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Chapter 18 of the *Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals*:

Separation and Union with the Root¹

This article provides translation of the Li He Gen chapter ("Separation and Union with the Root"), the 18th chapter of the *Chunqiu Fanlu*, together with a brief commentary. The text is traditionally attributed to a former Han scholar Dong Zhongshu, often called the "Father of Han Confucianism". The *Chunqiu Fanlu*, an important text of the Chinese Confucian tradition has influ-

¹ This translation and commentary is part of my Ph.D. research on syncretic elements in the book *Chunqiu Fanlu*, which I am doing at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, University of Zagreb. I would like to thank Prof. Zdravka Matišić for enrolling me in her project "Cultural and Historic Relations Croatia/India" in the Department of Indology and Far Eastern Studies. I would like to thank Prof. Jana Rošker for her critical reading of my translation of this chapter, and Ivana Gubić for providing me with writings from the Heidelberg Library. Many thanks especially go to editor Mario Rebac for his comments on the paper as a whole. I also owe special thanks to Prof. Michael Loewe for the extraordinary help he offered me while reading both my translation and the notes.

enced generations of scholars in traditional China, but has not yet been entirely translated into any European language. The translation of its 18th chapter is a contribution to the ongoing *Chunqiu Fanlu* translation project done with the intent to inform the reader with a segment of this influential work.

The *Chunqiu Fanlu*, commonly translated into English as “Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals”, “Rich Dew of the Annals”, “Luxuriant Gems...” etc., is an important Chinese Confucian text which has influenced generations of scholars in traditional China. The text is traditionally attributed to Former Han scholar Dong Zhongshu, often called the “Father of Han Confucianism.” However, research conducted recently by scholars such as Gary Arbuckle, Michael Loewe, Sarah Queen, and Joachim Gentz suggests that the *Chunqiu Fanlu* (CQFL) is a post-Han collection which was likely edited six centuries after Dong’s death. It is a compilation of extremely heterogeneous materials, some of which are at odds with the historical Dong.

Chapter 18, together with some other chapters, is designated by some scholars (such as Sarah Queen) as belonging to the literary unit of the *Chunqiu Fanlu* which those scholars have called the “Huang-Lao chapters”. These chapters lack attention to themes associated with the Confucian tradition of the Han. They are not based on Confucian scriptures, instead addressing the problem of statecraft in a highly syncretic manner, blending ideas

from different sources. The author(s) of these chapters took elements from different sources and recomposed them to suit their new vision.

This work will provide a translation and brief commentary of the Li He Gen chapter (“Separation and Union with the Root”), the 18th chapter of the *Chunqiu Fanlu* text. The *Chunqiu Fanlu*, although an important text of the Chinese tradition, has not yet been entirely translated into a European language. Thus, the purpose of this work is to contribute to the ongoing *Chunqiu Fanlu* translation project and to present to the reader some of the form and content of this influential work. This will hopefully enable the reader to appreciate the syncretic content and its vision, as well as the methods of argumentation found in Chapter 18. It could help us to understand how Huang-Lao elements were incorporated and how they influenced and transformed Chinese Confucianism. Finally, it will contribute to our understanding of nature and the development of Chinese thought.

春秋繁露 (*Chunqiu Fanlu*)

The Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals

Annotated Translation of Chapter 18

離合根² (*Li He Gen*)

² This will be, according to my knowledge, the first published translation of the *Li He Gen* chapter into a European language. Only parts of the *Chunqiu Fanlu* have been translated into European languages: the first six chapters of the *Chunqiu Fanlu* have been translated into German by Robert H. Gassmann, and parts of various chapters have been translated into English by Sarah Queen and Wing Tsit Chan. See: *Tung Chung-shu; Übersetzung und Annotation der Kapitel eins bis sechs von Robert H. Gassmann*, p. Lang, Bern-New York, 1988; *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, Vol. 1, ed. Wylliam Theodore De Bary and Irene Bloom, author of the section Joseph Adler, Columbia University Press, New York, 2000; Wing Tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton University Press 1969.

Large sections have also been translated into Russian in *Antologiya mirovoy filosofii* (Anthology of World Philosophy), Vol. I, Part I, Moscow 1968, including chapters 35 Shengcha Minghao, 36 Shixing, 41 Wei Ren Zhe Tian, 42 Wuxing Zhi Yi, 58 Wuxing Xiang Sheng and 81 Tian-Di Yin-Yang), and in *Drevnekitskaya filosofiya, Epoha Han* (Ancient Chinese Philosophy, Han Epoch), Moscow 1990, including chapters 1 Chu Zhongwang, 2 Yubei, 12 Shi Zhi, 13 Zhong Zheng, 21 Kao Gong Ming and 42 Wuxing Zhi Yi).

Short passages from chapters 44 *Wang dao tong san* and 35 *Shengcha minghao* have been translated into French in *Anthologie de la Littérature Chinoise* (ed. Hsu Sung-nien), Paris 1932 (see Tong Tchong-chou, *Tchouen Tsieou fan lou: Wang tao t'ong san and Cheng tch'a ming hao*). Kao Ming-k'ai et al. have translated two chapters, 44 (cited.) and 74 *Qiu yu*, in *Lectures chinoises* 1/1945, Université de Paris, Centre d'Études Sinologiques de Pékin, Paris 1945. The Chinese text used for this translation was copied from: D.C. Lau (ed.), *The ICS Ancient Chinese Texts Concordance Series Classical Works No. 6. A Concordance to the Chunqiu Fanlu*, Commercial Press Hong Kong, 1994. The printed text of *A Concordance to the Chunqiu Fanlu* is based on the *Sibu congkan* (SBCK) edition, a reprint of the text in the *Si ku quan shu zhen ben* 四庫全書珍本 (1773, or 1775).

Separation and Union with the Root³

天高其位而下其施⁴

Heaven, while taking its position on high, bestows its gifts below,⁵

³ In translating the title of this chapter I am following Sarah A. Queen, who translates the title *Li He Gen* as "The Separation and Union with the Root". See: Sarah A. Queen, *From Chronicle to Canon. The Hermeneutics of the Spring and Autumn According to Tung Chung-shu*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, p. 72. Michael Loewe suggests a translation of the title as "The root of the *Libe*" pointing out that *Libe* is a term which designates a plant. Michael Loewe, oral communication.

⁴ This line and the next one is repeated in Chapter 78. *Tian Di Zhi Xing* (The Conduct of Heaven and Earth) of the *Chunqiu Fanlu*: 天高其位而下其施，藏其形而見其光, *Chunqiu Fanlu* 17.1.179/12 this is

⁵ Qing scholar Su Yu cites a saying on Heaven (*tian*) in the *Yijing* (Book of Changes) where Heaven's bestowing refers to rain: 雲行雨施 (The clouds move and the rain is distributed.) (Book of Changes, Tuan Zhuan, Qian 1.1, <http://ctext.org/book-of-changes/qian2>). Su Yu, *Chunqiu Fanlu Yizheng* (Verification of the Meanings in the Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn) Zhonghua Shuju, Beijing, 1992, p. 164. *Chunqiu Fanlu Yizheng*, printed in 1914, is an important annotated edition with commentary, including notes from editions dating from the Ming to the Qing dynasty.

藏其形⁶而見⁷其光;⁸

While hiding its form, shows forth its light,

高其位, 所以爲尊⁹也,¹⁰

6 *Xing* is often translated as “physical form”, “shape” etc. It is very difficult to translate, as the word carries with it the meaning of bodily, material substance, as well as that of tangible form. (Michael Loewe, oral communication.) “Form” is also an important conceptual category in the *Huainanzi*. Joh S. Major explains it: “Form is contingent on differentiation, and thus any phenomenon that is at all identifiable belong to the realm of form. The “Formless” (*wu xing* 無形) therefore denotes states of both cosmic development and human consciousness that are prior to and more replete with potential power (and thus closer to the embodiment of the Way) than the contingent realities of form.” John S. Major, Sarah A. Queen, Andrew Seth Meyer, and Harold D. Roth (Translated and edited), *The Huainanzi. A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China*, by Liu An, King of Huainan., Columbia University Press, New York, 2010., p.902.

7 Zhong Zhaopeng noted that the graph 見 in this line has the same meaning as the graph 現 “to appear, to become visible, to manifest”: (見)同(現), 顯露也. The line refers to the brilliance of the sky, the visibility of sun and moon: 以日月爲耳目. *Chunqiu Fanlu Jiaoshi*, Shandong Youyi Chubanshe, Jinan, 1995. p. 297. *Chunqiu Fanlu Jiaoshi (Critical Annotations to the Spring and Autumn Studies)* is the last and most comprehensive edition. It includes notes from more than 20 earlier editions.

8 Chapter 19 *Li Yuan Shen* (Establishing the Primal Numen) of the *Chunqiu Fanlu* states: 天序日月星辰以自光 (Heaven arranges days, months, stars and celestial bodies by self-light.), *Chunqiu Fanlu* 6.6/26/20

9 Honoring *Tian*, conventionally translated as Heaven, began appearing in Chinese tradition when Zhou tribes conquered Shang. A process then began in which *Shang* or *Shang Di*, translated variously as “deity”, “Lord on the High” etc. was replaced with *Tian*. The great lengths to which the Zhou rulers went to identify *Tian* with *Shang Di* in order to present themselves as followers of the Shang culture, and consequently to legitimate dynasty, can be seen in this process. At the same time there was a move in the opposite direction, by which *Tian* eventually became a completely depersonalized power.

10 This line and the next three lines are repeated in the Chapter *Tian Di Zhi Xing* (The Conduct of Heaven and Earth) of the *Chunqiu Fanlu*: 高其位所以爲尊也, 下其施所以爲仁也, 藏其形所以爲神也, 見其光所以爲明也, *Chunqiu Fanlu*

Taking its position on high is the means by which it is honoured.

下其施, 所以爲仁¹¹也,

Bestowing its gifts below is the means by which it is humane (*ren*).

17.1/79/12-17.1/79/14

11 *Ren* is translated as “benevolence”, “goodness”, “humanness”, “humane”. Dictionary *Shuowen Jiezi* (Explaining Simple and Analyzing Compound Characters), an early 2nd century CE Chinese dictionary, explains the composition and meaning of *ren*: 仁, 親也. 从人从二. (The term *ren* means to take someone as one’s parents. It is composed of ‘man’ and ‘two’.) (*Shuo Wen Jie Zi*, 卷九, 人部, 4927, <http://ctext.org/dictionary.pl?if=en&id=31376>.) *Ren* is the highest ethical ideal in Confucian thought, as expressed in the *Analects*, as well as by Confucius’ followers. *Ren* denotes an achievement of humane excellence characterized by non-egoistic concern for another’s benefit. This ethical ideal includes characteristics manifested in family, society, and political institutions, such as being unshakably filial, respectful, obedient, etc.. The important dimension of being *ren* is to be in accordance with the requirements of ritual behaviour and tradition (*li*). Confucius stresses that someone who is *ren* has disciplined himself and returned to rituals. To be *ren* is the result of the process of self-cultivation in a particular natural, cultural and social milieu, therefore to be *ren* includes all the social roles which constitutes an individual in its ritualized roles and relationships. Thus, *ren* is not only mental, but also a physical characteristic which also includes human gestures and postures. Therefore, by translating the term *ren* with “benevolence”, we psychologise the term in traditions which do not lean on a preconception of the *psyche* as a way of defining human experience.

藏其形，所以爲神¹²(也¹³)，¹⁴

Hiding its form is the means by which it is numinous (*shen*).

12 *Shen* is conventionally translated as “numinous”, “numen”, “spirit”, “god”, “divine”, “spirituality” / “divinity”. *Shen* in the Shang oracle bones (*jia gu wen*) denotes both spirits and spirit-like powers, and also sacrificing to the spirits. As the spirits of the *shen* ancestors or deities were conceived of as beings with power over human life and natural processes, people prayed and sacrificed to them. Since the early Chinese world did not distinguish between phenomenal reality and transcendental reality, spirits and humans were conceived of as modalities of the same universe. So, because the Chinese tradition does not imply the existence of a transcendental entity, a translation of *shen* as “divine”, “spirit” is highly problematic. In some texts of more Daoist provenience, such as the *Zhuangzi*, some chapters of the *Guanzi*, *Huainanzi* and *Xunzi*, the meaning of *shen* is transferred from a personified ancestral deity to an unobservable factor underlying the process of nature and an invisible natural capacity and force connected with *tian*.

13 The character *ye* 也, missing in the SBCK edition, is added on the authority of *Gongyangzhuan* (In *A Concordance to the Chungtu Fanlu* it is written: 編者按準上文補.) The edition of Qing scholar Su Yu (*Chungtu Fanlu Yizheng*) is also missing the character 也.

14 *Xunzi* (c. 298-238 BCE) also describes *tian* in a correlative way, as having an observable and an unobservable side. The unobservability of the process of *tian* is that which he calls *shen* (numinous): “We do not perceive the process, but we observe the results, this indeed is why we call it ‘divine’. All realize that Nature has brought completion, but none realize its formlessness – this indeed is why we call it Nature.” *Library of Chinese Classics, Xunzi 2*, Hunan People’s Publishing House, 1999, 17.3, p. 535.

見其光，所以爲明¹⁵(也¹⁶)；¹⁷

Showing forth its light is the means by which it is illuminated (*ming*).

15 The character *ming* 明 consists of the pictographs of the sun and the moon. Carine Defoort notes: “*Ming* has a large range of meaning from plain eyesight and visibility to more sophisticated types of insight and clarity.” In this line *ming* relates to the “brightness” of the sky, the brilliance of the sun and moon. But, as Carine Defoort has noted, *ming* has two aspects of meaning: “The term *ming* relates to both the subjective and objective dimension of a situation, where in English it would be translated differently: on the one hand, *ming* is the eye’s “clear-sightedness”, and on the other, it is the object’s brightness” which allows it to be seen. (p.146.) *Ming* in early Chinese texts is often associated with the ruler: “Once his (the ruler’s, op.) unobstructed perspicacity (*ming*) is known, he is able to attract people from all over the empire and, in turn, shine like a bright (*ming*) polar star. As a consequence, the world revolves around him without him doing anything in particular for it.” (p.149.) Carine Defoort, *The Pheasant Cap Master (He guan zi). A Rhetorical Reading*, SUNY, New York, 1997. There are texts of Daoist provenience, such as the *Zhuangzi* and some chapters of the *Huainanzi*, which use this term in a broader meaning denoting the state of elevated consciousness as a characteristic of a sage. Also, it is important to add that the character *ming* at one time served as a replacement for a lost character with the meaning of ‘sacred’ or ‘dedicated’.

16 編者按：準上文補。The character *ye* 也 missing in the SBCK edition has been added on the authority of *Gongyangzhuan*. Su Yu, in *Chungtu Fanlu Yizheng*, is also missing the character 也.

17 There is a relevant saying in the book *Zhuangzi*: 天尊卑先後，天地之行也，故聖人取象焉。天尊地卑，神明之位也。(This precedence of the more honourable and sequence of the meaner is seen in the /relative/ action of heaven and earth, and hence the sages took them as their pattern. The more honourable position of heaven and the lower one of earth are equivalent to a designation of their spirit-like and intelligent qualities.) *Zhuangzi*, Outer Chapters, *The Way of Heaven 3.2* (<http://ctext.org/zhuangzi/tian-dao>); *The Writings of Chuang Tzu*, James Legge (ed. and tr.), 1891.

故位尊而施仁，藏神而見光者，天之行也。
So, bestowing *ren* while being situated on high, and showing forth light while hiding its numinous power, that is the conduct of Heaven.

故爲人主¹⁸者，法天之行，
Therefore, one who acts as the ruler of men takes Heaven's conduct as his model,

是故內深藏，所以爲神(也¹⁹)；
For this reason, inwardly, hiding his form deeply is the means by which he is numinous (*shen*).

外博觀，所以爲明也，
Outwardly observing matters widely is the means by which he is illuminated.

18 *Ren zhu*, or only *zhu*, is one of several words which could be translated as "ruler." Sarah A. Queen and John S. Major explain the term *zhu* in the introduction to the translation of chapter 9 of the book *Huainanzi*: "A Zhou-dynasty word known from bronze inscriptions and early literature (but not from Shang oracle bones), its earliest meaning seems to be 'one who presides' (for example, over a ceremony) or 'host' (of a banquet). Two close cognates are *zhu* 拄, 'to prop up' and *zhu* 柱, 'pillar' (specifically, a load-bearing pillar of a building)." John S. Major (ed. and tr.), *The Huainanzi. A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China*, by Liu An, King of Huainan, p. 290.

19 The redaction of Su Yu does not have *ye* 也. (Su Yu, *Chunqiu Fanlu Yizheng*). A Concordance: 編者按：準上文補。The character *ye* 也 missing in the SBCK edition is added on the authority of *Gongyang zhuan*.

任群賢²⁰，所以爲受成²¹(也²²)；

Employing a multitude of skilled people
Employing a multitude of worthy people is the means by which he realizes his accomplishments.

乃不自勞於事，所以爲尊也；

Thereupon, not busying himself with activities () is the means by which he is honoured.

汎愛群生，²³

Extensively loving all creatures and

不以喜怒賞罰，²⁴ 所以爲²⁵仁²⁶也。

20 The *Li He Gen* chapter argues Mozi's notion of "elevating the worthy" (*ren qun xian*).

21 The task of the ruler is to employ competent officials because tasks given to a capable person are successfully completed. Therefore, employment of the capable is crucial for the work of bureaucracy, and finally, for the growth of the state.

22 編者按：準上文補。The character *ye* 也 missing in the SBCK edition is added on the authority of *Gongyang zhuan*. Su Yu's *Chunqiu Fanlu Yizheng* is also missing the character 也.

23 The phrase 愛群生 "to love all creatures" is reminiscent of the concept *jian ai*, "universal love", a pivotal concept of Mozi thought (470 -391 BCE), which denotes care for all people equally.

24 This line expresses the idea of ruling without emotional prejudice. In the translation of this sentence, Su Yu's explains the phrase 不以喜怒賞罰 as: 不以一己喜怒爲賞罰 is followed (Not taking one's own anger or pleasure for rewarding and punishing, not rewarding and punishing by means of one's personal happiness or angeriness). Su Yu, p.165.

25 This could also be translated as 'to act in a humane way'. Michael Loewe, oral translation.

26 The notion of *ren*, "humaneness", bears different connotations in early Chinese writings. The understanding of *ren* as love is also found in texts such as *Mozi*, *Zhuangzi*, *Xunzi* and *Han Feizi*. A

by? not giving rewards and punishments on account of his own affection or anger is the means by which he is *ren*.

故爲人主者，以無爲爲道，以不私爲寶。

Thus, one who acts as the ruler of men considers non-action (*wu wei*) to be the way (*dao*) and considers impartiality precious.²⁷

位²⁸無爲之位，而乘²⁹備具之官，

Governing from the position of non-action (*wu wei*), he avails himself of duly established officials.

similar expression to Li He Gen's sentence is found in the *Zhu Shu Xun* (The Ruler's Techniques) chapter of the *Huainanzi*: 遍愛群生而不愛人類，不可謂仁 (*Huainanzi*, Zhu Shu Xun /The Ruler's Techniques/, 25, <http://ctext.org/huainanzi/zhu-shu-xun>). In the *Ren Yi Fa* (Standards of Humaneness and Righteousness) chapter of the *Chunqiu Fanlu*, humaneness is also defined as love: 仁者，愛人之名也，"Humaneness is the term that designates loving others." (*Chunqiu Fanlu* 8.3/38/24)

27 The *Book of Rites* (*Liji*) states: 天無私覆，地無私載，"Heaven overspreads all without partiality; Earth sustains and contains all without partiality." (*Liji*, Kongzi Xian Ju 5.2, <http://ctext.org/liji/kongzi-xian-ju>; Jiang Yihua i Huang Junlang, *Xin Yi Liji Duben*, Sanmin shuju, 2007; *The Li Ki*, tr. James Legge, Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 28, part 4, 1885.)

28 Su Yu's edition has the character 立. Su Yu, *Chunqiu Fanlu Yizheng*, p. 165.

29 Su Yu explains the meaning of the character *cheng* 乘, "to take advantage of", "to avail oneself of"; as *yin* 因, "to follow"; "to carry on": "乘，因也 (*Cheng* means to follow, to carry on), Su Yu, *Chunqiu Fanlu Yizheng*, p. 165.

足不自動，而相者³⁰導進，³¹

While his feet do not move of themselves, his assistants (*xiang zhe*) guide him forward,

30 The term *xiang zhe*, "the officer in waiting", "assistant in the rites", "escort", "master of ceremonies", "chief councilor" is a title given to senior officials in the central state administration who assisted the ruler in governing the state and overseeing the bureaucracy. Their role was to transmit the ruler's order (*ming*), and they were the chief executive officers of the state, very similar to present day prime ministers. In early Chinese literature, "the officer in waiting" is mentioned as a mediator in communication with the ritualistic duty of receiving guests of the ruler, transmitting messages from the guest to the ruler and sending the ruler's reply back to the guest. The *Liji* describes his duties: "The officer charged with the grave-clothes said, 'Our ruler has sent me with the grave-clothes.' The officer in waiting (*xiang zhe*), having gone in and reported, returned and said, 'Our orphaned master is waiting for you.'..." (*Liji*, Za Ji I, 53 <http://ctext.org/liji/za-ji-i>); "The chief of the attendants (of the messenger) had charge of the carriage and horses, and with a long symbol of jade in his hand communicated his message, saying, 'Our ruler has sent me to present the carriage and horses.' The officer in waiting went in and informed the presiding mourner, and returned with the message." (*Liji*, Za Ji I 54, <http://ctext.org/liji/za-ji-i>).

31 This line is close in expression to a line in the *Shenzi*: 足能行而相者導 (*Shenzi*, Yi Wen 9, <http://ctext.org/shenzi/yi-wen>) and the *Huainanzi*: 足能行而相者先 (*Huainanzi*, Zhu Shu Xun /Ruler's techniques/ 9, <http://ctext.org/huainanzi/zhu-shu-xun>).

口不自言，而擯者³²贊辭，³³

while his mouth does not utter words of its own accord, his attendants (*bin zhe*) pronounce the appropriate words (*ci*),

心不自慮，而群臣效當。

³² The term *bin zhe*, “attendant”, “the officer of reception”, “officer of communication”, is a title given to officials who acted as a medium of communication, especially in the mourning rites. The official titles *xiang zhe* and *bin zhe* are not used after the Qin dynasty.

The *Liji* describes his duties:

“A carriage and horses presented for a funeral entered the gate of the ancestral temple. Contributions of money and horses with the accompanying presents of silk, the white flag (of a mourning carriage) and war chariots, did not enter the gate of the temple. When the hearer of the contribution had delivered his message, he knelt down and left the things on the ground. The officer of communication took them up. The presiding mourner did not himself receive them.” (*Liji*, Shao Yi 3, <http://ctext.org/liji/shao-yi>). The chapter *Sang Dai Ji* describes his duties as follows:

“When the ruler went to a Great officer’s or a common officer’s, after the coffin had taken place, he sent word beforehand of his coming. The chief mourner provided all the offerings to be set down for the dead in the fullest measure, and waited outside the gate, till he saw the heads of the horses. He then led the way in by the right side of the gate. The exorcist stopped outside, and the blesser took his place, and preceded the ruler, who put down the offerings of vegetables (for the spirit of the gate) inside it. The blesser then preceded him up the eastern steps, and took his place with his back to the wall, facing the south. The ruler took his place at (the top of) the steps; two men with spears standing before him, and two behind. The officer of reception then advanced. The chief mourner bowed, laying his forehead to the ground. The ruler then said what he had to say; looked towards the blesser and leaped. The chief mourner then (also) leaped.” (*Liji*, Sang Da Ji 56, <http://ctext.org/liji/sang-da-ji>) 0

³³ There is a line similar in meaning and expression in the *Zhu Shun Xun* (The Ruler’s Techniques) chapter of the *Huainanzi*: 口能言而行人稱辭 (*Huainanzi*, Zhushunxun 1, <http://ctext.org/huainanzi/zhu-shu-xun>) and the *Yi Wen* chapter of the *Shenzi*: 口能言而行人稱辭 (*Shenzi*, Yi wen 9, <http://ctext.org/shenzi/yi-wen>).

while his heart does not concern itself, his ministers achieve what should be done

故莫見其爲之，而功成矣，³⁴

Thus without anyone seeing his actual doing, the deed is accomplished successfully.

此人主所以法天之行也。

This is the means by which the ruler of men takes Heaven’s conduct as his model.

爲人臣者，法地³⁵之道，³⁶

³⁴ There is an almost identical line in the *Yuan Daoxu* (Originating in the Way) chapter of the *Huainanzi*: 莫見其爲者，而功既成矣。 (*Huainanzi*, Yuan Daoxu 4, <http://ctext.org/huainanzi/yuan-dao-xun>)

³⁵ The Li He Gen chapter follows the early Chinese view of the universe in which Heaven (*tian*) is conceived as honourable and Earth as mean, a relationship which is transferred to human affairs. This view is also expressed in the *Book of Rites (Liji)*: 天尊地卑，君臣定矣。卑高已陳，貴賤位矣。 (The relation) between ruler and minister was determined from a consideration of heaven (conceived of as) honourable, and earth (conceived of as) mean. The positions of noble and mean were fixed with a reference to the heights and depths displayed by the surface (of the earth).” (*Liji*, Yue Ji 18, <http://ctext.org/liji/yue-ji>)

³⁶ Zhong Zhaopeng cites a line from the “The words of the text” (*Wen Yan*) commentary of the *Book of Changes*: 地道也，妻道也，臣道也。 (Book of Changes, 文言, 坤 10). Also, Zhang Zhaopeng cites a passage from the Xing Lun (Proper Conduct and Assessing the Situation) chapter of *The Annals of Lü Buwei (Lü Shi Chungjiu)*: 怒於堯曰：得天之道者爲帝，得地之道者爲三公。今我得地之道，而不以我爲三公。 (Zhong Zhaopeng, *Chungjiu Fanlu Jiaoshi*, p. 299.) “Yao yielded rule of the world to Shun. Gun, who was a feudal lord, angrily said to Yao: “He who obtains the Dao of Heaven becomes a Sovereign, he who obtains the Dao of Earth becomes one of the Three Dukes. Now, I have

Those who act as the ministers for mankind take the way of Earth as their model.

暴其形，出其情以示人，

they expose their form, and manifest their feelings³⁷ to show other people

高下、險易³⁸、堅與³⁹、剛柔、肥臞、美惡，累可就財⁴⁰也⁴¹，堅

high and low, difficult and easy, hard and soft (*ruan*), firm (*gang*) and yielding (*rou*), fat (*fei*) and thin (*qu*), beautiful and ugly, and by working hard they may all be assessed.

got the Dao of Earth, but this has not made me one of the Three Dukes. Gun believed that Yao had made an error in his assessment of things." John Knoblock, Jeffrey Riegel trans., *The Annals of Lü Buwei*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 2000, 20/6.2, p. 531

37 In chapter 78 *Tian Di Zhi Xing* (The Conduct of Heaven and Earth) of the *Chunqiu Fanlu* there is a similar statement: 爲臣者務著其情 (Those who act as the officials exert themselves in manifesting their feelings) (*Chunqiu Fanlu* 17.1/78/27, 17.1/80/23)

38 *The Art of War (Bing Fa)* states: "Earth comprises distances, great and small; danger and security; open ground and narrow passes; the chances of life and death." Lionel Giles (trans.), Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, El Paso Norte Press, 2009, p 1.

39 *Guanben* states: 他本(要)誤作要 (His edition 要 mistakenly uses 要).

40 Su Yu cites Lu Wenchao's explanation of the meaning of the graph *cai* 財 with its homophone *cai* 裁: 財, 與裁同. Su Yu, *Chunqiu Fanlu Yizheng*, p. 165. The character 財 connotes "regulation", "control", but also "perfecting."

41 *Tianqi Ben* 天啓本 (*Tianqi print*), a copy from the period of 1621-7, lacks the character 累. Note 39:

故其形宜不宜, 可得而財也。

In this way, whether or not the form is fitting may be assessed.

爲人臣者, 比地貴信, 而悉見其情于主⁴², 主亦得而財之, 故王道威而不失。

Those who act as the ministers for mankind are similar to Earth and so value trustworthiness, and therefore they entirely show their true feelings toward the ruler. So, the ruler, for his part, has the means of assessing them. Therefore, the king's way will have power (*wei*) and then will not be lost.

爲人臣常竭情悉力, 而見其短⁴³長⁴⁴, 使主上得而器使之⁴⁵, 而猶地之竭竟其情也,

42 There is a similiar saying in the *Tian Di Zhi Xing* chapter of the *Chunqiu Fanlu*: 著其情所以爲信也. (Earth) manifests its feelings, so it is trustworthy. 17.1A/80/16

43 *Tianqi Ben* uses 所.

44 There is a relevant saying in the *Jun Chen Shang* (The Prince and His Ministers, Part 1) chapter of the *Guanzi*: "Thus, when enlightened prince promotes his subject, he fully understands their weakness and strenghts. Knowing their limits, he then employs them according to the task", *Guanzi*, vol. 1, tr. W. Allyn Rickett, Boston, 2001, p. 412.

45 Zhong Zhaopeng explains the meaning of this line: 量其才器而任用之 ("To measure their capacity and talents and then assign them to a post"). Zhong Zhaopeng, *Chunqiu Fanlu Jiao Shi*, p. 300. In the *Analects* 13.25 there is a saying that expresses the idea of employing people according to their capacity: 君子易事而難說也: 說之不以道, 不說也; 及其使人也, 器之。小人難事而易說也: 說之雖不以道, 說也; 及其使人也, 求備焉。 "Exemplary persons (*junzi* 君子) are easy to serve but difficult to please. If one tries to please them with conduct that is not consistent with the way (*dao* 道), they will not be pleased. In em-

Those who act as the ministers for mankind constantly do their utmost and exert their strength, and they show their weak and strong sides, enabling the ruler on high to employ them according to their capacity, and then they are like Earth in completely exhausting its feeling.

故其形⁴⁶宜可得而財也。⁴⁷

In this way, their form is fitting and may be assessed.

The Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals, a new classic for the post-Classical world

Its 18th chapter and drawing from other roots

ploying others, they use them according to their abilities.” Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont, jr. (tr.), *The Analects of Confucius. A Philosophical Translation*, Ballantine Books, New York, p.169.

46 其形宜可得: *Tianqi ben* is missing the character *xing* 形: 其宜可得

47 There is a relevant statement in the *Wang Shu Xun* (The Art of Rulership) chapter of the *Huainanzi*: “The Way of the minister is said to be square because he finds what is appropriate and dwells in what he is best fitted for.” (Roger T. Ames, *The Art of Rulership. A Study in Ancient Chinese Political Thought*, Albany: State University Press, New York, p. 179.)

Su Yu notes: 臣之短長可得而財 猶地之宜不宜可得而財也 “Minister's weak and strong sides can be made a resource, like Earth's suitability and non-suitability can be made a resource.” Su Yu, also, cites the sentence from the Tian Lun (Discourse on Heaven) chapter of the *Xunzi*: 所志於地者，已其見宜之可以息者矣。 “Those charged with recording the affairs of Earth simply observe how its suitability (yi) for crops can foster yields.” (*Xunzi*, 17.5, p. 539)

1. The *Chunqiu Fanlu*⁴⁸

The *Chunqiu Fanlu* (春秋繁露), usually rendered “The Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn Annals”, “Rich Dew of the Annals”, “Luxuriant Dew...” etc. is an important Chinese Confucian text. Its vision of sovereignty and the relationship between humans and Heaven was relevant to the development of the ethical-political discourse of Chinese Confucianism.

CQFL is a lengthy work — it is a collection of seventeen books (*juan*) consisting of 82 chapters (*pian*), of which 79 have survived. It is ascribed to famous Former Han (206 BCE – 9 CE) scholar Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒, who lived (according to Qing dynasty scholar Su Yu) from c. 179 to 104 BCE. Dong was an exegete of the Gongyang Zhuan (Gongyang traditions) of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu*), a dominant commentary in the early Han.⁴⁹ Tradition credits him as playing a tremendous role in establishing Confucianism as the state ideology during the

48 I wish to thank Prof. Emeritus Michael Loewe from Cambridge University for giving me the first draft of his unpublished book on Dong Zhongshu and the *Chunqiu Fanlu*.

49 Joachim Gentz notes: “The *Chunqiu* (Annals) is one of the main if not the most important canonical works of early Han times after Wudi. Being a rather dry annalistic chronicle of the state of Lu, it was only able to achieve such exceptionally high status through the exegesis of the *Gongyang Zhuan* (Gongyang traditions), which was the most important commentary in early Han.” (Joachim Gentz, “Language of Heaven, Exegetical Skepticism and the Re-insertion of Religious Concepts in the Gongyang Tradition”, in: *Early Chinese Religion: Part One: Shang through Han* (1250 BC-220 AD), ed. John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski, Brill, 2009, p. 813.)

reign of emperor Wu (140 – 134 BCE),⁵⁰ for which reason he is often referred to as the “father of Han Confucianism”. Created as an adaptation to the changed environment of the unified Han empire, Han Confucianism was rooted in classical Confucian writings combined with the cosmological systems of the Yin and Yang and the concept of the Five Forces (or elements, or phases, *wu xing*).

2. Problematic nature of the text

The CQFL is one of the most problematic texts of early medieval Chinese history,⁵¹ and there are many questions and controversies surrounding its authenticity and dating. Although attributed to a Han scholar, there are no references made to any book by that name during

50 Gary Arbuckle cites the view of Ouyang Xiu (1007-1072) on the role of Dong Zhongshu in the supposed establishment of Confucianism during the reign of Emperor Wu: “Before, in the Warring States, Yang Zhu and Mozi made confusion worse confounded. Mencius deplored this, and devoted himself to explaining benevolence and rightness. Thus the theories of benevolence and rightness were victorious, and the teachings of Yang Zhu and Mozi were rejected. During the Han dynasty, all the schools of thought flourished together. Master Dong deplored this, and withdrew to study the Confucian school. Thus the Way of the Confucian school became illustrious and the other schools of thought came to an end. This is what results from what I refer to as ‘practicing what is fundamental in order to overcome it.’” (Ouyang Xiu, *Jushi ji*, Ben Lun chapter, in: *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, Taipei, 1988, 123. The passage is cited from: Gary Arbuckle, “Inevitable Treason: Dong Zhongshu’s Theory of Historical Cycles and Early Attempts to Invalidate the Han Mandate”, *JAOS – Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 115.4, 1995, p. 585.)

51 Sarah A. Queen, *From Chronicle to Canon. The Hermeneutics of the Spring and Autumn, according to Tung Chung-shu*, Cambridge University Press, p. 13.

the Han dynasty. The *Hanshu* (Book of Han) lists a book entitled *Dong Zhongshu* in 123 chapters (*pian*) and a book *Gongyang Dong Zhongshu Zhiyi* (The Gongyang (scholar) Dong Zhongshu Judges Cases) in 16 chapters, and the *Shiji* (Records of the Grand Historian) mentions a *Zaiyi Zhizhi* (Records of Disasters and Anomalies). The earliest references to the text date to the Liang dynasty (6th century), and Chinese scholars began questioning the text’s authenticity in the 11th century.⁵²

Recent research⁵³ has suggested that ascribing the text to the historical Dong is a questionable practice. They regard the CQFL as a composite work consisting of different layers of very heterogeneous material from early Han and likely even post-Han *Gongyang* scholarly work. The CQFL was assembled by an anonymous compiler between the third and sixth century.⁵⁴ It seems to contain essays authored by Dong Zhongshu, yet it also preserves writings with a problematic relationship to the historical Dong Zhongshu.

Most authors, as Joachim Gentz states, “agree that the first 17 chapters, which end with a postface (‘Yu xu’) represent the earliest and most probably authentic part of the whole compilation. In opposition to the rest of the text, these chapters are strict *Annals* exegesis.”⁵⁵ Michael Loewe concludes: “While there is no certain answer on

52 The first doubts are expressed in the *Chongwen Zongmu*, edited by Wang Yaochen and others in 1034, 45.

53 Su Yu, Keimtasu Mitsuo, Dai Junren, Tanaka Masami, Fukui Shigemasu, Gary Arbuckle, Sarah Queen, Michael Loewe, Joachim Gentz and Mychal Nylan.

54 Sarah A. Queen, *ibid.*, p. 14.

55 J. Gentz, *ibid.*, p. 824.

(the) question what parts of the CQFL can be authentically traced to Dong Zhongshu, it is possible to identify certain chapters (*pian*) which can almost certainly be ascribed to various different sources.” These include: a) chapters which draw directly on the explanations of the *Gongyang Zhuan*,⁵⁶ b) nine chapters which are based on the Five Elements Theory (*wu xing*). In addition, there are single chapters dispersed throughout the texts which can be ascribed to different sources.⁵⁷

56 Joachim Gentz has distinguished three different stages of the exegesis of the *Annals* in the first sixteen chapters of the *Chunqiu Fanlu* as most likely being the authentic work of Dong Zhongshu: a) the first nine chapters which try to resolve contradictions in the *Gongyang* tradition; b) chapters 10 to 12, which try to define the central principles of the *Annals*; c) chapters 13 to 16, which are of mixed type and include a reference to the *wu xing* in one *pian* (14). Chapter 17 is a postface. J. Gentz, *ibid.*, pp. 825-6.

57 Michale Loewe states: “(a) Chapter 74 where the rites with which to induce a fall of rain depend basically on a belief in *wu xing* and where the treatment of the ‘correct colours’ follows that cycle, as distinct from the principle for a choice of colours in *pian* no. 23. (b) *Pian* no. 23 some of whose ideas relate much more to those of the time of the *Baibu* conference of 79 CE than to those of Wudi’s reign. (c) Some *pian* relate to particular incidents in which Dong was concerned or said to have participated; e.g., no. 32 (see the Appendix p. 27), ‘Response to the king of Jiaoxi as to whether the counsellors of Yu deserved to be regarded as possessing *ren*’; no. 71 ‘Response on the conduct of sacrifices’; no. 75 ‘Prevention of rain’ (but not no. 74 ‘Invocation for rain’). No. 38 (‘Response on the *wu xing*’) is presented as a dialogue between Liu De (1) king of Hejian (155-130/129) and Dong Zhongshu; the two men might have met in 154, 148, 143 or 130 when the king attended the court at Chang’an, but there is no record of them so doing and it is at least questionable whether *wu xing* would have formed an important topic of discussion at that time. Good reasons have been expressed to reject some *pian* (e.g. no. 25) from Dong’s own writings and the present writer would find it hard to believe that nos. 23, 25, 26 derived from Dong Zhongshu himself. Doubts may also be cast on some other *pian*, including nos. 28, 33, 35, 36 which, as is tentatively suggested, may have been written as accounts of the discussions of 79 CE.” Michael Loewe, *Dong Zhongshu and Chunqiu Fanlu*.

3. Chapter 18 in the context of the *Chunqiu Fanlu* as a whole

The CQFL contains a great diversity of subject matter and content. Based on both content and structure, Xu Fuguan proposed that the *Chunqiu Fanlu* consists of three major divisions: Dong’s scholarship on the Spring and Autumn, Dong’s philosophy of Heaven, and a Discussion of Sacrifice and Court Ceremony.⁵⁸ Sarah Queen identifies five “literary units” of the text, which include: 1) Exegetical chapters, 2) Huang-Lao chapters, 3) Yin-Yang chapters, 4) Five-Phases chapters, 5) Ritual chapters.

Chapter 18 holds a significant place in the CQFL. It follows the “exegetical chapters”, the first seventeen chapters, which are concerned with the *Spring and Autumn Annals (Chunqiu)*, and it marks the beginning of the new “unity” of the text. Xu Fuguan places ch. 18 in the group of chapters concerned with the philosophy of Heaven. Similarly, Michael Loewe places it in the group of chapters dealing with the relationship of Heaven and Earth, the ruler and the ruled, and *wuwei*.⁵⁹ Following research conducted by Su Yu and Tanaka Masami, who suggested that some chapters differ significantly from the Confucian tradition of the Han and exhibit the influence of Huang-Lao thought,⁶⁰ Sarah Queen designated chapters 18 to 22, 77 and 78 as Huang-Lao chapters.⁶¹

58 Hsü Fu-Kuan, *Liang-Han ssu-hsiang-shih*, Chinese University Press, Hong Kong, 1975, p. 190-191.

59 M. Loewe, *Dong Zhongshu and the Chunqiu Fanlu*.

60 S. A. Queen, *ibid.*, p. 85.

61 S. A. Queen, *ibid.*, p. 85.

The doctrines, methods and teachings of Huangdi (The Yellow Emperor) and Laozi or, rather, of the Huang-Lao, are mentioned in Han writings the *Records of the Grand Historian (Shiji)* and the *Book of Han (Hanshu)*.⁶² The term "Huang-Lao"⁶³ is used interchangeably in these texts with the term "Daoist". These methods are described as follows: "The methods of Huang-Lao do not esteem extravagance. Through quiescence, simplicity and non-purposive action the ruler and minister are spontaneously rectified."⁶⁴

Regarding chapters 18-22, 77 and 78 of the CQFL, Sarah Queen states: "The correspondence between the Han description of Huang-Lao techniques and the salient features of these chapters evokes an author (or authors) closely affiliated with this tradition."⁶⁵ Queen notes that these chapters contain very little reference to Confucian scriptures, and that they do not stress the importance of humanity, righteousness and moral transformation through education. These chapters focus instead on the problem of statecraft in a highly syncretic manner, synthesizing

62 After archaeological excavation in 1973 near Changsha, Hunan, where the text *Huang-lao boshu (The Huang Lao Silk Manuscripts)* was unearthed, many scholars have begun to support the existence of *Huang-Lao* thought. They see a close relation between discovered texts and the description of *Huang-Lao* in the historical texts.

63 The term "Huang-Lao" is quite a problematic one. Some scholars use the term "Huang-Lao thought" (Peerenboom, Queen), while others (Loewe, Nylan, Richter) state that it is misleading to assign "the Huang-Lao" to a particular school or a group of thinkers, stressing that the synthesis of various elements was quite common in the Early Han.

64 SC (*Shiji*) 63/ 2147. Cited from S. A. Queen, *ibid.*, p. 91.

65 S. A. Queen, *ibid.*, p. 91.

elements from different traditions.⁶⁶ In addition, Queen supports her view of the Huang-Lao affiliation of this literary unit by showing that it is characterized by a distinctive vocabulary.⁶⁷

The above mentioned scholars concluded that some of the so called Huang-Lao chapters of the CQFL may have been authored by Dong Zhongshu early in his career, in the service of Emperor Qing (ca. 156 – 141 BCE)⁶⁸, when the practice of Huang-Lao was popular⁶⁹. Sarah Queen suggests these chapters were written by several authors (some perhaps by Dong) at different stages throughout the development of the Huang-Lao tradition.⁷⁰

On the other side, it is also important to note that, as Joachim Gentz states, "in the sources that most probably stem from Dong's hand—in *Shiji* and *Hanshu*, in the first 17 *Chunqiu* exegetical chapters and the ritual chapters of the *CQFL*, as well as any of the above mentioned

66 S. A. Queen notes that the Huang-Lao chapters differ in viewpoint, style, etc. S. A. Queen, *ibid.*, p. 85.

67 According to Queen, the distinctive terminology placing chapter 18 in the group of Huang-Lao chapters are: numen/numinosity (*shen*), clarity/brilliance (*ming*), non-purposive action (*wu wei*), employing worthies (*zhilidelren xian*), form/body (*xing*). *Ibid.*, p. 87.

68 According to the *Shiji* and the *Hanshu*, Dong Zhongshu began serving Emperor Qing in 152 BCE.

69 Historical records suggest that, from the reign of the first Han ruler, Emperor Gao (206-195 BCE), to the death of Empress Dowager Dou, 136 BCE, Huang-Lao thought was very popular and enjoyed official support. The *Shiji* and *Hanshu* record that numerous officials and politically prominent figures of the Western Han were fond of the techniques of the Yellow Emperor and Lao Zi. After the death of Empress Dowager Dou, Huang-Lao and other various teachings were forbidden in 141 BC, marking the triumph of Confucianism over other schools.

70 S. A. Queen, *ibid.*, p. 93.

fragments—Dong Zhongshu is never connected to *wuxing* or to Huang-Lao thought.“are the work of never connect with”⁷¹

4. Summary of the *Li He Gen* chapter

The “Separation and Union with the Root” chapter describes the proper way of the ruler and his subordinates in government.⁷² It argues that the proper way of the ruler in bureaucracy is non-action (*wu wei*), and that ministers should perform administrative duties. In order to legitimize its statecraft arguments, the *Li He Gen* uses cosmological principles, as noted by Sarah Queen.⁷³ According to these principles, the ruler should imitate the way of Heaven, while ministers should follow the way of Earth. Ruler and ruled are in opposition with each other, as are Heaven and Earth.

Their position and role in the government are in complementary opposition: non-action opposed to action. *Tian*, being the model for the ruler, is conceived of not only as Heaven, but also as human (*ren*), numinous (*shen*), clear-sighted (*ming*) and venerated (*zun*). The same ideals are attributed to the ruler. While the proper posture of the ruler in government is non-action, the ministers represent action: their duty is to serve diligently and loyally. Their

71 Joachim Gentz, “Dong Zhongshu”, in: *Encyclopedia of Religion*, , www.bookrags.com/research/dong-zhongshu-eor1-04/

72 Su Yu noted that the title of the chapter does not correspond with its content. He also draws attention to the comparable content of *pian* no 78. Su Yu, *Chunqiu Fanlu Yizheng*, p.165.

73 S. A. Queen, *ibid.*, p. 92.

service is to be properly rewarded or punished by the ruler, who is, like Heaven, without partiality and emotional prejudice.

The structure of the chapter can be divided into three parts: the chapter begins with the way of *Tian* (Heaven), followed by a description of the way of the ruler, and ends with a treatment of the ruler’s subordinates. Beginning with Heaven, followed by the ruler, and ending with the ruler’s subjects, the structure of the chapter follows the hierarchy of the natural-political world.

5. The cosmological presupposition of the *Li He Gen*’s political philosophy

The *Li He Gen*’s political philosophy is based on several cosmological principles concerning the order of nature. Firstly, it begins from the supposition that the world is an ordered unit consisting of its interactive members: Heaven, Earth and Man. When they act according to their specific nature and position, a “great order”⁷⁴ is created. The *Li He Gen* implies this assumption and describes the world as the ordered unity of Heaven, Earth, the ruler and the ruled, each of which hold functions appropriate to their position and nature, which the *Li He Gen* defines.

Secondly, nature is structured through complementary

74 *Liji* states: “In antiquity, Heaven and Earth acted according to their several natures, and the four seasons were what they ought to be. The people were virtuous, and all the cereals produced abundantly. There were no fevers or other diseases, and no apparitions or other prodigies. This was what we call ‘the period of great order.’” (*Liji*, Yue Ji, 42.4, <http://ctext.org/liji/yue-ji>)

oppositions, with two members, *yin* and *yang*⁷⁵. In the *Li He Gen* chapter, everything is ordered by lining up binary oppositions: there are pairs, sets of four, parallelisms of prose.⁷⁶ There are four members (Heaven, Earth, Ruler, Ruled), with the pairs Heaven/Earth and Ruler/Ministers (=Ruled). *Tian* and the ruler are described through binary oppositions: high/below (*gao/xia*), position/bestowing (*li/she*), form/light (*xing/guang*), honoured/humane (*zun/ren*), numinous/illuminated (*shen/ming*), hiding/showing (*cang/jian*), inwardly/outwardly (*nei/wai*), action/inaction, speech/silence. In addition, every statement is made through oppositions: "Heaven, while taking its position on high, bestows its gifts below, while hiding its form, shows forth its light...", hiding his form deeply is the means by which he is numinous (*shen*).

75 A. C. Graham concluded: "There can be no doubt of the centrality of binary opposition in Chinese culture. Everywhere from the pairs and the sets of four, five or more in cosmology to the parallelism of prose and the tone patterns of regulated verse we find groups which, even when the number is odd, divide neatly into pairs with one left over. The traditional cosmology as it settles into its lasting shape after 250. BC is ordered by lining up all binary oppositions along a single chain, with one member Yin and the other Yang." A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China*, Open Court, Chicago, 1989, p. 330.

76 A. C. Graham agrees with David Hall's and Roger T. Ames conclusion that "Western thought has hitherto been dominated by pairs such as God/world, mind/body, reality/appearance, good/evil", in which A is transcendent in the sense that "the meaning or import of B cannot be fully analyzed and explained without recourse to A, but the reverse is not true." Chinese thought, on the other hand, tends rather to conceptual polarities with A and B each "requiring the other for adequate articulation." A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao. Philosophical Argument in Ancient China*, Open Court, Chicago, 1989, p. 30.

Thirdly, an important aspect of the *Li He Gen* chapter is its correlative way of thinking and arguing.⁷⁷ It correlates the operations of the cosmos and the proper functioning of the state, correlating the conduct of the ruler with Heaven and that of the ministers with the Earth. It bases its view of the government on a natural model, the features of which appear in such Han-era compendiums as the *Huainanzi* (c. 139. BCE), the *Baihu tongyi* (*Comprehensive Discussion in White Tiger Hall*, 79. CE) and the *Huangdi neijing suwen* (*Plain Questions of the Yellow Sovereign's Inner Classic*).

Joseph Needham calls this kind of the correlative cosmology developed in Han China "the state analogy".⁷⁸ It is based on correspondence between the imperial state/bureaucracy and the cosmos. In ancient Chinese philosophy, it is requested that man imitate the way of nature. This request for modeling finds its explicit form in the *Li He Gen*: the proper way of the ruler should be modeled after the way of Heaven, while the proper way of his subordinates should be modeled after the way of Earth. Thus, the same set of characteristics (powers) attributed to Heaven are also attributed to the ideal ruler, and are in opposition to the set of characteristics attributed to ministers. Therefore, the

77 S. A. Queen has noted that "forms of correlative thought had already appeared by the third century BC in the Spring and Autumns of Mr. Lu (*Lüshi Chunqiu*) and were no doubt popularised by followers of the Yellow Emperor and Laozi in the early centuries of the Han." *Sources of Chinese tradition. From Earliest Times to 1600*, Volume One, ed. Wm. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom, Columbia University Press, p. 295.

78 John B. Henderson, "Cosmology", in: Antonio S. Cua (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy*, Routledge, New York, 2003, p.188.

Li He Gen chapter, in arguing what the proper way of the ruler and his ministers should be, uses the way of Heaven and Earth as justification.

6. The syncretic nature of the *Li He Gen* chapter

The *Li He Gen* chapter addresses the topic of statecraft in a highly syncretic way, blending ideas from various sources and streams of thought from the pre-Han period. The chapter shares ideas with the *Shen Buhai*, *Guanzi*, *Han Feizi*, *Huainanzi*, *Liji*, *Xunzi*, *Mozi*, *Springs and Autumns of Mr. Lü*, and other texts. Many sentences have clear parallels with the *Shen Buhai* and *Huainanzi*. It synthesizes the Daoist, Legalist, Moist, Confucian and *yin-yang* ideas.⁷⁹ Here it will be discussed how the author of this chapter synthesized these ideas and adapted them to his new vision.

In its theme and intent, the chapter can be traced to the writings of Shen Buhai, a 4th century BCE political

⁷⁹ There is a good reason for criticizing labels such as “Daoist”, “Confucian”, “Legalist” etc. by contemporary scholars. For example, Michael Loewe states that “The intellectual history of early China has frequently been bedeviled by the loose and ill-disciplined use of terms such as Taoist, Confucian or Legalist, in respect of periods before such categories applied. Certainly these terms featured among the six principal schools of thought listed by Ssu-ma T’an, who died in 110 BC; but it is unlikely that at that time it would have been possible or suitable to classify certain thinkers exclusively within the groups of Confucian (*ju*), Taoist, Legalist (*fa*), Yin-Yang, Mohist or Nominalist (*ming chia*) that he neatly distinguished. Such groups shared a great deal of ground in common and precise definitions were hardly possible.” Michael Loewe, *Faith, Myth and Reason in Han China, Four attitudes of mind*, Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis, 2005. p. 7.

philosopher. As Harlee G. Creel notes, Shen Buhai was focused on “the role of the ruler and the methods by which he could organize and control the bureaucracy.”⁸⁰ The impact of Shen Buhai’s ideas of administrative structure upon Chinese institutions began to take hold during the late Warring States period in the middle of the third century BCE — a time of increased mass involvement in government — and played a significant role in the formation of the imperial administrative apparatus well into Former Han times and possibly even later.⁸¹

According to Shen Buhai, the ruler holds firm control over his ministers through a number of techniques (*shu*). His famous dictum is: “The sage ruler depends upon methods, not on (his) sagacity. He employs technique (數 *shu*), not theory.”⁸² He stresses “non-active management” (*wu wei*) as the main technique of rulership.

Wu wei, literally “non-action”, is an important concept in early Chinese political thought.⁸³ It means natural

⁸⁰ Harlee G. Creel, *What Is Taoism? and Other Studies in Chinese Cultural History*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 1970. p. 93.

⁸¹ H. G. Creel, *ibid.*, p. 93.

⁸² Harlee G. Creel, *Shen Pu-hai, a Chinese Political Philosopher of the Fourth Century B.C.*, The Shen Pu-hai Fragments, The University of Chicago Press, 1974., p. 356.

⁸³ *Wu wei* 無為 is variously translated as “non-action”, “taking no action”, “non-deliberative action”, “effortless action”, and so on etc. Chad Hansen explains the meaning of this term: “*Wu* is simply “does not exist.” In this phrase, however, interpreters treat it as a negative prescription: “avoid *wei*.” The harder problem is to understand *wei*. Textbook interpretations say that *wei* means “purpose.” In modern Mandarin, the character has two different tones. The fourth tone reading is usually translated as “for the sake of.” In the second tone reading, the character would normally be translated as “to act.” Thus, translators argue, *wuwei* (or *wu wei*)

activity, activity without any coerciveness. The notion of *wu wei* is associated with cosmic activity, as is stated in the *Record of the Rites*: "Things are completed while it remains inactive (*wu wei*) – this is the Way of Heaven".⁸⁴ The ruler who takes a posture of non-activity imitates cosmic activity; this means to be like Heaven. Non-action is an ideal of ruling, thus commonly associated with the rule of ancient sages. Confucius says: "If anyone could be said to have affected political order while remaining nonassertive, surely it was Shun. What did he do? He simply assumed an air of deference and faced due south."⁸⁵ Shun (a mythological sage) cultivated his own nature in such a degree that he succeeded in governing in an entirely natural way. In the Confucian interpretation of non-action, where the moral cultivation of the people and social harmony are the prime duties of government, the ruler serves only as a moral model. Through this kind of guidance, people are transformed and led into a manner of conduct in which they seek moral achievement. Therefore, it is not necessary for a ruler to personally attend to matters of government in order to achieve social harmony.

really means no purposive action. The whole slogan is "take no purposive action and yet act." The second tone reading, however, has another important use. Grammar textbooks call it the putative sense—"to deem, regard, or interpret." *Wei* functions in this sense in belief ascriptions. ..." Chad Hansen, "Wuwei (Wu-wei). Taking No Action", in: *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy*, p.784.

⁸⁴ *Record of Rites* 27/16, cited from Roger T. Ames, *The Art of Rulership*, p. 30.

⁸⁵ *The Analects of Confucius. A Philosophical Translation*, 15.5., ed. and tr. Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont, Jr., p. 185.

The interpretation of *wu wei* in the *Li He Gen* is built upon a Legalist framework.⁸⁶ It follows Shen Buhai's vision (the Legalist vision)⁸⁷ of *wu wei* in defining a distinction between the "Way of the Ruler" and the "Way of the Minister". It defines the proper posture of the ruler as "non-action", while it defines the ministers' duties as the execution of government business.⁸⁸ The non-action of the ruler is expressed on three levels: as not speaking, not thinking/feeling and not moving. The ministers serve as the ruler's tools, and in this way the government affairs are carried out. In the Legalist kind of government, ruler rules over a "self-inspired bureaucracy".

In order to explain the *Li He Gen*'s premises, it is necessary to consider the purpose of Shen Buhai's writing. Roger T. Ames argues that Shen Buhai's writings are intended primarily to protect the interests of the ruler: "The interest of legalist political philosophy is the protection and benefit of a ruler."⁸⁹ *Wu wei* as a technique of rulership is intended to protect the ruler and enable him to control the state. Ames notes: "Shen Buhai elaborated the theory of *wu wei* into a practical principle of political control."⁹⁰ Ames cites

⁸⁶ There is an established scholarly opinion that the concept of 無爲 *wu wei* is essentially Daoist in origin. However, Herrlee G. Creel, in examining the origin of the concept *wu wei*, has challenged this scholarly opinion. He argues that the concept of *wu wei* was first developed in Shen Buhai's branch of Legalist thought, and that it then spread from its Legalist origins into Daoist thought. (*What is Taoism? And Other Studies in Chinese Cultural History*, p.48-79.)

⁸⁷ On the problem of the usual practice of calling the school "Legalists" or "the School of Law" see *ibid.*, p. 92-120.

⁸⁸ Roger T. Ames, *The Art of Rulership*, p. 48.

⁸⁹ Roger T. Ames, *ibid.*, p. 50.

⁹⁰ Roger T. Ames, *ibid.*, p. 48.

Shen Buhai's fragments which state that the ruler conceals himself in inaction, which enables him to remain in a superior position: "Shen Zi said: Where the perspicacity of the ruler is apparent, people will take precautions against it. Where his lack of it is apparent, people will mislead him. Where his intelligence is apparent, people will mislead him. Where his lack of it is apparent, people will hide things from him. Where his desires are apparent, people will dangle bait in front of him. Where his lack of them is apparent, people will manage him. Therefore it is said: I have no basis on which to know them. Only in doing nothing can I keep an eye on them."⁹¹ So, the ruler in the Legalist view of the government controls the state rather than administering it.⁹²

On the other side, the *Li He Gen*'s description of the ruled could also be interpreted in the context of the ruler's political control. The *Li He Gen* stresses that ministers should show their feelings to a ruler and that they should not hide their strengths and weaknesses. The ruler is thus able to know the qualities of his ministers, and the result

⁹¹ A significant passage which also supports a similar view in *Shenzi* is: "The skillful ruler ...conceals himself in inaction. He hides his motives and conceals his tracks. He shows the world that he does not act. Therefore those who are near feel affection for him, and the distant think longingly of him (that is, desire to become his subjects). One who shows men that he has surplus has (his possessions) taken from him by force, but to him who shows others that he has not enough, (things) are given. The strong are cut down; those in danger are protected. The active are insecure; the quiet have poise." H. G. Creel, *Shen Pu-hai, a Chinese Political Philosopher of the Fourth Century BC*, p. 349.

⁹² Roger T. Ames, *ibid.*, p. 51.

is that their abilities are used to the fullest and suitable to their position, while at the same time the ruler is able control them and retain his power.

In Confucian thought, the final goal of the government is more than simply to secure the well-being of the people; it is to provide opportunities for the moral improvement of its people. The *Li He Gen*'s view of the government is silent on the issue of the moral cultivation of the people. The people are portrayed only as workers by stressing their dedicated service. Complementary to this, the role of the ruler is not the moral persuasion of the people, rather it is oriented towards supporting the diligent service of the people. This is the case even when the *Li He Gen* employs the Confucian ethical ideal *ren*, humanness defined as love, since it is characteristic of the later Confucians, Zhuangzi and Mozi⁹³, as was noted by Wing-tsit Chan.⁹⁴ The ruler's humanness is defined as love and proper rewarding and punishment of the official's work. Like Heaven, which is detached and impersonal, the ruler, with non-action as his foundational orientation, is without personal bias and preferences. This ideal of unbiased and impersonal (*bu si*) rule is expressed in the Daoist classic *Laozi*: "The four

⁹³ Rune Svarverud concludes that "There is, however, a major distinction between the Mohist and the Confucian approach to 'love'. Whereas Confucian texts advocate 'love' defined within the social hierarchy of ethical responsibilities, the early Mohists emphasized an equalitarian 'love' expressed through the notion of *jian ai*, 'universal love' or 'mutual love.' In the later Mohist Canons *ren* is defined in terms of 'extending one's love to all.'" Rune Svarverud, *Methods of the Way: Early Chinese Ethical Thought*, Brill, Leiden, 1998, p. 284.

⁹⁴ "Generally speaking, from the time of Confucius through the Han dynasty (206 BC-A.D. 220), *jen* [pinyin: *ren*] was understood in a sense of love." Chan 1975, p. 109-110.

seasons have different weather, but because heaven shows no preference, the yearly cycle reaches its conclusion. The five offices of the state have different duties, but because the ruler shows no partiality, the country is properly ordered.”⁹⁵

The duty of the ruler is to employ “those who are worthy” (*xian zhe*), men of capability and wisdom, in his government. The principle of “elevating the worthy” in the administration is a prominent syntagm in Mozi thought, as Burton Watson notices: “The first principle which Mozi enunciates is that called ‘honoring the worthy’ – the duty of rulers to seek out men of wisdom and virtue and employ them in their governments.”⁹⁶

From the above stated premises, it can be concluded that the *Li He Gen* view of the goal of the government seems to be parallel to the Legalist one. Its goal is reduced to the

⁹⁵ Laozi 72/25/62 cited from Roger T. Ames, *ibid.*, p. 46.

⁹⁶ Mozi may have been among the first who interpret the “worthy man” as a “man of ability”, while other philosophical schools would be more inclined to interpret “worthy man” to mean “our party”, somebody on the same social level. Burton Watson explains the historical context in which this principle of Mozi’s thought started being more seriously considered: “By Mozi’s time, the right of certain aristocratic families to maintain hereditary possession of ministerial posts in the feudal governments had already been seriously challenged, and many rulers were doing just what Mozi recommended, surrounding themselves with men chosen from the lower aristocracy or the common people who would be less encumbered by family ties and feel a greater personal devotion to the ruler who had promoted them.” Burton Watson, *Mozi. Basic Writings*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2003., p. 6.

welfare of the state, its enrichment and strengthening, and above all, maintaining the position and power of the ruler. Roger Ames thus explains the final goal of the Legalist government: “The end served by this kind of government is first and foremost the interests of the ruler. These interests involve total control over the lives and actions of his subjects to serve the ends of absolute power, stability, personal safety, military strength, wealth and luxury, and freedom to enjoy the privileges due to his position.”⁹⁷

In addition, it is notable that the ruler in the *Li He Gen* is described with a strong tendency toward glorification. This appears as a consequence of likening the ruler to Heaven, and is supported by an injection of Daoist and Confucian ideals. The ruler deserves to be venerated (*zun*) by the people as they venerate Heaven because of his position. Veneration of Heaven is a pervasive idea in early Chinese texts. The ruler is numinous (*shen*) because his process is invisible. The numinosity of Heaven is stressed by Xunzi and Zhuangzi. The ruler develops Daoist “brightness” (*ming*), shining like a bright (*ming*) polar star. As a consequence, the world revolves around him without him doing anything for it, and the ruler can thus retain his power. The tendency toward the ruler’s glorification, expressed through likening the ruler with Heaven, could also have been a consequence of a new ideology, as explained by Mark Lewis. He states that the growing association of the ruler with Heaven was a “part

⁹⁷ Roger T. Ames, *ibid.*, p. 50.

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97 Roger T. Ames, *ibid*, p. 50.

of a newly arising ideology legitimating the ambitions of the rulers to unify the empire.”⁹⁸

Final remarks

In summary, the *Li He Gen*'s view of the political order is based on the Shen Buhai-Han Feizi branch of Legalist thought. In the *Li He Gen*'s political doctrine, as in Legalist theory, the roles of the ruler and ministers are clearly differentiated. The central concept of the chapter, *wu wei*, is also constructed around a Legalist framework. While Legalist texts defend their position by defending the interests of the ruler, the *Li He Gen* argues its position through cosmological arguments. The position of the ruler is likened to Heaven, and the position of his ministers is likened to Earth. In developing the idea of the distinct position and role of the ruler, describing him as being humane, impartial, loving, and numinous, the author of the *Li He Gen* chapter attributes the powers to Heaven and consequently to the ruler in a manner which synthesizes the characteristics of Confucian, Daoist and Moist sources.

⁹⁸ Carine Defoort discusses the admonishment of the ruler: "Mark Lewis has shown how the growing association of the ruler with heaven was part of a newly arising ideology legitimating the ambitions of the rulers to unify the empire. This association was presented as the expression of the cosmic order and of social harmony as part of this order the ultimate sanction of segmentary, aristocratic rule in the ancestral cults was replaced by forms of sanctioned violence and authority that were justified through the imitation of the patterns of heaven by a single, cosmic potent ruler. (Lewis, 1990:53)." Carine Defoort, *The Pheasant Cap Master (He guan zi). A Rhetorical Reading*, State University of New York Press, New York, 1997, p. 110.

The *Li He Gen* can be interpreted as a political document of the time in which it was written. Its topic reflects the historical issues of the period in which the chapter was written, which is the need for a functioning administration. The request for diligent and loyal service from officials and the responsibilities the author assigns to officials seem to reflect the growing complexity of and mass involvement in government.