

1 Introduction

Lunyu jijie 論語集解 [Collected Explanations of the Analects], compiled by He Yan, is the earliest version of the Analects that is still extant. There had been three versions of the Analects, each named for the means through which the text was preserved: the Qi, Lu and Ancient Analects. During the Chengdi reign of the Former Han period, Zhang Yu, the Marquis of Anchang, synthesized these versions and produced a Zhanghou version.¹ From then on, scholars used the Zhanghou version as the basis of their *zhangju* [syntactic and semantic analyses]. The Preface of *Lunyu jijie* picked up from here and explained what happened afterwards. It also documented the process through which the book was compiled and edited. I quote the passage here:

Zhang Yu, the Marquis of Anchang, studied the Lu Version of the Analects first, but also perused the Qi Version. He chose whatever was better and adopted them. His version is called the Zhanghou Version of the Analects 張侯論. Everyone cherishes it. The *zhangju* by Bao and Zhou are based on this text. As to the Ancient Version of the Analects, Scholar Kong Anguo was the only one to explain the text, but the full text of his explanations has not survived. During the Shundi reign, Ma Rong, the prefect of Nanjun, also wrote explanations for the text. Zheng Xuan, a Grand Overseer of Agriculture at the end of the Han period, annotated the Lu version of the Analects after consulting the Qi and Ancient versions. Chen Qun, who recently served as a Grand Overseer of Construction, Wang Su, a Minister of Ceremonies, and Scholar Zhou Shenglie, all wrote explanatory annotations. In earlier eras, scholars learned different interpretations from their teachers but did not document

1 The version of the Analects excavated in Bajiaolang village of Dingzhou municipality might have been an early draft of the Zhanghou version of the Analects; the version cited in *Chunqiu Fanlu* is likely to be the Qi version of the Analects. On these points, see Watanabe 2014b.

them through annotation. In the middle period, scholars started to perform annotation. Now there are many of those. These annotations offer various perspectives. They each have their merits and deficiencies. We collected excellent ideas from numerous authors, recorded their names, and made revisions in places where [the explanation] made us uneasy. We have named this compilation the Collected Explanations of the Analects. The above is presented by Sun Yong, Grand Imperial Advisor and Secondary Marquis; Zheng Chong, Grand Imperial Advisor; Cao Xi, Mounted Imperial Attendant, Palace Commandant, and Marquis of Anxiang; Xun Yi, Palace Attendant; He Yan, Minister, Commandant for the Imperial Cavalcade, Secondary Marquis.²

According to this Preface, He Yan was not the only author of *Lunyu jijie*. However, neither the *Treatise of the Classics* 經籍志 in the *History of Sui* nor the *Treatise on Literature* 藝文志 in the *Old History of Tang* listed Sun Yong, Zheng Chong, Cao Xi, and Xun Yi as authors of the work. This was probably because He Yan was responsible for all the annotations in the book, while also spearheading the entire compilation project. [The Preface] did not attribute the work solely to He Yan because of this: the emperor Cao Fang, who was ten years old at the time, had just started his study in the year of 241. The compilation of the book served the purpose of helping the emperor cultivate his knowledge about

- 2 安昌侯張禹、本受魯論、兼講齊說、善者從之、号曰張侯論、為世所貴。苞氏・周氏章句出焉。古論唯博士孔安國、為之訓解、而世不傳。至順帝時、南郡太守馬融亦為之訓說。漢末大司農鄭玄、就魯論篇章、考之齊・古、為之註。近故司空陳羣、太常王肅、博士周生烈、皆為義說。前世傳受師說、雖有異同、不為訓解。中間為之訓解、至于今多矣。所見不同、互有得失。今集諸家之善說、記其姓名、有不妥者、頗為改易、名曰論語集解。光祿大夫・閔內侯臣孫邕、光祿大夫臣鄭沖、散騎常侍・中領軍・安鄉亭侯臣曹羲、侍中臣荀顛、尚書・駙馬都尉・閔內侯臣何晏等上(『論語集解』序)。

On *Lunyu jijie*, I use the Kiyohara Noritaka manuscript of 1315, now held at Tōyō Bunko, as the basic text. This text is commonly referred to as the *shōwahon*. I also reference the editing and revision by Watanabe 2020. On the manuscripts of *Lunyu jijie* in the Muromachi period, see Takahashi 2008. Also see Takahashi 2013. The texts are easier to read in this version.

the Analects.³ The following reasoning led me to this conclusion: of the five people mentioned in the Preface⁴, Cao Xi was the brother of Cao Shuang, who effectively ran the regime under emperor Cao Fang. Cao Xi became a Palace Attendant in 239.⁵ He Yan started to serve as a minister at the beginning of the Zhengshi reign.⁶ Thus, the Preface was written at the beginning of Zhengshi reign. Based on these dates, I believe that *Lunyu jijie* was compiled for the perusal of the ten-year-old emperor: it was a semi-official publication of the Wei state. We must bear this in mind as we read the annotations.

3 *Sanguozhi* 三國志 [The History of the Three Kingdoms] vol. 4, the biographies of the three young emperors and of Cao Fang.

4 In the Weizheng chapter of *Lunyu Yishu*, there is a note indicating that “all the annotations for which the author’s name is not noted are by He Pingshu [He Yan].” It is likely that this is because He Yan was the editor and therefore did not note his own name. In fact, in the Weilinggong chapter of *Lunyu jijie*, for example, a passage reads: “Confucius said: Cannot Shun be considered as one who governed through non-action (*wu wei*)? What did he do? He permeated himself with humility and faced South with propriety.” “This means that [Shun] has chosen the right people to serve as officials. Therefore, he could rule through non-action.” This annotation does not bear its author’s name. Therefore, it is thought of as He Yan’s work. He Yan also remarked in his *Jingfudian fu* 景福殿賦 [An essay written at Jingfu Palace] (in *Wenxuan* volume 11) that “the key is to select the right people.” This shows his emphasis on the selection of officials. In his memorial, he said “rulers must choose to associate themselves with the right people. Shun cautioned Yu, ‘neighbors! Neighbors!’ Shun was advising Yu to be cautious about those who were close to him.” (the biography for Cao Fang in volume 4 of *Sanguozhi* 三國志). In this quote, He Yan was also stressing the importance of selecting the right personnel. It is clear that this and other unnamed annotations were authored by He Yan.

5 *Sanguozhi* vol. 9, biography of Cao Shuang.

6 *Sanguozhi* vol. 9, biography of He Yan, which was attached to the biography of Cao Shuang, and which quoted from *Weilue* 魏略 [A private history of the Wei]. Liu Binnan of the Qing period also argued in his *Lunyu zhengyi* 論語正義 [The correct meaning of the Analects] that the cause for the compilation of *Lunyu jijie* was to aid emperor Cao Fang’s study of the Analects. The compilation started in 241 and was completed after 242. However, Song Gang argued that it was completed between 236 and 249, see Song 2007.

In the Preface are listed the names of eight scholars whose annotations were included in *Lunyu jijie*. They are: Kong Anguo of Former Han (who preserved and passed down the Ancient version of the Analects; 466 annotations); Bao Xian of Latter Han (a New Text Confucian scholar whose work was based on the Lu version of the Analects; 196 annotations); Scholar Zhou; Ma Rong (Old Text Confucian scholar; 132 annotations); Zheng Xuan (author of *Lunyu zhu* 論語註 [annotations for the Analects]; 98 annotations); Wang Su of Wei (40 annotations); Zhou Shenglie (14 annotations); Chen Qun (author of *Lunyu yishuo* 論語義說 [explanations on the meaning of the Analects], 3 annotations). The compilers of *Lunyu jijie* were referring to these scholars when they said they “collected excellent ideas from numerous authors, recorded their names, and made revisions in places where [the interpretation] made us uneasy.” I have listed the number of annotations from each scholar in the brackets above. This excludes Scholar Zhou, whom the editors may have conflated with Zhou Shenglie. Kong Anguo was the most frequently quoted: his annotations account for more than half of all the selected annotations. When quoting Zheng Xuan, the compilers significantly condensed his annotations. Also of note, annotations which displayed the kind of *xuanxue* learning 玄學 [mystic learning] characteristic of He Yan’s own thinking were not in the majority.⁷

Some scholars criticized *Lunyu jijie* for its eccentric inclusion of eight incompatible schools of annotations⁸, which they argued caused much chaos for the norms of classical interpretation. Others noted the conciliatory position the book took: the compilers made an effort to give relatively equal attention to each school of thought, even as they intentionally omitted and condensed some

7 Ding Yan of the Qing period argued in his *Lunyu Kongzhu zhengwei* 論語孔註證偽 [Falsehoods in the Kong annotations for the Analects] that Kong Anguo’s annotations were all attributed to him falsely and were actually authored by Wang Su. Liu Binnan agreed with this assessment in his *Lunyu zhengyi*. The numbers of annotation entries are based on Uguchi 1996. In addition, Song 2007 has specific numbers for each chapter. On the characteristics of *Lunyuzhu* by Zheng Xuan, see Watanabe 2014a.

8 Takeuchi Yoshio and Yan Chunxin argued that this was something that went beyond the insistence on intellectual lineage; it amounted to accepting the theories of others in one’s own analysis. See Takeuchi 1977 and Yan 2012.

commentaries.⁹ Yet others said that the significance of *Lunyu jijie* lay in its rejection of classical studies 經學.¹⁰

Why did He Yan write *xuanxue*-based explanations for *Lunyu jijie*? As I have discussed elsewhere through an examination of the chapter in the book about the “nonaction of Shun,” the book, which was a semi-official publication of the Wei state, reflected the political conditions of its day. Many chapters of the book bear the hallmark of its times.¹¹

In this article, I will explain why He Yan’s *Lunyu jijie* defeated Zheng Xuan’s *Lunyu zhu* and emerged as the most important of all early annotations for the Analects. I will not focus on intellectual inheritance, or in other words how *Lunyu yishu* 論語義疏 [Interpretations for the Analects] by Huang Kan and *Lunyu zhushu* 論語註疏 [Annotations for the Analects] by Xing Bing inherited from *Lunyu jijie*. Rather, I will approach the issue through an analysis of the intellectual content of the book.

2 Yi-yuan and dao-wu

One characteristic of *Lunyu jijie* is that its worldview is premised on the key concepts of *yi* [one] and *yuan* [the originary].¹² He Yan believed that erudition was of no use in the search for the truth. The truth could only be found in the *yi*. He explained in the “Weilinggong” chapter of the Analects:

The Master said, “Ci! Do you take me for one who studies a great deal and remembers it?” Zigong replied, “Yes. Is it not so?” “It is not. I link all on

9 Yuhazu 2007 f..

10 Taka 2009.

11 Watanabe 2001.

12 Translator’s note: throughout the article, I translate key *xuanxue* terms such as 一 [One], 元 [origin], 道 [the Way], 無 [non-being] through transliteration as *yi*, *yuan*, *dao*, and *wu*, for there is much debate about how these metaphysical terms should be translated into English – or whether it is possible at all. This also serves the purpose of differentiating the metaphysical uses of these terms from more common meanings of the characters, which I translate accordingly in context. However, I sometimes translate the metaphysical *Wu* as non-being to match the linguistic context.

a single thread.”¹³ Kong Anguo said, “the term *ran* 然 [yes] refers to ‘do you take me for one who studies a great deal and remembers it.’” Kong Anguo said, “is it not so” is asking whether the above statement is not true. “[1] Goodness has its origin; things have their assemblage. [2] All under heaven return to the same point, even if by different paths. They have one hundred thoughts, yet all for one goal. If one knows the origin, then one can do much good. Thus, [3] studying a great deal is not necessary; learning the *Yi* is enough for knowing.”¹⁴

In He Yan’s commentary, [1] and [2] are quotes from the *Book of Changes*; [3] interprets the Analects based on the philosophy in the *Book of Changes*. This is why we say that *Lunyu jijie* is characterized by its *xuanxue* interpretations, which were based on the *Book of Changes*, *Laozi*, and *Zhuangzi*. These three classics are collectively known as “the three works of *xuan* 三玄.”¹⁵

Further, [1] came from the “wenyan zhuan” 文言傳 [Commentary on the Words] for the hexagram *Qian* 乾 in the *Book of Changes*. The original line reads, “What is called ‘the great and originating [*yuan*]’ is the first and chief quality of goodness; what is called ‘the penetrating [*heng*]’ is the assemblage [會 *hui*] of excellences.” Here the author used a quote that articulated the *Yi* through the *yuan*. *Yuan* means the originating origins; *hui* 會 means to assemble. [2] came from “Xici zhuan” 繫辭傳 [Commentary on the Appended Phrases] of the *Book of Changes*: “(Confucius said), all under heaven return to the same

13 Translator’s note: unless otherwise noted, the translations of the main texts of the Analects, the Book of Rites, the Book of Changes, and Laozi in the article are based in part on the translations of James Legge, Charles Muller, and Moss Roberts, with revisions. The translations of all other classical texts—and all errors there in—are my own.

14 子曰、賜也、汝以予為多学而識之者與。對曰、然[一]。非與[二]。曰、非也。予一以貫之[三]。[一]孔安國曰、然、謂多学而識之也。[二]孔安國曰、問今不然邪也。[三]1 善有元、事有會。2 天下殊塗而同歸、百慮而一致。知其元則衆善舉。故3 不待多學而一以知之也。(『論語集解』衛靈公篇)。

15 On the point that *Lunyu jijie*’s main characteristic is its *xuanxue*-based interpretation of the Analects, see Murotani 1995. Tang Guiming also argued that the main characteristic of *Lunyu jijie* was its invocation of the Book of Changes, see Tang (2005).

point, even if by different paths; [all under heaven] aim for the same goals, even if through many different thoughts.” This line of thinking, in which myriad paths and myriad thoughts all led to the same place, gave *Lunyu jijie* its core ideas.¹⁶

Of note, in the annotations for these lines in the *Book of Changes* by Han Kangbo of East Jin, Han said, “less leads to gain, more leads to confusion. Although paths are diverse, destinations are the same. Although thoughts are many, their goals are not at odds. The key to wisdom is not extensive study, but rather the *Yi*: one could learn all [the wisdom] without even thinking.” He Yan’s idea was that erudition was useless in the search for truth; these annotations by Han Kangbo also embodied this idea.

He Yan had a few reasons to think that erudition was not valuable. The first was based on the three essential meanings in the *Book of Changes*. Zheng Xuan considered these three meanings to be “simplicity; change; and stability.”¹⁷ Among these, He Yan stressed simplicity. There was probably mutual influence between He Yan and Wang Bi, who also foregrounded simplicity in his *Zhouyi*

16 In the Liren chapter of *Lunyu jijie* was the following passage:

Confucius said, “Shen, my doctrine is that of an all-pervading unity.” The disciple Zeng replied, “Yes.” [1] The Master went out, and the other disciples asked, saying, “What do his words mean?” Zeng said, “The doctrine of our master is to be true to the principles of our nature and the benevolent exercise of them to others, this and nothing more. [2]”

[1] Kong Anguo says, “he understood this immediately and thus did not ask further. Therefore, he said ‘yes.’”

[2] Serve those above oneself with loyalty; connect with those below oneself with magnanimity; they are all based on *Yi*. This is all about [dealing with] people.

However, in the drafts of this text in the Zhenghe version and Zhengping version, the second annotation is missing. In contrast, the Shicaitang version by Liao of the Song period (reprinted by *Yuan Xujun*, seen at the Palace Museum of China), the second annotation is present. Based on this, we can see that He Yan made it explicit that loyalty and magnanimity were qualities that issued from “*Yi*.”

17 Preface to *Zhouyi Zhengyi* 周易正義 [the true meaning of the Book of Changes].

zhu 周易註 [annotations for the *Book of Changes*]. He Yan praised and promoted Wang Bi. This is the second reason. He and Wang shared the trend of their times, which valued simplicity.

According to Kaga Eiji, Wang Bi had difficulty providing a literal explication of the scriptures in *Zhouyizhu*, so much so that he had to exclude from his explanations the sophisticated texts explaining the hexagrams.¹⁸ This approach was influenced by the basic tenets of the Jingzhou School, which stressed “eliminating unnecessary words and excluding complication.” It was a new trend in the Wei-Jin period to contemplate over the *Book of Changes* and the *Laozi* concepts of *xing* 性 [character] and *tiandao* 天道 [the heavenly way]. Wang Bi’s philosophy aimed to explain the ontology of the cosmos and the laws governing the existence of the myriad beings. He Yan’s *Lunyu jijie* also sought to explain these principles through the lens of the *Book of Changes*. The invocation of *Yi* reflects these endeavours.

The third reason for He Yan’s critique of erudition was his competition with Zheng Xuan learning.¹⁹ In order to systemically integrate all the New Text and Old Text classics, Zheng Xuan constructed an expansive world of knowledge. Obviously, the nature of this system of knowledge is erudition. He Yan shunned the systemic, comprehensive system of knowledge in Zheng Xuan’s scholarship, aiming instead at grasping the core of the Analects. Although *Lunyu jijie* quoted from Zheng Xuan, He Yan deleted Zheng Xuan’s words on classical studies. The reason for this is the above.²⁰

18 Kaga 1994.

19 On the Six Heavens theory, which represented Zheng Xuan’s effort in systemizing his learning and which was placed at the top of the learning of rituals, see Watanabe 2007 and 2009.

20 On the point that *Lunyu jijie* excluded Zheng Xuan’s interpretations based on his classical studies, see Taka 2009. In addition, in Yuhazu 2007, Yuhazu searched for the aims of the compilation of *Lunyu jijie* in the fact that, even though the work intentionally abbreviated and summarized the interpretations of prior scholars of the Han and Wei periods, to the extent possible, He Yan listed the names of the above scholars.

As such, *Lunyu jijie* posited that it was possible to understand the whole [truth] through the examination of *yi* and *yuan*.²¹ This understanding about *yi* and *yuan* was based evidently on He Yan's brand of *xuanxue*. It is different from those of Huang Kan and Zhuzi.²²

He Yan also discussed the basic principles of *yi* and *yuan*, which he explained in the "Weilinggong" chapter of *Lunyu jijie*, in his *Daolun* 道論 [A treatise on *dao*]. In this text, He Yan interpreted *yi* and *yuan* through the concepts of *dao* and *wu*.

In *Daolun*, He Yan said, "Being is born from non-being [wu 無]. Action, too, stems from non-being. One cannot describe non-being with words, name

21 In the Weizheng chapter of *Lunyu jijie*, there is the following passage:

Confucius said, "the study (攻 gong) of strange doctrines is injurious indeed." [1]

[1] Gong 攻 means to study. The myriad ways of good learning come from the same origin, so the various paths [of good learning] return to the same point. Strange doctrines do not return to the same point.

Here He Yan said although paths were different, the destination was the same. In other words, he stressed the idea of "Yi."

22 On the sentence "my doctrine is that of an all-pervading unity 一以貫之," which I cited before, Huang Kan explained in *Lunyu yishu* that this meant "using the one Way to guide the ten thousand principles under heaven." Zhuzi explained in *Lunyu Jizhu* that this meant "the heart of the sage is of one principle; it can be applied broadly and is appropriate everywhere. It has various uses." Either interpretation is different from that of He Yan. On the characteristics of Huang Kan's *Lunyu yishu*, see Watanabe 2013 and 2021. Moreover, *Lunyu yishu* is based on the version edited and revised by Takeuchi Yoshio and published by Kaitokudō kinenkai, 1924. I also referenced Gao 2013. For *Lunyu Jizhu*, I used the version in Zhuzi quanshu 2002. In Murotani 1994, Murotani argued that He Yan's *xuanxue* learning, which was *Dao* ist in nature, did not take Confucianism as its enemy. Rather, it took a reconciliatory stance and allowed for the possibility of co-existence between the two schools. This was consistent with the Wei regime's aversion towards pushing through unified theories by force. However, even though, among other things, He Yan mentioned his own philosophy about *Yi* in the Weilinggong chapter but did not elaborate on the same theme in the Liren chapter, his emphasis on philosophy was consistent.

it with names, see it in shapes, or listen to it through sounds: such is the *dao* in its fullness. Thus, *dao* can amplify sounds, engender things, encompass forms and spirits, and magnify light and colours. It is because of *dao* that black is black and white is white. It is because of *dao* that squares are square, and circles are round. Circle and square formed their shapes because of *dao*, yet *dao* has no shape; black and white earned their names thanks to *dao*; yet *dao* has no name.”²³

As *Daolun* shows, He Yan’s ontology understood that which existed 存在者 as “being 有”; and it was non-being 無 that was the metaphysical origin for the existence of all beings. And non-being was also the *Dao* in its fullness: in his *Wuminglun* 無名論 [Treatise on the no-name], He Yan posited that non-being was the *dao*. Thus, in *Daolun*, the understanding of the whole and its core was achieved through the *dao*, which was the same with non-being.²⁴ In the “Weilinggong” chapter of *Lunyu jijie*, He Yan understood *yi*, *yuan*, *dao*, and *wu* [non-being] along similar lines.

He Yan expressed the ideas of *yi* and *yuan*, and explained the Analects using *dao* and *wu*, all of which were central concepts in his philosophy. For example, in the “Xianjin” chapter of *Lunyu jijie*, He Yan stressed the following thinking about *dao* in a passage in which Confucius praised his disciple Yan Hui:

Confucius said: “Hui has nearly attained perfect virtue, yet he is often possession-less [lükong 屢空]. Ci is not wealthy by fate, so he has to contrive in order to enrich himself. His speculations are usually on the mark.”

This passage says that Hui was close to the way of the sages, for he was often in poverty yet found joy in his way of being; Ci did not follow superior instructions and engaged only in commerce and in speculating about rights and wrongs. This was the Master praising Hui to prod Ci. Another interpretation reads the word “lǚ” 屢 [often] as “mei” 每 [always] and “kong” 空 [poverty] as

- 23 何晏道論曰、有之為有、待無以生、事而為事、由無以成。夫道之而無語、名之而無名、視之而無形、聽之而無聲、則道之全焉。故能昭音嚮而出氣物、包形神而章光影。玄以之黑、素以之白。矩以之方、規以之圓。圓●方得形、而此無形。白黑得名、而此無名也(『列子』天瑞第一、張湛注)。
- 24 In *Wuminglun*, He Yan wrote, “the *dao* is something that only non-being possesses.” (quoted in volume 4 of *Liezi*) Horiike 1988.

“xuzhong” 虛中 [humble and focused]. [This was Confucius] leveraging the goodness of the sages to teach the disciples how to approach the *Dao*. Those who still did not understand the *Dao* were erroneous in their own ways. Hui was the only one who remained humble and focused while seeking the *dao*, for he embraced the *dao* deeply. One who is not humble cannot understand the *dao*. Zigong did not suffer from the same problems with the other disciples. Yet he did not know the *dao* either. For, he reached his aim by luck without studying the origins of things, and earned a fortune by pure chance without a heavenly mandate. This was why he was not humble.²⁵

Among the disciples of Confucius, Yan Hui was the closest to attaining the way of the sages. He Yan found the cause of Confucius’s praise for Yan Hui in Yan Hui’s affinity with the *dao*. Further, He Yan compared Yan Hui and Zigong based on their distance from the *dao*, and criticized Zigong for “not knowing the *dao*.” The explanation for Yan Hui’s affinity with the *dao* could be found in his way of thinking. Yan Hui was the only one who “embraced the Way deeply.” Thus, he was able to learn the *dao*. This implied that people could not reach a great understanding the *dao* through erudition. Rather, they needed to contemplate about the metaphysical origins of things, which took the form of the *dao*. This was indeed He Yan interpreting the Analects with his key concept of the *dao*.

The above crystallizes the characteristics of He Yan’s *Lunyu jijie*: it shows a worldview with the core ideas of *yi* and *yuan* at its base. These core ideas were the same with *dao* and *wu*. Like his *Daolun* and *Wuminglun*, He Yan interpreted the Analects using his ideas of *dao* and *wu*, which were at the center of his thought. He also believed that Yan Hui’s contemplation about the *dao* was the reason why Confucius praised him heartily. Through these efforts, He Yan constructed

25 子曰、回也、其庶乎。屢空。賜不受命而貨殖焉、憶則屢中一。[一]言回 1 庶幾聖道、雖數空匱、而樂在其中矣。賜不受教命、唯財貨是殖、憶度是非。蓋美回、所以勵賜也。一曰、屢、猶每也。空、猶虛中也。以聖人之善、教數子之庶幾。猶不至於知道者、各內有此害。其於庶幾、每能虛中者、唯回、懷道深遠。不虛心、不能知道。子貢無數子之病、然亦 3 不知道者、雖不窮理而幸中、雖非天命而偶富。亦所以不虛心也。(『論語集解』先進篇)

a “comprehensive principle [Ch: 通理],” which stood apart from that of Zheng Xuan.

Through his *xuanxue*-based interpretation of the Analects, He Yan clarified the absolute nature of the *Dao*, which he thought of as the metaphysical origin of all beings and fashioned as the foundation of his worldview. Soon after, in his *Laozi zhu* 老子註 [Annotations on *Laozi*], Wang Bi started treating *dao* as *li* 理 [principles].²⁶ He Yan used *xuanxue* interpretations to show that the absolute nature of *dao* was expressly present in the Analects. This endeavour embodied the trend of the Wei-Jin times to search for “comprehensive principles 通理.”

3 The Realization of Dao

According to He Yan, articulating the *dao* was difficult even for Confucius. Let us consider his justification for this assertion through a passage explaining the “Shuer” chapter of the Analects in *Lunyu jijie*:

Confucius said, “Set your aspirations [zhi 志] on the *dao* [1], hold on to [ju 据] virtue [2], rely on [yi 依] your ren [3], and relax in the study of the arts [yi 藝] [4].”

[1] *Zhi* 志 means to admire. *Dao* cannot be experienced. Thus, one can only admire the *dao*.

[2] *Ju* 据 means to rely upon. Virtue is material. Thus, one can rely on it.

[3] *Yi* 依 means to lean on. People who are ren [benevolent] use their efforts to help other people. Thus, they can be leaned upon.

[4] *Yi* 藝 means the six arts. They are not enough for one to rely upon. Thus, Confucius said relax in the study of them.²⁷

On “set your aspirations on the Way 志于道,” Zhuzi’s *Lunyu jizhu* 論語集註 [Collected Annotations of the Analects], among others, explained the phrase

26 See Kaga 1994.

27 子曰、志於道 [一]、据於德 [二]、依於仁 [三]、游於芸 [四]。[一] 志、慕也。道不可体、故志之而已矣也。[二] 据、杖也。德有成形、故可据。[三] 依、倚也。仁者功施於人、故可倚之也。[四] 芸、六芸也。不足拋依、故曰遊也。(『論語集解』述而篇)。

literally as “to aim for the *dao*.” He Yan’s interpretation was different: even for Confucius, “*dao* cannot be experienced.” Therefore, one could only “admire it [the *dao*].” In other words, the *dao*, which existed as the metaphysical origin of all beings and must thus be placed at the foundation of one’s worldview, was at such a height that even Confucius could not reach.

Therefore, it would be very difficult to realize the *dao* in the world unless something special happened. In He Yan’s explanation of the “Liren” chapter of the Analects, he said the following:

Confucius said, “if one learns the *dao* in the morning, it is fine to die in the evening.” This passage says that [Confucius] is about to die, but he still has not heard that the *dao* has materialized in the world.²⁸

To implement the rule of the *dao* in the world is difficult: even Confucius could not reach the *dao*. Thus, He Yan explained that it was in principle impossible to hear that the *dao* had been realized in the world.²⁹ However, if certain conditions were met, it would still be possible to rule the world on the basis of the *dao*, which was the metaphysical origin of all beings.

In the “Yongye” chapter of *Lunyu jijie*, He Yan said that the state of Lu was close to the *dao*.

Confucius said, “The state of Qi, with one change, could be at the level of Lu. The state of Lu, with one change, could attain the *dao*.” Bao says, this means that the kingdoms of Qi and Lu have retained the teachings of Taigong and Zhougong. Taigong was capable; Zhougong was sagacious. Although the politics and culture of the two kingdoms are in decline today, if wise rulers

28 子曰、朝聞道、夕死可矣一。[一]言將至死、不聞世之有道也。(『論語集解』里仁篇)。

29 Ogyū Sorai also said in Rongochō 論語微 that it was impossible to implement the *dao*. In contrast, Zhuzi said in *Lunyu jizhu*: “*dao* is the natural principle of things. If one could learn it, one could live and die in peace with no regrets. Zhaoxi 朝夕 [morning and evening], this is used to indicate how short the time frame is.” That is, Zhuzi explained that if one could understand the *dao*, one would have no regrets even if one were to pass away right after.

govern them, Qi could be like Lu, and Lu could reach an era in which the *dao* is realized.³⁰

Lunyu jijie says that if Lu could be ruled on the basis of the *dao*, then Lu could enter an era in which “the *dao* is realized.” As I will discuss below, this comes from the “Liyun” chapter of *Book of Rites*: it is an era in which “all under heaven is shared by all.” This is a description of the Yao-Shun era. The Yao-Shun Transition of that era served as a precedent for the so-called Han-Wei Transition, which gave rise to the Wei dynasty.³¹ In other words, if the state of Lu was governed as if it were under Yao and Shun, then *dao*-based governance could be realized. This was what He Yan used Bao Xian’s annotation to say.

Here, the *dao*, which was the metaphysical origin of all things, was combined with the “Grand *Dao* 大道 [the grand Way]” in the “Liyun” chapter of the *Book of Rites*. Before we examine the significance of the above, let us sort out the relationship between *dao* and *tian* 天 [heaven] in He Yan’s thought. This was a complicated relationship. For example, in the “Gongyechang” chapter of *Lunyu jijie*, there is such a passage:

Zigong said: “From our Master we learned about written documents and cultural presentations (*wenzhang* 文章) [1], we never learned what he said about human nature and the Way of heaven (*xingyu tian dao* 性與天道) .[2]”

[1] Zhang 章 means bright. The brilliance of writing can be seen in form and in substance and can be used to cultivate one’s senses.

[2] Xing 性 is what gives birth to people. The way of heaven is the *dao*, which is originary, smooth, and renewed every day. It is deep and subtle and therefore cannot be learned.³²

30 子曰、齊一变至於魯。魯一变至於道一。[一] 苞氏曰、言齊●魯有太公●周公之余化也。太公大賢、周公聖人。今其政教雖衰、若有明君興之者、齊可使如魯、魯可使如大道行之時之也。(『論語集解』雍也篇)。

31 On how He Yan legitimized the Han-Wei transition through invoking the Liyun chapter of the *Book of Rites* and the Yao-Shun transition, see Watanabe 2003a and 2003b.

32 子貢曰、夫子之文章、可得而聞也一。夫子之言性与天道、不可得而聞也已矣二。[一] 章、明也。文彩形質著見、可以耳目修也。[二] 性者、人之所受以生也。天道者、元亨日新之道也。深微、故不可得而聞也。(『論語集解』公冶長篇)。

In this chapter, He Yan interpreted the *dao* of Heaven as the *dao* which was “originary, smooth, and renewed every day.” The *dao* and the Heaven were co-existing, parallel concepts here. However, among others, Ruan Ji 阮籍, a contemporary of He Yan’s, adopted *Zhuangzi*’s theory of the formation of the cosmos.³³ In that theory, the *dao* gave birth to Heaven and Earth, which in turn gave birth to everything else. That is, the *dao* was placed above the Heaven. In other words, the *dao* and the Heaven were separate things. In fact, He Yan also discussed the relationship between the Heaven and the Earth in the context of the relationship between being and non-being in his *Wuminglun*:

The *dao* is non-being. From the time of their formation, Heaven and Earth belong to the realm of being. Yet they are still called the *dao*, for they can still invoke the non-being. Thus, although they exist in a realm with names, they can hide their nameless image.³⁴

According to this text, the *dao* belongs to non-being, and Heaven and Earth belong to being. The reason why the Heaven could still be called the *dao* was that it could still make use of the *dao*. Thus, Heaven could exist in a realm with names but hide its nameless image. That is, He Yan understood the Heaven as a being that was also infused with [the essence of] non-being.³⁵

As such, in He Yan’s thought, the Heaven was being and at the same time non-being. Therefore, in He Yan’s theory, the Heaven was being and non-being; the *dao* was non-being; yet these distinctions did not contradict the fact that “the *dao* of the Heaven 天道” was used as a compound phrase in the “Gongyechang” chapter of *Lunyu jijie*. Thus, for He Yan, the Heaven and non-being, or the *dao*, were one and the same.

For He Yan, those who integrated their virtues with Heaven and Earth were sages. In the “Jishi” chapter of *Lunyu jijie*, He Yan said the following about the sages and Heaven and Earth:

33 On Ruan Ji’s theory about the formation of the cosmos, see Watanabe 2015.

34 夫道者、惟無所有者也。自天地已來、皆有所有矣。然猶謂之道者、以其能復用無所有也。故雖處有名之域、而沒其無名之象。(『列子』仲尼篇第四、張湛注)。

35 See Horiike 1988.

Confucius said, “There are three things of which the superior man stands in awe. He stands in awe of the ordinances of Heaven [1]. He stands in awe of great men [2]. He stands in awe of the words of sages [3]. The mean man does not know the ordinances of Heaven [4], and consequently does not stand in awe of them. He is disrespectful to great men [5]. He makes sport of the words of sages [6].”

[1] It is auspicious to follow, and inauspicious to contradict: such is the Mandate of Heaven.

[2] “Great men” means sages. They are those who match their virtues with those of Heaven and Earth.

[3] Deep and broad and hard to understand: such are the words of the sages.

[4] [The Mandate of Heaven] is magnanimous and cheerful, and so [mean men] does not know to fear it.

[5] [Great men] are straight but not unrestrained, thus [mean men] insult them.

[6] [Sages] cannot take up small tasks, so [mean men] makes sport of their words.³⁶

If the sage could be one with Heaven and Earth and their virtues, then the sage, who was one with the Heaven – a concept between being and non-being – could be legitimized not just by Heaven, but also by *wu* and *dao*, which were superior to Heaven. In He Yan’s understanding, a sage legitimized by the fundamental concepts of *wu*, *dao*, *yi*, and *yuan* could guide ideal governance.

So, how would a sage legitimized as such, like Yao and Shun as described in the “Liyun” chapter of the *Book of Rites*, govern and bring the *dao* to the world?

36 孔子曰、君子有三畏。畏天命一、畏大人二、畏聖人之言三。小人不知天命而不畏也四、狎大人五、侮聖人之言六。[一] 順吉逆凶、天之命也。[二] 大人、即聖人。与天地合其德者也。[三] 深遠不可易知、則聖人之言也。[四] 恢。故不知畏也。[五] 直而不肆。故狎之也。[六] 不可小知。故侮之也。(『論語集解』季氏篇)。

4 The Governance of Non-action and *Shanrang* 禪讓 [the voluntary transfer of state power]

Shun's governance through non-action was a kind of politics that relied on sagacious people. In the "Weilingong" chapter of *Lunyu jijie*, He Yan offered the following annotations:

Confucius said: "Cannot Shun be considered as one who governed through non-action (*wu wei*)? What did he do? He permeated himself with humility and faced South with propriety." This means that [Shun] has chosen the right people to serve as officials. Therefore, he could rule through non-action.³⁷

Shun appeared in seven chapters of the Analects. He Yan chose this particular passage and used it to explain non-action as "choosing the right people to serve as officials."³⁸ As the minister of personnel, He Yan was aiming at institutionalizing the recruitment of officials with *xuanxue* as his guiding principle.³⁹

As the source of this allusion, the *Book of Rites* says:

Formerly Zhongni was present as one of the guests at the Ji sacrifice; and when it was over, he went out and walked backwards and forwards on the terrace over the gate of Proclamations, looking sad and sighing. What made him sigh was the state of Lu. Yan Yan was by his side, and said to him, 'Master, what are you sighing about?' Confucius replied, 'I never saw the practice of the Grand *Dao*, and the eminent people of the three dynasties; but I have my object (in harmony with theirs). When the Grand *Dao* was practiced, a public and common spirit ruled all under heaven; people of talent, virtue, and ability were chosen [to serve]; words were sincere, and harmony was cultivated.⁴⁰

37 子曰、無為而治者、其舜也與。夫何為哉。恭已正南面而已矣一。[一言任官得其人。故無為而治也。] (『論語集解』衛靈公篇)。

38 Huang Kan's *Lunyu yizhu* explained this as non-action was necessary because it was between two sages; Zhuzi's *Lunyu jizhu* explained this as sages transformed the people with their flourishing virtues. Neither mentioned the selection of officials. This is a unique interpretation by He Yan in *Lunyu jijie*.

39 On He Yan's aim to select all officials on the basis of *xuanxue* when he served as the minister of personnel, see Watanabe 2014a.

40 昔者仲尼與於蜡賓。事畢、出遊於觀之上、喟然而嘆。仲尼之嘆、蓋

On this, Zheng Xuan annotated: “the Grand *Dao* referred to the era of the Five Emperors.” That is, the Grand *Dao* was realized in the era of the Five Emperors, among them Yao, Shun, and Yu, who voluntarily conceded power to their worthy successor. The chapter also said that, in that era, politics was characterized by the selection of the sagacious and the capable for official posts. In other words, this was the politics that He Yan had in mind in his annotation above. Moreover, Confucius said the above when he sighed about the state of affairs in the state of Lu. In other words, He Yan believed that if one could return Lu to the state of affairs in the era when the Grand *Dao* was practiced, then Lu, which was already close to the *Dao*, could enter an ideal era. He Yan was following the narrative in the “Liyun” chapter of the *Book of Rites* when he said so.

He Yan showed great respect for the above chapter because the Wei ruler had used the chapter as a source of allusions in his edict when he accepted the voluntary transfer of power from the ruler of the Han dynasty.⁴¹ The rulers of the Wei had claimed themselves to be descendants of Shun and the rulers of the Han to be descendants of Yao. Shun had succeeded Yao through *shanrang* and practiced sagacious politics based on the *dao*, which was the metaphysical origins of all beings. He Yan was pursuing the same politics [in his own times].

Elaborating further on the respectable non-action of Shun, He Yan stressed the importance of selecting worthy officials in the “Weilinggong” chapter of *Lunyu jijie*. However, because this was also what the Analects meant to say in the first place, it was not necessary for He Yan to offer an alternative interpretation based on *xuanxue*.

Confucius said, “Did not Zang Wenzhong steal the chances of others for a position? He knew the ability of Liu Xiahui, but did not recommend him.” Kong Anguo said, “Liu Xiahui is also known as Zhan Qin. Knowing someone’s ability but not recommending them for a position, that is the same as

嘆魯也。言偃在側、曰、君子何嘆。孔子曰、大道之行也、與三代之英、丘未之逮也。而有志焉。大道之行也、天下為公、選賢與能、講信脩睦。……(『禮記』禮運篇第九)。

41 This edict was quoted in *Houhanji* 後漢紀 [History of the Latter Han] (volume 30, the biography of the Xian emperor, the entry for the 25th year of the Jian’an reign). See Watanabe 2003.

stealing one's position."⁴²

Lunyu jijie did not offer a special explanation for the proposition in the main text of the Analects that the person who failed to recommend [other worthy people] was effectively stealing their position. He Yan included the passage above in *Lunyu jijie* in order to stress the imperative to recommend worthy people to the state, which was inherent in the non-action of Shun.

It is one's duty to recommend worthy people: the next chapter in the Analects also discusses this, and He Yan once again offered no alternative interpretation.

Zhong Gong, currently serving as prime minister to the head of the Ji family, asked about government. Confucius said, "fill official positions [1], grant pardon to all the petty offenses, and then put virtuous and able people into positions of responsibility." Zhong Gong asked, "How am I going to find these virtuous and able people and use them to fill official positions?" Confucius said, "select from those you know. Will the people let you ignore the ones you don't know of?"[2]

[1] Wang Su said, "this passage means that, in governance, one should appoint officials first, and then assign them responsibilities".

[2] Kong Anguo said, "those whom you do not know, people will recommend them spontaneously. Everyone recommends those whom they know, and there will be no worthy people left behind."⁴³

In stressing the need to recommend those whom one knew, He Yan was possibly critiquing Sima Rui, who contradicted Cao Shuang's approach to official recruitment. Sima Rui promoted a system in which the provincial officials responsible for recommending worthy people did not interact directly with those

42 子曰、臧文仲其竊位者與。知柳下惠之賢、而不與立也一。[一]孔安國曰、柳下惠、展禽也。知賢而不舉、為竊位也。(『論語集解』衛靈公篇)。

43 仲弓為季氏宰、問政。子曰、先有司一、赦小過、舉賢才。曰、焉知賢才而舉之。曰、焉知賢才而舉之。曰、舉爾所知。爾所不知、人其舍諸二。[一]王肅曰、言為政當先任有司、而後責其事也。[二]孔安國曰、汝所不知者、人將自舉之。各舉其所知、則賢才無遺也。(『論語集解』子路篇)。

whom they selected. This set them apart from the prefectural officials, who did have direct contact with potential candidates.⁴⁴ I will refrain from elaborating on this point here.

In contrast to the absence of *xuanxue* elements in the above, on the lives of the people governed by non-action, the “Taibo” chapter of *Lunyu jijie* provided many explanations based on *xuanxue*. We know they were based on *xuanxue* because in these passages, the *dao* was often invoked.

Confucius said, “You might make people act according to certain principles, but you won’t be able to make them understand it.”[1]

[1] *you* 由 means to use. The reason why one could make the people act but not make them understand is that the common people can perform everyday tasks but do not have the ability to understand [deep principles].⁴⁵

This unique explanation is based on “Xici shangzhuan” 繫辭上傳 [Grand commentary I] in the *Book of Changes*:⁴⁶

The successive movement of the inactive [yin] and active [yang] operations constitutes what is called the way (of things). That which ensues as the result (of their movement) is goodness; that which shows itself in its completeness is the natures (of people and things). The benevolent see it and call it benevolence. The wise see it and call it wisdom. The common people, acting daily according to it, have no knowledge of it. Thus it is that the way (of things), as seen by the superior man, is seen by few.⁴⁷

44 On the debate between the cliques led by Cao Shuang and Sima Rui on the nine-rank system, see Watanabe 2002. Also see Watanabe 2003b.

45 子曰、民可使由之、不可使知之。[一]由、用也。可使用而不可使知者、百姓能日用而不能知也。(『論語集解』泰伯篇)。

46 Zhuzi’s *Lunyu jizhu* did not base its interpretation on the *Book of Changes*. Rather, it explained the passage as follows: “it is possible to make the people follow how the li 理 [principle] should be [in everyday life], but it is not possible to make them understand why it is so. 民可使知之由于是理之当然，而不能使之知所以其然。”

47 一陰・一陽、之謂道。繼之者善也。成之者性也。仁者見之謂之仁、知者見之謂之知。百姓日用而不知。故君子之道鮮矣(『周易』繫辭傳上)。

According to the above, *dao* was both active and non-active; people used it every day but did not understand it. Thus, the governance of non-action made people act based on the workings of the *dao*, which encompassed Heaven, Earth, *yin*, and *yang*, yet it did not even attempt to make them understand it. This was the politics of non-action. Through the integration with the *dao*, which was the metaphysical origins of all beings, people could live a life in happiness.

Therefore, under the governance of non-action, all people naturally followed the ruler. On this, the “Weizheng” chapter of *Lunyu jijie* offered the following explanation:

Confucius said, “If you govern with the power of your virtue, you will be like the North Star. It just stays in its place while all the other stars position themselves around it.”[1]

[1] Bao said, “virtue means non-action. It is just like the North Star: it does not move, but all other stars position themselves around it.”⁴⁸

The above explanation, in which virtue meant non-action, was based on chapter 38 of *Laozi*. Here He Yan offered a unique explanation based on *xuanxue*.⁴⁹ The above chapter of *Laozi* said the following:

(Those who) possessed in the highest degree the attributes (of the *dao*) did not (seek) to show them, and therefore they possessed them (in fullest measure). (Those who) possessed in a lower degree those attributes (sought) not to lose them, and therefore they did not possess them (in fullest measure). (Those

48 子曰、為政以德、譬如北辰居其所、而衆星共之一。[一] 苞氏曰、德者、無為。譬猶北辰之不移、而衆星共之。(『論語集解』為政篇)。

49 Huang Kan did not base his interpretation in *Lunyu yishu* on *Laozi*. Rather, he said, “*de* 德 means *de* 得 [to obtain]. This passage means that rulers should govern by learning the nature of the ten thousand things. That is, by *de* 德. For this reason, Guo Xiang said, if one could learn the nature of the ten thousand things, one could be said to have attained *de* 德.” Moreover, Zhuzi said in *Lunyu jizhu*, “*de* 德 means *de* 得 [to obtain]. That which is obtained in one’s heart will not be lost.” According to Hu Bingwen’s *Sishu tong* 四書通 [An explication of the Four Books], Zhuzi revised these words in his later years. Doda 2014.

who) possessed in the highest degree those attributes did nothing (with a purpose), and had no need to do anything. (Those who) possessed them in a lower degree were (always) doing, and had the need to be so doing.⁵⁰

Lunyu jijie said here that Shun followed the governance of non-action, which *Laozi* explained above. Therefore, Shun was able to make people follow him.

As such, *Lunyu jijie* legitimized the centralized personnel system based on He Yan's *xuanxue* learning. This system was given articulation in the Wei edict announcing the Han-Wei Transition. The edict based its reasoning on the "Liyun" chapter of the *Book of Rites*. He Yan explained this through Shun's approach to selecting worthy officials by non-action. He also stressed that Confucius, too, prioritized the selection of officials in governance. Thanks to this approach, people lived according to the *dao*, which encompassed Heaven, Earth, *yin*, and *yang*, even as they did not understand the *cao* themselves. They followed the ruler just like all stars positioned themselves around the North Star. By these means, governance based on the *dao* could be realized.

He Yan also advocated for the legitimacy of the Wei dynasty, which succeeded the Han through a voluntary transfer of power modelled upon the *shanrang* transition between Yao and Shun. He Yan did so by praising the *shanrang* approach to dynastic succession. *Lunyu jijie* said:

Confucius said of the Shao that it was perfectly beautiful and also perfectly good [1]. He said of the *wu* that it was perfectly beautiful but not perfectly good. [2]

[1] Kong Anguo said, "Shao is the music of Shun. Shun was given power because of his supreme virtue. Therefore, [Confucius said] it was perfectly good."

[2] Kong Anguo said, "*wu* is the music of King *Wu*. King Wu conquered all under heaven by force. Therefore, [Confucius said] it was not perfectly good."⁵¹

50 上德不德、是以有德。下德不失德、是以无德。上德无為、而无不為。下德為之、而无以為(『老子』第三十八章)。

51 子謂韶、尽美矣、又尽善也一。謂武、尽美矣、未尽善也二。[一]孔安国曰、韶、舜樂也。謂以聖德受禪。故曰尽善也。[二]孔安国曰、武、武王樂也。以征伐取天下。故曰未善尽也。(『論語集解』八佾篇)。

The above explained that Shun received the mandate to rule the realm through *shanrang*, and therefore Confucius said it was perfectly good; King Wu conquered the realm by force, and was therefore not perfectly good. In other words, He Yan based his judgment on the distinction between *shanrang* and conquest by force. Through this distinction, he bolstered the legitimacy of the Wei dynasty, which positioned itself as the successor of Shun and succeeded the Han dynasty through the practice of *shanrang*.

In contrast, Zheng Xuan's *Lunyu zhu* based its value judgment on whether "grand peace was achieved."⁵² Zheng Xuan's work was written at the end of the Latter Han, and he was troubled by the disorder that the Huangjin rebellion caused. So he sought for "grand peace." He Yan's *Lunyu jijie* was written for presentation to the ruler of the Wei dynasty, which was founded after a voluntary transfer of power modelled on the Yao-Shun transition. These political circumstances affected how the authors determined their criteria for value judgment: one chose world peace, the other the modality of power transition.

On the intention of He Yan's *Lunyu jijie* to legitimize the Han-Wei transition, Liu Binnan also said the following in the "Taibo" chapter of his work *Lunyu zhengyi* 論語正義 [The correct meaning of the Analects]. Let me quote it from *Lunyu jijie*:

Confucius said, "How majestic [*weiwei* 巍巍] was the manner in which Shun and Yu held possession of the empire, without lifting a finger!" [1]

[1] This is praising Shun and Yu for acquiring the power to rule the realm without intentionally pursuing such power. *Weiwei* 巍巍 means majestic.⁵³

He Yan explained here that Confucius praised Shun and Yu for not obtaining the power to rule the realm on their own accord. Rather, they accepted their mandate through *shanrang*. This explanation served to glorify the Han-Wei transition. The reason why the *shanrang* between Yao and Shun was so important was that the Grand *Dao* could only exist in a society of Grand Har-

52 See Watanabe 2014a.

53 子曰、巍巍乎、舜•禹之有天下也。而不与焉一。[一]美舜•禹己不与求天下而得之也。巍巍者、高大之称也。(『論語集解』泰伯篇)。

mony. Therefore, the Wei dynasty was legitimate because it followed the *shanrang* model of the Five Emperors, who reigned over societies of Grand Harmony; it did not follow the way of the Three Kings in the era of Small Tranquility. The Three Kings acquired power through conquest.

Liu Binnan remarked that He Yan's interpretation above, which focused on Shun and his *Shanrang*, was not the original intention of the Analects.⁵⁴ Liu cited Mao Qiling's *Jiqiupian* 稽求篇 [a treatise on the search for the truth] to say that what the Analects actually meant was this: "the essence of governance by non-action is to use the sagacious and to appoint the capable."⁵⁵ He went on to say that "the Wei usurped the Han to secure the power to rule the country. Its rulers falsely equated [the Han-Wei] transition with the *shanrang* transition between Yao and Shun. This is why He Yan produced his writings."⁵⁶ This is a good analysis.

54 For example, in *Lunyu jizhu*, Zhuzi said, "buyu 不與 [not to participate], means 'not relevant.' This passage means that they did not derive joy from holding a position of power." That is, Zhuzi understood the passage to mean that they were themselves not concerned with politics.

55 Liu Binnan raised the following as evidence for his thesis: first, in his *Lunheng* 论衡, Wang Chong of Latter Han understood this passage as saying that Shun selected his officials based on the principle of non-action; second, in his *Chongranglun* 崇讓論 [A treatise on honoring *Shanrang*], Liu Shi of Wei and Western Jin offered the same explanation for the passage. Liu cited as his evidence the fact that the three ministers 三公 are selected not from powerful lineages, but rather from those who received the greatest number of recommendations.

56 Liu Binnan cited the following as his evidence: in the biography of the Xian emperor of Han, which was cited in a note for the biography for the Ming emperor of Wei in the third volume of *Sanguozhi* 三國志, there is the following passage: "Confucius praised the grand achievements of Yao and Shun effusively. This is because he believed the voluntary transfer of state power to be a greatly sagacious choice." Further, in *Weishi Chunqiu* 魏氏春秋 [Histories of the Wei lineage], cited in a note for the biography of the Wen emperor of Wei in the second volume of *Sanguozhi*, there is a passage as follows: "the emperor ascended the stage and completed the rituals. He looked at his ministers and said, 'I now understand the actions of Yao and Shun.'"

I have demonstrated in this article that the above stemmed from the philosophy of the *dao*, which He Yan explicated through *xuanxue*-based interpretations of the Analects. He Yan saw this *dao* as the metaphysical origin of all beings and placed it at the foundation of his philosophy. He Yan's *Lunyu jijie* was intended for emperor Cao Fang, who started studying the classics at the age of ten. It served to legitimize the Han-Wei transition.

5 Conclusion

Although He Yan's *Lunyu jijie* rejected classical studies 經學, it did not simply enumerate all prior annotations [of the Analects] and seek for their conciliation. He Yan wrote *Lunyu jijie* in order to show emperor Cao Fang the best way to achieve the kind of good governance based on the *dao*. In the work, he also pursued his ideals through the *dao*, which permeated both Confucianism and *xuanxue*. In so doing, he had to confront *Lunyu zhu*, a key component of Zheng Xuan's system of classical studies.

The primary characteristic of He Yan's *Lunyu jijie* is that the author saw core concepts such as *yi* and *yuan* as the foundation of his worldview. *Yi* and *yuan* were synonymous with *dao* and *wu*. He Yan used the idea of *Dao*, which was the metaphysical origin of all beings, as the basis of his interpretation of the Analects. For example, he explained that Confucius regarded Yan Hui highly because of Yan Hui's deep contemplation about the *dao*.

Although *dao* is so distant that even Confucius could not embody it, the kind of good governance based on the *dao* did exist under Yao and Shun. For Heaven, with which the sages were one in their virtues, belonged to both non-being (the *dao*) and being. Therefore, sagacious governance by non-action could be achieved through the *dao*. Shun made all people follow him naturally by practicing the governance of non-action. He selected sagacious people for official positions. All of this was possible after Shun received his power through *shan-rang*. Accordingly, He Yan believed that if the Wei, which accepted its mandate from the Han in the same manner as the Yao-Shun transition, could practice the governance of non-action, then *dao*-based rule could be realized.

As a semi-official work of scholarship under the Wei dynasty, *Lunyu jijie* stressed the non-action of Shun and the institution of *shanrang*. This is a reflection of the political circumstances of its times.

In addition, He Yan's effort to explain the Analects using the *dao* as his central concept was also an attempt to find a comprehensive principle to compete with Zheng Xuan's systemic, comprehensive explication of the Analects. Because it was intended for the ten-year-old emperor Cao Fang, the work featured simple explanations. For this reason, it received high praise and, having ultimately defeated *Lunyu zhu*, emerged as the most important early explanation (of the Analects).

Lunyu jijie existed in the *zeitgeist* of the Wei-Jin era. The Han had legitimized Confucius, yet it was now falling. In an effort to search for the truth, the *zeitgeist* of the times turned to the absolute nature of *dao* and *wu*, which were the origins of Heaven and Earth. Amid these trends, He Yan used *xuanxue*, which was based on the *Book of Changes* and *Laozi*, to interpret the Analects, which was the direct articulation of the teachings of Confucius. And through this effort, he sought to find a way of governance based on the *dao* in the non-action of Shun. Further, He Yan also endeavoured to implement the governance of non-action by striving to recruit worthy officials in his role as the minister of personnel. In this he was drawing on Cao Shuang's efforts.

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