

well-intentioned at first, and can be used to maintain orders and avoid disorders). *You ren yan you bu shan, huan chu yu ren* 有人焉有不善，乱出于人 (But because they come out of factiousness, they will become ruined at the end anyhow, all the troubles are invited by men themselves).

This passage involves the social state of “humanistic rules and institutions” and Daoist remarks about such a society. According to *Hengxian*, the institution of rituals and righteousness, which are manifested through names, objects, appliances and costumes and are beneficial to monarchs, are simply artificial things. They are good and play a proper role in maintaining order, as they were established first, but where there occurred human “factiousness,” there would be “troubles”; and where there were “human beings,” there would be “troubles,” so the artificial institution of rituals and righteousness finally turned out to be the source of disasters.

That was the persistent attitude with which the Daoists criticized humanistic rules and institutions. The chapter *Zaiyou* in *Works of Zhuangzi* says, “It was the Yellow Emperor who tried to constrain the minds of people with benevolence and righteousness at first... When it came to the Three Kings, people all over the country were scared at these things. Then there occurred despicable men such as King Jie of the Xia Dynasty and Robber Zhe of the Zhou Dynasty, and so-called worthy persons including Zeng Can 曾參 (a disciple of Confucius, renown of his filial piety) and Shi Yu 史魚 (an official of the Wei State during the Spring and Autumn Period, who was praised by Confucius for his straightforwardness), and all forces such as Confucian and Mohist schools rose up competitively. Under such a situation, the delighted and the angered suspect each other, the ignorant and the knowledgeable deceive each other, the good and the evil condemn each other, and the suspect and the creditable laugh at each other. In this way, the world degrades.” Again, the chapter *Pianmu* says, “How clamorous and fussy the society has been since the Three Kings.” The same idea can also be found in other chapters in *Zhuangzi*, one of which is its chapter *Shanxing*. Likewise, *Huainanzi* holds a similar train of thought, for example, *Muicheng*, one of its chapters, takes the institutionalization that occurred during the Yellow Emperor’s period as the cause of disorder in later society. Therefore, *Hengxian* has taken up the persistent Daoist attitude of criticizing humanistic rules and institutions such as colorful objects, rites and righteousness.

9 Passage 8 of Hengxian

Xian you zhong, yan you wai 先有中，焉有外 (Something internal occurs first, and then that external); *xian you xiao, yan you da* 先有小，焉有大 (something

small first, and then that big); *xian you rou, yan 8th you gang* 先有柔，焉有刚 (something soft first, and then that hard); *xian you yuan, yan you fang* 先有圆，焉有方 (something round first, and then that square); *xian you hui, yan you ming* 先有晦，焉有明 (something dim first, and then that bright); *xian you duan, yan you chang* 先有短，焉有长 (something short first, and then that long). *Tian dao ji zai, wei yi yi you yi, wei fu yi you fu* 天道既载，唯一以统一，唯復以犹復 (Now that the divine way is established, the only thing to do is to practice the principles of the One and the return).

This passage shows Daoists’ views and attitudes towards the essence of real existences. According to Daoists, all real existences are in a relative relationship, which means each is opposite to others and enters the opposite relationships of domestic and foreign, small and large, soft and hard, round and square, dark and bright, short and long, and so forth. In the relationships between “opposites,” the existences that take each other as objects depend on each other at the same time. For example, there would be no “internal” if there was no “external,” and so it is with others. The second chapter in *Laozi* says, “it is that existence and non-existence give birth the one to (the idea of) the other; that difficulty and ease produce the one (the idea of) the other; that length and shortness fashion out the one the figure of the other; that (the ideas of) height and lowness arise from the contrast of the one with the other; that the musical notes and tones become harmonious through the relation of one with another; and that being before and behind give the idea of one following another.” This is similar to *Hengxian*, but *Laozi* does not discriminate between existences and non-existences, difficulty and ease, length and shortness, height and lowness, and before and behind, while the pattern that “there is X at first, and then there is Y” in *Hengxian* seems to have affirmed one side in advance in the relationship, for example, the “internal” in the relationship between internal and external, the small between small and large, the soft between soft and hard, the round between round and square, the dim between dim and bright, and the short between short and long. Thus, *Hengxian* has expressed the Daoist idea of having a submissive attitude instead of a leading one, as well as its recognition of relative relationships.

In this passage, what is most notable is its last line, which says, “Now that the divine way is established, the only thing to do is to practice the principles of the One and the return.” Here, the “one” is intended to eliminate any opposition, and the “return” is to return to the original source. It is similarly designed to cancel all the relativities between opposite aspects such as internal and external, large and small. Daoists are sensitive in the face of relativities, and what they see in such relativities is constraints and limitations: An existence is confined by its targets. Therefore, Daoists point out that all the existences in the real world are relative on one hand, but on the other hand, they have been trying to find out a

way to transcend the relativity. A return to simplicity and oneness is their prescription. This Daoist trait is manifested in this passage in *Hengxian* by pointing out the path to the “One” and “return,” although it has disclosed the relativity between internal and external, small and large, soft and hard, round and square, dim and bright, and short and long.

10 Passage 9 of Hengxian

Heng, qi zhi sheng, yin 9th yan ming 恒，气之生，因言名 (The origination of *heng* and *qi* got its name because of words), *xian zhe you yi, huang yan zhi, hou zhe jiao bi yan* 先者有疑，荒言之，后者校比焉²³ (predecessors felt dubious and talked much, and successors follow them as an example). *Ju tian xia zhi ming, xu shu, xi yi bu ke gai ye* 兴天下之名，虚树，习以不可改也 (All the names in the world are simply some false establishment, but once they are established, they cannot be altered). *Ju tian xia zhi zuo, qiangzhe guo* 举天下之作，强者果²⁴ (For all the events in the world, only those who are powerful can succeed). *Tianxia 10th zhi da zuo* 天下之大作 (The great actions in the world), *qi X 25th bu zi ruo* 其XX不自若。 *Zuo 26th, yong you guo yu buguo, liang zhe bu fei* 作，庸有果与不果，两者不废 (actions may be effective, and may

²³ Li Ling punctuates this line as “*hengqi zhi sheng, yin yan ming xianzhe youyi, huangyan zhi houzhe jiaobi yan* 恒气之生，因言名先者有疑，荒言之后者校比焉” (Ma 2003, p. 296). Now it is re-punctuated according to Liao Mingchun. Liao says, “*Xianzhe* is opposite to *houzhe*. *Xianzhe* possibly refers to the primary things such as *heng*, and *houzhe* possibly to the derivative things such as words and names” (Liao 2004, p. 90). Liao is correct in matching *xianzhe* with *houzhe* in opposition, but his interpretations of these two expressions are not. In addition, Liao reads *huang* as *wang* 妄, which is unacceptable. The word *huang* actually means vastness or broadness (Wang 1956, Vol. 9). In my thinking, the expression *huangyan* 荒言 means to have talked much, and this line means that “the thinker who thought over the genesis of *heng* and *qi* had talked much about this issue, and people of the coming generation followed the thinker’s steps, repeating his words lengthily.”

²⁴ The punctuations of these lines are questionable. Li Ling originally punctuates them as “*Ju tianxia zhi zuo qiangzhe, guo tianxia zhi da zuo* 举天下之作强者，果天下之大作” (Ma 2003, p. 296), and Liao Mingchun deals with them as “*Ju tianxia zhi zuo, qiangzhe guo tianxia zhi da zuo* 举天下之作，强者果天下之大作” (Liao 2004, p. 90). But I think they should be punctuated as such: *Ju tianxia zhi zuo, qiangzhe guo* 举天下之作，强者果。 In my opinion, this line is a complete sentence, meaning that “only those powerful can succeed, and the expression *tianxia zhi da zuo* 天下之大作 should be combined with its following words and form another complete sentence.”

²⁵ These two words have complicated strokes, and they are still unintelligible.

²⁶ Li Ling thinks that this word should be connected with its previous sentence, reading it as *bu zi ruo zuo* 不自若作 (Ma 2003, p. 298). Liao Mingchun says, “There is a punctuation mark behind the word ‘*zuo*’, so Li Ling punctuates the lines after it. Note: in terms of the meanings of the context, there might be a scribal error” (Ibid.). Liao says the word *zuo* should be a part of the following line, and I think this single word should be viewed as a complete sentence.

not, either of these two possibilities cannot be denied). *Ju tianxia zhi wei ye, wu ye ye 27th, wu ye ye, er neng zi wei ye* 举天下之为也，无夜也，无典也，而能自为也 (All the doings in the world are not abnegated or supported, they take place by themselves). *11th Ju tian xia zhi xing tong ye, qi shi wu bu fu* 举天下之性同也。 (All the things in the world are identical in terms of their nature, for they are intended to go back to their sources). *Tian xia zhi zuo ye, wu wu ji 28th, wu fei qi suo* 天下之作也，无忤极，无非其所 (All the actions in the world comply with laws, and take place in the proper ways they should). *Ju tian xia zhi zuo ye, wu bu de qi heng er guo sui* 举天下之作也，无不得其恒而果遂 (All the actions in the world are consistent with *heng* and thus effective). *Yong huo 12th de zhi, yong huo shi zhi* 庸或得之，庸或失之 (It is impossible to gain or lose it by chance). *Ju tianxia zhi ming wu you, fa zhe yu tianxi zhi mingwang, mingjun mingshi 29th, yong you qiu er bu li* 举天下之名无有，法者与天下之明王，明君，明士，庸有求而不虑 (No names in the world have any essence, and all those who seek names as well as insightful rulers and worthy people will have to think it over before they take action).

As a summary of this paper, this passage responds to the theory of genesis in the first passage, and clarifies that both names and words come out of human beings and thus are empty without any real essence. Its first line “The origination of *heng* and *qi* got its name because of words, predecessors felt dubious and talked much, and successors follow them as an example” defines the issue about the generation of *heng* and *qi*, an issue related to names and words. In other words, when one talks about the issue of the generation of *heng* and *qi*, he speculates on this issue instead of the generation of *heng* and *qi* themselves. That is, the speaker is speculating on an issue instead of facing an object. Such speculations take place because of a “dubious” feeling, because of the bewilderment caused by this issue. Predecessors talked about their doubts a lot, and so their successors followed them, saying the same. So, the names and words in the world were established in repeated comments, and the so-called “false establishment” in the essay emphasizes that both names and words are

²⁷ Li Ling says, “*Ye* 夜, possible read as *she* 舍, constitutes a cross conference with the word *yu* 与 in the following text” (Ma 2003, p. 297). And Liao Mingchun says, “The word *she* 舍 was originally written as *ye* 夜, now it is a version according to Li Ling.” Note: *she* is opposite to *yu*. *she*: to abnegate or oppose; *yu*: to help or support.

²⁸ The three words *wu wu ji* is interpreted as *wu xu heng* by Li Ling, now revised according to Liao. *Wu* 忤: to disobey; *ji* 极: rules or principles. *Wu wu ji*: not to break any rules.

²⁹ Li Ling punctuates this line as “*Ju tianxia zhi ming wu you fei zhe, yu tianxia zhi mingwang* 举天下之名无有度者，与天下之明王...” (Ma 2003, p. 298). Liao revises the word *fei* 度 to be *fa* 法, and thinks the expression *fa zhe* should be read together with the following line. Here, Liao’s idea is accepted.

characteristic of emptiness and do not contain essence, but once they are established, they can be accepted by people, becoming a customary and unchangeable way of thinking.

The next line "For all the events in the world, only those who are powerful can succeed" means that only those who are powerful can successfully set up rules and modes. The line next to that discloses "the great actions in the world." As for this line, no assertion has been made about its meaning as a whole because some of its words are unintelligible. But almost absolutely, it involves a situation different from the efforts of people who are powerful. So, *Hengxian* continues, saying that actions involve the two possibilities of effectiveness and ineffectiveness, neither of which can be eliminated. Thus, *Hengxian* suggests a way of *wuwei* 无为 (non-action), the attitude of *wu ye* 无夜 (neither abandonment nor opposition) and *wu yu* 无舆 (no patronage or support). In this way, actions in society take place for themselves. With all actions taking place for themselves, all events and things go back to *heng* as a source, and take place in the proper ways they should. And thus there would be no issues regarding gains and losses. According to *Hengxian*, all these depend on a clear awareness that "the names in the world contain no essence," an awareness that both names and words are merely artificial things. Therefore, *Hengxian* requires those who seek laws (i. e., those who seek names) as well as enlightened kings and scholars to think this issue over, in case they become stuck in the trap of names and words.

Now we have completed reading the whole essay. The first 5 passages are ideas about how the natural universe originated, and the latter 4 ones are ideas about the humanistic world. The genesis theory in *Hengxian* is different from that in *Taiyi Produces Water*. The latter says:

Taiyi generates water, and water supports *taiyi* in reverse, and thus the sky occurs. The sky supports *Taiyi* in reverse, and the earth thus occurs in reverse. With the sky and earth supporting each other, both spirits and intelligence are thus produced. With spirits and intelligence supporting each other, the *yin* and the *yang* are thus produced. With the *yin* and the *yang* supporting each, the four seasons are thus available. With the four seasons supporting each other, cold and heat are thus caused. With the cold and heat supporting each other, both wetness and dryness are thus formed. And with wetness and dryness supporting each other, time becomes available and the circle meets its end.

The course of the universe's genesis conceived of in *Taiyi Produces Water* can simply be summarized as the following: *Taiyi*→Water→the sky→the earth→spirits and intelligence→four seasons→coldness and heat→wetness and dryness→time. In comparison, *Taiyi Produces Water* simply describes the rising

of the natural universe, but *Hengxian* contains two clues: one is about the genesis of the natural universe, and the other is about its comprehension of a humanistic world. Between the two clues there exists a clear relationship between fundamentality and dependency, that is, the genesis of the natural world has provided a model to understand the humanistic world. This model helps people clearly see how the world human beings live in has developed into a "real" world throughout history. Because this "real" humanistic world is comprehended as a historical establishment of human beings, it is also changeable in thought, and the way it changes is simply to return to simplicity and truth, i. e., to return to where it comes from. And thus it becomes open to a new path of "renewing to be something."

Just over 600 Chinese words, *Hengxian* is short in length, but our study shows that it is a significant piece of literature that discusses cosmology in ancient China. It is true that there are still many unintelligible words in the essay, and that there are also some concepts and logical links that are unclear, but we can clearly see the thoughts of some ancient Chinese thinkers on the genesis of the universe, and no doubt such speculation was a preparation for *Huainanzi*. So, in a vision of the history of thoughts, we can regard *Huainanzi* as a pool of thoughts, which accepted a variety of ideal resources before the Qin Dynasty and bestowed them with a single form. In its idea about the genesis of the universe, *Huainanzi* has apparently been influenced by essays such as *Hengxian*, *Taiyi Produces Water* and *Daoyuan*, and has also been inspired by *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi*, of course.

References

- Anju Xiangshan, Zhongcun Zhangba (1994). *Weishu Jicheng* 纬书集成 (Collection of Commentary Works on *The Book of Changes* during the Han Dynasty). Shijiazhuang: Hebei Renmin Chubanshe
- Ding Sixin (2004). You Wu zhi Bian he Qi de Sixiang 有无之辩和气的思想 (Debates on Beings and Non-beings and Ideas About Qi). *Zhongguo Zhexueshi* 中国哲学史 (History of Chinese Philosophy), Issue 3
- Dong Zhongshu (1994). *Chunqiu Fanlu* 春秋繁露 (Resplendent Gems of Spring and Autumn). Shandong: Youyi Chubanshe
- Feng Youlan (1961). *Zhongguo Zhexueshi* 中国哲学史 (History of Chinese Philosophy). Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju
- Guo Qingfan (1961). *Zhuangzi Jishi* 庄子集释 (Collected Commentaries on the Works of Zhuangzi). Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju
- Jingmenshi Bovuguan (1998). *Guodian Chimu Zhujian* 郭店楚墓竹简 (Bamboo Slips from a Tomb of the Chu State at Guodian). Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe
- Liezi (2002). *Liezi* 列子 (The Works of Liezi). Beijing: Huaxia Chubanshe
- Liao Mingchun (2004). *Shangbo Cang Chu Zhu Shu Hengxian Xinshi* 上博藏楚竹书《恒先》新

- 释 (New Interpretation to *Hengxian*, a Bamboo Book of Chu State Collected by Shanghai Museum). *Zhongguo Zhexueshi* 中国哲学史 (History of Chinese Philosophy), Issue 3
- Li Rui (2004). Qi Shi Zi Sheng: *Hengxian* Dute de Yuzhoukan "气是自然":《恒先》独特的宇宙论 (Qi Produces Itself: A Unique Cosmological Idea in the Essay *Hengxian*). *Zhongguo Zhexueshi* 中国哲学史 (History of Chinese Philosophy), Issue 3
- Li Xueqin (2004). Chu Jian *Hengxian* Shouzhang Shi Yi 楚简《恒先》首章释义 (Explanation to the first Part of *Hengxian* on the Bamboo Slips of the Chu State). *Zhongguo Zhexueshi* 中国哲学史 (History of Chinese Philosophy), Issue 3
- Ma Chengyuan (2003). *Shanghai Bowuguan Cang Zhanguo Chu Zhu Shu* 上海博物馆藏战国楚竹书 (Bamboo Books of Chu State During the Warring States Period Collected by Shanghai Museum), Vol. 3. Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe
- Mawangdui Hanmu Boshu Zhenglizu (1974). *Mawangdui Hanmu Boshu* (1) 马王堆汉墓帛书(壹) (Silk Books from Tombs of the Han Dynasty at Mawangdui, 1). Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1974
- Pang Pu (2004). *Hengxian Shidu* 《恒先》试读 (A Tentative Commentary to the Essay *Hengxian*). *Zhongguo Sixiangshi Tongxun* 中国思想史通讯 (Newsletters for the History of Chinese Thought), Vol. 2
- Wang Yizhi (1956). *Jingzhuan Shici* 经传释词 (Explanations of Classic Works and Their Commentaries). Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju
- Xu Shen (1981). *Shuowen Jiezi* 说文解字 (Explanation of Scripts and Elucidation of Characters). Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe
- Zhang Shuangli (1997). *Huainanzi Jiaoshi* 淮南子校释 (Collation and Commentaries to the Works of *Huainanzi*). Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe