

SUMMARY

The conclusion of this work is, first, that the arguments of modern scholars are wrong in many ways concerning Lao Zi and his book the *Laozi*; second, where this study does not demonstrate that these arguments are wrong, it does show that they are not compelling enough to overthrow the traditional position maintained concerning Lao Zi and his book in this work. The modern work ends only in an unwarranted skepticism and in hypotheses which lack good evidence.

Concretely speaking, the arguments, issues and notions with which this work has dealt are as follows: 1) Lao Zi's biography in Sima Qian's *Shiji* is partly misunderstood in the West. 2) The recent theories concerning Lao Zi the man and the book called the *Laozi*, which Liang Qichao and Feng Youlan initiated in opposition to the traditional opinion, have been wrongly accepted by Western scholars as authoritative conclusions. 3) The popular opinions in the West concerning Lao Zi the man and the book called the *Laozi* are incorrect and should be modified. These issues have been discussed in this study with the conclusion that the most reasonable position to take in regard to Lao Zi and his book is the traditional one.

- The main issues of the *Laozi*, the book:

The editions

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. However, this traditional version has received later additions in the process of transmission. The Jingmen Bamboo Slips *Laozi* is the oldest version thus far discovered. The Mawangdui silk texts and the Fu Yi version of the *Laozi* were probably from two different traditions. In this case, the Bamboo Slips *Laozi* was earlier than both the Silk texts and the Fu Yi version of the *Laozi* or was at least completed in the same period. One can suppose, therefore, that the silk text and the Fu Yi version were developed from the Bamboo Slips *Laozi*. But this supposition cannot be validated until a new study and translation of the *Laozi* based on the Bamboo Slips texts is done. And this will be the task of the next part of this study.

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. The *Laozi* began to be called a 'classic' only from the period of the Han Dynasty.

The book of *Laozi* is divided into two parts: *Daojing* 道經 or *Daopian* 道篇, and *Dejing* 德經 or *Depian* 德篇. We cannot easily discover the original order of the *Laozi*, *i.e.*, whether the *Daojing* comes before the *Dejing*, or the *Dejing* comes before the

Daojing. According to both the *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 and the Mawangdui silk text, the *Laozi's Dejing* or *Depian* comes before *Daojing* or *Daopian*. However, a version in which the *Daojing* comes before the *Dejing* already appeared in the Former Han Dynasty. Generally believed is that the *Laozi* originally had no chapter divisions. No one knows who initiated the division the book into eighty-one chapters. However, the version of Heshang Gong 河上公, dating from the Han 漢 Dynasty, that of Wang Bi 王弼 from the Jin 晉 Dynasty, and that of Fu Yi 傅奕 from the Tang 唐 Dynasty as well as the present general transmitted version all consist eighty-one chapters.

The literary style

Concerning the style of the *Laozi's* normal version, various opinions abound. Many parts of the book are rhymed, but it is not a real poem. Traditionally, it belongs to the part called *zi* 子部 in *Sibu beiyao* 四部備要.

The book is from one person's hand rather than many, because: 1) The systematization of the *Laozi's* thought indicates a single author; 2) The first personal pronouns *wo* 我 and *wu* 吾 refer to the author himself, and the complaints in the book is similar to that of Confucius and Qu Yuan 屈原; these indicate also a single author. The book has also received later additions in the process of transmission.

The *Laozi* is a work from Chu 楚, because 1) The historical records have proved that it has its origin there; 2) The book has used Chu dialects; 3) The book demonstrates familiarity with the customs of Chu.

The authorship

There really was a man called Lao Dan 老聃, *i.e.*, Li Er 李耳, also called Lao Zi 老子, who was a contemporary of Confucius, *i.e.*, in 6th century BC. This Lao Zi was the author of the *Laozi's* original version. The original version of the *Laozi* was possibly different in some respects but similar on the whole to the traditional version of the *Laozi* which we possess today. But clearly most(?)⁷²¹ of the speeches and words of Lao Zi as well as the main points of his thought can be found in the normal version of the *Laozi*.

The traditional version was possibly added by some other people, but they must have successfully arranged the words of Lao Zi and understood the spirit.

The date

Various hypotheses have been forwarded concerning the date of the *Laozi*. According to the traditional opinion, the *Laozi* is from the end of the Spring and Autumn Period, *i.e.*, in the sixth to fifth century BC. The new scholars represented by Liang Qichao have proffered various opinions which put the *Laozi* at a later date. The main elements, such as the contemporary references, the terminology, the idea, and the style of the book,

⁷²¹ We can question whether only some or most of Lao Zi's speeches or words have been retained in the *Laozi's* present version. This 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.

have been involved in establishing the date of the *Laozi*.

This study holds that Lao Dan did write a book at the end of the Spring and Autumn Period, *i.e.*, in the sixth to fifth century BC. This fact has been proven by an analysis of the arguments of Liang and his followers in respect to the contemporary references, the terminology, the idea, and the style of the book. Modern scholars, who have the new opinion face two problems. One is that their arguments have been proven wrong by recent discoveries in the ancient classics and in archaeology. Another concerns the logical problems plaguing their methodology.

Speaking concretely, this study supports its opinion by showing: 1) There are contemporary references to the *Laozi*. 2) Terms such as *renyi*, *shangxian*, and *wancheng zhi zhu*, which have been employed by Liang and his followers, stem from the Spring and Autumn Period; thus, they do not support the notion of the *Laozi* as 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, belong to the Spring and Autumn Period. 4) The style of the *Laozi*, which Liang and his followers claim proves that the *Laozi* is a later work, does not in fact indicate such a later date. It shows instead that the *Laozi* is a work stemming from the end of Spring and Autumn Period or from the beginning of the Warring States Period. The whole style characteristics and the regional Chu background of the *Laozi* as well as the contrasts among the *Laozi*, the *Shijing* and the *Chuci* are most relevant in showing this.

- The main issues of Lao Zi the man:

The names

Lao Zi's surname was Lao 老, though it was, as four items of evidence shows, later changed to Li 李. His private names were Dan 聃 and Er 耳.

He was called as "Zi 子" as an honorary name meaning "gentleman", "scholar", or "master".

The native place

Lao Zi was a native of Chu 楚, which formerly belonged to Chen 陳.

Occupation

He was an archivist of Zhou 周, a contemporary of Confucius.

The meeting with Confucius

Lao Zi did meet Confucius. Concerning the meeting, many different opinions have been offered. Liang Qichao and his followers reject that the meeting took place, arguing mainly from two points: one is the inconsistencies among the speeches of Lao Zi in the different records; the other concerns the reliability of the source that records the meeting.

As to the first issue, the present work argues that though different speeches do occur in the different records, this fact cannot be employed to demonstrate as inconsistency

in spirit. Indeed these speeches are not against the spirit of the *Laozi*.

As to the second issue, the present work argues that since Sima Qian uses a source tradition different from the *Zhuangzi*, the unreliability of the *Zhuangzi* cannot affect the reliability of the *Shiji*. On the other hand, the *Inner chapters* of the *Zhuangzi*, which is generally accepted as reliable, does record Lao Dan's death and his contemporary with Confucius; thus, Lao Dan must have lived before the writing of the *Zhuangzi*.

Besides these points, one can refer to the Confucian records of meeting in the *Liji*: *Zengziwen*, the *Lüshi chunqiu*, etc. No reliable reasons compel us to deny the historicity of these records. The arguments of many modern scholars have been proved to be assumption rather than fact.

The identification with Lao Lai Zi

Lao Zi and Lao Lai Zi 老萊子 were two different people.

The identification with Lao Peng

We can arrive at no certain conclusion concerning the identification between Lao Zi and Lao Peng 老彭.

The identification with Taishi DAN

Lao Zi 老子 and Taishi DAN 太史儋 were two different people. Lao Dan 老聃, *i.e.*, Lao Zi, was a contemporary of Confucius; but Taishi DAN was a historian of Zhou, he had a meeting with Duke Xian of Qin 秦獻公 during the period 384-362 BC.

The son of Lao Zi, Zong

Zong 宗 was the son of another man. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the Grand Historian DAN 太史儋 was a historical figure, the father of Zong. Because of his similarity to Lao Dan in more respects than one, was confused with the son of the author of the *Laozi*.

Generally speaking, then, a misunderstanding concerning the *Laozi* has plagued the West, based on a wrong-headed reliance on the theories of Liang Qichao, Feng Youlan and their followers. The argument of this study, however, demonstrates that arguments of scholars like Liang Qichao and Feng Youlan are weak, improperly supported, and ineffective. That Lao Dan wrote the *Laozi* at the end of the Spring and Autumn Period is a conclusion which should be accepted both in the East and in the West.

概要

本书的结论是，新派关于老子其人及其书的论点在很多方面都是错误的，其次，新派的某些观点本书并未证明其为错误时，本书已指出它们不足以推翻传统的观点，因此，他们的论述往往只停留在假设或怀疑的阶段而缺乏较好的论据。

具体来说，本书所论述的主要问题是：一，司马迁《史记》中的《老子传》在西方社会被误解了很多。二，关于老子其人及其书，由梁启超和冯友兰为代表的新派对传统的观点提出了怀疑和挑战，他们的论断在西方被错误地当作权威性的结论。三，西方的很多关于老子其人及其书的流行观点是错误的，应该加以修改。这些问题在本书中都被一一论述了，传统的观点应该得到维护。

关于老子其书，有以下问题：

版本：荆门竹简是至今所发现的最古老的《老子》版本。马王堆和傅奕《老子》是两个来源于不同传统的本子。根据报导，竹简老子成书于战国中期，这说明竹简《老子》要早于或至少与马王堆和傅奕本同时。因此，可以设想马王堆和傅奕本是从竹简《老子》发展来的。但是在对竹简《老子》进行详细地研究之前，以上的这一假设还无法被证实，这一研究是本书下集的任务。

题目和结构：《老子》也叫作《道德经》，《五千文》或《五千言》。从汉朝开始，老子被称作“经”。《老子》一书分两个部分：道经（或道篇）和德经（德篇）。现在已难以知道它们本来的顺序是道经在前还是德经在前。根据《韩非子》和马王堆《老子》，德经都是在道经前面的。但是在西汉时道经在德经前面的版本也就已经出现了。

学者们普遍认为《老子》本来是不分章的，现已难以知道是谁从何时开始把《老子》分为八十一章的了。然而，汉时的河上公本，晋朝的王弼本，唐朝的傅奕本《老子》以及现在流行的《老子》都含有八十一章。

性质：关于《老子》的性质也有很多不同的观点。《老子》一书的很多部分都是押韵的，但它又不是真正的诗。传统上它被列入四部备要里的“子”部。

它是由一个人写成的而非多人的集体著作，因为：一，它的思想很有系统性；二，书中所用的第一人称代词“我”和“吾”都指代作者本人，书中的报怨之辞和孔子（《论语》）及屈原（《楚辞》）的极相似。但在后来的流传过程中，《老子》也被后人增删修改了部分内容。

《老子》一书是楚国的产物，本书从两个方面对此进行了论证：一，历史资料的记载；二，书中运用楚方言；三，书中表现的楚国文化风俗。

作者：在公元前六世纪与孔子同时，的确存在一位老聃，他就是李耳，也称为“老子”。也存在一本叫《老子》的书，那是《老子》的原版，它在某些方面会与我们所拥有的老子的流行版

本有些差异，但是在总体上它们是相同的，<<老子>>大部分话语⁷²²和他的主要思想都可以从<<老子>>的现行流行本中找到。

<<老子>>的现行版本可能被其他人增改过，但此人一定很熟悉老子的精神并且成功地对老子的言语进行了组织安排。

时代：关于<<老子>>的时代问题，历来也有种种不同的论调。根据传统的观点，<<老子>>成书于春秋末期，也就是公元前六到五世纪。但是梁启超等新学者则将<<老子>>的成书时期大大推迟了，其主要因素是：同时代的引证，术语的使用，书的思想，风格等。

本书的观点是，老聃在春秋末公元前五世纪写了<<老子>>一书。利用对梁启超等人的论述（如同时代的引证，术语的使用，书的思想，风格等）进行驳论和新的考古成果，本书证明了自己观点的正确性。新学者们的论述中所存在的问题主要有两个：一是被古籍和考古新发现所证明了的错误，二是他们方法论上所存在的逻辑矛盾。

具体来说，本书的主论据是：一，存在对<<老子>>的同时代引证；二，术语如“仁义”，“尚贤”，和“万乘之主”等曾被梁冯等人引为否定<<老子>>为春秋末作品的证据，而本述则证明这些术语也属于春秋时期。三，梁冯说<<老子>>的思想对于春秋时代来说太激进了，本书证明它们就是春秋时的思想，因此梁冯的论点不攻自破。四，梁冯所凭以立论的<<老子>>风格特点也被本书证明是无说服力的。另一方面，本书从正面也证明了<<老子>>是春秋末战国初的作品：<<老子>>的整个风格特点及楚文化的背景，<<老子>>与<<诗经>>和<<楚辞>>的风格比较。

关于老子其人，有以下诸问题：

姓名：老子的姓是“老”，后来变为“李”，这已由四方面的论据给予证实。他的名是“聃”和“耳”。他被称作“子”是一种尊称，相当于“绅士”，“学者”或“先生”。

籍贯：老子的籍贯是“楚”，以前属于“陈”。

职业：他是孔子时周朝的一个守藏史。

与孔子的会面：关于这一问题有很多不同的观点。梁启超和他的支持者们主要从两个方面来否定会面一事：一是他们认为在不同的记载中的老子言论之间有冲突；二是他们认为记载老孔会面的材料本身不可靠。

关于第一个否定会面的论据，本书驳斥说，老子的不同言论并不相互冲突，相反的是它们都与老子一书的精神很吻合。

关于第二个否定会面的论据，本书驳斥说，司马迁写<<史记>>时有一个不同于<<庄子>>的材料来源，因此<<庄子>>的不可靠性并不能否定<<史记>>的可靠性。从另一方面说，一般被认为可靠的<<庄子>>的内篇也有关于老聃之死和孔老同时代的记载，因此老聃一定生活于庄子之前。除此之外，<<礼记·曾子问>>，<<吕氏春秋>>和<<荀子>>也都有关于老子的记载。因此并无可靠的证据来否定这些记载的历史可靠性。很多新派的论断只是一种假设而已，并非事实。

⁷²² 老子的一部分还是大部分话语被包含在现行流行本中？在研究完荆门竹简老子之前，还无法回答。本研究的下个阶段将对此作专门探讨。

与老彭的认同：此问题无定论。

与太史儋的认同：老子和太史儋是两个不同的人。老聃也就是老子，是孔子的同时人；太史儋也是周朝（东周）的一个史官，他曾于公元前384年至362年见过秦献公。

老子的儿子宗：宗是“另一个老子”的儿子。太史儋有可能就是宗的父亲，因为儋与老子（老聃）在一些方面有相似性故与老聃相混淆了。

总的来说，根据梁启超和冯友兰的观点，在西方存在着一种对《老子》一书的误解。然而，本书证明这些观点是不正确的。老聃在春秋末期写了《老子》一书，是一个在东西方都应该承认的事实。