁴⁵⁹

The pattern of rhyme in the *Laozi* is very different from that of the *Chuci*. It is difficult to do similar statistical research on the *Laozi*, because it is not a real poem. Liu Xiaogan has, however, still done some general statistical studies. Among the 51 chapters involved, 24 of them are rhymed in every sentence, which accounts for 47% of the whole;⁴⁶⁰ Nine of the poems are rhymed with comparative neatness in the odd sentences, which accounts for 18% of all of the rhymed passages.⁴⁶¹ The combined form and other patterns involve 18 poems, or 35% of the whole.⁴⁶²

The main pattern of rhyme in the *Laozi* is the combined form, which indicates that when the *Laozi* was written no general rhyme pattern for such work had yet emerged. And this mixture of patterns fits the various patterns of rhyme in the *Shijing*. On the other hand, in respect to the distinction between "every sentence" and "odd sentence" rhyming, the *Laozi* distinctly prefers the former over the latter. And this preference fits the high occurrence of rhyme in the *Shijing*. The *Laozi*, therefore, is similar to the *Shijing* in rhyme pattern.⁴⁶³ And considering the contrast between the *Laozi* and the *Shijing* as well as that between the former work and the *Chuci*, clearly the *Laozi* bears similarities to the *Shijing* but shows difference from the *Chuci*.

The *Chuci* was written by Qu Yuan 屈原, who was a native of Chu and lived during the latter part of the Warring States Period. The *Laozi* is also a work of Chu. And if it stemmed also from the middle or the end of the Warring States Period, it would have to have been influenced by the *Chuci*, or at least, they would be similar. But, as we have seen, the style of the *Laozi* is different from that of the *Chuci*; thus, the *Laozi* cannot be a product of the end of the Warring States Period. Neither can the *Laozi* be a work dating from the middle of the Warring States Period, because its style is too similar to that of the *Shijing*. It must, then, be a product the time when the style of the

⁴⁵⁸ See Chen Guying (general ed.) IV 1994: p. 430.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁰ Cf. chapters 1, 5, 6, 21, 28, 36, 45, 47, 51, 52, 54, 55, 58, 59 (mainly the four characters-sentences) and 2, 15, 22, 26, 44, 68, 69, 73, 78, and 79.

⁴⁶¹ Cf. chapters 9, 10, 19, 64, 67 and 4, 33, 17, and 56.

⁴⁶² Cf. chapters 14, 29, 30, 41, and 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 25, 27, 32, 35, 37, 39, 57, 62, and 65.

⁴⁶³ See Chen Guying (General ed.) 1994: IV: p. 431.

Shijing was still current, *i.e.*, the end of the Spring and Autumn Period or the beginning of the Warring States Period.⁴⁶⁴

This analysis does not imply that Liu Xiaogan's research has solved the problem of the date of the *Laozi*. But it does show that Liu's research has provided good evidence to support the traditional opinion concerning the date of the *Laozi*, which comes also from Sima Qian over two thousand years ago.

1.5.6 The conclusion concerning the date of the *Laozi*

Concerning the date of the *Laozi*, this work is of the following opinion:

The discovery of the Bamboo Slips *Laozi* from Jingmen in 1994 does prove that the *Laozi* did exist in the middle of the Warring States Period. This version consists of just over two thousand characters and is similar to the version of the Mawangdui text.⁴⁶⁵ This discovery, of course, cannot solve the problem of dating the *Laozi*, but it raises anew the question concerning the date of the normal version of the *Laozi*. If the Mawangdui silk texts *Laozi* and the normal *Laozi* were developed from the Bamboo Slips *Laozi*, then the former two developed *after* the Bamboo Slips *Laozi*. Difficult, however, is to know whether they were both developed *from* the Bamboo Slips *Laozi*. This problem cannot be solved before a detailed analysis can be done of the Bamboo Slips *Laozi*, the results of which will comprise the next part of this study.

The contemporary and later quotations of the *Laozi* have proved that both Lao Zi the man and the book called the *Laozi* existed in the time of Confucius, *i.e.*, in the 6th century BC. That Lao Zi and Confucius were contemporaries, will be proved in the present work's next chapter. One can refer to my section §2.4.2.2 C, where shows that a person Wu Zhi talks with both Lao Dan and Confucius at the same time, thus it proves that Lao Dan and Confucius were contemporaries. This was recorded in the Inner Chapters of the *Zhuangzi*, which is generally believed as making by Zhuang Zi himself in the 4th century BC. But what the original *Laozi* contained cannot yet be known if it is different from the normal version which we possess today. We may, however, be able to fix the date of the traditional version of the *Laozi*.

All the arguments which aim at establishing the anti-traditional opinion concerning the date of the *Laozi* have not provided enough evidence to throw the theory of Sima Qian overboard. These have each been analyzed in this chapter and found wanting. On the other hand, we have found various items of evidence which support the hypothesis that the *Laozi* is a work stemming from the end of Spring and Autumn Period. For example, Sima Qian referred to this period in his *Shiji* over two thousand years ago, and the *Laozi* was quoted by many contemporary and later works such as the *Mozi*, the *Yinwenzi*, the *Zhuangzi*.

The contemporary and later quotations of the *Laozi*, of course, cannot prove with

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*: pp. 435-437.

⁴⁶⁵ According to the interview with Liu Zuxin, the leader of the Jingmen museum by senior lecturer Huang Xiuli on Oct. 16th, 1995.

certainty that the traditional version of the *Laozi* was completed at that time, since several versions of the book were quite possibly transmitted even before the middle of the Warring States Period. The quotations in the *Mozi*, *Yinwenzi*, and *Zhuangzi* might be from another version of the *Laozi* which we have not yet seen rather than from the traditional version or the Jingmen Bamboo Slips version. The quotations cannot, therefore, prove that the *Laozi*'s traditional version was a work stemming from the end of the Spring and Autumn Period. The only other helpful ways of giving any probable date for the traditional version of the *Laozi* involves an analysis of the vocabulary and the style of the traditional version of the book.

An analysis of the vocabulary of the *Laozi* has been an effective way proving that the traditional version is a work that originates before the middle of the Warring States Period. So do the characteristics of style. Most parts of the *Laozi* are rhymed, but the style of this rhyming is not easy to determine. If the *Laozi* is from the middle or later portion of the Warring States Period, it would be a contemporary of the *Chuci*'s, so they should be similar to each other in style. But the style and rhetorical characteristics of the *Laozi* are much closer to that of the *Shijing* than that of the *Chuci*. The traditional version of the *Laozi*, therefore, must have been written earlier than the middle of the Warring States Period. The most likely date is either at the end of the Spring and Autumn Period or the beginning of the Warring States Period.

1.6 Summary and conclusion

The editions: Before the discovery of the Bamboo Slips *Laozi* from Jingmen, the earliest edition we possessed of the *Laozi* was the Mawangdui silk text, which dates from about 180 BC. Book A and Book B of the silk texts are from two different traditions. In both of them, the *Dejing* precedes the *Daojing*. The first part of book A has chapter divisions, but the second part and the entirety of Book B does not. We cannot easily say whether the Mawangdui silk text is close to the original version of the *Laozi*. For many transmissions have intervened during the years. The Heshang Gong version, however, though a later edition than the Mawangdui edition, might come from an earlier version of the *Laozi* than does the Mawangdui text. But we have no means yet to prove this hypothesis.

The traditional version of the *Laozi*, also called the normal versions in the present work, *i.e.*, the versions of Yan Zun, Heshang Gong and Wang Bi, probably date from the end of the Spring and Autumn Period or the beginning of the Warring States Period, which places them in the 6th to 5th century BC. The Bamboo Slips *Laozi* comes from the same tradition as the Mawangdui text version of the *Laozi*, but whether it is part of that version or an even earlier version cannot yet be known. Its date is earlier than both Silk texts and the Fu Yi version of the *Laozi*, or else it was completed at least during the same period.

The titles and structure: The *Laozi* 老子 is also called *Daodejing* 道德經 and *Wuqianwen* 五千文 or *Wuqianyan* 五千言. It was during the Han Dynasty that the *Laozi* began to

be called a 'classic'.

The book of the *Laozi* is divided into two parts: *Daojing* 道經 or *Daopian* 道篇, and *Dejing* 德經 or *Depian* 德篇. We cannot easily know what constitutes the original order of the *Laozi*, i.e., whether the *Daojing* precedes the *Dejing*, or the *Dejing* precedes the *Daojing*. According to both the *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 and the Mawangdui silk text, the *Dejing* or *Depian* of the *Laozi* precedes *Daojing* or *Daopian*. But we find the *Daojing* preceding the *Dejing* already in the Former Han Dynasty.

Generally believed is that the *Laozi* originally had no chapter divisions. And we do not know who divided the book into eighty-one chapters. The versions of Heshang Gong 河上公 from the Han 漢 Dynasty, Wang Bi 王弼 from the Jin 晉 Dynasty and Fu Yi 傅奕 from the Tang 唐 Dynasty, and the present, generally transmitted version all consist eighty-one chapters.

The essential character of the work: Various opinions abound concerning the essential character of the *Laozi*. Many parts of the book are rhymed, but it is not really a poem. Traditionally, it belongs to a part of *zi* 子部 in *Sibu beiyao* 四部備要.

It is from one person's hand rather than many, because: 1) Its thought is systematic; 2) The first personal pronouns *wo* 我 and *wu* 吾 refer to the author himself, and the complaints of the book are similar to those of Confucius and Qu Yuan 屈原, which are the character of private book. The book has, however, received additions by later scholars in the process of transmission.

The book of *Laozi* is a work of Chu 楚, because 1) The historical records have shown that this is the case; 2) The book uses Chu dialects; 3) The book demonstrates knowledge of the custom of Chu.

The authorship: A man named Lao Dan 老聃, i.e., Li Er 李耳, or Lao Zi 老子, who was a contemporary of Confucius in the 6th century BC did exist. The book he wrote, the *Laozi*, once existed as an original version which, while different in some aspects, was on the whole similar to the traditional version we possess today of the work. The evidence shows clearly that most(?)⁴⁶⁶ of the speeches and words of Lao Zi as well as the main points of his thought can be found in the traditional version of the *Laozi*.

The author of the traditional version was Lao Zi himself, and the book has also been possibly added to by some other people, but they were inordinately successful at arranging the words of Lao Zi and at understanding Lao Zi's philosophy.

The date: The exact details concerning the date of the original *Laozi* cannot yet be known. The date of the *Laozi*'s traditional version, however, should be placed as early as the end of the Spring and Autumn Period or the beginning of the Warring States

⁴⁶⁶ Have some or most of Lao Zi's speeches or words been preserved in the present version of the *Laozi*? This question cannot be answered before a study of the Jingmen bamboo Slips *Laozi* is completed. This will be done in the next stage of the present study.

Period. Secondly, one could consider a slightly later date in the middle of the latter period.

Various hypotheses have emerged concerning the date of the *Laozi*. According to the traditional opinion, the *Laozi* dates from the end of the Spring and Autumn Period, *i.e.*, from the sixth to fifth century BC. Recent scholars, represented by Liang Qichao, have been skeptical toward this early date and have proposed a later date. Their main arguments for dating the work concern the contemporary references, the terminology, the ideas, and the style of the book. In response to these argumentations, this work has argued that: 1) The contemporary references to the *Laozi* do occur. 2) Terms such as *renyi*, *shangxian*, and *wancheng zhi zhu*, which have been employed by Liang and his followers to deny an early date have been shown to be terms current in the Spring and Autumn Period; thus, they do not provide adequate evidence the *Laozi* is a later work. 3) The ideas of the *Laozi*, which Liang and his followers say are too radical for the time of Lao Zi and Confucius, have also been proved to belong to the Spring and Autumn Period. 4) The style of the *Laozi*, which Liang and his followers claim to prove that the *Laozi* is a later work, has been shown to indicate instead the *Laozi* is a work from the end of the Spring and Autumn Period or, at least, the beginning of the Warring States Period. Liang's handling of the style question was inadequate, as he did not note correctly the characteristics of style and the regional Chu background of the *Laozi*. Furthermore, the contrasts among the *Laozi*, *Shijing* and *Chuci* point as well to an early date of authorship.

In sum, we can say that a misunderstanding concerning the book called the *Laozi* has hampered the West in grasping the details concerning it correctly. This misunderstanding is grounded in the hypotheses of Liang Qichao, Feng Youlan and their followers. The arguments of this work have aimed at showing that the above scholars, so influential in the West, actually present only weak and ineffective arguments. Lao Zi the man did exist, and he did author a book called the *Laozi*. And this fact can be seen from an analysis of the traditional version of the *Laozi*, which was completed before the middle of the Warring States Period by Lao Zi himself and has been added to by some person who surely knew well the philosophy of Lao Zi.