

Introduction to the Study of Laozi, Zhuangzi and Liezi During 1911-1949 in China



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Abstract

Laozi老子, Zhuangzi庄子, and Liezi列子 are important texts of Taoism in China and the essence of Chinese traditional culture. Scholars who want to understand China and Chinese culture, it is necessary to understand them, and it is also necessary to understand the research situation from 1911 to 1949 because this period was the time when many important and authoritative works were published. This paper introduces the research on these three books during that period.

Keywords: Laozi老子; Zhuangzi庄子; and Liezi列子; 1911-1949; China; Taoism

Introduction to the Study of Laozi

There are many books and papers on the study of Laozi. Now we only select works with high academic value and great influence for review. The following first briefly reviews the research overview from the perspective of ideological research. The first perspective is to interpret "Laozi" through Confucianism. Representative works include: Xu Ang徐昂's Confucian Interpretation of the Tao Te Ching道德经儒论states that the origins of Confucianism and Taoism are the same. Ma Qichang马其昶's Laozi Gu老子故 believes that Laozi comes from the Book of Changes易经, and he also explains Laozi with Confucian classics such as The Analects and Mencius.

The second perspective is to interpret "Lao" from the perspective of Buddhism. Representative works include: Liang Qichao梁启超's Laozi's Philosophy老子哲学 pointed out that Laozi created a systematic philosophy for China. Although this was a rough creation, it was large-scale and raised many questions for future generations to study.

Zhang Chunyi张纯一's General Explanation of Laozi老子通释 interprets Laozi through Buddhist perspectives on cause and effect, life and death. However, the Interpretation is somewhat excessive and clumsy. Ma Yifu马一浮's Annotations to Laozi老子注 explains the "Dao" in Laozi through the concepts of "reality" 实相, "thusness" 真如, and "non manifestation" 无相示相, and uses Bodhisattva to interpret the Holy King.

The third ideological perspective is to interpret Laozi through Western philosophy. Representative works include: Zhi Weicheng支伟成's Punctuation Annotations on Laozi's Tao Te Ching标点注解老子道德经, which is mainly classified according to modern Western disciplines, including Laozi's cosmology, nominalism, political philosophy, philosophy of life, and philosophy of education. He advocates promoting both the excellent elements of traditional culture and absorbing reasonable elements from the West philosophy and culture.

The fourth ideological perspective is to interpret Laozi by using the thoughts of the pre-Qin Schools. Representative works include: Miao Zhuan缪篆's Laozi Gu Wei老子古微 which places each chapter of Laozi at the beginning of the chapter, and then quote sentences from literary works of pre-Qin different scholars, or "Zhuan Yue"(Miao Zhuan's view) which breaks off one's own meaning. This approach is in line with the study of pre-Qin scholars and is worth learning from in modern research on pre-Qin literature (including unearthed literature).

Secondly, there was a heated debate among scholars before during 1911-1949 regarding the author and completion date of Laozi. Even though The Guo bamboo slip version of Laozi, the Mawangdui silk script version of Tao Te Ching, and the Peking University Han Dynasty bamboo slip version of Laozi have been unearthed, there is still no consensus in the academic community

in China and abroad on this matter. During 1911-1949, Liang Qichao梁启超, Hu Shi胡适, Feng Youlan冯友兰, Qian Mu钱穆, Gu Jiegang顾颉刚, Gao Heng高亨, Luo Genze罗根泽, Ma Xulun马叙伦, Zhang Dainian张岱年, Guo Moruo郭沫若, Jiang Boqian蒋伯潜, and others all joined this debate. Afterwards, Qian Mu compiled several papers published during this period into Zhuang Lao Tong Bian庄老通辨. Hu Shi published "On the Issue of the time when Laozi was written with Qian Mu"与钱穆论〈老子〉成书问题. Gu Jiegang published Inferring the Writing Age of Laozi from Lü Shi Chun Qiu《从〈吕氏春秋〉推测〈老子〉之成书年代》. Basically, it can be said that there are debates in the academic community on whether Laozi is a real person, whether the author of Laozi is only Laozi, the time when Laozi was written, and the main ideas of Laozi. The opinions are divided into two schools: one believes that there was a person named Laozi who lived during the Spring and Autumn period, and that Laozi was written by Laozi during that period. The other believes that there may not necessarily be Laozi himself, and that the author of Laozi may not be Laozi. It should have been written during the Warring States period, while some believe that it should have been written after Zhuangzi.

In addition, as an ancient book and classic, Laozi is similar to other ancient books, and many scholars carry out proofreading, annotation, and other work. Some of the most famous works include Ma Xulun马叙伦's Laozi Fu Gu老子覆诂, Jiang Xichang蒋锡昌's Laozi Xiao Gu老子校诂, and Gao Heng高亨's Laozi Zheng Gu老子正诂.

Introduction to the study of Zhuangzi

Since the 20th century, scholars have studied the methods of Zhuangzi, some using traditional elementary school methods, while others citing Buddhism or Western philosophy to interpret Zhuangzi.

Annotate Zhuangzi on the academic aspect of traditional philology and collation methods

During 1911-1949, scholars used traditional methods such as collation, exegesis, identification of falsehoods, and compilation to organize Zhuangzi. Some of the more famous works include Ma Xulun马叙伦's Zhuangzi Yizheng庄子义证, Gao Heng高亨's Zhuangzi Xinjian庄子新笺, Wang Shumin王叔岷's Zhuangzi Jiaoshi庄子校释, and Zhang Mosheng张默生's Zhuangzi Xinshi庄子新释.

A Study of Zhuangzi from an Ideological Perspective

The first method is to interpret Zhuangzi through Western philosophy. Hu Shi胡适's Outline of the History of Chinese Philosophy中国哲学史大纲, Xian Qin Ming Xue Shi先秦名学史, and others divided Zhuangzi's philosophy into Zhuangzi's theory of evolution, Zhuangzi's logic, and Zhuangzi's philosophy of life. Feng Youlan冯友兰's History of Chinese Philosophy中国哲学史 applies Western philosophy to study Zhuangzi's philosophy, comparing Zhuangzi's "Dao" and "De" with Western "Ideas" and "God". Jiang Xichang蒋锡昌's Zhuangzi Philosophy庄子哲学 uses

philosophical terms proposed by Plato, Kant, Spencer and others to explain the "Ontology of the Heavenly Way".

The second method is to interpret the Zhuangzi by using Buddhism terms and concepts. Zhang Taiyan章太炎's Interpretation of Qi Wu Lun齐物论释 explains "Qi Wu齐物" in Buddhist terms of "equality". Liang Qichao梁启超's Overview of the School of Thought after Laozi, Confucius and Mohism老孔墨以后学派概观 believes that Zhuangzi's views are similar to Mahayana Buddhism.

The third method is to integrate Chinese and Western learning methods and philosophical connotations to study Zhuangzi. Lang Qingxiao朗擎宵's Zhuangzi Case Study庄子学案 not only uses Western methodology and epistemology to study Zhuangzi, but also uses traditional research methods such as citing literature from various pre-Qin schools and documents to compare similarities and differences with Zhuangzi, inventing and annotating each other. The most important feature of Jiang Xichang蒋锡昌's Zhuangzi's Philosophy庄子哲学 is the integration of philosophy and exegesis, which is a correct method of studying and interpreting Zhuangzi's ideas, reducing the drawbacks of applying Western philosophy, and avoiding unreasonable application of Western theories. Overall, scholars made progress in their research on Zhuangzi in terms of Philology, Exegesis, Collation during 1911-1949. Due to the influence of the West, scholars have used Western philosophical theories to study. Some have explored Zhuangzi's whole philosophy, some want to use Zhuangzi to express their ideals, and some have explored anarchism based on the political situation and trends of the time.

Introduction to the study of Liezi

Study and annotate Liezi from a traditional perspective

During 1911-1949, some scholars followed the research method of the Textual Criticism of Qing Dynasty, used different methods such as collation, exegesis, identification of falsehoods, and compilation of lost works on Liezi. Some of the more famous ones include: Tao Hongqing陶鸿庆's Reading Notes on Liezi读列子札记, Wang Zhongmin王重民's Annotations on Liezi列子校释, Wang Shumin王叔岷's Supplement to Zhuangzi庄子补正, Yang Bojun杨伯峻 revised the sentences of Liezi in his Annotations to the Collection of Liezi列子集释, believing that Liezi was a collection of essays after Qin and Han Dynasties. Ma Xulun马叙伦's Examination of Liezi's Counterfeit Books列子伪书考 proposes twenty things to prove that Liezi is a fake book.

Study Liezi from an ideological perspective

Some scholars used Buddhist ideas to interpret Liezi, such as Zhang Huaimin张怀民's New Interpretation of the Chapter "Tianrui" of Liezi列子天瑞篇新义.

Other scholars start from the perspective of selecting articles and editions of Liezi

For example, Chen Hexiang陈和祥's Commentary and Notes on Liezi评注列子读本 and Tang Jinggao唐敬果's Selected

Annotations on Liezi 列子选注 have played a significant role in popularizing Liezi.

Conclusion

During 1911-1949, Chinese scholars conducted research on various aspects of Laozi, Zhuangzi, and Liezi, which played a role in inheriting and promoting China's excellent Taoist culture. Their

research results have made great contributions. Until now, when we study Taoist thoughts, documents, and classics, we must refer to these research results. They occupy an important place in the history of Chinese Taoist research. Moreover, Taoist community advocates harmony and peace, which plays a significant role in the development of global civilization.



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