

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE GUODIAN *LAOZI*

by

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7 Annotated Translations

The translations in this section were included for the convenience of the reader. They are all relevant to the arguments made in Section 3.1.2 regarding the changing use of the term *Taiyi* over time.

7.1 Notes on Translation

Square brackets in the Chinese text indicate that characters have been added to fill in the spaces left by missing or damaged characters in the original document. Square brackets in the English translation indicate where I have had to add words for the sake of clarity. For some of the texts, I have also included translation notes as well as relevant commentary (e.g. from the *Guodian Chumu Zhujian*) beneath my translations and marked them with capital letters in brackets, e.g. (A). For ease of reference, I have labeled commentaries and their respective pages numbers in short form, e.g. *Guodian Chumu Zhujian* page 124 is labeled ‘GCZ 124.’ The English translations of the commentaries are my own.

When it comes to Chu era bamboo texts, it is important to note that there are many difficulties inherent their in translation. In many cases, they include characters that are no longer used, and scholars must guess as to their meaning by comparing their use to other texts which contain those terms. In many cases, the strips are damaged, and key characters are (wholly or partially) missing or obscured. Scholars must again make a guess as to which characters would be most likely to be missing, based on context or on other versions of the text (if they exist). In addition, Chu script was not standardized, and characters with similar sound or components were often substituted for each other. Finally, due to the fact that the texts are written on bamboo slips whose strings often rot away over time, and whose ends may be broken or damaged, the process of arranging the strips into their original order is also difficult. Unless the text matches perfectly

with a received version, errors are easy to make. All of these difficulties lead to translations that are tenuous at best, and filled with suggestions for alternative readings.

My translation of the TYSS is based on the *Guodian Chumu Zhujian*.¹⁸⁷ In the Chinese text, the characters in brackets, except where explicitly marked, are those supplied by the collators of the *Guodian Chumu Zhujian*. Where two (or more) possible readings exist, I have chosen to include both character suggestions, but then only translated the one I thought was most suitable. After careful analysis, I have agreed with Robert Henricks that Slip 9 should be moved from its *Guodian Chumu Zhujian* placement to after Slips 10–12, and have placed it accordingly.¹⁸⁸ I also referred to Henricks' English translation of the TYSS to ensure my translation was accurate.¹⁸⁹

For all of the other texts, I used the Gugong Concordances (故宮【寒泉】古典文獻全文檢索資料庫 *Gu gong [Han quan] gu dian wen xian quan wen jian suo zi liao ku*) for the Chinese text, found online at <http://210.69.170.100/s25>. The Gugong Concordances is a Chinese language, full-text searchable collection of many official documents and books from the Pre-Qin to the Qing dynasty. The Concordance was created by 陳郁夫 Chen Yu-Fu and 敬啟 Jing Qi in 1999 and published by the National Palace Museum in Taiwan (Guoli gugong bowuyuan 國立故宮博物院). In some cases, I confirmed the Chinese text with other sources, as marked.

All the English translations are all my own, however, in some cases, after I had finished my translation, I consulted with other pre-existing English translations in order to clarify sections I had difficulty with. For the *Zhuangzi*, I consulted Burton Watson. 1968. *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*. New York: Columbia University Press. However, our translations ended up

¹⁸⁷ Jingmenshi Bowuguan 荊門市博物館 (Jingmen Museum), 郭店楚墓竹簡 *Guodian Chumu zhujian* (*The Bamboo Slips from the Chu Tomb at Guodian*).

¹⁸⁸ Henricks, *Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching*, 127–128.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

fairly different. I often simply disagreed with his translations. Watson also tends to omit difficult lines, gloss over tricky phrases, and obscure the original grammar, so I did not find his translation terribly helpful for the passages I was struggling with. For the *Chuci*, I consulted David Hawkes. 1985. *Songs of the South: An Anthology of Ancient Chinese Poems by Qu Yuan and Other Poets*. London: Penguin Classics and David Hawkes. 1959. *Ch'u Tz'u: The Songs of the South*. London: Oxford University Press. While I did not often need to refer to his translations, I made great use of his footnotes and general comments, especially when it came to proper names and obscure references. For the *Lushi Chunqiu*, I consulted John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel. 2000. *The Annals of Lü Buwei*. California: Stanford University Press. While their style is much more poetic than mine, it was very helpful in confirming the basic sense of various passages.

7.2 Translations

7.2.1 *Taiyishengshui* (TYSS) 太一生水

Slips 1–8

1 大(太)一生水，水反輔(輔)大(太)一，是以成天。天反輔(輔)大(太)一，是以成隍(地)。天隍(地)[复相輔]

Taiyi gave birth to Water. Water returned to assist (A) *Taiyi*, [and] by means of this the Heavens were completed/manifested. The Heavens returned to assist *Taiyi*, [and] by means of this the Earth was completed. The Heavens and Earth [returned to assist each other] (B),

(A) GCZ 125: ‘補’ should be read as ‘輔,’ which can also be written as ‘備.’ The *Guangya* or *Expanded Erya* Dictionary’s section titled “Explaining Old Words part 2” says “備 means 助 (to help, to assist).”

(B) GCZ 125: the missing characters in this sentence can be read as “复相輔” based on context.

2 也，是以成神明補 神明复相補(輔)也，是以成𡩊(陰)易(陽)。𡩊(陰)易(陽)复相補(輔)也，是以成四時。四時

[and] by means of this the Spirits and Luminaries were completed. The Spirits and Luminaries returned to assist each other, [and] by means of this *Yin* and *Yang* were completed. *Yin* and *Yang*

returned to assist each other, [and] by means of this the Four Seasons were completed. The Four Seasons

(C) GCZ 126: the *Zhou Yi*'s "Shuo Gua" ("Discussion of the Trigrams") chapter states: "One who lives by surreptitiously receiving the assistance of the Spirits and Luminaries" and the *Zhuangzi* chapter 33 "All Under Heaven" separates *shenming* into two separate entities by asking "Spirits descend due to what? Luminaries are emitted due to what?"

(D) 四時 often refers to 'year,' but here it can't because '歲' is already being used here to refer to 'year.'
GCZ 126: '四時' refers to the four seasons of Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter.

3 复[相]輔(輔)也，是以成倉(滄)然(熱)。倉(滄)然(熱)复[相]輔(輔)也，是以成濕燥(燥)。
濕燥(燥)复相輔(輔)也，成載(歲)

returned to assist each other (E), [and] by means of this Cold and Hot (F) were completed. Cold and Hot returned to assist each other, [and] by means of this Wet and Dry (G) were completed. Wet and Dry returned to assist each other, completing the Yearly Cycle (H)

(E) GCZ 126: according to the surrounding context, there is a character missing after '復' (returned), which should be '相' (mutually).

(F) GCZ 126: '倉' should be read as '滄.' The character '滄' (dark blue), when put in contrast to '熱' (heat/hot), must mean 'cold.' The *Shuowen* says '倉' means '冬' or 'cold winter-time temperatures.'

(G) GCZ 126: '燥' should be read as '燥' (dry) even though the *Shuo Wen* says '燥' means '乾' (cold).

(H) GCZ 126: '載' is Chu script for '歲' because the Tang Dynasty tradition says it means '載' (year) and the *Erya*'s chapter called "Explaining Heaven" says '載' means '歲' (year). The Sun Commentary says "When the four seasons all come to an end, this is called a year."

4 而止。古(故)載(歲)者，濕燥(燥)之所生也。濕燥(燥)者，倉(滄)然(熱)之所生也。
倉(滄)然(熱)者，[四時] 5 者，陰(陰)陽(陽)之所生也。陰(陰)陽(陽)者，神明之所生也。
神明者，天(地)之所生也。天(地) 6 者，大(太)一之所生也是古(故)，大(太)一(藏)於
水，行於時，(周)而或(又)[始，以己為]

and that's all. Therefore the year [is] generated by Wet and Dry. Wet and Dry [are] generated by Cold and Hot. Cold and Hot [are] generated by the Four Seasons. The Four Seasons [are] generated by *Yin* and *Yang*. *Yin* and *Yang* [are] generated by the Spirits and Luminaries. The Spirits and Luminaries [are] generated by Heaven and Earth. Heaven and Earth [are] generated by *Taiyi*. For this reason, *Taiyi* is stored/concealed in water, [and] moves in the [four] seasons. Making a circuit and then starting again, [it] takes itself to be (I)

(I) GCZ 126: I suspect it is permissible to read '進' as '周' (to make a circuit), and '或' as '又' (again).

After that, there is a character missing that ought to be '始' (to begin). Therefore, the meaning of '周而又始' is the same as '周而復始' (to make a circuit and then start again)."

7 孺(萬)勿(物)母。𠂔(一)块(缺)𠂔(一)涅(盈), 以忌(紀/己)為孺(萬)勿(物)經。此天之所不能殺, 陸(地)之所

the mother of the ten thousand things. In turns [going] under [and] over (J), [it] takes itself to be (K) the warp (M) of the ten thousand things. This [is] what Heaven is not able to weaken (L), what Earth

(J) GCZ 126: ‘𠂔’ should be read as ‘一.’ This character also appears in the bamboo text the *Wu Xing* and the *Shijing*’s song “Cao feng: Shi jiu (The Turtle Doves), which both say: “The gentle man, the Junzi, his appearance is [properly] uniform.” This can be used to prove that ‘𠂔’ ought to be read as ‘一.’

Based on the comments of the GCZ, this phrase should be treated as ‘一缺一盈.’ Since the grammatical structure ‘一X一Y’ can be read as either ‘simultaneously X and Y’ or ‘alternating X and Y,’ and since the set of terms ‘缺’ and ‘盈’ can refer to ‘empty/waning’ and ‘full/waxing,’ or ‘under’ and ‘over,’ I chose to translate ‘一X一Y’ as ‘alternating, and ‘缺’ and ‘盈’ as ‘under’ and ‘over’ to suit the weaving metaphor indicated by the term ‘經’ (‘warp’) later in the sentence. For more on identifying ‘一缺一盈’ as a weaving metaphor, rather than a moon metaphor (as would be indicated by choosing to define ‘缺’ and ‘盈’ as ‘empty’ and ‘full’), see (M) below, and Section 5.

(K) GCZ 126: ‘忌’ should be read as ‘紀’ (discipline or to record). In the *Guodian Chumu Zhujuan*, we find that Qiu disagrees with the other editors: he suspects that ‘忌’ should be read as ‘己’ (itself). Based on the similarities between these lines and the *Laozi*, for the time being I tend to favor this reading.

(L) GCZ 126: Regarding] ‘殺,’ the *Yili* “Shi Guan Li” has the phrase ‘德之殺也’ and the commentary claims the meaning is similar to ‘衰’ ([make] weak, decline). The *Zhouli* chapter “Lin Ren” has the phrase ‘詔王殺邦用’ and the commentary claims the meaning is similar to ‘減’ (moat around).

(M) As mentioned before, in weaving, the warp is the set of fixed vertical parallel yarns through which the weft is woven. When weaving with a loom, the warp yarns are fully attached before weaving begins. The mixed and stable warp provides the ‘framework,’ and the weft, once woven repeatedly over and under the warp strings, makes the ‘pattern’ and completely hides the warp strings.

8 不能釐(埋/釐), 𡗗(陰)曷(陽)之所不能成君子智(知)此之胃(謂). . . .

[is] not able to change (N), what *Yin* and *Yang* are not able to complete. The Junzi knows this [is] called...

(N) According to Robert G. Henricks. 2000. *Lao Tzu’s Tao Te Ching*. NY: Columbia University Press, 126. ‘釐’ should be read as ‘埋’ (to bury or cover up, e.g. with earth, snow, etc.) Most of the GCZ 126 comment regarding this character is untranslatable due to the number of non-extant characters, however, I have managed to ascertain that “Bamboo texts use the character ‘釐,’ which means ‘釐.’ The *Ancient Script Four Tone Rhyme Book* quotes the *Ancient Book of History* in saying that ‘釐’ was written ‘𡗗.’ In Bronze script ‘釐’ is written as ‘𡗗’ on a Chen state Gui vessel, and the form of this Bronze script character is similar to the form of the character found in the bamboo texts. The *Hou Han Shu*’s chapter titled “Liang Tong Zhuan” has the phrase ‘豈一朝所釐’ and the commentary claims that the meaning is similar to ‘改’ (change). However, it is important to note here that the *Ancient Book of History* (a.k.a. The Guwen version of the *Shang Shu*), which was reportedly found in the walls of Confucius’ house, is generally considered a Han forgery, and therefore not a terribly reliable source of Warring States information.

Slips 10–12

10 下,土也,而胃(謂)之陸(地)。上,𩇛(氣)也,而胃(謂)之天。道亦其志(過/字)也。青(請)昏(問)其名。以

[What is] below [is] soil, but [we] call it Earth. [What is] above [is] air, but [we] call it Heaven. [It] takes ‘*Dao*’ [as] its designation (O). Please may I ask its name? [One who] takes

(O) GCZ 126: ‘志’ follows the sound of *xin* and *hua*, and so we used this as a pretext to read the character as ‘過’ (to pass through or beyond).

11 道從事者必愧(訛/託)其名, 古(故)事成而身長。 聖人之從事也, 亦愧(託)其

the *Dao* to engage in affairs, necessarily trusts in its name, Therefore [his] affairs are complete and [his] body [lives] long. [When] the sage’s engaging in affairs, [he] also necessarily trusts in

(P) According to his Chinese transcription, Robert G. Henricks believes ‘愧’ should be read as ‘訛’ (to cheat) but his English translation reflects the definition of ‘托’ (to rely on). Robert G. Henricks. 2000. *Lao Tzu’s Tao Te Ching*. NY: Columbia University Press, 124 and 126. Edward Slingerland, in a private communication, indicated that this term could mean “to temporarily lodge,” which would make this phrase “it necessarily temporarily takes it for its name.” The GCZ 125 uses ‘託’ (to trust), with no explanation.

12 名, 古(故)𡗗(功)成而身不𡗗(傷)。 天陸(地)名志(字)并立, 古(故)𡗗(過)其方, 不思相
□□□[當], /

its name, therefore [his] work/merit is accomplished and [his] body is not harmed/distressed. [Regarding] Heaven and Earth, [their] names and designations stand side by side, therefore [if we] go beyond these areas, [we] cannot think [of something] appropriate [to serve as a name] (Q).

(Q) GCZ 126: As for ‘思,’ in the *Jianwen* it is distinguished from ‘田,’ and we take it to be ‘思.’ The Baoshan Chu bamboo strips have the phrase ‘思攻,’ this ‘思’ character is considered to be the same as in the *Jianwen*. Qiu disagrees: “As for the character after ‘相,’ it is damaged, but the topmost part of it still survives. Considering to the remaining strokes, as well as the surrounding context, the rhyme groups, and the remainder of the text, this necessarily is the character ‘尚’ another character that takes the ‘尚’ phonetic, and therefore it ought to be read as ‘當.’ Furthermore, ‘不思相當’ should be read as one sentence. As for the three missing characters following that, according to the text’s meaning, they ought to be ‘天不足’ or ‘天□□,’ and along with the next strip’s phrase ‘於西北,’ should be read together as one sentence. From the phrase ‘故事成而身長’ to the end of the text, the rhyme type is that of nasalized sounds (*yang* sounds), i.e. the rhyme group is: 長、傷、方、當、強、□、上.

Slip 9

9 天道貴溺(弱), 雀(爵/削/摧)成者以益生者, 伐於彊(強), 責於... /

Heaven’s Way values weakness (R). Cutting away (S) at [what is] complete in order to add on to [what is] alive (OR: Cutting at Completeness in order to increase Life)(T) [is like] striking down in violence (U), punishing in... [in order to...]

(R) This phrase sounds like the received *Laozi* Chapters R43 and R76: “The softest, most pliable (弱) thing in the world runs roughshod over the firmest (強) thing in the world” and “Rigidity and power occupy the inferior position; Suppleness, softness, weakness, and delicateness occupy the superior position.” Henricks, *Lao-Tzu Te-Tao Ching*, 12 and 47, respectively.

(S) GCZ 125 has ‘爵’ for ‘雀,’ with no explanation. Robert G. Henricks (*Lao Tzu’s Tao Te Ching*, 127–129) suggests that ‘雀’ should be read as ‘削’ (to pare or peel with a knife; cut; chop). Henricks also suggests an alternate reading of ‘摧’ (knock, beat, strike), as this could relate better to the story of Gong Gong striking what is complete (i.e. the originally intact pillar of heaven and severing Earth’s cord). For the full description of the Gong Gong myth, see my comments about TYSS in the main text of Section 3.1.2.

(T) This phrase sounds a lot like the received *Laozi* Chapter R55: “To add on to life (益生) is called a ‘bad omen’; for the mind to control the breath—that’s called ‘forcing (強) things.’” Henricks, *Lao-Tzu Te-Tao Ching*, 24. Here, it again sounds like a negative thing, since it is being compared to “striking down in violence.”

(U) This reference to “striking down in violence” is perhaps referring to the violence of Gong Gong as he smashed down the pillar of Heaven. This strip appears to carry an admonition to those who would act as he did.

Slips 13–14

13[天不足]於西北，其下高以彊(強)。隍(地)不足於東南，其上..... /

14[不足於上]者，又(有)余(余/餘)於下。不足於下者，又(有)余(余/餘)[於上。] /

Heaven is not sufficient in the North West, its lower [part]/underneath [i.e. the earth] is high by means of force/violence. (V) Earth is not sufficient in the North East, its upper [part]/above [i.e. Heaven/the sky] [is high by means of violence]. (W) Not [being] sufficient in the upper [part]/above (X), there is surplus (Y) in lower [part]/underneath. [Not [being] sufficient in the lower [part]/below], there is surplus in upper [part]/above. (Z)

(V) This is referring to the violence of Gong Gong as he smashed the pillar. See my comments in the main text of Section 3.1.2.

(W) This part of the text is missing, and I keep trying to reconstruct the geometry to figure out if Heaven would be low or high in the North-East, but it is very difficult to do. Based on Section 3.1.2, I know Heaven is low and the Earth is high in the North-West, and the waters run to the South-East, so the Earth must be low there. If the Earth is low in the South-East, and the pillars of the South-East cannot reach Heaven, perhaps Heaven would be high there. For the time being, I will go with ‘high,’ however I am ready to stand corrected.

(X) GCZ 126: “This place omits approximately seven characters, according to the examples in the text, we can emend the last four characters to be ‘不足於上.’”

(Y) Henricks suggests 余 should be left as 余 (surplus). Henricks, *Lao Tzu Tao Te Ching*, 129. GCZ 126: suggests 余 should be read as 餘, which also means ‘extra’ or ‘surplus,’ but offers no explanation as to why.

(Z) This sounds like the *Laozi*: “The Way of Heaven is like the flexing of a bow. The high it presses down; the low it raises up. From those with a surplus it takes away; to those without enough it adds on. Therefore the Way of Heaven is to reduce the excessive and increase the insufficient.” (Chapter R77)