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Research Note

The "Thought of Huang-Lao"[a]: A Reflection on the Lao Tzu[b] and Huang Ti[c] Texts in the Silk Manuscripts of Ma-wang-tui[d]

TU WEI-MING

On 30 July 1972 the *People's Daily* in China broke the news of a major archaeological discovery in the Ch'ang-sha[e] area of Hunan[f] Province, the site of the ancient state of Ch'u.[g] The discovery, which was to be labeled Tomb 1 of the Ma-wang-tui finds, was of an astonishingly well-preserved female who lived at least 2,000 years ago, along with numerous artifacts from the Western Han[h] (206 B.C.–A.D. 8), including finely executed paintings on silk, intricately embroidered clothes, more than 180 pieces of delicate lacquer ware, 162 expressive wooden tomb figurines, and more than 300 bamboo strips and wooden slips used as "grave inventory notes" (*ch'ien-ts'e*)[i] inscribed with ink characters of high calligraphic quality. Subsequent researches, including anatomical studies of the woman's body, positively identified Ma-wang-tui as the burial mound of the Marquis of Tai,[j] Li Ts'ang,[k] who had served as chief minister to three kings of the Kingdom of Ch'ang-sha prior to his death in 186 B.C.; and of his consort, who died—possibly of food poisoning—approximately twenty years later. These vivid relics revealed an important chapter of ancient Chinese culture history to the scholarly community.[1]

The excavations of the two tombs adjoining Tomb 1 were carried out from November 1973 to January 1974 by representatives of the Archaeological Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Hunan Provincial Museum. They further substantiated the importance of what had already been acclaimed one of the most significant discoveries in recent decades.[2] In July 1974 *Wen-wu*[l] (Cultural

Tu Wei-ming[ev] is Professor of History and Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Religious Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. The author wishes to thank the members of the Workshop on the Silk Manuscripts of Ma-wang-tui, sponsored by the Berkeley Regional Seminar in Confucian Studies, held at the University of California at Santa Cruz, 21–23 April 1978, and in particular the organizer of the workshop, Jeffrey K. Riegel, who made searching criticisms of an earlier version of this paper. He also thanks the members of the Ma-wang-tui Study Group of the Academy of Sciences in the People's Republic of China for providing him with additional information during their special briefing for the Han Studies Delegation of the Committee for Scholarly Communication with the People's Republic of China, 18 October 1978. He is grateful to Professor Yü Ying-shih,[bz] head of the Delegation, for granting him special permission to take part in the discussion in Peking. He wishes to acknowledge further the editorial assistance of Betsy Scheiner. The Chinese characters in the glossary were written by Changlin Dillingham.

[1] For some of the early scholarly discussions on Tomb 1 of the Ma-wang-tui finds, see *K'ao-ku* [Archaeology], 1972, no. 5, pp. 37–42; and 1972, no. 6, pp. 48–52. Also, see *Wen-wu* [Cultural relics], 1973, no. 7, pp. 73–74; and 1973, no. 9, pp. 61–76.

[2] For brief notes in English on some of the more important articles on these finds, see Jeffrey K. Riegel, "A Summary of Some Recent *Wenwu* and *Kaogu* articles: Mawangdui Tombs Two and Three," *Early China*, Fall 1975, no. 1, pp. 10–15.

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Relics) published a brief report on the finds of Tombs 2 and 3. The former, which was poorly sealed and had been plundered a number of times as well, belonged to the Marquis himself. But the latter, believed to have been the tomb of his son, who died at about the age of thirty in 168 B.C., contained more than a thousand grave objects. The most spectacular treasure among them is undoubtedly the Silk Manuscripts found in the lower part of Lacquer Box 57. The editorial board of *Wen-wu* held a symposium on 28 August 1974, with those experts who had been working on the manuscripts for the past six months invited to make some general observations. The reports of these scholars, under the leadership of senior classicists such as T'ang Lan[m] and Shang Ch'eng-tso,[n] make it clear that the discovery of the Silk Manuscripts, containing more than 120,000 characters, is a contribution to the illumination of the Classical era unprecedented in Chinese history.[3]

For one thing, the Silk Manuscripts provide us with two versions of the *Lao Tzu*. Based upon a study of tabooed words, the experts state that version A, which is written in seal script, must have been completed no later than 195 B.C., and that version B, in clerical script, may have been written between 194 and 180 B.C., thus representing by far the oldest extant texts of the Taoist classic. While the two versions are nearly identical in form and content, they differ significantly from the standard modern editions both in chapter sequence and language. For instance, version B contains 5,467 characters and is divided into two main categories; since the *Te*[o] category actually precedes the *Tao*[p] category, it seems that the Book of Lao Tzu, commonly known as *Tao-te ching*,[q] ought to be referred to as *Te-tao ching*.[r] The title could then be read as "the acquisition of the Way," rather than Arthur Waley's more familiar rendition, "the Way and its power."[4]

Equally fascinating, and even more meaningful historically, are the "lost texts" attached to the two versions of the *Lao Tzu*. The four texts immediately following version A include a manuscript of 181 lines with more than 5,400 characters. A preliminary report indicates that it may have been a Confucian classic in the tradition of Mencius.[5] The four texts that precede version B have a total of 11,564 characters in

[3] A summary of the symposium is found in *Wen-wu*, 1974, no. 9, pp. 45–57. Other participants included Ch'iu Hsi-kuei,[ca] Lo Fu-i,[cb] Li Chia-hao,[cc] Chang Cheng-lang,[cd] Chou Shih-jung,[ce] Ku T'ieh-fu,[cf] Sun Kuan-wen,[cg] Fu Chü-yu,[ch] Chu Te-hsi,[ci] Tseng Hsien-t'ung,[cj] and Shih Shu-ch'ing.[ck]

[4] The best published account of the *Lao Tzu* portion of the Silk Manuscripts is *Ma-wang tui Han-mu po-shu*[cl] [The Silk Manuscripts of the Han tomb of Ma-wang-tui] (Peking: Wen-wu, 1975), an eight-volume edition. The first volume consists of photo reprints of the original silk manuscripts as reconstructed by the Ma-wang-tui Study Group. Volumes 2–6 are the transcriptions of the manuscripts into modern simplified Chinese with explanations and annotations. The last two volumes compare line by line the newly discovered versions of the *Lao Tzu* with the standard Fu I[cm] (555–639) edition.

[5] Professor Loewe of Cambridge University notes: "The text propagates Confucian idealism, in a manner comparable with that of *Ta-hsüeh*[cn], the author may have been a disciple of the school of Meng Tzu[co] or Tzu Ssu."[cp] See Michael A. N. Loewe, "Manuscripts Found Recently in China," *T'oung Pao*[cq] 63, nos. 2–3 (1978): 119. Loewe's preliminary survey is the most extensive discussion to date in English on the Silk Manuscripts as well as on manuscripts on wood, bamboo, and paper unearthed in China since 1972. I am indebted to Professor Edwin G. Pulleyblank for making available to me a copy of this particular text from the University of British Columbia library in the winter of 1976. My own work on the material partly confirms Loewe's observation, but I would suggest that it might have been in the tradition of *Chung-yung*,[cr] and that it was precisely the kind of Mencian teaching that is characterized in the *Hsün Tzu* as *wu-hsing*.[cs] This Confucian *wu-hsing* should perhaps be rendered as "five conducts" to distinguish it from the *wu-hsing* in the Yin-Yang School. For an excellent study on this topic, see P'ang P'u,[ct] "Ma-wang-tui po-shu chieh-k'ai-le Ssu-Meng wu-hsing shuo chih-mi"[cu] [The Silk Manuscripts of Ma-wang-tui solve the riddle of

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175 lines: *Ching-fa*[s] (Invariable Law, 5,000 characters); *Shih-ta ching*[t] (Ten Great Scriptures, 4,500); *Ch'eng*[u] (Balancing, 1,600); and *Tao-yüan*[v] (Origin of the Way, 464).[6] The most convincing interpretation of these texts to date strongly suggests that they may be the lost texts of the Yellow Emperor referred to in the bibliography of the *History of the Former Han Dynasty* as the *Huang Ti ssu-ching*[w] (The Four Scriptures of the Yellow Emperor).[7]

The Silk Manuscripts also include other texts of comparable significance. Especially noteworthy is a version of the *Book of Change,* complete with all 64 hexagrams in about 5,200 characters. The three accompanying texts are thought to have been early Confucian commentaries on the Book. The longest of the three, amounting to 6,000 characters, is said to have employed the rhetorical device of a series of dialogues between the author, presumably a transmitter of the classic, and several questioners.[8] In addition, the Silk Manuscripts also contain materials that are remarkably similar in language to the *Chan-kuo ts'e*[x] (Stratagems of the Warring States). They may have been among the sources from which the *Chan-kuo ts'e* was put together under the editorship of Liu Hsiang[y] (77–7 B.C.). Some experts suspect that they might be the long lost thirty-three chapters of the *Su Tzu*[z] (The Book of Su Ch'in,[aa] d. 317 B.C.), an account written by one of the most influential strategists of *realpolitik* in the Warring States (403–222 B.C) of what he himself said and did.[9]

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the theory of the "Five Phases" in the school of Tzu-ssu and Mencius], *Wen-wu,* 1977, no. 10, pp. 63–69.

[6] For a pioneering discussion in English of the meaning of these texts, see Jan Yün-hua, "The Silk Manuscripts on Taoism," *T'oung Pao* 63, no. 1 (1978): 65–84. See also Professor Jan's "Short Bibliography of the Silk Manuscripts," *Society for the Study of Chinese Religions Newsletter,* 1976, no. 1, pp. 4–7.

[7] This is based on T'ang Lan's interpretation. See his important article, "Ma-wang-tui ch'u-t'u Lao Tzu i-pen chüan-ch'ien ku-i-shu te yen-chiu—chien-lun ch'i yü Han-ch'u Ju-Fa tou-cheng te kuan-hsi"[cv] [A study of the lost ancient texts preceding version B of the *Lao Tzu* unearthed at Ma-wang-tui with comments on their relation to the struggle between Confucians and Legalists in early Han], *K'ao-ku hsüeh-pao* [Acta Archaeologica Sinica], 1975, no. 1, pp. 7–38. It should be noted that the title of one of the four texts, *Shih-ta ching,* has recently been changed to *Shih-liu ching*[cw] (Sixteen Scriptures). I am indebted to Li Hsüeh-ch'in[cx] of the Institute of History in the Academy of Social Sciences, People's Republic of China, for this information. For a critical reflection on T'ang's interpretation, see Lung Hui,[cy] "Ma-wang-tui ch'u-t'u Lao Tzu i-pen ch'ien ku-i-shu t'an-yüan"[cz] [A search for the origins of the lost ancient texts preceding version B of the *Lao Tzu* unearthed at Ma-wang-tui], *K'ao-ku hsüeh-pao,* 1975, no. 2, pp. 23–32. For a reference to Lung's argument in English, see Loewe, p. 120.

[8] For some basic information on this material, see Loewe, p. 117. A brief reference to the *I-ching*[da] manuscript is found in "Ma-wang-tui erh-san hao Han-mu fa-chüeh te chu-yao shou-huo"[db] [The major finds of nos. 2 and 3 of the Han tombs unearthed at Ma-wang-tui], ed. The Writing Committee of both the Institute of Archaeology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Provincial Museum of Hunan, in *K'ao-ku,* 1975, no. 1, pp. 50–51.

[9] For a preliminary observation on this material, see Yang K'uan,[dc] "Ma-wang-tui po-shu Chan-kuo-ts'e te shih-liao chia-chih"[dd] [The value as historical source of the *Stratagems of the Warring States* in the silk manuscripts of Ma-wang-tui], *Wen-wu,* 1975, no. 2, pp. 26–34. See also Yang's further comments on the material: "Chan-kuo chung-ch'i te ho-tsung lien-heng chan-cheng ho cheng-chih lu-hsien tou-cheng"[de] [The battles between vertical cooperation and horizontal alliance and the struggles between political lines in the middle period of the Warring States], *Wen-wu,* 1975, no. 3, pp. 1–8. A transcription of the text into modern simplified Chinese is found in "Ma-wang-tui Han-mu ch'u-t'u po-shu Chan-kuo-ts'e shih-wen"[df] [An annotated account of the *Stratagems of the Warring States* in the Silk Manuscripts of the Han tomb unearthed at Ma-wang-tui], ed. Ma-wang-tui Han-mu po-shu cheng-li hsiao-tsu,[dg] (hereafter abbreviated as MWTHT), *Wen-wu,* 1975, no. 4, pp. 14–26. Ma Yung,[dh] a member of the Ma-wang-tui Study Group, has written an analytical essay on the chronology and historical background of this particular manuscript; see his article, "Po-shu Pei-pen Chan-kuo-ts'e ko-p'ien te nien-tai ho li-shih pei-ching"[di] [The date and historical background of each chapter in the *Other Version of the Stratagems of the Warring States* of the Silk Manuscripts], *Wen-wu,* 1975, no. 4, pp. 27–40. For a further reflection on the issue of dating, see Tseng Ming,[dj] "Kuan-yü po-shu Chan-kuo-ts'e chung Su

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Other fascinating miscellaneous materials include valuable records of astronomical predictions; sophisticated geographic, military, and city maps; a large body of literature on medicine, with several hundred prescriptions for specifically diagnosed ailments and various forms of psychosomatic illness; and a manual on the physiognomy of horses *(Hsiang-ma ching* [ab]). [10]

In the last four years, more than fifty scholarly articles on the Ma-wang-tui finds have been published in *Wen-wu, K'ao-ku* [ac] (Archaeology), and *K'ao-ku hsüeh-pao* [ad] (Acta Archaeologica Sinica). As expected, Ma-wang-tui studies, as a growing academic concern, promise to develop into a multidisciplinary inquiry reminiscent of Tun-huang [ae] and other comparable Sinological efforts. For example, one of the earliest collaborative attempts to understand the relics unearthed from Tomb 1 brought together physicians, chemists, and experts on preservatives, as well as archaeologists, philologists, classicists, geographers, art historians, and paleographers. The special issue of *Wen-wu* (September 1972) which published a summary of the symposium seems to have ushered in a mode of scholarship that is likely to become the main thrust of research in the humanities in the People's Republic of China. These studies will not only increase our knowledge of traditional China, but will also reshape, and in some cases radically alter, fundamental academic conceptions of early Chinese artistic expressions, mythological symbols, and interactions among

Ch'in shu-hsin jo-kan nien-tai wen-t'i te shang-ch'üeh" [dk] [A discussion of several dating problems of the Su Ch'in letters in the *Stratagems of the Warring States* of the Silk Manuscripts], *Wen-wu,* 1975, no. 8, pp. 23–30. See also *Chan-kuo Ts'e,* trans. James I. Crump, rev. ed. (Taipei: Chinese Materials Center, 1979).

[10] See Loewe, pp. 122–24. For an informative discussion of these maps, see "Ch'ang-sha Ma-wang-tui san-hao Han-mu ch'u-t'u ti-t'u te cheng-li" [dl] [A reconstruction of the maps from no. 3 of the Han tombs unearthed at Ma-wang-tui], ed. MWTHT, *Wen-wu,* 1975, no. 2, pp. 35–42. T'an Ch'i-hsiang, [dm] the eminent historical geographer of Fu-tan [dn] University, has worked on these maps; see his articles, "Liang-ch'ien i-pai to nien ch'ien te i-fu ti-t'u" [do] [A map more than twenty-one hundred years old], *Wen-wu,* 1975, no. 2, pp. 43–48; and "Ma-wang-tui Han-mu ch'u-t'u ti-t'u so shuo-ming te chi-ko li-shih ti-li wen-t'i" [dp] [Several problems in historical geography as illustrated by the maps in the Han tombs unearthed at Ma-wang-tui], *Wen-wu,* 1975, no. 6, pp. 20–28. See also "Ma-wang-tui san-hao Han-mu ch'u-t'u chu-chün-t'u cheng-li chien-pao" [dq] [A brief report on the reconstruction of the military map in no. 3 of the Han tombs unearthed at Ma-wang-tui], ed. MWTHT, *Wen-wu,* 1978, no. 1, pp. 18–23. For descriptions of the medical texts, see "Ma-wang-tui Han-mu ch'u-t'u i-shu shih-wen chih-i" [dr] [An annotated account of the medical texts of the Silk Manuscripts in the Han tombs unearthed at Ma-wang-tui, I], ed. MWTHT, *Wen-wu,* 1975, no. 6, pp. 1–5; for the second part of this article, see *Wen-wu,* 1975, no. 9, pp. 35–48. See also the two articles contributed by the Research Seminar on Historical Medical Texts of the Chinese Medicine Research Institute: "Ma-wang-tui san-hao Han-mu po-hua tao-yin-t'u te ch'u-pu yen-chiu" [ds] [A preliminary study of the Diagram of Breathing Exercises on silk in no. 3 of the Han tombs unearthed at Ma-wang-tui], *Wen-wu,* 1975, no. 6, pp. 6–13; and "Ma-wang-tui po-shu ssu-chung ku-i-hsüeh i-shu chien-chieh" [dt] [A brief introduction to the four kinds of lost texts on ancient medical sciences in the Silk Manuscripts of Ma-wang-tui], *Wen-wu,* 1975, no. 6, pp. 16–19. For interpretive essays on these texts, see T'ang Lan, "Ma-wang-tui po-shu Ch'üeh-ku-shih-ch'i p'ien k'ao" [du] [An examination of the treatise entitled "Abstaining from Cereals and Inhaling Air" in the Silk Manuscripts of Ma-wang-tui], *Wen-wu,* 1975, no. 6, pp. 14–15; and Chung I-yen [dv] and Ling Hsiang, [dw] "Wo-kuo i-fa-hsien te tsui-ku i-fang—po-shu Wu-shih-erh ping-fang" [dx] [The most ancient prescriptions for medicine discovered in our country—the Fifty-two Prescriptions for Diseases of the Silk Manuscripts], *Wen-wu,* 1975, no. 9, pp. 49–60. I am indebted to Donald Harper of the University of California at Berkeley, also a member of the Santa Cruz Workshop, for his thought-provoking studies on the medical texts. For an analysis of the *Hsiang-ma ching,* see Hsieh Ch'eng-hsia, [dy] "Kuan-yü Ch'ang-sha Ma-wang-tui Han-mu po-shu Hsiang-ma ching te t'an-t'ao" [dz] [An inquiry into the *Classic of Horse Physiognomy* in the Silk Manuscripts of the Han tombs unearthed at Ma-wang-tui in Ch'ang-sha], *Wen-wu,* 1975, no. 8, pp. 23–26. For an annotated account of the *Hsiang-ma ching* in modern simplified characters, see *Wen-wu,* 1975, no. 8, pp. 17–22.

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classical systems of thought.[11] Major revisions will no doubt extend to other areas of the study of China.

Underlying all these great possibilities, of course, is the *Problematik* of interpretation. The excitement of being confronted with so many new "realities" may lead one to search for a general scheme whose grandeur does justice to the monumental challenge. The task at hand is far from well-defined, however, and demands a subtlety and patience diametrically opposed to the urge to tie up loose ends hastily. For those of us who must rely on the mediations of the published record, the work is not only painstaking, but often frustrating. Without access to the Silk Manuscripts as a whole, how can we determine the relative importance of a particular text? Should we accept the renditions made available to us? How do we know that the manner in which the materials have been presented over the past few years has not been influenced by political considerations in ways that somehow distort the original shape of the literature?[12] A host of similar queries can be raised. Those of a critical bent may even question the wisdom of making any broad observation at the present stage of development. With these qualifications and reservations in mind, I would like to offer some preliminary reflections on the possible implications of two of the texts for studying the relationship between Taoism and Legalism in early China.

The Lao Tzu

An initial encounter with the two newly unearthed versions of the frequently translated and widely studied Chinese classic gives the impression that the most interesting scholarly projects are likely to be in textual analysis. The very fact that there are 467 more characters in version B than in the current editions of the *Lao Tzu* raises major issues about the text. Equally significant for textual analysts is the division of the eighty-one chapters into the *Te* and *Tao* sections, reversing the long-established convention of referring to the Book as the *Tao-te ching*. We are not sure whether or not the additional characters, including at least 37 that have not yet been found in any ancient dictionaries, can all be accounted for as "free variations," although these are common in the Silk Manuscripts.[13] Nor can we be certain that

[11] Among the several inquiries currently underway in English, the following studies are particularly likely to lead to promising research results: N. J. Girardot, "Myth and Meaning in the Tao Te Ching: Chapters 25 and 42," *History of Religions* 16, no. 4 (1977): 294–328; John S. Major, "Research Priorities in the Study of Ch'u Religion," *History of Religions* 17, nos. 3–4 (1978): 226–42; and Michael Loewe, "Man and Beast: The Hybrid in Early Chinese Art and Literature," *Numen* 25, fasc. 2 (1978): 97–117. In the area of art history, see Noel Barnard's pioneering attempt to study the famous Ch'u silk manuscript of 1934: *The Ch'u Silk Manuscript—Translation and Commentary* (Canberra: Australian National Univ., 1972 and 1973); see also A. Gutkind Bulling, "The Guide of the Souls Picture in the Western Han Tombs in Ma-wang-tui near Ch'ang-sha," *Oriental Art* 20, no. 2 (Summer 1974): 58–73.

[12] It is vitally important to note that the so-called "Struggle between Confucianism and Legalism" debate, which was frequently a topic in intellectual discussions from 1972 to 1975, has had a damaging effect on critical scholarship in the People's Republic of China. It is therefore heartening to learn that Chinese scholars have made serious attempts to transcend this limited and limiting ideological dichotomy in recent months. But, regrettably, a deep-rooted "positivistic" tendency still persists among Chinese research workers. As a result, it is difficult for us to obtain disinterested accounts of subjects which are considered "superstitious" or "fanciful."

[13] I am indebted to Dr. T. Y. Tain[ea] of Los Angeles and Dr. William Boltz of Berkeley, members of the Santa Cruz Workshop, for their unpublished philological studies on the *Lao Tzu* texts. See also, Robert G. Henricks, "A Note on the Question of Chapter Divisions in the Ma-wang-tui Manuscripts of the *Lao-Tzu*," *Early China*, 1978–79, no. 4, pp. 49–51.

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the chapter sequence, which conforms to the quoted passages of the *Lao Tzu* in the Legalist classic *Han Fei Tzu,*[af] represents the original order. It is quite possible that the Ma-wang-tui versions themselves might have already been altered by Legalist influence.

The value of the silk texts for emending the current versions of the *Lao Tzu* is great. Hsü Fu-kuan,[ag] of the New Asia Research Institute, has already raised several issues on just this topic.[14] Jan Yün-hua,[ah] of McMaster University, touches on the same point in the first scholarly discussion on the subject in English.[15] Underlying the authentic possibilities of improving the philological quality of the text, however, is the more intriguing issue of the meaning of the text itself. How was the text of the *Lao Tzu* perceived by the early Han scholars? Was it a text for spiritual self-cultivation, a treatise on nonaggression, or, as some scholars claimed—notably Wang Chen[ai] in the T'ang[aj] Dynasty and Wang Fu-chih[ak] (1619–1692)—a manual of military strategy? Chai Ch'ing,[al] in an article published in *Hsüeh-hsi yü p'i-p'an*[am] (Study and Criticism) insists that the *Lao Tzu* is a "military book" (*ping-shu*[an]). The force of Chai's argument is seriously undermined, however, by the article's ideological stance.[16] A carefully researched paper by the eminent scholar Kao Heng[ao] and his colleague Ch'ih Hsi-chao[ap] proposes that, in the political culture of the first decades of the Former Han, the text could very well have been considered a kind of "Legalized Taoism."[17] In other words, the teachings in the *Lao Tzu* not only coexisted with a bureaucratic structure defined in Legalist terms but, more significantly, also provided a guiding principle for that structure's methods of operation.

H. G. Creel, in his presidential address to the American Oriental Society in 1956, was already concerned with the puzzling question, What is Taoism? Creel also mentioned that J. J. L. Duyvendak's recently published translation of the *Lao Tzu* had aroused wide interest partly because his interpretation was reminiscent of "a wing of Taoist thought that leaned heavily toward Legalism." Creel further observed, in a footnote to the printed version of his address, that "the interpretation made by Duyvendak was espoused only by distinctly minority opinion among early Taoists."[18] Although the main purpose of Creel's remarks was to stress the difference between philosophic Taoism (including both the "contemplative" and the "purposive" aspects) and Hsien[aq] Taoism, with its primary focus on the cult of immortality, the passing reference to possible links between Taoism and Legalism is particularly pertinent in the present context.

Professor Creel's assessment of these ties as philosophically tenuous and historically accidental seems to be predicated on a vital causality: because the sayings in the *Lao Tzu,* put together by several authors over a long stretch of time, are terse and cryptic, the convenient ambiguity of the *Lao Tzu* could be—and was—

[14] Hsü Fu-kuan, "Po-shu Lao Tzu so fan-ying te jo-kan wen-t'i"[eb] [Several problems reflected in the Silk Manuscripts of *Lao Tzu*], *Ming-pao*[ec] *Monthly* 10, no. 6 (1975): 96–99.

[15] Jan Yün-hua, "The Silk Manuscripts on Taoism," pp. 66–69.

[16] The article originally appeared in the tenth issue of *Hsüeh-hsi yü p'i-p'an,* and is included in *Lao Tzu,* comp. MWTHT (Peking: Wen-wu, 1976), pp. 95–108. For references on Wang Chen and Wang Fu-chih, see p. 96.

[17] Kao Heng and Ch'ih Hsi-chao, "Shih-t'an Ma-wang-tui Han-mu chung te po-shu Lao Tzu"[ed] [A provisional discussion of the *Lao Tzu* in the Silk Manuscripts of the Ma-wang-tui Han tomb], *Wen-wu,* 1974, no. 11, pp. 1–3.

[18] Herrlee G. Creel, "What Is Taoism?," in his *What is Taoism? and Other Studies in Chinese Cultural History* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1977), p. 7, n. 31.

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exploited to serve various and even opposite interpretive positions. Thus Creel's argument implies that the Legalist appropriation of the wisdom of the *Lao Tzu* during the Han testifies to nothing more than the fluidity of the text.

It is one thing, however, to assume that a text is flexible enough to allow conflicting interpretations but quite another to deduce, as Creel seems to do, that such flexibility is proof of the lack of coherent structure and meaning in the original text. If Legalized Taoism actually was the predominant intellectual trend in the first century of the Former Han, it is vitally important to know what its distinctive features were; as its central scripture the *Lao Tzu* will be absolutely necessary in defining these characteristics. This may appear to be circular logic: in order to understand the meaning of the *Lao Tzu,* we need to know how it was used by the early Han scholars, and in order to understand the thought of the early Han scholars (presumably a form of Legalized Taoism), we must first interpret the *Lao Tzu*. In fact, however, I am suggesting that pre-Han thinkers may have arrived at a variety of approaches to the form and content of the text. These approaches merged into a loosely structured system of thought which profoundly affected the political culture of the Former Han, and was in turn fundamentally transformed by it. This encounter reshaped the unusual insights on self-cultivation which the *Lao Tzu* contained as part of its philosophy of life; they emerged as a set of basic principles of government that were then applied to the operation of a highly complex bureaucracy.

Kao and Ch'ih argue, in the study referred to above, that the Legalists rearranged the order of the text of the *Lao Tzu* in the course of their reshaping and appropriation of its principles. The *Tao* section deals mainly with ontology and cosmology, and the *Te* section with psychology and politics; the Legalists may have placed the *Te* section before the *Tao* section because they considered its set of topics the more important of the two. The order of the *Lao Tzu* in the Legalist text, the *Han Fei Tzu,* is cited as evidence in support of this explanation. Kao and Ch'ih thus propose that there are at least two distinct transmissions of the *Lao Tzu,* the Legalist and the Taoist.[19] Current versions, which place the *Tao* section before the *Te* section, reflect the Taoist sense of the relative importance of the two topics. There is no evidence that this represents an earlier version of the text. The re-emergence of the cult of immortality (Religious or Hsien Taoism) in the first century A.D.,[20] with its revival of interest in the Tao as a philosophy of life, may have led to the present order, the introduction of chapter divisions, and the reduction of the number of characters to around five thousand. It appears that the text was still fluid in the pre-Ch'in[ar] (221–206 B.C.) era, however, as suggested by the appearance of sayings from the *Lao Tzu* in the *Chuang Tzu,*[as] the *Hsün Tzu,*[at] the *Chan-kuo ts'e,* and the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu,*[au] as well as in the *Han Fei Tzu.* Since we have not yet established an indisputable chronology for the *Lao Tzu* and these other texts, we cannot accept Kao and Ch'ih's conclusion that the *Lao Tzu* must have been a primary source for all of them without further investigation.

The more fundamental problem is not merely to show that the *Lao Tzu* can be interpreted in either the Legalist or the Taoist context, but to describe the shape of

[19] See Kao Heng and Ch'ih Hsi-chao, p. 2.

[20] For an informative discussion on this phenomenon from the perspective of Chinese religious history, see *Facets of Taoism: Essays in Chinese Religion,* ed. Holmes Welch and Anna Seidel (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1979), pp. 19–81.

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thought called "Legalized Taoism" in which the *Lao Tzu* is believed to have functioned as a central scripture. The reference to a tradition of ideas and practices known as "Huang-Lao" in the *Shih-chi*[av] (Historical Records) is most instructive in this regard. According to Ssu-ma Ch'ien[aw] (145–86 B.C.), three interpreters of the sayings of Lao Tzu are of particular historical significance. While Chuang Tzu elaborated Lao Tzu's philosophy of personal inner freedom (*tzu-jan,*[ax] self-so), Shen Pu-hai[ay] and Han Fei[az] developed the sayings of Lao Tzu into different methods of political control. Ssu-ma also states that both Shen and Han were deeply influenced by the Huang-Lao tradition; Shen's thought was originally "rooted" in it and Han's thought eventually "returned" to it, although both were preoccupied with *hsing-ming*[ba] ("forms and names," or, in Creel's terminology, "performance and title"), presumably an already well-established technique of government.[21]

Kuo Mo-jo[bb] (1892–1978) suggested in 1946 that the Huang-Lao doctrine might have emerged at the capital of the state of Ch'i[bc] around 300 B.C.; he characterized its adherents as the Huang-Lao faction of Chi-hsia.[bd] [22] Even though his claim is still far from being substantiated, the term "Huang-Lao" is less confusing now than it must have been to Kuo's readers three decades ago. Prior to the discovery of the Silk Manuscripts, the best known reference to Huang-Lao was in the Historical Records; the absence of any discussion of the content of the doctrine led some scholars to conclude that it was associated with the cult of immortality and had little to do with either Taoism or Legalism. We are now in a much better position to suggest that Huang-Lao is in fact a form of highly sophisticated political philosophy; its primary purpose seems to be the translation of Taoist insights, such as *wu-wei*[be] (nonaction), into Legalist governmental practices. Some of the most influential ministers of the Former Han Dynasty, such as Ts'ao Ts'an[bf] (d. 190 B.C.) and Ch'en P'ing[bg] (d. 178 B.C.), put its teachings into practice,[23] and it may also have been propounded in Chi-hsia, where several hundred outstanding scholars are said to have congregated as guests of King Hsüan[bh] of Ch'i (r. 319–301 B.C.).

Huang-Lao

Without necessarily committing ourselves to T'ang Lan's contention that the four texts preceding version B are indeed the lost *Huang Ti ssu-ching,* we can for the time being assume that they are probably the kind of literature referred to in the Historical Records as advocating the Huang-Lao doctrine. But we must enter a caveat here about the sense in which the term "Huang-Lao" is used. Although it is commonly assumed that the term "Huang-Lao" refers to Huang Ti (Yellow Emperor) and Lao Tzu, when contrasted with the "Lao Tzu" of the Historical Records, "Huang-Lao" (or should it be rendered "Huang-lao"?) clearly refers to a more complex structure of ideas. Furthermore, it seems that the four texts themselves vary in their use of rhetorical devices and argumentative procedures, even though

[21] Ssu-ma Ch'ien, *Shih-chi* [The historical records], 10 vols. (Peking: Chung-hua,[ee] 1972), 7: 2146. See also Herrlee G. Creel, *Shen Pu-hai, A Chinese Political Philosopher of the Fourth Century B.C.* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 22.

[22] Kuo Mo-jo, "Chi-hsia Huang-Lao hsüeh-p'ai te p'i-p'an"[ef] [A critique of the Huang-Lao School in Chi-hsia], in *Shih p'i-p'an shu*[eg] [The ten critiques] (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1946), pp. 133–61, quoted in Creel, *What Is Taoism?,* p. 9, n. 50.

[23] Ssu-ma Ch'ien, 6: 2029, 2062. See also, Ssu-ma Ch'ien, 7: 2436 for a brief genealogy of the transmission of the Huang-Lao tradition.

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they exhibit a remarkably unified pattern of thought. A description of some of their common themes may help us to define more closely what the Huang-Lao doctrine purports to convey. The tentativeness of my analysis will become obvious, but I hope that the following selection of four critical issues will convey a sense of the far-reaching implications these texts may have.

Tao

This ultimate reality or nonreality figures prominently in the Huang-Lao or Huang Ti texts. It is undifferentiated, indeterminate, and ineffable. Yet it is generative, autonomous, unchangeable, and complete. As the inexhaustible source of the cosmos, Tao can neither be delimited by material things nor delineated by words. It is the One, alone and matchless. It is also the wholeness from which all the divergent beings come into existence. Furthermore, as Jan Yün-hua observes, Tao is not only the origin of all phenomena, but the "home" they will ultimately return to:

> Heaven and Earth, Yin[bi] and Yang,[bj]
> [The four] seasons, sun and moon,
> Stars and clouds,
> Worms, crawling creatures,
> And those bearing roots,
> All have taken of it for their lives,
> Yet Tao does not become less;
> All of them return to it,
> Yet Tao does not become more.[24]

The language of the *Tao-yüan,* of which this is an example, is remarkably similar to that of the *Lao Tzu.* Sayings in the *Tao-yüan* are usually variations on the central theme of Tao described poetically in the *Lao Tzu.* In some cases, they dwell on the same subject as those of the *Lao Tzu,* with more vivid illustrations; in others, they elaborate on the great value of attaining Tao. The main concern, it seems, is not only to offer a "contemplative" appreciation of Tao, but also to show a "purposive" application of it. Thus, a concluding line states: "By embracing Tao and by knowing the standard, the world may become one."[25] The method by which the unalterable standard of the One is obtained becomes the main focus of the Huang-Lao texts.

The cosmological power of Tao lies in its all-inclusive presence. Yet it does not show off its creativity, but deliberately hides its brilliance. The true king, through direct apprehension, can see and hear its subtle manifestations. This unusual perception enables him to reign not by imposing arbitrary rules of conduct upon the people, but by luring them, gradually and without conscious purpose, to a mode of life with a regularity and a naturalness reminiscent of the evolution of the four seasons. Tao is, according to this view, the real source of authority, for it is the ultimate basis on which the *fa*[bk] (model or law) and *li*[bl] (pattern) essential for conducting governmental affairs are established.

Fa-Li

The *Lao Tzu* can be interpreted as a form of purposive Taoism that formulates, at

[24] "Tao-yüan," in *Ching-fa,* comp. MWTHT (Peking: Wen-wu, 1976), pp. 101–2. *Ching-fa* is used here as a generic title for all four lost Huang-Lao texts. Thus, *Ching-fa* includes "Tao Yüan," "Shih-ta ching," and "Ch'eng," as well as "Ching-fa."

[25] *Ching-fa,* p. 102.

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least implicitly, a guiding principle for political control; the Huang-Lao texts, on the other hand, make explicit their intention to expound the "method of the king" (*wang-shu* [bm]). True to the Taoist spirit of *wu-wei,* the king is supposed to emulate the vacuity (*hsü* [bn]), indeed the purposelessness, of Tao. The king need not resign from his role as the supreme leader to fully embody Tao in his ordinary daily existence, as the eremetic tradition of the *Chuang Tzu* suggests he do. But he must learn to embrace the essential features of Tao in order to develop a style of government characterized by Tao-like virtues *(te)*.

One of these virtues, often discussed in the Huang-Lao texts, is a sense of regularity. The king should see to it, for example, that his officials discharge their duties in an orderly and predictable fashion. Once the rhythmical pattern of governmental activities is set in motion, the king must refrain from exercising his personal likes and dislikes in ways that would upset it. On the contrary, he should transcend his own will and conform to the natural turn of events in a disinterested and emotionless manner. It is absolutely necessary for the king to establish the "model" *(fa)* or the "pattern" *(li)*, so that the people as well as the officials can clearly know what is expected of them. Contrary to the actual practice of Legalism in the centralized bureaucracy of the state of Ch'in, where *fa* and *li* were also considered of great importance, the model and principle conceived here are basically passive. They are not superimposed imperatives, but rather the natural order of things, allowed to emerge in the daily routine of the governing process. It is in this sense that the *Ching-fa* claims: "The way of perceiving all under heaven, for the holder of Tao, is without attachment, without preconception, without purposeful activity and without self-centeredness."[26]

The teachings of Huang-Lao are not Legalistic; the idea of "government by law" (*fa-chih* [bo]), as it is usually understood, is incompatible with the spirit of "pure tranquility and nonpurposeful action" (*ch'ing-ching wu-wei* [bp]). The latter is predicated on the belief that Tao, as the natural pattern of movement underlying concrete things and events, cannot be apprehended by sensory perceptions. The imposition of positive laws upon the world without any appreciation of how the pattern really works is a futile exercise in artificiality; the more ingenious the imposition is, the more ungovernable the people will become. Instead, rules and regulations should be reduced by directing the attention of the ruler to the essentials of bureaucracy, notably "forms and names." Such a process of reversal is possible only if the king can acquire a "penetrating insight" (*kuan* [bq]) that is qualitatively different from the knowledge of sight and sound, for the model and principle of the phenomenal world can be perceived only by a selfless holder of Tao.

Kuan

A defining characteristic of the true king is the acquisition of such penetrating insight. The idea of *kuan* (literally, to see and to observe), a term used as the title of a chapter in the *Shih-ta ching,* underlies the practice of this virtue.[27] The king cannot afford to see things as they present themselves in the phenomenal world, but must learn to observe the inner workings of the universe, the subtle manifestations of Tao. His personal style of life must demonstrate the feasibility of applying these

[26] See the "Tao-fa" [eh] chapter in *Ching-fa,* p. 2.
[27] *Ching-fa,* pp. 48–50.

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manifestations to the workings of government. A prerequisite for such knowledge is the ability to observe things as they really are; this ability can best be cultivated by distancing oneself from the immediate demands of politics so that one can see objectively the "timeliness" (*shih*[br]) of the interpenetration of heaven and earth, the evolution of the four seasons, and the alternation of the *yin* and the *yang* forces.

A most eloquent symbol of the perceptiveness required of the ruler is the statue which is alleged to be the Yellow Emperor's self-portrait. It is a square statue with four similar faces pointing out from the center so that he can see all twelve directions.[28] Such an image is appropriate to the legend that the Yellow Emperor invented the compass. According to the first chapter of the *Ten Great Scriptures,* the Yellow Emperor has been honored as a universal king because his holistic vision encompassed heaven, earth, and humanity: his mandate was conferred by heaven, his position established on earth, and his reputation completed among the people. He regarded heaven with a sense of awe, treated the earth with love, and took care of the people with intimate affection. The king so conceived is sensitive not only to human affairs, but also to subtleties in nature. Since his human way is identical with the Way of heaven, he never interferes with the effectiveness of the people, and never misses the proper sequence of the course of nature. Thus he serves heaven with rectitude and waits for men in tranquility. His government is not simply passive, for he also acts resolutely as the occasion demands.

Ch'eng

It is often assumed that the Legalists appropriated Taoist terminology, especially the expressions used to capture the meaning of Tao, primarily to establish a cosmological foundation for the cardinal Legalist concept of law. The *Han Fei Tzu,* a most sophisticated presentation of the Legalist philosophy, seems to support this view.[29] The Legalists presumably drew on Taoist insights to adapt their political thinking to changing circumstances. The third of the Huang Ti texts, *Ch'eng* (Balancing), sheds some light on the ways in which such borrowing reshaped Legalist political philosophy.

T'ang Lan points out that the concept of "balancing," an essential feature of the functions of Tao, and an important aspect of Legalist methodology, is absent from the *Lao Tzu.* This is one of the several examples he cites to substantiate his claim that the Huang Ti texts are Legalist in character.[30] To be sure, most of the ideas centered around the key concept of balancing in *Ch'eng* can be analyzed as part of a set of political and legal procedures for running a bureaucracy. It is questionable, however, whether we can analyze the concept solely in Legalist terms, with no reference to Taoism. The text clearly shows that "balancing" means more than the application of the principles of "forms and names" to the establishment of a system of checks and balances. Rather than merely providing a justification for the use of "forms and names," the cosmological insight underlying the whole discussion both defines what "form and names" should be and describes how they ought to function in bureaucratic procedure.

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[28] This highly suggestive image is found in the "Li-ming"[ei] chapter of the *Shih-ta ching.* See also, *Ching-fa,* p. 45. My interpretation is tentative.

[29] For an introductory statement on this issue, see Fung Yu-lan,[ej] *History of Chinese Philosophy,* trans. Derk Bodde (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1952), 1: 330–35.

[30] *K'ao-ku hsüeh-pao,* 1975, no. 1, p. 13. It seems that his interpretive position in this particular article has been influenced by the aforementioned "Confucianism versus Legalism" debate, but it is, on the whole, informative and persuasive.

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It is inconceivable, in the perspective of the Huang Ti texts, that the king could rule in a balanced way without a profound knowledge of Tao. Tao "has no beginning but has responses." Tao is also the ultimate reason that "[w]hen a thing is about to come into being its form (*hsing* [bs]) appears first; it establishes itself by the form, and it is named by its name (*ming* [bt])."[31] Accordingly, the king must not make arbitrary efforts to initiate, dominate, anticipate, possess, or control. He should instead follow the rhythmical pattern of nature and, by a holistic, experiential understanding of the principles of heaven and earth, respond in a timely way to the challenges of the world. In the realm of military affairs, for example, the king does not start a war, even though there are righteous reasons to do so. Only when there is no other recourse (*pu-te-i* [bu]) will the king use the army, and he will conclude the campaign as soon as its objective is achieved.[32]

A more fundamental approach to human conflict is to eliminate its causes. One way to do this is to weigh the relative importance of existing relationships and establish a structure of roles, functions, and procedures to be followed. Once such a structure is recognized its objectivity will be universally respected, and the king must see to it that no one, including himself, can change it arbitrarily. The consistency with which the bureaucracy is run guarantees its vitality and longevity. As nature amply demonstrates, premature growth easily decays, and untimely flowers do not bear fruits; the human order must not be fashioned contrary to, or even independent of, the natural order of things. The king, with his penetrating insight, learns from nature the virtues of flexibility, tenderness, and receptivity. And, through personal cultivation, he sees the delicate balances of *yin* and *yang*, which are manifested in the details of human affairs as well as in great cosmological transformations.

Yang symbolizes heaven, and *yin* symbolizes earth. By association, the *Ch'eng* asserts, many of the dichotomies which form the human experience—spring/autumn, day/night, large state/small state, above/below, male/female, father/son, elder brother/younger brother, birth/death, speech/silence, and give/take—can also be understood in terms of the primordial relationship between *yang* and *yin*.[33] Balancing, in this sense, is hardly the quest for conformity with an abstract principle. It is basically an art of negotiation aimed at achieving the best results possible under limited conditions. Its psychology is closer to that of a householder with a large family who is under severe financial strain than to that of an affluent landlord: it requires frugality, simplicity, and self-sufficiency. The true king can run the state effortlessly, not only because he has minimized resistance, but also because he has set the bureaucratic machinery in motion on a steady course that will avoid any waste of energy. As this interpretation suggests, the Huang Ti texts teach the *yin* virtue, the value of the female principle, and the necessity of the ethics of conservation.[34]

According to the Huang Ti texts, therefore, the ideal government is the least government. Although they take the existence of government for granted, the mode

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[31] *Ching-fa*, p. 89.

[32] Ibid., p. 90.

[33] Ibid., pp. 94–95.

[34] We should also entertain the possibility that the so-called "Four Scriptures of the Yellow Emperor" may each exhibit a particular line of thinking in either the Taoist or the Legalist tradition. For two stimulating essays on this subject, see Ch'eng Wu [ek] (T'ien Ch'ang-wu [el]), "Han-ch'u Huang-Lao ssu-hsiang ho Fa-chia lu-hsien" [em] [The thought of Huang-Lao and the Legalist line in early Han], *Wen-wu*, 1974, no. 10, pp. 43–47; and T'ien Ch'ang-wu, "Tsai-t'an Huang-Lao ssu-hsiang ho Fa-chia lu-hsien" [en] [Further discussion of the thought of Huang-Lao and the Legalist line], *Wen-wu*, 1976, no. 4, pp. 78–83.

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of politics which they prescribe is neither Legalist coercion nor ideological persuasion, but exemplary teaching. Rulership is not a mechanism of control but a model for emulation. The primary function of the ruler is to harmonize relationships among people and between people and nature. Indeed, the "passivity" of the ruler is such that military expansion is never glorified, economic growth is not encouraged, but is allowed to rely entirely on the initiatives of the people, and bureaucracy is reduced to a minimum. The personal example of the king, whose style of life remains frugal, simple, and self-sufficient teaches the people to limit their desires. The political style is pure and tranquil in order to give the people enough rest. Historically, this creative application of Taoist insights to the operation of institutions inherited from the Legalist bureaucracy of the Ch'in Dynasty was a remarkable accomplishment of the founding fathers of the Former Han.[35]

I believe, however, that characterizing the Huang Ti texts as Legalist documents is as misleading as referring to the *Lao Tzu* as a military book. It is true that the Huang Ti texts—and for that matter the *Lao Tzu*—have been used for legal, military, and political purposes, and, as I noted earlier, in practice they can be seen as a kind of Legalized Taoism. Once Taoist ideas were translated into Legalist language, they assumed a different shape and meaning; yet Legalist thought and action were also transformed when they were embedded in a Taoist context. The Huang-Lao doctrine is neither Taoist nor Legalist in the conventional sense, nor is it, strictly speaking, a form of Legalized Taoism. It is, rather, a unique system of thought—one which we are now beginning to make some sense of, with the help of the Silk Manuscripts. It is to be hoped that further research will illuminate this doctrine, which dominated much of Former Han political culture prior to the emergence of Confucianism as a state cult in the reign of Wu Ti[bv] (140–87 B.C.). And it may not be farfetched to expect that an adequate appreciation of the "Thought of Huang-Lao" (*Huang-Lao ssu-hsiang*[bw]) will greatly enhance our understanding of such major classical texts as the *Huai-nan Tzu,*[bx] the *Han Fei Tzu,* and the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu,* and our knowledge of the interaction of the three indigenous teachings in early China.

Given the present stage of Ma-wang-tui scholarship, it is premature to draw any philosophical or historical conclusions about the shapes of thought that the Silk Manuscripts seem to represent. I believe, however, that it is not only desirable but necessary to formulate some broad, tentative interpretive statements, so that the full implications of this important archaeological find can be explored.

First, the discovery of the most extensive as well as one of the earliest collections of manuscripts on silk has greatly extended the boundaries of the field of ancient Chinese studies. Its significance, as Michael Loewe notes, is comparable to that of

[35] The newly discovered Ch'in bamboo scripts, over 1,000 pieces, provide excellent source materials for an understanding of the Ch'in bureaucracy at work. See *Shui-hu-ti Ch'in-mu chu-chien,*[eo] ed. Shui-hu-ti Ch'in-mu chu-chien cheng-li hsiao-tsu[ep] (Peking: Wen-wu, 1975). This particular edition contains seven volumes. The first two are photo reprints of the original bamboo scripts as reconstructed by the Study Group. The other five are transcriptions of the scripts into modern simplified Chinese with explanations and annotations. They include a chronicle, official dispatches, three collections of laws, questions and answers on legal problems, rules and regulations dealing with criminal cases, and an instruction book on how to serve as a subofficial. For an interpretive essay on the Legalist ideas behind the Ch'in bureaucracy, see Machida Saburō,[eq] "Shin no shisō tōsei ni tsuite"[er] [On the thought control of the Ch'in Dynasty], *Chūgoku Tetsugaku Ronshū*[es] [Studies in Chinese philosophy], 1978, no. 4, pp. 1–17. Machida's research note makes extensive use of the Shui-hu-ti finds.

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the discovery of the Shang-Yin[by] shells and bones, or the documents from the Tunhuang caves.[36] For the student of Chinese intellectual history, it has greatly increased the possibility of reconstructing a mode of thought which was prevalent during the early Han, but which fell into disuse following the reign of Wu Ti. The manuscripts are valuable not only because they are hitherto unknown primary sources, but also because their authors approached perennial problems of cosmic order and social harmony in early China with resourcefulness and sophistication. To understand the "political culture" exemplified by these Huang-Lao thinkers, we need to enlarge our vocabulary, refine our semantic categories, and reformulate our conceptual schemes.

The tripartite division of Chinese thought prior to the age of Buddhist influence into Legalism, Taoism, and Confucianism may have been a convenient device in traditional Chinese historiography. But this simple image of neatly differentiated systems of ideas lacks explanatory value in analyzing the complex process of empire building in the first century of imperial China. The traditional claim that the Legalist Ch'in regime (221–206 B.C.) was replaced by a kind of Taoist early Han government (206 B.C.–A.D. 8), which in turn was Confucianized during the reign of the aforementioned Wu Ti, must not be uncritically accepted.[37] The political climate of the early Han was deliberately passive, in reaction to the highly centralized and demanding bureaucracy of the Ch'in; the Han government adopted the policy of allowing the people to rest and recuperate. But it is one thing to advocate a Taoist political philosophy, and quite another to run a bureaucracy in the spirit of Taoist nonaction. It is the latter, I believe, that provided the context in which the thought of Huang-Lao could be translated into action. It is, therefore, not enough to show how "Taoistic" or "Legalistic" Huang-Lao was. We need to know in what ways it actually worked as a coherent and inspiring approach to the art of government.

Our limited exposure to the "lost texts" in the Silk Manuscripts seems to indicate that the thought of Huang-Lao contains several apparently unrelated but actually fully integrated philosophical concepts: a cosmological vision of the Way (*tao*) as the primordial source of inspiration; an administrative technique (*fa-li*), based on the principle and model of the naturalness of the Way; a concern for the cultivation of penetrating insight (*kuan*), so that a king could reign without imposing his limited, self-centered view on the order of things originally manifested in nature; and the necessity of attaining a kind of dynamic balancing (*ch'eng*) in order to ensure a steady flow, as it were, of the political system as a mirror image of the cosmos. Huang-Lao is definitely not a haphazard, eclectic compromise. The interplay of the Taoist and Legalist symbols is so salient a feature of this mode of thinking that I am tempted to interpret it as a conscious attempt at a new fusion. If, historically, it actually did develop out of Legalism and Taoism, it could well be characterized as the result of a serious syncretic intellectual effort. And we may speculate that the union of two originally separate traditions of thought was occasioned by the urgent task of empire building in the transitional period between Ch'in and Han.

[36] Loewe, p. 100.

[37] For a sophisticated interpretation of Han thought, see Hsü Fu-kuan, *Liang-Han ssu-hsiang-shih*[et] [Intellectual history of the Former and Later Han Dynasties] (Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng,[eu] 1976), pp. 85–438.

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We should also entertain the possibility, nevertheless, that Huang-Lao originated from a structure of ideas predating Legalism, Taoism, and Confucianism. If so, it provides us with a rare access to the Sinitic world of ideas prior to the emergence of the Hundred Schools. It is not at all farfetched to suggest that some of the key concepts in the thought of Huang-Lao, such as the metaphor of the Way and the emphasis on self-cultivation, were part of a common fund of symbolic resources that ancient Chinese thinkers of virtually all intellectual persuasions tapped to develop their own forms of philosophy. The *Huai-nan Tzu,* the *Han Fei Tzu,* the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu,* and other similar texts and fragments obviously need to be re-examined as guidelines, or at least as pointers, to the landscape (even the label of syncretism is anachronistic) where ancient Chinese thought first began to take shape.

a 黃老
b 老子
c 黃帝
d 馬王堆
e 長沙
f 湖南
g 楚
h 漢
i 遣冊
j 軑
k 利蒼
l 文物
m 唐蘭
n 商承祚
o 德
p 道
q 道德經
r 德道經
s 經法
t 十大經
u 稱
v 道原
w 黃帝四經
x 戰國策
y 劉向
z 蘇子

aa 蘇秦
ab 相馬經
ac 考古
ad 考古學報
ae 敦煌
af 韓非子
ag 徐復觀
ah 冉雲華
ai 王真
aj 唐
ak 王夫之
al 翟青
am 學習與批判
an 兵書
ao 高亨
ap 池曦朝
aq 仙
ar 秦
as 莊子
at 荀子
au 呂氏春秋
av 史記
aw 司馬遷
ax 自然
ay 申不害
az 韓非

ba 刑名
bb 郭沫若
bc 齊
bd 稷下
be 無為
bf 曹參
bg 陳平
bh 宣
bi 陰
bj 陽
bk 法
bl 理
bm 王術
bn 虛
bo 法治
bp 清靜無為
bq 觀
br 時
bs 形
bt 名
bu 不得已
bv 武帝
bw 黃老思想
bx 淮南子
by 商殷
bz 余英時

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ca 裘錫圭
cb 羅福頤
cc 李家浩
cd 張政烺
ce 周世榮
cf 顧鐵符
cg 孫貫文
ch 傅舉有
ci 朱德熙
cj 曾憲通
ck 史澍青
cl 馬王堆漢墓帛書
cm 傅奕
cn 大學
co 孟子
cp 子思
cq 通報
cr 中庸
cs 五行
ct 龐朴
cu 馬王堆帛書解開了思孟五行說之謎
cv 馬王堆出土老子乙本卷前古佚書的研究兼論其與漢初儒法鬥爭的關係
cw 十六經
cx 李學勤
cy 龍晦
cz 馬王堆出土老子乙本古佚書探原
da 易經
db 馬王堆二、三號漢墓發掘的主要收獲
dc 楊寬
dd 馬王堆帛書戰國策的史料價值
de 戰國中期的合縱連橫戰爭和政治路線鬥爭
df 馬王堆漢墓出土帛書戰國策釋文
dg 馬王堆漢墓帛書整理小組
dh 馬雍
di 帛書別本戰國策各篇的年代和歷史背景
dj 曾鳴
dk 關於帛書戰國策中蘇秦書信若干年代問題的商榷
dl 長沙馬王堆三號漢墓出土地圖的整理
dm 譚其驤
dn 復旦
do 兩千一百多年前的一幅地圖
dp 馬王堆漢墓出土地圖所說明的幾個歷史地理問題
dq 馬王堆三號漢墓出土駐軍圖整理簡報
dr 馬王堆漢墓出土醫書釋文(一)
ds 馬王堆三號漢墓帛畫導引圖的初步研究
dt 馬王堆帛書四種古醫學佚書簡介
du 馬王堆帛書却谷食氣篇考
dv 鍾益研
dw 凌襄
dx 我國已發現的最古醫方—帛書五十二病方
dy 謝成俠
dz 關於長沙馬王堆漢墓帛書相馬經的探討
ea 譚戴嶽
eb 帛書老子所反映的若干問題
ec 明報
ed 試談馬王堆漢墓中的帛書老子
ee 中華
ef 稷下黃老學派的批判
eg 十批判書
eh 道法
ei 立命
ej 馮友蘭
ek 程武
el 田倉五
em 漢初黃老思想和法家路線
en 再談黃老思想和法家路線
eo 睡虎地秦墓竹簡
ep 睡虎地秦墓竹簡整理小組
eq 町田三郎
er 秦の思想統制について
es 中國哲學論集
et 兩漢思想史
eu 學生
ev 杜維明

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