The **Xinshu** 新書 Reexamined: An Emphasis on Usability over Authenticity

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A collection of texts conventionally ascribed to Jia Yi 賈誼 (200-168 BC), the **Xinshu** 新書 has been subjected to an ages-long debate regarding its authenticity. The present study disclaims the discovery of any adequate evidence to prove the text trustworthy; but it finds the arguments for its forgery ill-founded. Rather than present merely an account of this dilemma or attempt to corroborate either position in the debate, this paper argues against the approach in textual criticism that views early texts through a dualistic prism of authenticity vs. forgery. A case of forgery should be established upon no less concrete evidence than should one of authenticity. The mere lack of positive evidence can hardly be regarded or used as any negative evidence to disprove a text. Given the dilemma, the paper suggests treating the **Xinshu** nonethelss as a workable and even currently reliable source for our study of Jia Yi until that very day dawns upon us with any unequivocal evidence of its forgery detected or, better still, excavated.

*Keywords:* Jia Yi; **Xinshu**; Western Han; Authenticity; Forgery; Chinese Textual Criticism

**Introduction**

The **Xinshu** 新書 is a collection of texts traditionally ascribed to Jia Yi 賈誼 (200-168 BC). An important figure in the Chinese intellectual history, Jia Yi played an active role in initiating a political reform during the early Han. The form of the extant **Xinshu** can be traced back to the Song dynasty (960-1279) if not earlier. But none of the Song editions survives except by way of Lu Wenchao’s 魯文弨 (1717-1796) edition of the **Xinshu** and Lu’s editorial notes therein (Nylan, 1993: p. 162). There are, moreover, texts in the **Xinshu** that are corrupted. All this resulted in the centuries’ long debate over the authenticity of the text. There have been scholars who consider the **Xinshu** as a case where either a “reckless person” (wangren 妄人) wrote a text and deceptively attributed it to Jia Yi or someone forged a book of Jia Yi by compiling and altering some quotations of Jia Yi gathered from other sources. In this study, I will follow Cohen’s suggestion to refer to both kinds of spurious texts as pseudopigrapha.

The view of the **Xinshu** as a pseudopigrapha is explicit in the *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 國庫全書總目提要 (Siku tiyao henceforth). Compilers of the *Siku tiyao* (Siku compilers henceforth) claimed to have identified some other early texts—primarily the *Hanshu* 漢書—to be the sources based on which the **Xinshu** was forged. The unidentified forger, the compilers suspected, forged the **Xinshu** by fist dividing up some of Jia Yi’s essays cited in those other sources, then editing and compiling the divided passages into 58 chapters, and finally putting each of the 58 under an imposed title in order to falsely establish it as a chapter. The *Siku* compilers opined that the forger’s motive was to match the total of the forged chapters with the number recorded in the bibliographic treatise of the *Hanshu* (i.e. *Hanshu* 30).

From late 1950s to early 1960s, Chen Weiliang 陳煒良 (1958) in Hong Kong and a team of four accomplished scholars in Peking University (i.e. Sun Qinshan et al., 1961) each provided a comprehensive summary of the debate. Both raised quite a few original and cogent points. After reviewing the same set of contending arguments, they each arrived at a conclusion in opposition to the other’s. The four scholars in Beijing conclude their study by arguing for the authenticity of the **Xinshu**. Following the four scholars, Wang Zhouming 王洲明 (1982) conducted a similar collative comparison and reached the same conclusion. The four scholars’ major points are incorporated in Wang Zhouming’s study and presented along with Wang’s substantial original findings. One can thus legitimately treat Wang as a major defender of the **Xinshu** in modern China. Without being informed of Chen Weiliang’s insightful challenge, Wang Zhouming, however, did not have a chance to deepen his discussion.

Examining a textual issue invariably involves ascertaining the date of a text. The language of a text has long been an area where scholars commence their search for evidence. In the past few years, there have been scholars who attempted linguistic approach to the received **Xinshu**, looking for what the text might reveal linguistically about its date. Wang Zhouming, for one, included a linguistic discussion of a moderate scope in his aforementioned research. In Europe and at the turn of the millennium, Rune Svarverud conducted a much more extensive research in this respect. His attempts significantly contribute to the linguistic study of the extant **Xinshu**. But, his study, as Luo

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1As Cohen (2000: p. 195) observes, “[o]ne aspect of the work of the Ch’ing Dynasty textual scholars […] was the identification of various types of spurious books. This area of scholarship is called pien-wêr 識偽 “distinguishing the spurious”. The general term for such books is wei-shu 伪書, which is often translated as ‘forgery’. However, ‘pseudopigrapha’ (writings of falsely ascribed authorship) is a more appropriate translation because ‘forgery’, with its implication of intentional fraud, applies to some types of wei-shu but not to all.”
Shaodan (2002) points out, falls short of providing adequate proofs. More work is yet to be done in this field.

Besides language, other textual issues have also been brought into focus. Some textual features were particularly cited as evidence of forgery. They include the textual corruption, the flawed writing style, the lack of reference to the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳, and the mismatch between some quotes of Jia Yi in the *Hanshu* 漢書 and their counterparts in the *Xinshu* 新書.

The discussion on writing style often touches upon the textual mismatch between the *Xinshu* and Jia Yi’s quotes elsewhere. Such discussion adequately demonstrates scholars’ difficulty in maintaining objectivity when they face the current lack of transmitted or excavated manuscript as a reliable reference point. The afore-mentioned four scholars in Peking University, for instance, conducted a textual comparison between the *Xinshu* and the quotes of Jia Yi in the *Hanshu*. They considered the *Xinshu* authentic because they found the texts in the *Xinshu* smoother and more consistent in style than the quotes in the *Hanshu*. But, precisely the same kind of comparison left Chen Wei liang with an opposite impression about the writing style of the *Xinshu*. He concluded that the *Xinshu* was forged by copying those quotes in the *Hanshu*. Likewise, Yao Nai 姚鼐 (1732-1815) also considered the *Xinshu* spurious partly because, to him, the *Xinshu* did not seem to present as good a writing style as did its textual counterparts in the *Hanshu*. Their conflicting views, interestingly, converged on a basic assumption of Jia Yi’s perfection in writing style. Stemming from the assumption was a conviction that, between the *Xinshu* and those quotes, the better written text would necessarily be the original text. But one may find the common ground questionable at a time before the perfection of Jia Yi’s writing style can be established in the first place.

Chen Wei liang, in addition, noted that the spuriousness of the *Xinshu* was evidenced in its lack of reference to the *Zuo zhuan*, because such absence was impossible for someone like Jia Yi, an official-scholar with acclaimed expertise in *Zuo zhuan*. He proceeded to relate such peculiarity in the *Xinshu* to the formats of silk and bamboo texts in the early times. I will focus on the way embedded end titles were used in early texts and the change they underwent. The section cites concrete evidence to suggest that originally all or some of the chapters in the extant *Xinshu* were merely passages rather than freestanding texts. They were either mistaken for titled essays (i.e. chapters) or intentionally but erroneously treated as chapters in later editions. Hence the peculiar divisions of some of the texts in the *Xinshu* are hardly indicative of forgery.

The third section examines the views of Yao Nai and the *Siku tiyao*. Both question the authenticity of the *Xinshu*. Both have inspired later debates, including Yu Jiaxi’s 余嘉锡 (1883-1955) forceful refute of the *Siku tiyao*. But unlike the *Siku* compilers, who would give credit to the part of the *Xinshu* that bore no textual parallel to the *Hanshu*, Yao Nai considered the *Xinshu* entirely untrustworthy. I will argue that Yao’s point proceeded from a misinterpretation of both the *Xinshu* and the *Hanshu*.

The fourth section discussed Chen Wei liang’s textual study. To my knowledge, there has been hardly any response to Chen’s challenge except Svarverud’s book. In this section I will, besides introducing Svarverud’s points, question the validity of the evidence Chen cites, which includes the verbosity of the *Xinshu* text and the lack of mention of the *Zuo zhuan* in the *Xinshu*.

In the conclusion, I, on the one hand, acknowledge the insufficiency of current evidence to authenticate the *Xinshu*. On the other hand, I argue that the reliability of the extant *Xinshu* can be recognized on the sole basis of the inadequacy of all the arguments that are hitherto made to prove the *Xinshu* spurious.

The edition of the *Xinshu* that I use is primarily the one compiled by Yan Zhenyi 阮振益 and Zhong Xia 鍾夏 (2000). This edition is based upon the *Jifu* 吉府 (1515 AD) edition, which is a Ming-dynasty edition and whose source, according to Yan and Zhong (2000: p. 5), can be traced far back into pre-modern times because of some identified features of pre-Song scripts. Other editions that I use include the *Siku qianshu* edition and Lu Wenchao’s Baojing Tang 抱經堂 edition. Subsumed under this latter edition are a reproduction of the Baojing Tang edition in 1937 by Shangwu Yinshuguan, a modern edition by Wu Yun 吳雲 and Li Chuntai 李春第 (1989), and it opposes the adherence to the dichotomy of authenticity and spuriousness where the *Xinshu* is concerned.

The present study, therefore, would point out that, for all the lack of substantial evidence to authenticate the *Xinshu*, it is unadvisable to label the *Xinshu* as pseudepigrapha. And this paper will question the viability of such a practice as treating the textual corruption of the extant *Xinshu* to be evidence of its forgery.

Following this introduction, the first section of this article tackles such fundamental questions as what the *Xinshu* is and what it was thought to be. I find that, first, no pre-modern editions of the *Xinshu* contain Jia Yi’s literary works except in an appendix in some cases. Second, the evidence I examine does not support the proposition that the *Xinshu* was compiled on the basis of Jia Yi’s quotes in the *Hanshu*.

The second section begins by summarizing the corrupted condition of the *Xinshu* text. Close attention is paid to the peculiar way in which some parts of the text are divided and how the peculiarity aroused the suspicion of forgery. The discussion proceeds to relate such peculiarity in the *Xinshu* to the formats of silk and bamboo texts in the early times. I will focus on the way embedded end titles were used in early texts and the change they underwent. The section cites concrete evidence to suggest that originally all or some of the chapters in the extant *Xinshu* were merely passages rather than freestanding texts.

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another modern edition by Wang Zhouming and Xu Chao 徐超 (1996). Fang Xiangdong’s 方向東 (2000) modern edition, which collates several editions, has also been accorded close attention.

**Xinshu or Not Xinshu?—Two Criteria**

As observed above, the *Xinshu* is said to have been forged on the basis of the citations of Jia Yi in the *Hanshu*. But in addition to the *Xinshu*, there have been other monographs attributed to Jia Yi. Some are indeed composed of the quotes of Jia Yi in the *Hanshu*. We thus need to make certain we are not discussing one of those other books when we actually mean to examine the *Xinshu*. In the face value, the confusion seems unlikely to occur, for different books are differently titled. However, title turns out to be an inadequate means of identification, because “Xinshu” was not an original title of that corpus of essays attributed to Jia Yi. This title occurred as late as the 6th century (Wang Zhouming, 1982: p. 17). It is thus necessary to examine the identity of what came to be the extant *Xinshu*.

Regarding this issue, Wang Zhouming holds a rather broad view. Having traced the record of Jia Yi’s works in the bibliographical treatises of dynastic histories as well as such Song-dynasty bibliographical catalogs as the *Chongwen Zongmu 崇文總目* and *Zhongxing Guan’ge Shumu 中興館閣書目*, Wang concludes,

The above records indicate that the work of Jia Yi was transmitted all along from the Han Dynasty to the Song Dynasty. [Its] title varied during the transmission: [It] was known sometimes as the *Jia Yi*, sometimes as the *Jiazi*, sometimes as the *Jia Yi ji*, and sometimes as the *Jia Yi xinshu*. What [also] varied was the textual division: [It] could be in 2, 4, 9, 10, 15, or 19juan. And there lacked a uniformed way of categorizing it. [The monograph] was categorically treated sometimes as [a text of] Confucian School and sometimes as [one of] the Miscellaneous School. *上述著錄說明,賈誼的作品,從漢代到宋代都一直流傳。在流傳中,名稱有變化,或二卷,或四卷,或九卷,或十卷,或十九卷; 且無一致的分類方式。[此書]時而被當作儒家學書,時而作為雜家著作.*

Appropriately, Wang implies here that the monograph under discussion could also be known as the *Xinshu*; because, in his citation of the *Zhongxing guan’ge shumu*, “Xinshu” was the adopted title. Wang (1982: pp. 19-20) later suggested that the extant *Xinshu* and the “ancient editions” (gabun 古本) of the book came from the same source. So it is obvious that, along this long chain of identifications, if any of the monographs is found to be problematic, the *Xinshu* will be automatically subjected to suspicion.

Wang Zhouming’s chain of identifications noticeably includes some text corpus categorized under literary sections in the bibliographical treatises of dynastic histories. Wang (1982: pp. 17-18), for instance, includes a 4-juan Jia Yi ji, a 2-juan Qian Han Jia Yi Ji, and a 2-juan Jia Yi Ji in, respectively, *Suishu* 35, *Jiu Tangshu* 47, and *Xin Tangshu* 60. These monographs are all in the category of literary works. My study shows that although the *Xinshu* circulated under different titles, Jia Yi’s literary works were not included except as an appendix in some cases. As Svarverud observes,

[T]he texts attributed to Jia Yi consisted of two main bodies of texts: The memorials written by Jia Yi himself as suggestions and grievances on the current situations in the empire of Western Han times; and the more philosophical and cosmological texts recording the words of Jia Yi based on his teachings and speeches conducted by himself, or his disciples and relatives shortly after his death—most probably both (Svarverud, 1998: p. 8).

Except in the *Songshi* 史, where a 10-juan Jia Yi *xinshu* is categorized as a text of Miscellaneous School, the collection that Svarverud observed is invariably categorized in the section of *rujia* 儒家 in both dynastic histories and other bibliographical sources. Examples include a 58-juan Jia Yi in the *Hanshu*, a 10-juan Jia Zi in the *Suishu*, a 9-juan Jia Zi in the *Jiu Tangshu*, a 10-juan Jia Yi *xinshu* in the *Xin Tangshu*, a 19-juan Jiazi in the *Chongwen zongmu*, and a 10-juan *xinshu* in the *Junzhai dushu* zhì 餘穀讀書志.

In his bibliographical catalog, the *Yuhai* 玉海, Wang Yinglin 王錫麟 (1223-1296) regarded, firstly, the three Jia Yi books recorded in those dynastic histories and, secondly, the *Xinshu* recorded in the *Zhongxing guan’ge shumu* as texts of one and the same tradition. He provided a list of all the essays in the version of the *Xinshu* in his time, which overwhelmingly corresponds to the table of contents of the extant *Xinshu*. On that list, there are no works of literature. Moreover, we see on the list a considerable amount of texts not found in the *Hanshu*. A text of this tradition is exemplified by Lu Wenchao’s edition of the *Xinshu*, which consists of 58 philosophical and political essays attributed to Jia Yi. But among the 58 essays, two are completely missing except for their titles. The 58 pieces are divided into such categories as shishi 事勢, lianyu 連語, and zashi 雜事. Some editions, such as Lu Wenchao’s, include Jia Yi’s *xinshu* biography.

If anyone either suggests a different line of textual transmission or introduces a different monograph, s/he needs to first define his/her position to the tradition identified by Wang Yinglin. Otherwise, s/he may risk causing confusion in school-ships by introducing other books into the tradition without giving a notice. And that may lead to the error of discussing the authenticity issues of a wrong book.

Since Wang Yinglin identified the tradition without suggesting any exhaustive list of books, caution should be taken when one attempts to extend the list by adding books. Although difference in title is of little importance in this case, it must be noted that any book we add should meet the following two criteria reflected in Wang Yinglin’s bibliographical notes and table of contents. First, the book attributed to Jia Yi should be categorized in a non-literary section in pre-modern bibliographical sources. Specifically it should fall into the section of philosophical works—be it “Confucian School” or “Miscellaneous School. What this criterion entails is the absence of literary works. Moreover, we see on the list a considerable amount of texts not found in the *Hanshu*.

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1Both teams of modern scholars declare that they have largely kept the text of Baqing Tang 抱經堂 edition intact in their editions (see Wu & Li, 1980: p. 358; Wang & Xu, 1996: p. 4).
Jia Yi’s Literary Works and the *Xinshu*

Besides the collection of Jia Yi’s works categorized in the section of philosophy, there are other collections under Jia’s name but categorized in such literary sections as fu-poetry (e.g. *Hanshu* 30), *ji* 集 (e.g. *Suishu* 35) and *bieji* 別集 (as in both *Tangshu*). We consider those books outside the tradition of the *Xinshu* because they are categorized separately from the books in the tradition identified by Wang Yinglin.

But, since Jia Yi stands out in Chinese history as both a political thinker and a literary figure, could it be that, in each of those dynastic histories, a single text corpus ascribed to Jia Yi’s literary works except in an appendix. In *Hanshu* 30, Ban Gu left some unequivocal notes where categories in the *Qilue* were altered. Although we are not certain exactly how systematic his categorization and notes may be, oftentimes what seems to be double categorization is nonetheless conventionally treated as an indicator of different bibliographical identities. It is thus unjustifiable to treat one monograph in the category of philosophy as identical with another in the section of literature just because they are ascribed to the same author, hence our first criterion.

The first criterion, to recall, also entails the absence of Jia Yi’s literary works except in an appendix. In *Hanshu* 30, there are a 58-pian Jia Yi categorized under *rujia* and a 7-pian Jia Yi under the fu-poetry. None of the fu-poems is included in Lu Wenchao’s edition of the *Xinshu*. And, in a note on Jia Yi’s works in *Hanshu* 30, Wang Yinglin wrote, “[Under the category of] *rujia* [in the [bibliographical] treatise [of the *Hanshu*, there is a] 58-pian Jia Yi. Besides, there are seven pian of *fu*-poems.”

We have mentioned that certain versions of the *Xinshu* might include Jia Yi’s literary works in an appendix. But such versions are normally considered as “other versions” 別本. He Mengchun 何孟春 (1474-1536) once provided an annotated table of contents for his edition of the *Xinshu* in the Ming Dynasty (see Yan & Zhong, 2000: pp. 492-493). The last volume, according to the table, contains five fu-poems of Jia Yi. It was He Mengchun himself that referred to this edition as a *bieben* (Ibid., p. 492). Qi Yuzhang 祁玉章 (1969: p. 45) further noted that He Mengchun’s edition differed from other editions in the

7In *Hanshu* 30, a 29-pian Shangjun 商君 and a 27-pian Gongyang 荆陽公 孫鞅 are separately categorized though both were attributed to the pre-Qin statesman Shang Yang 商鞅 (cf. *Hanshu*, p. 1735, 1757). The same holds true with a 2-pian Pang Xuan 彭玄 and a 30-pian Pang Xuan, both of which are apparently ascribed to the pre-Qin military commander and theorist Pang Xuan (cf. *Hanshu*, p. 1739, 1757). In these two cases, Ban Gu did not put any note regarding how each book is related to its suspected counterpart in a different category. It is to be noted that cases like this are rare. Moreover, what the categorial distribution of Li Ku’s 李悝 works exemplifies is a case in which books attributed to the same author, once categorized separately, are usually treated as different books rather than simply as different versions of a same book. In *Hanshu* 30, there are a 7-pian Li Ke 李悝, a 32-pian Li Kui 李悝, and a 10-pian Lizi 李子 respectively under the categories of *rujia*, *fajia* 法家, and *bing quanmu* 兵兼儒. All these books are ascribed to the pre-Qin statesman Li Kui, though all had been lost by the time of *Suishu* 35. Yet, because these books were differently categorized in *Hanshu* 30, they are considered as three different books (see Gu Shi, 1987: pp. 99, 133, 194; Zhang Shumai, 1990, p. 238).

8Yao Menghui 姚明煇 (fl. 1914) provided specific titles for five of the seven *fu*-poems, such as “Diao Qu Yuan fu” 邱原賦, “Funiu fu” 鳥鳴賦, etc. (see Yao Menghui, 1933: p. 146). There are only two pian that Yao did not find. But there is a “Diao Xiang fu” 張香賦 recorded by Chen Zhengsan 陳振孫 (1983: vol. 674, p. 694a) in the Song Dynasty. It is not certain whether “Diao Xiang fu” is an alternative title for “Diao Qu Yuan fu.”

9Since the main-body text of the *Xinshu* normally begins with Jia Yi’s “Guo Qin lun” 郭愷論, one may wonder whether this exemplifies a case where the *Xinshu* includes a work of literature. This question derives from the fact that, in pre-modern times, “Guo Qin lun” was occasionally considered as a work of the *fu* 赋 poetry (cf. Qian Zhongshu, 1979: p. 888). The fact is, however, “Guo Qin lun” is not exactly a *fu*-poem. Rather it is merely a case where “Mr. Jia [Yi] presents [a piece of] exposition that resembles a *fu*-poem.” 資生論而似賦 (Ibid., p. 891). I think a parallel case could be found in Yang Xiong’s 阳城生行文偶儷, “行文偶儷” (53 BC-18 AD) essay “Jiechao” 解嘲. “As an essay featuring parallelism,” observed Yang Shuda 杨树达 (1984: p. 677), “certainly ‘Jiechao’ came to be known as a *fu*-poem among later generations [after Yang Xiong and Ban Gu].” “[After Yang Xiong’s *Jiechao* and *Jiexiao*] were meant to be *fu*-poems at the time when they were composed.”
way the texts were divided into volumes. Evidently, even in this “other edition,” the section of Jia Yi’s literary works is nonetheless kept outside the main-body text and is reduced to an appendix.6 This tradition seems to be well preserved in modern times as well. In their edition of the Xinshu, Yan Zhenyi and Zhong Xia put Jia Yi’s fu-poems in an appendix, to which the two modern scholars gave such a sub-title as “The fu-poems and Scattered Texts Not Included in the Xinshu.” 新書未收文賦及佚文. This title confirms our view that Jia Yi’s literary works are not included in the main-body text of the Xinshu.

The Xinshu and the Quotes of Jia Yi in the Hanshu: The Second Criterion

In Xinshu study, scholars unanimously consider Chen Zhensun 陈振孙 (1179-1262) as the first one who claimed to have found the Xinshu spurious.7 Those who question the authenticity of the Xinshu would work hard to substantiate Chen Zhensun’s view. And those who trust the Xinshu would often begin their discussion by refuting Chen Zhensun. But a perusal of Chen Zhensun’s annotation would lead us to discover that the 11-juan Jiazi that he examined failed to meet at least one of our criteria. We thus suspect that this Jiazi, regardless how spurious it might be, had nothing to do with the Xinshu. Let us quote Chen Zhensun in full and take a close look.

The Jiazi [in] 11 juan. Note: According to the Chongwen Zongmu, the bibliographical treatises of the Suishu and the [Jia] Tangshu both have [Jia Yi’s book] in nine juan. The treatise of the Xin Tangshu has it in 10-juan. This edition is [in] 11 juan [and hence] suspicious of error. [Its ascribed] author is Jia Yi from Luoyang, [who served as] grand tutor of King of Changsha in the Han Dynasty. [The compilation consists of] 58 pian according to the bibliographical treatise of the Xinshu. This book begins with “Guo Qin lun” and ends with “Diao Xiang fu.” The rest of it is all composed of excerpts from the Xinshu. Moreover, in Volume 11, [there is a] “Biography of Jia Yi” abridged [from the Xinshu]. Those parts that are absent from the Xinshu are invariably shallow, motley, and [hence] unworthy of any attention. [Therefore the book] could be anything but Jia Yi’s original work. 賣子十一卷。案：崇文總目云隋唐志皆九卷。新唐書藝文志作十卷。案：崇文總目云隋唐志皆九卷。新唐書藝文志作十卷。此本作十一卷，疑誤。漢長沙王太傅洛陽賈誼為親疏危亂，其非漢書所有者，輒淺駁不足觀，決非誼本書也 (Chen Zhensun, 1983: Vol. 674, p. 694a).

Based on Wang Yinglin’s notes and table of contents, our second criterion stipulates that in no case can there be an edition of the Xinshu with its contents limited to the memorials of Jia Yi in the Hanshu. From Chen Zhensun’s account, we learn that the book he witnessed featured a main-body text that “begins with ‘Guo Qin lun’ and ends with ‘Diao Xiang fu.’” In addition, there was an abridged biography in Volume 11 that was included presumably as an appendix. The rest of the book, as we are told, “is all [emphasis added] composed of excerpts from the Hanshu” with only a few occasional exceptions. Then how can this 11-juan Jiazi be an edition of the Xinshu? How can this book possibly be affiliated with the tradition that Wang Yinglin identified? Chen Zhensun was certainly right when he judged the 11-juan Jiazi to be a pseudepigrapha. It is us who have misread Chen Zhensun and resultanty formulated an erroneous impression that by denouncing the 11-juan Jiazi, Chen Zhensun was questioning the authenticity of the Xinshu.

Textual Division and the Textual Corruption of the Xinshu

The Xinshu is known to consist of 58 chapters. But none is mentioned in early bibliographies. Wang Yinglin’s Yuhai is the first known source that has listed the 58 titles. Since the Xinshu is a collection of essays, each essay constitutes a titled chapter. There are two titles whose subordinate texts were lost early. Fifty-eight is also the number for chapters recorded in the Siku tiyao. The Siku compilers indicated that only 55 chapters had survived the long process of transmission from the Song dynasty.

In the late 1990’s, Rune Svarverud (1998: pp. 8-11) listed those 58 chapters in his book—including the two titles with missing texts—along with their distributions among the ten juan of the extant Xinshu. This number for the chapters matches the number recorded in Hanshu 30 (cf. Hanshu, p. 1726).

Physical Condition of the Text

Among the received 50 some chapters, some do not look like chapters. And there are numerous corrupted passages, which gives rise to quite a few cases of contextual mismatch and gaps in logic (Chen Weiliang, 1958: pp. 4-5). Yet such an imperfect version, as we know now, is the remainder of several re-editions and reproductions over time, especially those in the Tang and Song times (Svarverud, 1998: p. 33).

As a concrete example, in a chapter entitled “Qin shu wei jiu” 親疏危亂, we encounter a rather abrupt beginning like this,

There is something that Your Majesty would not do now. [I,] Your subject [,] would not dare present [anything] less than the entire truth [regarding the current] situation. [Let us] suppose that the sub-celestial terrain were the same as an earlier time when Marquis of Huaiyin stayed enfeoffed at Chu, Qing Bu stayed enfeoffed at Huainan, Peng Yue stayed enfeoffed at Liang, Han Xin stayed enfeoffed at Han, Zhang Ao stayed enfeoffed at Zhao, Guan Gao stayed [in his position] as a minister, and Lu Wan stayed enfeoffed at Yan; [let us further suppose that] Chen Xi were still in Dai. [In a word, let us] suppose that these few lords were all well and alive, remaining at their individual fiefs. Had Your Majesty ascended to the throne at a moment like that, could Your Majesty consider Yourself safe? [I,] Your subject, know as a fact that Your Majesty could not. 陛下有所不為矣,臣不敢不畢陳事制。假令天下如曩昔也,淮陰侯尚王楚,黥布王淮南,彭越王梁,韓信王淮,張敖王趙,賈誼為親疏危亂，其非漢書所有者，輒淺駁不足觀，決非誼本書也 (Chen Zhensun, 1983: Vol. 674, p. 694a).

According to Chao Gongwu 趙公武 (fl. 1151-1161), there are also “certain [versions of the Xinshu] that include [Jia Yi’s biography in Hanshu] as an appendix.” 或取漢書賈誼傳附於後 (Chao Gongwu, 1983: p. 214b).

Dates of Chen Zhensun’s life span are provided according to He Guangyuan’s 何廣援 (2001) research.

10Compiled on the basis of Lu Wenchao’s edition, the extant Xinshu comprises 56 or 55 chapters, depending on whether the “Guo Qin lun No. 2” and “Guo Qin lun No. 3” are combined.
Besides, late Professor Zhang Shunhui 張舜徽 (1962: pp. 28-29) pointed out that, after the emergence of wood-engrave printing, book producers would make a point of ensuring an economical use of engraving materials at the expense of the physical layout of ancient editions. Zhu Taiyan 朱太岩 (1989: p. 47) also noted that, in the age of woodblock printing, book producers tended to seek to create new, and hence change the old, text formats for the mere purpose of making their products look appealing to their customers. The text format we see in woodblock printing is therefore not always a faithful replica of an early edition. Chen Weiliang is right in noting that some chapters look fragmented. But, to consider the fragmentation indicative of spuriousness is to overstretch the significance of the evidence12. Skeptics of the Xinshu never adequately explicated to what extent textual fragmentation could be considered evidence of forgery.

But, if it is merely a passage rather than a chapter and if the title is not something artificially imposed by a forger, why else is there a title for this passage?

Embedded Passage Titles and Its Possible Application in the Xinshu

The answer can be found in what we may call passage titles or embedded end titles found in bamboo and silk texts up to the Han times, if not later. As passage titles instead of chapter titles, they were positioned at the end of each passage. I will argue that this format and the change it underwent can adequately account for both the peculiar textual division and the textual corruption in the received Xinshu.

The Han edition of the Yili 儀禮 suggests a format that may confuse an inexperienced medieval or modern reader13. Since this text is a Han edition, one cannot rule out the possibility this might have been one of the formats adopted in the early collection of Jia Yi’s works.

Some pre-modern scholars already noted that, in early Chinese texts, there were often subtitles assigned to individual passages within a chapter (Zhang Shunhui, 1962: pp. 35-37). In the 1940s, Professor Zhang Shunhui was among the first few modern scholars who provided comprehensive accounts of this format, observing in particular that the format could be found in early texts such as the Xionzi and the Lushi chunqiu14. Both texts are noticeably pre-Qin texts compiled during the Western Han). Later on, there were more scholars following their steps. Knoeblock (1988: Vol. 1, p. 113), for one, noted that “the Lü edition of the Xionzi” divided the text of each book into para-

11See Wu & Li, 1989: p. 104. Lu Wenchao’s opinion can be found in Lu’s note in Jia Yi, 1937: pian 23, p. 32.

12Such as Chen Weiliang maintained that the textual problems could not have been the result of scattered bamboo slips with rotten strings or of a delinquent script copier, he did not provide any detailed examples to support his point. Chen has provided two detailed charts to compare between the Xinshu and other documents, especially the Hanshu. But, with those charts, Chen makes no attempt to examine the fragmentation found in the Xinshu. (see Chen Weiliang, 1958: pp. 4, 6-21).

13It is a format in which all the chapter numbers and chapter titles were inscribed on the backside of each chapter’s first [bamboo] slip. By that we mean on the reverse side of each chapter’s first line. Long chapters of over dozens or one hundred slips were numbered on the back of the first slip whereas their titles were scribed on the back of the second slip (Chen Meng-jia, 1980: pp. 301-302).

14For instance, Professor Zhang Shunhui (1990: p. 184) once observed that the Lushi chunqiu 呂氏春秋, another text from the State of Qin, was the first early Chinese text that was known to have adopted this format. From Professor Zhang’s preface, we learn that the source where he made this observation was originated from his manuscript in 1946.
graphs covering single topics. Some of these paragraphs contain embedded titles."

Embedded end titles can also be found in excavated texts. In the Shuihudi Qinmu zhujian (4th–3rd BC), end titles like "chulü" (除史律), "chudizi" (除子弟律), "Waihulu" (魏戶律), and "Weibenminglü" (魏弁命律), etc. all suggest pre-Han use of such titles than in the Han dynasty. Other examples, as Yates noted, can be found in the Huang-Lao texts excavated at Mawangdui in mid-southern China (Yates, 1997: pp. 197-198). Since the Shuihudi and Mawangdui texts are respectively Qin and Han scripts, it is safe to consider the use of such titles as a common practice during the Qin-Han period at the latest. In some early texts, titles and subtitles are found respectively at the end of an essay and the passages or paragraphs in the essay (Wang Liqi, 1999: pp. 265-267). In others, there can be an essay title that covers each essay while there are subtitles placed at the end of each passage (Jiang Boping, 1995: pp. 119-120). It is the exceptional titles provided by the authors or imposed by the compilers of the texts. But one thing is certain: Even if they proved to be posterior impositions, it would not mean the text itself is spurious. These titles were, admittedly, not well preserved in later editions of early texts. And this fact could easily mislead those who reproduced early texts in pre-modern times, resulting in their erroneous presentation of early texts. Some scholars (e.g. Gu Yanwu, 1990: pp. 908-909; Zhang Shunhui, 1962: p. 35) imputed the mishandling of these titles to the medieval and later editorial confusions that mistook those embedded end titles for part of the main-body text.

If an editorial note by Lu Wenchao is right, we may say such editorial mistake can indeed be detected in an essay entitled “Wumei”五美 in the Xinshu. In Lu’s edition, this chapter ends with a sentence that reads, “Your Majesty’s fear of what has, for a long time, kept Your Majesty from implementing these five desirables?”所以文悼而久不為此五美? While leaving the sentence intact, Lu Wenchao put the following note immediately beneath the sentence: “The last two graphs [i.e. “五美”, meaning “five desirables”] must be a title of the preceding passage”末二字當目上文. In Lu’s judgment, therefore, the two graphs 五美 at the very end were originally meant to be a title rather than part of the last sentence of the passage. Hence according to Lu’s reading, the last sentence should be: “Your Majesty’s fear of what has, for a long time, kept Your Majesty from implementing this?”所以文悼而久不為此?

The extent Xinshu, as is indicated in our Introduction, can be traced back to some Song editions that eventually survived in Lu Wenchao’s edition and Lu’s notes therein. It can be inferred from Lu’s note that the last two graphs, “wumei,” had already been treated as part of the main-body text in the Song editions that Lu witnessed. Yet the sentence, just by itself, would be grammatically and idiomatically correct regardless whether this disyllabic word were added or not. Besides, in Lu Wenchao’s edition, the same two graphs were also used in the beginning of the passage as a chapter title. Difference in opinion has thus occurred regarding where this disyllabic word belonged.

In the past, there have been modern annotators who exemplified the difference in their annotated editions of the Xinshu. In their 1989 edition, Wu Yun and Li Chuntai mixed the disyllabic word into the main-body text. Wang Zhouming and Xu Chao (1996: p. 62), in contrast, dropped the disyllabic word and then added an editorial note, declaring that they had done so in accordance with two editions in the Ming dynasty as well as the quote of the text in Hanshu 48 (i.e. biography of Jia Yi). Fang Xiangdong (2000, p. 89) quoted Lu Wenchao’s note without a comment. The same year, Yan Zhenyi and Zhong Xia (2000: p. 70) remarked in their annotated edition of the Xinshu that since there were no other occurrences of end titles in the extent Xinshu, they judged these two graphs to be redundant graphs rather than an embedded end title.

In this particular case, I suggest basing our judgment primarily on the text itself instead of on either the Hanshu or any post-Song editions of the Xinshu. Although neither the presence nor the absence of the two graphs would result in a grammatically incorrect sentence, a scrutiny of the text will lead us to the conclusion that only the absence of those graphs is contextually appropriate.

This passage was composed to advise the emperor to institute a system of dizhi 地制 (enfeoffment). Instituting the system would, as the author argued, make the emperor’s virtue known to the “sub-celestial world” in five aspects. Thus the “five desirables” refer to the world’s five kinds of recognition of the emperor’s virtue. Apparently, one can securely infer from this argument that all the emperor was capable of was having the five desirables “done” to his majesty himself. In other words, the five desirables were not something that the emperor was able to initiate directly. They were, rather, the five rewards for the emperor to earn, the five things that the “sub-celestial world” would do to his majesty as a response to and reward for his successful establishment of that system. The object of the verb “為”, therefore, has to be the enfeoffment system, not the “five desirables”. And the pronoun "此"—meaning “this”—should be taken as a singular demonstrative pronoun that denotes the system of enfeoffment. Lu Wenchao is, therefore, correct in considering the last two graphs external to the last sentence.

As for whether the two graphs merely remain as a redundant word or function as a title, there can be no definitive answer. But there is no mutual cancelling between the two possibilities. It was likely that the two graphs, “wumei”, remain in the text as
both a redundant word and an embedded end title.

There were, to recall, pre-modern scholars and book compilers who mistook embedded end titles for part of the main-body text. There were also editors who would, by mistake or on purpose, change former print-formats (Gu Yanwu, 1990: pp. 908-909; Zhang Shunhui, 1962: p. 35; Zhu Taiyan, 1989: p. 47). The Song editions of the Xinshu, though extant no more, had remained to be “the sole sources for all later editions” in the form of Lu Wenchao’s commentaries on them (Svarverud, 1998: p. 24). Cherniack observes that the Song dynasty was a time when Chinese book culture favored change. Consequently, “the supports that had earlier served to stabilize the texts were weakened, and canonical texts, like other texts, became open to textual innovation” (Cherniack, 1994: p. 21). Her comment is in agreement with Zhu Taiyan’s (1989: p. 47) description of the fashion during the Song dynasty among reproducers of ancient books.

Because the use of embedded end titles was popular in the Han era and the modification of early formats was a common practice during the Song times, it stands to reason to suspect that there were originally other end titles in the Xinshu. But a thorough removal of them would require both knowledge about early formats and the ability to recognize such titles. In the Xinshu, other end titles could be easily detected because it was grammatically or idiomatically impossible to merge the titles into the sentences that they individually followed. But the presence of the embedded title “wumei” does not make its preceding sentence any less idiomatic than does its absence. The title hence survived deliberate removals and remained as redundant graphs in the text. Chen Wei Liang discusses textual corruption from the primary perspective of falsification. But passage title is an important factor to consider in this matter.

The Siku Tiyao and Yao Nai

To discredit a historical document normally means to find it anachronistic. As late as the Qing Dynasty, compilers of the Siku Tiyao and—especially—Yao Nai both claimed to have found concrete evidence of forgery in the Xinshu.

The Siku Tiyao

In their discussion of the Xinshu, the Siku compilers remarked that “the book is not entirely authentic, nor is it entirely forged” 其書不全真, 亦不全譌 (Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao, juan 49). The evidence of its not being “entirely authentic,” they declared, lied in the corrupted condition of the text and the titles that seemed to have been artificially imposed on passages (Ibid). These are the topics that we discussed in the previous section. The reason they considered the Xinshu not “entirely forged” was because they found that, among the parts of the Xinshu with no textual parallels in the Hanshu, there were texts rich in early teachings with their sources traceable in ancient classics. The compilers thus differ from many modern skeptics of the Xinshu in that they were not unwilling to give credit to the parts of the Xinshu that lacked textual parallels in the Hanshu, though the compilers’ judgment in this regard is rather subjective.

Yao Nai

Yao Nai’s skepticism, by contrast, was directed to the entire Xinshu. He considered the Xinshu questionable in textual and historical aspects. In the textual aspect, the grounds of his skepticism do not differ significantly from those of other skeptics discussed in our previous sections. But his criticism in historical aspect deserves our particular attention.

In the “Dengqi” 等齊 Chapter of the Xinshu, the author said he would “sigh over” the practice of using gold seals among the ministers of enfeoffed lords. Yao Nai considered the “sighing” as an anachronistic react to what had already come to be normal by Jia Yi’s time, when lords began to lose interest in honoring codes of protocols appropriate to their individual statuses and ranks. What is more, in the chapter of “Dengqi,” enfeoffed lords are addressed as bixia 陛下. And the term fei 妃 (concubine) is found to be an alternative title for hou 后 (queen). Yao Nai argued that, firstly, bixia was a title that no lords in the Han era could possibly adopt because the titled had been allocated for the emperor alone in the Qin Dynasty. Secondly, to refer to a queen as a fei was a practice that did not occur in history until as late as the Wei-Jin period. So, its occurrence in the “Dengqi” Chapter seemed to suggest that the Xinshu was forged in or after the Wei-Jin times.

As regards the use of the title bixia, Wang Zhouming points out that the purpose of the chapter was to denounce the practice of addressing a lord as bixia (Wang Zhouming, 1982: p. 12). The chapter was, in other words, taking issue with the lords’ disregard of protocol codes. As for referring to a queen as fei, it should be noted that the original meaning of fei is “spouse”, not “concubine” (Zhang Shunhui, 1983: juan 24, p. 5b). And according to Wang Zhouming (1982: p. 21), the character 妃 in this sense is pronounced pei instead of fei. Therefore, the sentence “Tianzi zhi pei hao yue hou 天子之妃號曰后” in “Dengqi” simply means “the spouse of the Son of Heaven is known as a Queen”. Moreover, Yao Nai’s criticism of the chapter regarding the “sighing over” the use of gold seal may instantly remind us of what Wang Guoweii 王國維 (1877-1927) found about the “Dengqi” Chapter. The chapter mentions some official titles in the courts of enfeoffed states. Wang Guoweii had once judged those titles to be particular only to the governance structure of the central court. For this reason, he had long considered this chapter untrustworthy until one day he witnessed a number of clay seals that had been in use during the Han Dynasty in the court of an enfeoffed state. Right on the seals, Wang noticed precisely those titles that he had found in the “Dengqi” chapter. Wang said he then realized that what was said in “Dengqi” was true. It was true that enfeoffed lords during the Western Han had lost interest in protocol codes and began emulating the emperor in the system of officialdom (Wang Guoweii, 1973: juan 18, p. 921). But if this was a common practice among the lords, does it mean Yao Nai was right in pointing out the “sighing” in the “Dengqi” Chapter to be an anachronistic reaction to it? The key issue here, I think, is not what practice was common and normal in that period, but rather what practice would look intolerable to the author of the chapter no matter how common, normal, or even fashionable the practice might have been in his time. It was all a subjective matter on the part of the author. A historical and objective perspective would thus be totally irrelevant.

Chen Wei Liang’s Criticism Reviewed

As a scholar in modern time, Chen Wei Liang (1958) epito-
mizes all skepticism of the Xinshu and contributes to significantly deepening our study. His criticism—which examines the Xinshu from literary, historical, and philosophical perspectives (Nylan, 1992: p. 169)—strikes as more comprehensive and sophisticated than that of all his predecessors. Critics of the Xinshu today can hardly afford to ignore his study. Nylan (1992) and, especially, Svarverud (1998) have both presented in-depth reviews that did justice to Chen’s contributions. My review below will discuss Chen’s criticism on the minben 民本 thought and what one may call senary-composite cosmology in the Xinshu. In addition, I will discuss his arguments on the stylistic issues in the Xinshu and how the Xinshu was related to other texts, especially to the Shuoyuan 說苑 and Zuo zhuan 左傳.

Five or Six

In the Xinshu, both the “Liushu 六術” and “Daode shuo” 道德說 chapters argue that everything in the universe is six-fold. According to Hanshu 48, however, Jia Yi suggested—over 20 years after the founding of the Han Dynasty—that the Han Empire establish yellow as the most important color, change the calendar of his time, and replace the quinary customary and ritual system with a senary system, in which, for example, physical dimensions of utensils were to be set at six lengths (i.e. chi 尺 and/or cun 寸) and the emperor would use a six-horse chariot. Chen Weiliang (1958: p. 27) considered such discrepancy between those chapters and Hanshu 48 suggestive of a case of textual forgery on the part of the Xinshu.

The discrepancy is admittedly obvious. But I do not think it substantiates an assumption of Jia Yi’s consistent insistence upon the implementation of a quinary system. Viewed from a perspective of Five-Phase 五行 theory in pre-modern China, succession of dynastic regimes would follow a cycle of destruction 相剋 and, especially, Svarverud (1998) have both presented in-depth studies of the cosmological significance of five and six as evidence for the non-reliability of these chapters in Xinshu is superficially argued, because

There is ample evidence for a cosmology interpreting Heaven as containing the essential six qi 氣 which in turn give birth to different qualities in the world of things, not [Svarverud’s italic] excluding but rather forming a comprehensive cosmology incorporating the hierarchical cyclicity of the Five Elements in early Han cosmology. Based on pre-Han and early Han cosmology the scheme of all things origination in a six-fold division presented in the chapters Liushu and Daodeshuo seems, on the contrary, to conform to expectations with regard to the writings of the Han eclectic Jia Yi (Svarverud, 1998: p. 133).

Svarverud’s point is argued through ample citations of early sources. To the list of his examples, I would add the Guoyu 國語, where the following cosmological theorization is found:

The Heaven is six-fold whereas the Earth five-fold. Such are the numeric constants [in the cosmos]. The heavenly [sexaduple] function as longitudes while the earthly [quin-tuple] as latitudes. The longitudes and latitudes [inter-weave] with no error, hence the [formation of cosmic] pattern. 天六地五，數之常也。經之以天，緯之以地，經緯不爽，文之象也 (Guoyu, 1978: juan 3, p. 98).

Wei Zhao’s 韋昭 (204-273) annotation elaborated on this notion of cosmic pattern and substantiated the concepts of sextuple and quintuple with the following remark.

In the heaven there are six qi 氣, namely yin, yang, wind, rain, darkness, and brightness. On earth there are five elements. [They are] Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, and Soil. With the six heavenly qi functioning as longitudes while the five earthly elements as latitudes, [the cosmos] is complete. 天有六氣，謂陰、陽、風、雨、晦、明也。地有五行：金、木、水、火、土也。以天之六氣為經，以地之五行為緯，而成之也 (Guoyu, 1978: juan 3, p. 98).

Evidently, this passage in the Guoyu confirms Svarverud’s point that numbers Six and Five were integrated in early Chinese cosmology.

The Minben 民本 Thought

In such Xinshu chapters as “Dazheng No. 1” 太政上 and “Dazheng No. 2” 太政下, Chen Weiliang identified “the political thought of treating-people-as-basis” 民本政治思想. After comparing the themes of these two chapters with that in Jia Yi’s quotes in the Hanshu, he judged the two chapters to be artificial early writings. Central to this observation is apparently his assumption that things absent in authorized dynastic histories are unreliable. In terms of the minben thought, however, the present study does not find the two Xinshu chapters inconsistent with the “Guo Qin lun” quoted in the Shi ji 史記, which
was no less established as standard history than was the *Hanshu*. Besides, I do not think that there was only one kind of *minben* thought in early China.

The term *minben* is arguably a short form for the phrase “min wei bang ben” 民惟邦本 (common populace is the foundation of the state) in Chapter “Wuzi zhi ge” 五子之歌 in the old-text *Shangshu* 尚書. According to the chronology suggested by Yan Ruquo 袁若璩 (1636-1704) (1796), the old-text *Shangshu* may not have predated Jia Yi’s time. But the “minben” thought is nevertheless a convenient posterior label for the kind of early persuasions that accorded importance to the common populace. Mencius (7B: 14) is widely quoted to have said “(in a state) the people are the most important; the spirits of the land and grain (guardians of territory are the next; the ruler is of slight importance)” (Chan, 1963: p. 81). One would agree with Chen Weiliang on the marked difference between this kind of minben thought and that conveyed in those two *Xinshu* chapters.

Chen Weiliang’s (1958, p. 27) observation on the “spirit of Legalism” (fajia jingshen 法家精神) in Jia Yi’s thought is well founded. With very few exceptions (e.g. Yang Shuda, 1984: Vol. 7, p. 479), scholars generally agree with Ban Gu that Jia Yi “was well versed in (the thoughts of) Shen (Buhai) and Han (Fei)” 明申韓 (Hanshu, p. 2723). Scholars in the Song Dynasty paid particular attention to this aspect of Jia Yi. Ye Shi 葉適 (1150-1223) once remarked that Jia Yi’s Warring-State-type of strategies was adorned in his use of Confucian principles (see Qian Zhongshu, 1979: p. 893). Chen Liang 陳亮 (1143-1194) (1987: pp. 126-128) regarded the “heterodox learning” 異端之學 of Legalism as an important complement to the Confucianism in Jia Yi’s thought. In Northern Song times, Su Shi 苏轼 (1086: Vol. 1, p. 315) took for granted Chao Cuo’s 趙蕤 (200-154 BC) “heretical ideas” of Legalism but felt surprised at the same ideas manifested in Jia Yi’s teaching. To Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619-1692) (1996: Vol. 10, p. 104) in the Ming-Qing period, Jia Yi “sounded scarcely different from Li Si” 去李斯之言也無幾.

Given all these attestations, one would still expect Chen Weiliang to explain why he had considered the minben thought and the “spirit of Legalism” mutually exclusive. In Chapter 23 of the *Guangzi* 管子, it is said “[a] hegemonic or kingly dominance would start from treating the common populace as a foundation. The state will be stable [so long as] the foundation is in order. [Should] the foundation become chaotic, the state would be in jeopardy.” 大霸王之所始也以民為本，本治則國固，本亂則國危. Further reading of the chapter will take us to a focused discussion on how to accomplish dominance and ensure the triumph of one’s state in wars of annexation. Such a topic is of course more pertinent to the will of a ruler than it would be for the interest of the common populace. This obviously speaks of a certain convergence between Mencian minben thought and Legalism.

Early Legalist thinkers lacked the chance to examine enough of the formidable force of nationwide mass riots, such as the untouchable’s general uprisings by the untouchables towards the end of the Qin Dynasty. They therefore variously emphasized what Mark E. Lewis calls “sanctioned violence” as their answer to all socio-political situations. Around the fall of the Qin Empire, early-Han literati found in sanctioned violence something that might arouse vehement reaction from the masses. Such awareness was amply reflected in the political discourse of the early Han period, including the speeches of Jia Yi. In this regard, the minben thought detected by Chen Weiliang in the *Xinshu* does not seem to significantly deviate from Jia Yi’s Legalist inclinations reflected in the *Hanshu*. I choose to refer this kind of minben thought as practical minben thought.

It is said in Chapter “Dazheng No. 1” that a ruler “cannot afford not to fear the people” 民不可不畏也. This presumably comes from the “Jiagao” 酒誥 chapter of the *Shangshu*, where King Cheng of Zhou said that “previously, the sage king of the Yin held [both] the Heavenly Sovereignty [and] petty commoners in awe” 在昔殷哲王畏天懼民. Thus, insofar as they were the object of the sage king’s fear, “petty commoners” were considered second only to the “Heavenly Sovereignty.” The *Xinshu* chapter elaborates on this idea of fearing the people, cautioning that a ruler, “therefore, cannot slight even the most base, nor deceive even the most foolish, commoner among the general populace.” 故夫民者，至聖不可忽也；至愚不可欺也 because, “from ancient times to now, it has always been the case that he who sets himself against the people will be sooner or later overcome by the people”. 故自古至於今，與民為讎者，有敗有速，而民必勝之. In the same chapter, a ruler’s regime is said to be doomed once people loathed what the ruler wanted them to do. Likewise, in the *Shiji*, we catch Jia Yi arguing eloquently in his “Guo Qin lun” that, upon the loss of people’s favor, the Qin Empire—a formerly invincible conqueror of six well armed states—could not even withstand the strike from a crowd of untouchables who were armed with only wood clubs and hoes. This kind of reasoning found in an orthodox history is by no means incompatible or inconsistent with the practical minben thought conveyed in the two *Xinshu* chapters.

**Stylistic Issues**

As is summarized in the Introduction, in late 1950s and early 1960s respectively, Chen Weiliang in Hong Kong and a team of four scholars in Beijing compared the texts of the *Xinshu* and that of Jia Yi’s quotes in the *Hanshu*. After comparing almost 21But, even in that early period, Xunzi 荀子 (4th-3rd cent. BC), the alleged mentor of such major Legalist theorists as Han Fei 韓非 and Li Si 李斯, was already aware that the masses were to the ruler what water was to boat. By that he meant that, just as water was capable of both carrying and overturning a boat, so were the masses capable of upholding and overthrowing their ruler (see Xunzi, 1936: Vol. 20, p. 100). In the *Liji* 傳習, incidentally, it is also argued that a gentleman cannot afford to overlook the general populace any more than one can afford to overlook water, which is capable of taking human life if one is careless about it (*Liji*, 1983: Vol. 161, 412b). Like the thought of Xunzi, the *Laozi* 老子 was also a rich source of influence to Legalism. Argument similar to the foregoing, for instance can also be found in Chapter 39 of the *Laozi*.

22According to Lewis, sanctioned violence was “modes of inflicting harm or taking life which men accept, approve, and even prescribe.” By that he specifically refers to the imposition of the will of the ruling upon the ruled, or that of one state’s will upon another, through institutionalized use of force (Lewis, 1990: p. 1).
the same set of texts, Chen Weiliang and the team of four scholars has each reached an opposite conclusion to the other’s argument. Whereas Chen Weiliang contended that the quotes of Jia Yi in the *Hanshu* presented a smoother reading than did the *Xinshu*\(^{23}\), the four scholars judged the latter to be smoother in reading than the former. Obviously, different scholars’ personal tastes for writing styles were at play in their textual criticism.

If Zhang Xuecheng’s *章學誠 (1738–1801)* observation can be accepted, we must take into account that there were times when pre-modern historians edited and revised the historical documents they quoted\(^{24}\) (Zhang Xuecheng, 1956: p. 65).

And one would question the assumption Chen Weiliang and the four scholars shared despite their difference. It is an assumption that idealizes Jia Yi’s writing style. Based on this shared assumption, Chen and the four scholars in fact agree that, between the *Xinshu* and Jia Yi’s quotes in the *Hanshu*, a better-written text must be the original text. Chen Weiliang particularly shows an inclination to idealize Jia Yi’s writing. He, for example, considered the “Daoshu” *道術* chapter unauthentic because he found part of the essay “long-winded, meaningless, continuously garrulous, [and hence] unlikely to be what an ambitious and patriotic Jia Yi would have cared to say.” 儒者無義，繁絮不休，似非胸懷大志，存心家國如賈誥者所屑言也 (Chen Weiliang, 1958: p. 26). As a similar example, his comment on two other *Xinshu* chapters is: “As a writer with a natural and flowing style, Jia Yi could never have possibly written such self-repetitive and awkward sentences. Such is the shallowness and vulgarity of the forger.” 章疏宕如賈誥者亦決不會為此重複笨拙之句，此乃偽者之淺陋 (Ibid, p. 28).

In both cases, Chen Weiliang (1958: pp. 4-5, 26-27) considered the textual and stylistic problems suggestive of a forger whose writing skill was markedly inferior to that of Jia Yi. Svarverud (1998: p. 81) rightly imputed some of the repeated passages to the physical damage of the bamboo texts. Regarding those problems that are more stylistic than physical in nature, one would wonder whether a stylistically imperfect text is necessarily a forged text. I choose to answer the question through a discussion on critics’ reception of the first part of Jia Yi’s “Guo Qin lun” (i.e. “Guo Qin lun No. 1”).

Although textual scholars disagree about the authorship of the *Xinshu*, they all regard “Guo Qin lun No. 1” as an authentic. Chen Weiliang largely relied on “Guo Qin lun No. 1” in his discussion of Jia Yi’s thought. As a text with a clear line of transmission, “Guo Qin lun No. 1” is quoted in full in the *Shiji*. From there, according to Svarverud (1998: p. 48), Ban Gu quoted it in his *Hanshu*. Later on, it was included in numerous prestigious anthologies, of which Xiao Tong’s *文選* (501-531) 、Wenxuan 文選、Yao Nai’s *Guwen Cizi Zuan* 古文辭類纂, and Yan Kejun’s *Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao Wen* 全上古三代秦漢三國六朝文 are only a few examples.

Yet “Guo Qin lun No. 1” has not always been favorably received among critics. Scholars normally appreciate its vigorous style. But they notice that it is a text that features sentences “too lengthy to recite or read aloud” 難於諷誦 (Huang Kan, 1962: pp. 145-146), redundant expressions, “unsymmetrical and unstable parallelism” 對偶偏枯駭, “piled-up phrases” 堆疊成句, and “lavishness in words in excess of substantiality in meaning” 詞肥義瘠 (Qian Zhongshu, 1979: p. 891). Could it possibly be coincident that Chen Weiliang found in those *Xinshu* chapters exactly the same kind of stylistic problems as those other modern scholars found in “Guo Qin lun No. 1”?\(^{25}\)

In fact, there were also pre-modern scholars under the same impression about Jia Yi’s writing. Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), for one, caught Jia Yi “scribbling haphazardly all along on the wings of [his] talent”. 只是承才快，胡亂寫去 (see Qian Zhongshu, 1979: p. 888). His remark echoes an earlier remark by Su Shi, who found Jia Yi “opulent in talent while inadequate for one, caught Jia Yi “scribbling haphazardly all along on the wings of [his] talent”.

Chen Weiliang has certainly demonstrated incisive discernment in identifying Jia Yi’s stylistic flaws. But let us not forget that such flaws are shared by the texts that Chen considers unreliable and those that he trusts with no reservations.

### The *Xinshu* vs. Other Early Texts

Chen Weiliang has also taken note of some textual similarities between the *Xinshu* and three other texts\(^{26}\). He found the texts in the *Xinshu* shorter than their textual counterparts in those three books, and thus suspected the *Xinshu* of being partly forged on the basis of those books because, had those three books quoted the *Xinshu*, their texts would have been either of the same length as, or shorter than, the *Xinshu* texts.

However, among the three textual parallels between “Xiu zheng yu No. 1” 修正語上 (Xinshu) and “Jundao” 祖道 (Shuoyuan), I find only one case in which the *Xinshu* text is shorter. Svarverud must have noticed this as well. He observes that Chen Wailiang has based his “argument on a limited number of passages among all the parallel passages in these texts” (Svarverud, 1998: p. 62).

As a matter of fact, to say that, between the two sources, the longer text is the original text, we have to eliminate one more possibility suggested by the four scholars in Peking University. It is the possibility that both the *Xinshu* and non-*Xinshu* texts were quoting an unidentified third source instead of each other (see Sun Qinshan et al., 1961: p. 65). This is a possibility that one can never rule out. But since the third source is still hardly identifiable, and considering the large quantities of early texts lost to time, let us base the discussion solely on what is known.

In the following, I will compare two texts between which the *Xinshu* and non-*Xinshu* texts are equally readable but of significantly different lengths. The point I wish to make is that, even if we, for the sake of argument, rule out the possibility of there being a third source, forgery on the part of the *Xinshu* is still not the best explanation for a text parallel. Now let us examine the example below, where the Shuoyuan passage is significantly longer than its counterpart in the *Xinshu*.

23Likewise, Yao Nai in pre-modern China considered the *Xinshu* spurious partly because, to him, the *Xinshu* texts did not read as smoothly as their textual counterparts in the *Hanshu*.

24In the *Hanshu*, we see a long quote of Jia Yi’s petition that is capped by a passage that reads like a modern essay. As a pre-modern annotator of the *Hanshu*, Yan Shigu 袁世進: noted that this was “probably a case where the historian simply put [in the history] what was important and relevant”. “And,” said Yan Shigu, “that is why Ban Gu” later said in the final comment that [he] “selectively” included in [Jia Yi’s biography] those [essays] that were pertinent to the affairs of that time.” 輩家畢竟取真要切耳。故下文去損其於世事著於傳 (Hanshu, p. 2260).  

25They are Dong Zhongshu’s *董仲舒 (179-106 BC)* Chunqiu Fanlu 春秋繁露 and Xiu Xinag’s *Shuoyuan* 修苑 and *Xinshu* 新序.

26The examples he cites are, specifically, “Rongjing” 容經 (in the *Xinshu*) vs. “Yuber” 玉杯 (in the *Chunqiu Fanlu*), “Chuqiu” 春秋 (in the *Xinshu*) vs. “Zaiishi No. 4” 薛氏四 (in the *Xinshu*), and “Xiu zheng yu No. 1” 修正語上 (in the *Xinshu*) vs. “Jundao” 祖道 (in the *Shuoyuan*).
Between these passages, the Shuoyuan passage obviously owes its more extensive length to its longer sequence of “必自X Verb之” structure. To me, the “也” in the former’s “必自也 Verb之” makes better sense than the latter’s “他”，because what the entire passage says is that since one gets “very little [out of] words if [one] hears [the words] after having them savored by others”, a “wise ruler” should “personally” deal with and work on what is advised to him rather than do it through others. So, the “也” in the structure is more likely to be an adverb [meaning “by oneself”] than a preposition [meaning “from” or “through”]

Thus, in spite of the longer text on the part of a non-scholar, a “wise ruler” should “personally” deal with and work on what is advised to him rather than do it through others. So, the result is that one will get very little [out of] words if [one] hears [the words] after having them savored by others. Because of this, a wise ruler’s [words] must be [obtained by] listening to others, hearing what is advised to him rather than do it through others, selecting from others, taking from others, collecting from others, storing them up personally. Therefore, it is sagacious to take the Dao quickly27, prominently [rewarding] to implement [the Dao] quickly, and nice to quickly apply the Dao to the masses. For this reason, [he] who seeks the Dao will do it with [his] heart instead of [his] eyes. [And he] who takes the Dao will do it with his ears instead of his hands.

Finally, as indicated above, there have been large quantities of early texts lost to time. Of the 29 quotes of Confucius in the Mencius, only eight have had their sources identified. But few of the eight quotes present perfect textual parallel to their sources (Gu Yanwu, 1990: p. 339). Considering all this, it is hardly feasible or constructive to compare lengths in search of an authentic text.

The Xinshu and the Zuozhuan

From Hanshu 88, we learn that Jia Yi was the leading scholar of the Zuozhuan study in his generation. In his time, he studied, taught, and wrote about, the Zuozhuan. His expertise in the study of the Zuozhuan is confirmed in Wu Chengshi’s 吳承仕 (1885-1939) Jingdian shiwen xulu zhuangcheng 經典釋文序錄疏證 (1984: p. 123). However, Wang Zhong 汪中 (1744-1794) (1869: neipian 3, p. 5) noticed that, in those parts where the history of the Spring-Autumn period was cited and discussed, the Xinshu did not present sufficient textual parallels to the Zuozhuan. In other words, the author of the Xinshu did not demonstrate enough of his familiarity with the Zuozhuan.

Liu Fenglu 劉逢祿 (1776-1829) (1995: p. 254a) also considered the connection between the Xinshu and the Zuozhuan weak. From there, he proceeded to question the conventionally alleged authorship of the Zuozhuan. From the late 19th to the beginning of the 20th centuries, however, Liu’s judgment encountered vigorous challenge. Zhang Binglin 張炳麟 (1868-1936) refuted Liu Fenglu’s view on several occasions. In his Chunqiu Zuozhuan xulu 春秋左傳箋注, Zhang Binglin exhibited numerous examples to argue that the Chunqiu (i.e. Spring-Autumn Period, 770-467 BC) lore in the Xinshu did not contradict but rather complement the Zuozhuan (e.g. Zhang Binglin, 1982: Vol. 2, pp. 841-843). Similarly, Yu Jiaxi also...
remarked that, in the *Xinshu*, Chapter “Baofu” was partly based upon the *Zuo zhuan* (Yu Jiaxi, 1963: pp. 266–267).

But the view of Wang Zhong and Liu Fengli seems nevertheless valid. Usually, without annotators’ aid, (e.g. Yang Shuda, 1984: Vol. 10, p. 751; Yang Bojun, 1981: pp. 719, 788–789, 1195) the parallels between the *Zuo zhuan* and the *Xinshu* would easily pass unnoticed, for they are mostly imperfect parallels. Among all the 12 citations of the *Zuo zhuan* recorded in *The Xinshu with parallel passages from other pre-Han and Han texts*, wording parallels are sporadic and rare31. More surprisingly, the title of the *Zuo zhuan* is simply not mentioned in the *Xinshu*. What first-class expert would demonstrate so little knowledge in his acclaimed area of expertise?

There has been, to my knowledge, no one in China—at least no one in the Chinese mainland—that has attempted to answer this question. In Europe, Svarverud has suggested two answers, between which, the first one is forthright. The lack of reference to the *Zuo zhuan* is, as he suggests, possibly an indication that Jia Yi was not [Svarverud’s emphasis] well versed in the *Zuo zhuan*, and may not even have composed the *Zuo zhuan* commentary entitled *Zuo zhuan xungu* 左傳訓故, as is recorded in Hanshu, Rulinzhuan 儒林傳 (Svarverud, 1998: p. 126).

Then why there is such a record in the *Hanshu* and Liu Xiang’s 劉向 (77?-6? BC) *Bielu* 別錄 will become an unsettled issue. Compared with this first answer, Svarverud’s second answer is more sophisticated. “Another more plausible explanation,” says he, seems to be that these historical events [of Spring-Autumn period] did not serve the intention of being historical records but rather moralistic anecdotes substantiating the lessons to be drawn from history. Jia Yi was thus less concerned with their historical accuracy and more concerned with their pedagogical effect on teaching in the state of Liang. As suggested by Wang Zhong these events may possibly also belong to a lost corpus of early orally transmitted texts not recorded in *Zuo zhuan* (Svarverud, 1998: p. 126).

This is indeed an interesting point. Speaking of the records in the *Zuo zhuan*, however, perhaps little matters how accurate they might be historically, many of them had already been rendered moralistic enough by their author to meet various pedagogic purposes. So, if Jia Yi did know them well, how did he find them unusable in *his* teachings? Why did he resort to anecdotes instead of the *Zuo zhuan*? Here, Chen Weiliang’s challenge is still not something we can afford to ignore. But if we review the transmission of the *Zuo zhuan*, we will find that forgery is anything but the sole, or even the best, explanation for the lack of mention of the *Zuo zhuan* in the *Xinshu*.

As Svarverud points out, Wang Zhong suspected that the events cited in the *Xinshu* were transmitted from texts other than the *Zuo zhuan*. This suspicion might have been justified long ago in the 20th century. In the 1970s, a silk text of Spring-Autumn history entitled *Chunqiu shiyu* 春秋事語 was excavated in Changsha, Hunan Province.32 Scholars agreed that the text was composed in the Warring States period and scribed around the founding of the Han dynasty, between 210 and 190 BC (Zhang Zhenglang, 1977: pp. 36, 38). According to Zhang Zhenglang 張政烺, this is a text composed for pedagogic purposes, intended to prepare youth for further study of the *Spring-Autumn annals* (SAA henceforth). Without addressing an opposing opinion held by Tang Lan’s 唐蘭, Li Xueqin 李學勤 (1989: pp. 24, 6) substantiated Zhang Zhenglang’s view by arguing that the *Chunqiu shiyu* was largely adapted from the *Zuo zhuan*. While taking note of some differences between the two texts, Li Xueqin concluded that the *Chunqiu shiyu* was “indeed a categorical early work of *Zuo zhuan* studies.” As for early *《左傳》*’s certain works, particularly a work of Xunzi’s tradition within the *Zuo zhuan* school of historical studies. In interestingly, while Wang Zhong noticed the significant discrepancy between a Spring-Autumn anecdote in the “Shenwei” 審微 chapter of the *Xinshu* and its counterpart in the *Zuo zhuan*, Li Xueqin found the same anecdote in the *Xinshu* impressively parallel to its corresponding record in the *Chunqiu shiyu*. What this seems to suggest is that it is one thing not to directly cite the *Zuo zhuan*, but it is quite another to deviate from the *Zuo-zhuan* school of SAA study.

The affinity between the *Chunqiu shiyu* and *Zuo zhuan* is also noted by Wu Rongzeng 吳榮曾 (1998) and Wang Li 王莉 (2003) from different perspectives. And after comparing the style, syntax, narrative format, viewpoints, and chronology of events in this text and those in the *Zuo zhuan*, Li Xueqin went on to tackle the significance of the title “Shenwei”. He cited the following heritage line of the *Zuo zhuan* school recorded in Lu Deming’s 陸德明 (556-627) *Jingdian shiwen* 經典釋文 and Liu Xiang’s *Bieli* 劉向 *Bielu*:[33] Zuo Qiufang 左丘明—Zeng Shen 曾申—Wu Qi 吳起—Wu Qi 吳起—Duo Jiao 鐵卯—Yu Qing 應卿—Xunzi—Zhang Cang 張蒼—Jia Yi 戊. Li Xueqin observed that, in the *Zuo zhuan* school, there were four works that contained the character wei 微 in their titles.34 And from Li Xueqin (1989: p. 5), we learn that Yan Shigu 順伯 (581-645) glossed the meaning of the *wei* to “to explain the subtle

31 Tang Lan’s view was expressed on August 28, 1974, at a forum sponsored by the journal of Wenwu. A minute of the forum entitled “Zuotan Changsha Mawangdui Hanmu boshu” 座談長沙馬王堆漢墓書 is published in *Wenwu* 220.

32 The heritage chain presented by Lu Deming 陸德明 ends with Jia Yi 賈誼 whereas that by Liu Xiang 劉向 ends with Zhang Cang 張蒼.33 Wang Zhongming (1982: p. 25) suggests that Jia Yi had another mentor called Master Wu 吳公. The heritage line Wang Zhongming presents is: Xunzi—Li Si 李斯—Master Wu 吳公. The heritage line Wang Zhongming presents is: Xunzi—Li Si 李斯—Master Wu 吳公. Jia Yi would assume that this is based upon the following account in Hanshu 《漢書》 48, “Jia Yi was a native of Luoyang. A [youth of 18], he was well reputed in his prefecture for [his ability to] recite [and] interpret classics [and for] his literary talents. Master Wu, Governor of Henan heard of his outstanding endowments. He, thereupon, summoned [Jia Yi and] placed [Jia] at his mensia. [Master Wu] treated [Jia Yi] with exceeding favor [emphasis added] … As formerly a townsman of Li Si, [Master Wu] once studied under [Li Si’s] mentorship.” 賈誼，雒陽人也，年十八，以能誦詩書屬文稱於郡中，河南守吳公聞其秀材，召置門下，甚幸愛。⋯⋯【吳公】故與李斯同邑，又善學事師。它 seems that Wang Zhongming associated the term mensia 門下 with mensheng 門生 (disciple). But Chen Zhi 陳直 (1979: p. 288) pointed out that the term mensia here meant mensheng zhi xia 門生之下 (official patronage). I choose to accept Chen Zhi’s interpretation because I judge the phrase xing’ai 幸愛 to be not as an appropriate expression to describe mentorship as it is for describing patronage.

33 Among the four, authors of the *Zuo zhuan* 左氏微 and *Zhangshi Wei* 張氏微 are unidentified but suspected to be, respectively, Zuo Qiufang and Zhang Cang (Li Xueqin, 1989: p. 5).
meaning.” 所以即便是 Li Xueqin held that wei was a common genre in the Zuozhuan school of SA A study, which featured short discussions of the morals and lessons to be drawn from the Zuozhuan. He observed that works in this genre had sometimes used materials not included in the Zuozhuan. And, as a spin-off of his research, Li discovered that the style and format of Chapter “Shenwei” in the Xinshu were typical of this genre (Li Xueqin, 1989, pp. 5-6).

Moreover, Li found the excavation spot of the Chunqiu shiyu significant. As is generally known, Changsha was where Jia Yi once served as Grand Tutor for the King of Changsha. Considering his official post in Changsha and the fact that the Chunqiu shiyu was intended for pedagogical purposes, one may not feel very surprised at the similarity that Li Xueqin identified between the Chunqiu shiyu and “Shenwei.”

Yet, we still have good reason to wonder why Jia Yi demonstrated so little of direct knowledge of the Zuozhuan. A remark by Wang Mao (1939: pp. 133-134) regarding the use of yijing 逸經 during the Western Han may deepen our perplexity.

The yijing in the term yijing means “to be left out” (Yang Bojun, 1981: p. L, 1984: p. 197) A yijing thus refers to a jing (經 classic text) that was not adopted in the imperially authorized curriculum of classic studies, which in turn means that the study of a yijing was not a practice under imperial patronage. As Yang Bojun (1981: p. L) suggests, the Zuozhuan had long been considered a yi chunqiu 逸春秋 (i.e. an extracurricular text of SA A studies) in the Han Dynasty. It was, according to Yang Bojun, considered a yi chunqiu even in the time of Wang Chong 王充 (27-97) in the Eastern Han Dynasty. This means the Zuozhuan had remained extracurricular throughout the entire Western Han era.

This, however, still does not adequately explain the lack of its reference in the Xinshu. Although the study of extracurricular classic texts (i.e. yijing) did not enjoy governmental patronage, it was not banned, either. In fact, Wang Mao noticed that there had been a number of scholar-officials during the Western Han who actually took delight in citing such texts in their writings and speeches. The people Wang Mao listed were mostly scholar-officials after Jia Yi’s time. But, on the list there was also Xiao He 蕭何, who significantly predated Jia Yi. Wang Mao claimed to have found numerous cases of yijing-citing in the Han Dynasty. In that case, although the Zuozhuan could not possibly be used as an orthodox canon, why was it not even honored in the Xinshu in the capacity of a yijing? And, as a logical question to follow, could the author of the Xinshu still be someone specialized in Zuozhuan study, living in a time when yijing-citing was at least perfectly acceptable if not necessarily fashionable?

My answer to these questions is invariably affirmative. We need, firstly, examine the transmission of the Zuozhuan during the Western Han. In spite of the long transmission that the Zuozhuan school of SA A studies had undergone, the Zuozhuan never became a popular classic in the imperial court until the reign of Emperor Ping of the dynasty (r. 1 BC-6 AD), which was over 160 years after Jia Yi’s death. Previously, during Emperor Ai’s (r. 6-1 BC) time, the Zuozhuan school once attempted to establish an official institute for the Zuozhuan study. But they did so only to meet with oppositions from the Imperial Eurchites (Hanshu, 1962: p. 1976). Hence Pi Xirui 皮錫瑞 (1850-1908) (1936: p. 79) agreed with Liu Chang’s 劉敞 (1019-1068) that the Zuozhuan was unwelcome among Western-Han literati. In fact, this problem seems so impressive among later generations of scholars that even a record of the Liu 河 school of the Zuozhuan would be enough to arouse suspicion. During the Western Han, the popular and official schools of SA A studies in the imperial court had first been the Gongyang 公羊 tradition and then Gaolun 整論 tradition. Yet even the prevalence of these two traditions also predated Jia Yi.

Secondly, one must take into consideration the political atmosphere in the imperial court at that time. It is generally agreed that the Western Han was a time when the imperial court largely discouraged citation of classics. As a most widely cited example, Lu Jia 陸賈, a scholar-official previous to Jia Yi, once got scolded by Emperor Gaozu for citing classics from time to time. What the emperor wanted him to do instead was to summarize the political lessons that could be drawn from the succession of the Qin Dynasty by the Han Empire (Hanshu, 1962: p. 2113).

Things did not change much in Jia Yi’s generation. Emperor Wen was the ruler that Jia Yi served. From the biography of Zhang Shizhi 張說之, we learn that this emperor would still expect an official to “lower” his arguments down to a practical level instead of “issuing very high-sounding theories.” At such an imperial request, Zhang Shizhi, too, had to confine his translation by the SAA (1019-1068) that the Zuozhuan was unwelcome among Western-Han literati. In fact, this problem was so impressive among later generations of scholars that even a record of the Liu 河 school of the Zuozhuan would be enough to arouse suspicion. During the Western Han, the popular and official schools of SA A studies in the imperial court had first been the Gongyang 公羊 tradition and then Gaolun 整論 tradition. Yet even the prevalence of these two traditions also predated Jia Yi.

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The Xinshu are divided into such sections as shishi, lianyu, and zashi. According to Yu Jiaxi (1958: p. 541, 544), the texts in the shishi section were written to the emperor whereas those in the lianyu section were written to the emperor whereas those in the lianyu section were written to the emperor while those in the zashi section were written to the emperor.

Luo S.
in the lianyu and zashi sections were largely Jia Yi’s unofficial speeches recorded by his disciples or followers. If we accept Yu Jiaxi’s view, then it seems interesting that one encounters more Spring-Autumn stories in lianyu and zashi than in shishi⁴⁰. As is generally known, although “high-sounding” theorization was not welcome in court, history had always been an important subject of academic discipline. By the Han Dynasty, it had been a long tradition among scholars of various persuasions to resort to history in their theoretical undertakings (Luo Jun, 1995: pp. 96-97). Although this tradition could have been affected by the political fashions of the time, it was not likely to be terminated by the fashions. What was dispensed with in the imperial court was not necessarily as dispensable in education. In Chapter “Xianxing” 先醒 in the lianyu section of the Xinshu, one can find an example where Jia Yi, as a royal tutor, taught a prince how to interpret three Spring-Autumn anecdotes. However, in education, the contents of teaching would inevitably be circumscribed by the outcome of academic and political contentions. That may account for the lack of direct citation and mention of the Zuozhuan even in those Xinshu lectures.

It was not until several decades after Jia Yi’s time did the knowledge of the Zuozhuan come to be manifested in the speeches of those scholar-officials with expertise in Zuozhuan study. Liu Xin, for instance, once quoted a short passage from Zuozhuan Lord Cheng year 13 in his memorial during Emperor Cheng’s reign (32-7 BC) (see Hanshu, 1962: p. 979, 980, footnote 1). Note that Liu’s memorial with a quote of Zuozhuan historically heralded the Zuozhuan school’s large-scaled but abortive campaign to institutionalize the Zuozhuan study in 6 BC, the very year immediately after Emperor Cheng’s reign, which means that such direct use of the Zuozhuan occurred over 130 years after Jia Yi’s death. Another example is Du Ye 杜協, grandson of Zhang Chang 張敞, who was an official-scholar very knowledgeable about the Zuozhuan. In his early years, Du Ye had studied under Zhang Chang’s son—i.e. Du’s own maternal uncle—Zhang Ji 張稚 and inherited thereof the academic heritage of the Zhang family. In the year of 2 BC, Du Ye wrote a memorial to his emperor, which contained the following passage.

In the past, the Earl of Zheng yielded to Madam Jiang’s wish, hence the eventual cataclysmic usurpation of power by [his younger brother] Duan. King Xiang of Zhou domestically suffered from the trouble caused by Queen [Mother] Hui, [which resulted in] his hazardous exile in Zheng 昔華伯隨姜氏之欲，終有叔段篡國之禍；周襄王內追惠及之難，而遭到鄭之危 (Hanshu, 1962: p. 3475).

This is a passage featuring forthright citations of Zuozhuan 39. The Spring-Autumn stories in the shishi section are both few and brief. The only exception in this regard is Chapter “Shenwei.” But this chapter, if we recall Li Xueqin’s 李學勤 (1989: p. 5) judgment, is written in the genre of wei 舊. Unlike other articles in this section, “Shenwei” bears no evidence to indicate that it was a petition addressed to the court. For one thing, an author of a petition would refer to himself as chen 臣 and the emperor as bixia 陛下. But neither of these is found in “Shenwei.” In fact “Shenwei” is simply not composed in the form of a petition or correspondence, where the author directly addressed another person or a certain sector of the government. Rather, “Shenwei” squarely meets Li Xueqin’s description of the genre wei insofar as it is a moralistic discussion. As such, it contains elaborate presentations of four Spring-Autumn anecdotes; though, as scholars have pointed out, the stories significantly differ from their counterparts in the Zuozhuan.

Lord Yin year 1 and Lord Xi year 24 (Yang Shuda, 1984: Vol. 9, p. 658)⁴¹. As an official message to the court, perhaps it was no coincidence that this occurred squarely in the thriving period of the Zuozhuan school in the Western Han—though the Zuozhuan study was still not institutionalized at that time. By the time this message was written, over 160 years had elapsed since Jia Yi’s death. And it is noteworthy that the memorials of Liu Xin and Du Ye both emerged at a time when the Western Han Empire was approaching its collapse. The official establishment of the Zuozhuan as an orthodox canon took place in the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220), which was historically a separate era from the Western Han.

Political contentions during the early Western Han are known to have been complicated by the competitions among schools of thoughts. One glaring example is found in the vying between Confucianism and Huang-Lao Daoism. By overtly citing and emphasizing the Zuozhuan in political discourse, a scholar-official might risk inviting otherwise avoidable frictions and hostilities in court. The frictions might come from both the throne and the official-scholar’s colleagues. Considering both this background and the fragmented condition of the Xinshu, one can hardly exclude the possibility that certain bamboo texts about the Zuozhuan were simply ripped off and destroyed⁴². Forgery, therefore, can hardly be the best—still less the sole—explanation of the lack of references to the Zuozhuan in the Xinshu.

Conclusion

The textual corruption of the Xinshu is a plain fact from which one can deduce neither way regarding the issue of its authenticity. However, the use of an embedded end title in its textual layout is found to be consistent with Western Han format of texts. A forger aware of this early format would have tried to forge more of such titles and make each of them showier or more ostentatious than the only end title “wumen”. Conversely, a forger who was ignorant about this early format would not have thought to end an already complete sentence with a redundant disyllabic word in the first place. Either way, we start from hypothesizing the forgery of the text but end in disproving the hypothesis.

But does this signify the authenticity of the text? We must reiterate our earlier concession about the inadequacy of such a single—albeit valid—piece of evidence. To textual critics who accept nothing less than definitive authenticity, I would suggest looking also for definitive evidence of forgery, because a case of forgery must be established on no less concrete evidence than should a case of authenticity. As shown in the present

⁴⁰According to the edition of the Hanshu kaiguan 漢書考管 in my possession, the latter citation is that of “Zuozhuan Lord Xi year 25”. (cf. Yang Shuda, 1984: p. 1029). I suspect that its number “25” is a typographic error. This citation by Du Ye is a citation of Zuozhuan Lord Xi year 24, not 25.

⁴¹By the Han Dynasty, there had already been a long history of censorship in China. It is generally known that a large quantity of ancient documents was destroyed in the Qin Dynasty. But that may not have been the first case of censorship. Ban Gu noted that with the decline of the hegemonic culture of the Zhou Dynasty, various lords began to violate former norms; and, as they did so, they removed from early documents some texts about former proprieties (Hanshu, 1962: p. 1029). According to Yang Shuda (1984: Vol. 3, p. 130), Ban Gu’s observation was most likely to be based on Mencius 5B: 2. Speaking of Jia Yi, Liu Xiang was the first known compiler of Jia’s writings. Considering the fact that Jia Yi and Liu Xiang were about a century apart, we cannot securely assume that Jia’s works were handed down to Liu Xiang’s generation complete and intact.
study, no skeptics of the *Xinshu* have provided any adequate evidence to prove their point. The most solid basis for their skepticism is still the mere lack of any adequate proof of authenticity, which is anything but concrete evidence of forgery.

Once the invalidity of their basis is ascertained, what we see is the limitation of the dichotomy of authenticity and spuriousness itself. Individual scholars’ common sense is still required in their effort to gauge the extent of a text’s usability in the scholarship on its conventionally ascribed era and author. I would suggest always treating the *Xinshu* as a usable datum for our study of Jia Yi until the very future day dawns upon us with any concrete and unequivocal evidence of forgery discovered in textual or, better still, archaeological research.

REFERENCES


