

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

University of Washington

Committee:

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

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Abstract

A Philological, Text Critical Reading of Sections of Chapter Five of the Yellow Emperor's Inner

Classic, Basic Questions

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The *Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic* is the Han dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE) medical text at the center of professional, literature-based medical practice in China for the last two-thousand years. Since the Song dynasty, roughly one thousand years ago, a single government sanctioned version of the first of the two books of the *Inner Classic*, “Basic Questions”, has acted as the authoritative version until modern times, the vast majority of scholars referencing it exclusively. This authoritative Song version took as its master copy an eighth century version which had undergone extensive changes. A seventh century text, the *Grand Basis*, contains most of “Basic Questions” and that in a state that did not get altered during the eighth century. This suggests *Grand Basis* is a closer reflection of the original Han “Basic Questions” than that which has acted as the authoritative version for the last thousand years. This research makes a close, critical comparison of portions of chapter five of “Basic Questions”. The goal was to determine the existence and nature of differences between the Song version and *Grand Basis*. Though too small a sample to arrive at definitive conclusions several differences were revealed suggesting, tentatively, an attempt on the original Han authors’ part to make their intent clear, this lost or concealed in the Song version. Enough differences of a meaningful type were found to warrant further, more complete investigation.

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1) Initial Matters

Introduction

The current authoritative version of the Han dynasty foundational Chinese medical classic *Huáng Dì Nèi Jīng Sù Wèn* 黃帝內經素問, *Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic Basic Questions*, was written in the Song dynasty, 1057 CE, by a government committee consisting of Lín Yì 林億 and Zhǎng Yǔxī 掌禹錫^{1,2}. The text was formally labeled *Zhòng Guǎng Bǔ Zhù Huáng Dì Nèi Jīng Sù Wèn* 重廣補注黃帝內經素問, *Broadly Supplemented and Annotated Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic Basic Questions* (referred to here-on-out simply as “*Zhòng Guǎng*”). The purpose was to create an authoritative version of the then approximately thousand-year-old medical classic to correct errors and illuminate areas of confusion in the text. The committee had access to multiple versions of the *Sù Wèn* from which to create their edition, including the following:

- The *Sù Wèn Xùn Jiě* 素問訓解 by Quān Yuánqǐ 全元起 from the 6th century;
- The *Huáng Dì Nèi Jīng Tài Sù* 黃帝內經太素 (referred to here-on-out as *Tài Sù*) by Yáng Shàngshàn 楊上善 from the 7th century;

¹ The *Sù Wèn* is the first book, of two, of the *Huáng Dì Nèi Jīng* 黃帝內經, *Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic*. The other book is the *Líng Shū* 靈樞, *Spiritual Pivot*. The *Sù Wèn* and *Líng Shū* are often studied, translated, and referenced as independent texts. This current project addresses the *Sù Wèn* only, as the nature and transmission of the *Líng Shū* differ substantially from the *Sù Wèn*.

² Unschuld, 2003, 60.

- The version commented upon, rearranged, and amended by Wáng Bīng 王冰 in the 8th century³.

The Song committee chose Wáng Bīng's version as their master copy, for instance extensively quoting directly from it, while making less frequent editorial comments about parallel passages from the *Tài Sù* or *Sù Wèn Xùn Jiě*. This Song version, the *Zhòng Guǎng*, has acted as the authoritative version of the *Sù Wèn* until modern times, forming “the basis for all reprints and commentaries ever since”⁴. This has effectively made Wáng Bīng's commented and highly edited and rearranged version the default for the last thousand years⁵. His understanding and interpretation of the text is regarded quite nearly as highly as the original *Sù Wèn*, itself⁶.

Soon after the writing of the *Zhòng Guǎng*, the *Sù Wèn Xùn Jiě* was lost (sometime in the twelfth century) and the *Tài Sù* fell out of use and transmission within China (it survived in Japan and would eventually be re-introduced into China)⁷. This is noteworthy because both these texts predate Wáng Bīng's version. With the *Sù Wèn Xùn Jiě* lost, the *Tài Sù* reflects the only extant version of the Han dynasty *Sù Wèn* before Wáng Bīng made his extensive changes, deletions, additions, and rearrangements. Even a brief investigation reveals numerous differences between the *Tài Sù* and the Wáng Bīng version, including lexical and graphic variants, raising of commentary into the main text,

³ Unschuld, 2003, 61.

⁴ Unschuld, 2003, 23.

⁵ This fact is further affirmed by portions of the research done here (see Section 3).

⁶ N. Sivin in Loewe, 1993, states Wáng Bīng's commentary is “ubiquitous, his interpretation seldom challenged” (197).

⁷ A 12th century copy of a recension that survived at Ninnaji in Kyoto serves as the basis for all modern editions (Loewe, 202).

outright omissions, and reordering of words. The fact that there exists a text that is both older than and different from the thousand-year-old authoritative version of the *Sù Wèn* demands focused scholarly attention^{8,9}.

Chapter five of the *Sù Wèn*, *Yīn yáng yìng xiàng dà lùn* 陰陽應象大論, “Comprehensive Discourse on the Resonant Images of Yin and Yang”, has received attention from multiple modern Western scholars and would seem to serve as a perfect target for a text critical reading and investigation comparing the *Tài Sù* and the *Zhòng Guǎng* based on Wáng Bīng’s version of the *Sù Wèn*.

⁸ N. Sivin in Lowe, 1993, not only urges the *Tài Sù* be studied alongside the *Sù Wèn*, as the former “shows fewer signs of revision”, but states there is a “great need” for a new edition of the *Sù Wèn* which compares Wáng Bīng’s version to earlier sources (196, 202). David Keegan, PhD, the first Western scholar to write a dissertation on the *Sù Wèn*’s origin and internal structure seems to agree saying the *Tài Sù* is the “most valuable comparative material we have” (53).

⁹ Paul Unschuld and Herman Tessenow’s translation of the *Sù Wèn* (2011), published after the above-cited statements of Sivin, makes great strides towards the goal of a new edition of the *Sù Wèn*. For the first time in the English language, it incorporates translation of many traditional commentaries and comparisons with different versions of the *Sù Wèn*, including the *Tài Sù*. However, even here there are omissions, leaving the need for a dedicated text critical reading of the *Tài Sù*.

Transmission of the *Sù Wèn*

Though the current authoritative version is roughly a thousand years old, the original *Sù Wèn* itself is over two thousand years old¹⁰. The title *Huáng Dì Nèi Jīng*, the very same title of the medical classic of which the *Sù Wèn* is the first half, was first mentioned in the first century CE *Qī Lǜè* 七略, a catalog of texts in the Han court library¹¹. However, the *Qī Lǜè* was soon lost¹². Bān Gù 班固 mentions a *Huáng Dì Nèi Jīng* in his *Hàn Shū* 漢書, *History of the [Former] Han*, alongside a *Huáng Dì Wài Jīng* 黃帝外經, as well as *Nèi* and *Wài Jīngs* associated with the persons Biǎn Què 扁鵲 and Bái Shì 白氏¹³. Though there is room for debate, some historians voicing “strong objections”, it is both well within reason and widely accepted that this *Huáng Dì Nèi Jīng* referenced in the Han is the same as that which we have today¹⁴.

The first mention of a specific text titled *Sù Wèn* occurs in the Han dynasty Chinese herbal classic *Shāng Hán Lùn* 傷寒論, *Treatise on Cold Damage*, where the author lists it as a source of his

¹⁰ Throughout this brief introduction and review of transmission the *Nèi Jīng* is referred to as “a book”. Although this is standard it is a bit misleading. This “book” is much more like a compilation of many small books written, often better described as re-arranged, by several authors over several hundred years spanning the Han dynasty. See Loewe, Unschuld 2003, and Keegan.

¹¹ Unschuld, 2003, 3.

¹² Unschuld, 2003, 3.

¹³ Unschuld, 2003, 4.

¹⁴ Unschuld, 2003, 4.

knowledge^{15,16}. The *Jiǎ Yǐ Jīng* 甲乙經, *Systematic Classic of Acupuncture*, written in the third century following the Han dynasty, quoted extensively from the *Sù Wèn*¹⁷. These quotes serve today as the best representation of those contents of the original *Sù Wèn*, as the Han version of the *Sù Wèn* would soon disappear completely while the *Jiǎ Yǐ Jīng* would persist^{18,19}. From just after the Han until the Song dynasty, and the writing of the authoritative *Zhòng Guǎng*, reference was also made to the *Sù Wèn* in various dynastic histories²⁰.

The oldest commented edition of a complete *Sù Wèn* was written by the aforementioned Quān Yuánqǐ during the 6th century, the *Sù Wèn Xùn Jiě*²¹. This text would survive until sometime in the 12th century, but then be lost²². This then means the *Tài Sù*, the commented version of the *Sù Wèn* by Yáng

¹⁵ This is the title by which this text has been known since soon after its writing in the Han dynasty. However, it was originally part of a larger text the *Shāng Hán Zá Bìng Lùn* 傷寒雜病論, *Treatise on Cold Damage and Miscellaneous Diseases*.

¹⁶ Loewe, 197.

¹⁷ The title of this text is often rendered *The ABCs of Acupuncture* in the contemporary English-speaking Chinese medical community.

¹⁸ It is worth noting that the received *Jiǎ Yǐ Jīng* is a Song dynasty, government-created version, just as with the *Sù Wèn*. Therefore, an additional layer of caution and analysis is required anytime the *Jiǎ Yǐ Jīng* is treated as its third century version.

¹⁹ The *Jiǎ Yǐ Jīng* was “the first medical text transmitted to the present containing historically datable contents that can be traced to the textus receptus of the *Sù Wèn*” (Unschuld, 2003, 22).

²⁰ Unschuld, 2003, 5.

²¹ Unschuld, 2003, 24.

²² Unschuld, 2003.

Shàngshàn of the seventh century which took the *Sù Wèn Xùn Jiě* as its master copy, is currently the oldest complete version of the *Sù Wèn* available in contemporary times^{23,24,25}.

In the eighth century the scholar Wáng Bīng 王冰 spent twelve years creating his own version of the *Sù Wèn*. He also took the *Sù Wèn Xùn Jiě* as his master copy, but after consulting dozens of medical and nonmedical texts he rearranged sections of the *Sù Wèn*, added some 30,000 characters (increasing the size of the text by fifty percent), and gave extensive commentary^{26,27}. This edition, though not surviving intact through to modern times, has acted as the authority on the *Sù Wèn* since the Song dynasty. This is due to the fact that during the Song dynasty a government committee was created to address the reportedly deplorable state of the *Sù Wèn*, including text and commentaries being mixed up, “meaning and structure confused”²⁸. This committee had access to the *Sù Wèn Xùn Jiě*, *Tài Sù*, and Wáng Bīng’s edition. The committee selected Wáng Bīng’s as their master copy²⁹. Though they include

²³ Unschuld, 2003, 31.

²⁴ The extant *Tài Sù*, in fact, only contains roughly 83%, 25 of 30, of the original *juàn* 卷 (Loewe, 202).

²⁵ As with discussion of the *Nèi Jīng* as “a book”, the suggestion of a clean, uncomplex, linear timeline beginning with the creation of a *Sù Wèn* followed by subsequent versions and editions ever diverging further and further from the “original” is somewhat misleading, as the earliest pre-Tang versions of the *Nèi Jīng* texts were likely all simply varying arrangements of texts of the same pool available to Later Han authors (Loewe, 201). This notwithstanding, the critical value of the *Tài Sù* to *Nèi Jīng* studies stands.

²⁶ Unschuld, 2003, 40.

²⁷ Interestingly, Wáng Bīng made no mention of the *Tài Sù*. It is unclear why. (Unschuld, 2003, 40).

²⁸ Unschuld, 2003, 61

²⁹ Though Unschuld suggests we “can only speculate” as to their motives, it was most likely because medical instruction had been based on the Wáng Bīng version since the Tang dynasty, infusing it with great authority (Unschuld, 2003, 59; Loewe, 204).

comments as to the contents of the *Xùn Jiě* and *Tài Sù*, they relied primarily upon Wáng Bīng’s version when creating the aforementioned *Zhòng Guǎng Bǔ Zhù Huáng Dì Nèi Jīng Sù Wèn*. Their intent was to create a single, authoritative *Sù Wèn*. And they succeeded, as it is and has ultimately been the *Zhòng Guǎng* that is accessed and referred to when the *Sù Wèn* has been discussed or quoted ever since (this being demonstrated again in the review of *Sù Wèn* texts, pre-modern and modern, for this current research).

Table 1 summarized textual transmission of the *Sù Wèn*.

Dynasty	Event	Text
Han dynasty ~200 BCE – 200 CE	Earliest mention of a <i>Huáng Dì Nèi Jīng</i> (now lost), first century BCE	<i>Qī Lǚè</i>
	Earliest surviving mention of a <i>Nèi Jīng</i> , first century CE	<i>Hàn Shū</i>
	Earliest mention of a <i>Sù Wèn</i>	<i>Shāng Hán Lùn</i>
3 rd century	Excerpts from the original <i>Sù Wèn</i> recorded in a separate text	<i>Jiǎ Yǐ Jīng</i>
6 th century	Oldest commented complete <i>Sù Wèn</i> , since lost	<i>Sù Wèn Xùn Jiě</i>
7 th century	Oldest commented <i>Sù Wèn</i> , pre-dating the authoritative version	<i>Tài Sù</i>
8 th century	Rearranged and amended version which would come to act as source of authoritative <i>Sù Wèn</i>	Wáng Bīng’s edition
11 th century	Creating of version which acts as authoritative version to modern times	<i>Zhòng Guǎng</i>

Table 1: Textual history of the *Sù Wèn*

This Study

This current research effects a philologically rigorous, text critical reading of sections from *Sù Wèn*, chapter five, *Yīn yáng yìng xiàng dà lùn* 陰陽應象大論. The *Tài Sù* is compared, character by character, against the *Zhòng Guǎng*, the authoritative Song dynasty edition of the *Sù Wèn*. Both structure and content are analyzed in seeking meaningful variations between the two. Historical phonology is also employed for analysis comparing the modern, Middle Chinese (7th – 13th century), and Old Chinese (Han dynasty and earlier) pronunciations of key words. Additionally, important *Sù Wèn* texts from the Song to modern times have been reviewed for discussion of variations between the *Tài Sù* and *Zhòng Guǎng*. The purposes are, first, to gain a clearer picture of the *Sù Wèn* prior to the changes made by Wáng Bīng in the 8th century and, second, to review the attention paid to these differences within major pre-modern Chinese, as well as English, studies and translations of the *Sù Wèn*.

This research builds primarily on the modern work of Paul Unschuld. Dr. Unschuld, a medical anthropologist, has been leading a team in the study and translation of the *Sù Wèn* since 1988. Over this time he and his team have produced a scholarly two-volume translation of the *Sù Wèn* with traditional commentaries, a translation of the *Líng Shū* with translation of traditional commentary, a comprehensive dictionary of the *Sù Wèn*, and a text discussing the history and contents of the *Sù Wèn*³⁰. Well over a decade before those he published a complete, scholarly translation, including traditional commentaries, of another major Han dynasty medical text, the *Nán Jīng* 難經, *Classic of Difficulties*^{31,32}.

³⁰ Unschuld, 2011, 2016; Tessenow and Unschuld, 2008; and Unschuld, 2003, respectively.

³¹ Unschuld, 2011, 10.

³² Both Unschuld and Sivin agree that no philologically rigorous, scholarly translations of the *Sù Wèn* existed prior to that generated by Unschuld and his team (Loewe, 207; Unschuld, 2011, 9).

Additionally, the works of Nathan Sivin, PhD and Sabine Wilms, PhD have been heavily relied upon. Dr. Sivin is a well-respected sinologist with extensive experience and publications in the field of Chinese medicine, including reviews of major works on the history of Chinese medicine and his own translation of texts on contemporary Chinese medicine³³. Dr. Wilms is a scholar with extensive, direct experience investigating and teaching Chinese medical classics to acupuncture students and Chinese medical professionals. Pre-modern Chinese sources, such as from the Ming and Qing dynasties, are emphasized over contemporary Chinese-language scholarship as the former are the largely the target of the latter.

This study is broken down into the following parts:

1) Initial Matters

2) “Comparison Analysis” of the *Sù Wèn* chapter five as appears in the *Zhòng Guǎng* compared to *Tài Sù* chapter three. This is further divided into four sections.

3) *Sù Wèn* Texts

4) Outcomes and Further Study

³³ Sivin, 1987, 1990, and 2014.

Methods

A Microsoft Excel spreadsheet was created within which sections of the *Zhòng Guǎng* and *Tài Sù* were compared. This basic comparison was then transferred to a Word document where analysis was conducted. The results of this work appears under the title *Comparison Analysis*. Paul Kroll's *A Student's Dictionary of Classical and Medieval Chinese*, course notes from lectures with Professor William G. Boltz at the University of Washington, the *Shuō Wén Jiě Zì* 说文解字 (2nd century), and the *Kāng Xī Zì Diǎn* 康熙字典 (18th century) served as the primary resources for investigating the meanings of specific words.

In addition, please note the following:

- Square brackets [] when used around English words indicate those words are added in the translation when either they are felt implied by the translator, such as Dr. Unschuld, or when needed as required by the norms of the English language. When such brackets occur around Chinese characters, they delineate those characters existing solely in the *Zhòng Guǎng*, not occurring in the *Tài Sù*.
- Characters placed between *asterisks* appear exclusively in the *Tài Sù*, not in the *Zhòng Guǎng*.

The pre-modern texts referenced are, themselves, unique scholarly texts worthy of focused research. I have not conducted such investigation. This current study is therefore limited for that lack of deep familiarity. I have merely isolated and reviewed the specific lines reviewed in this work.

2) Comparison Analysis

What follows is direct comparison and analysis between the *Zhòng Guǎng* and the *Tài Sù*. Each section begins with the standard, “authoritative” *Sù Wèn*, i.e., the *Zhòng Guǎng*. This is followed by enumerated differences between it and the *Tài Sù*. The *Tài Sù* version is then given followed, lastly, by comparative analysis.

Section I

Zhòng Guǎng:

黃帝(1)曰：陰陽者天地之道[也](2)，萬物之綱紀(3)，變化之父母(4)，生[殺](5)之本始(6)，神明之府也；治病(7)必求(8)於本。

1. *Tài Sù* adds *問於岐伯*.
2. *Tài Sù* omits this 也.
3. *Tài Sù* adds *也*.
4. *Tài Sù* adds *也*.
5. *Tài Sù* uses *煞* in place of 殺*.
6. *Tài Sù* adds *也*.
7. *Tài Sù* adds *者*.
8. *Tài Sù* adds *之*.

Tài Sù in full: 黃帝*問於岐伯*曰：陰陽者天地之道，萬物之綱紀*也*，變化之父母*也*，生*煞*之本始*也*，神明之府也；治病*者*必求*之*於本。

The *Tài Sù* makes explicit to whom, Qí Bó 岐伯, the Yellow Emperor's question is addressed. This detail is omitted in the *Zhòng Guǎng*. However, as it is common for Qí Bó to be the addressee of the Yellow Emperor's questions the omission of this detail here has no effect on or difference in meaning between texts. Note, however, there is a general tendency for the *Tài Sù* to give additional details for greater clarity in reading the text (see sections below).

The *Zhòng Guǎng* contains where the *Tài Sù* omits 也 in 陰陽者天地之道[也]. In the *Zhòng Guǎng*, 也 acts as a final grammatical particle indicating the noun phrase 陰陽 may be identified as the latter noun phrase 天地之道. That is, "Yin and yang may be identified as the way of heaven and earth". While the *Tài Sù* omits this particle, the sentence is to be read equivalently, the first noun phrase labeled as the second. Thus, there is no effect on or difference in meaning between texts on this specific line. However, it should be noted that this section should be read as a series of parallel lines with similar numbers of characters and syntactic structure:

黃帝曰陰陽者

天地之道也 - Four characters each line below

萬物之綱紀

變化之父母

生殺之本始

神明之府也

It is, thus, worth our attention to note where the presence or absence of 也, though perhaps not altering the technical reading of the immediate line within which it appears, may still be of interest in a

larger section of lines *as a whole*, as discussed below. For example, note that the *Tài Sù* adds 也 in the following lines:

萬物之綱紀

變化之父母

生殺之本始.

Comparing this section between the texts reveals the following³⁴:

Characters in common in black; solely in the <i>Tài Sù</i> placed between asterisks; solely in the <i>Zhòng Guǎng</i> in square brackets	<i>Zhòng Guǎng</i>	<i>Tài Sù</i>
黃帝曰陰陽者 天地之道[也] 萬物之綱紀*也* 變化之父母*也* 生殺之本始*也* 神明之府也	黃帝曰陰陽者 天地之道也 萬物之綱紀 變化之父母 生殺之本始 神明之府也 Four characters per line (following zhě)	黃帝曰陰陽者 天地之道 萬物之綱紀也 變化之父母也 生殺之本始也 神明之府也 Four <i>or six</i> characters per line

A graphical symmetry, same number of characters, is seen in the *Zhòng Guǎng* where the *Tài Sù* has grammatical particles denying this symmetry. The *Zhòng Guǎng* has 也 where the *Tài Sù* does not and is missing this graph where the *Tài Sù* contains it. And these differences result in the symmetry just mentioned. Ignoring the apparent inconsistent usage of 也 in the *Tài Sù* (particularly the absence of it following 道), it appears the difference in use of 也 in the *Zhòng Guǎng* is intended to create symmetry,

³⁴ The *Jiǎ Yì Jīng*, which contains quotes from the original Han dynasty *Sù Wèn* and predates the *Zhòng Guǎng*, *Wáng Bīng*, and the *Tài Sù*, does not contain this line.

as the additions and subtractions converge on this outcome. Such preference for symmetry was not evident in other sections investigated for this project.

Another potential reason for these differences is rhyming. Perhaps the differences between the *Zhòng Guǎng* and *Tài Sù* are due to underlying rhymes. To investigate this we could look into the pronunciation of the words written by the last two characters of each line, separated from the rest of their line below, in Middle Chinese (MC) and Old Chinese (OC), with the characters that serve as points of deviation between the two texts numbered and placed in bold^{35,36}:

Zhòng Guǎng

天地之	道 MC dāu ^B OC lû?	也 MC jia ^B OC lai? (1 - not present in the <i>Tài Sù</i>)
物之	綱 MC kân OC kân	紀 MC kjî ^B OC kə?
變化之	父 MC bju ^B OC ba?	母 MC mǎu ^B OC <*mô?
生殺之	本 MC pwən ^B OC pên?	始 MC ší ^B OC lhə?
神明之	府 MC pju ^B OC po?	也 MC jia ^B OC lai?

³⁵ The last *two* characters because 也 occurs frequently in these lines and as a purely grammatical character would not be included in a rhyming scheme.

³⁶ All Middle Chinese and Old Chinese below from Schuessler.

Tài Sù

天地	之 MC tsi OC tə	道 MC dāu ^B OC lû?
萬物之綱	紀 MC kjǝ ^B OC kə?	也 MC jia ^B OC lai? (2 - not present in <i>Zhòng Guǎng</i>)
變化之父	母 MC māu ^B OC <*mô?	也 MC jia ^B OC lai? (3 - not present in <i>Zhòng Guǎng</i>)
生殺之本	始 MC ší ^B OC lhə?	也 MC jia ^B OC lai? (4 - not present in <i>Zhòng Guǎng</i>)
神明之	府 MC pju ^B OC pə?	也 MC jia ^B OC lai?

In the first difference, labeled #1 above, the added graph 也 is a grammatical particle and, thus, would most likely not be taken into account in rhyming. Even if we were to analyze the sound characteristics of the word it writes (in Old Chinese, the language of the original Han dynasty *Sù Wèn*), it does not create an improved rhyming sequence. It shares a glottal stop ʔ with both the word that precedes it and with the word in the corresponding place in the following line, with which it would be expected to rhyme. Thus, there is no gain in ending consonant. Further, the vowel of 也, ai, does not make for a better rhyme with the word in the corresponding place in the subsequent line, 紀 OC kə?, than that which it precedes it, 道 OC lû?:

也 OC lai?

Graph it precedes: 道 OC lû?

Graph in subsequent line: 紀 OC kə?

This suggests the addition of 也 would not have been made for rhyming purposes, as its existence does not have that effect. Instead, as suggested earlier, it may have been added for graphical symmetry.

In the *Tài Sù* lines the differences, numbered #2, 3, and 4 above, are all the graph 也 not seen in the *Zhòng Guǎng*. Again, these would not be involved in a rhyming sequence. If we were to include them in a rhyme analysis four of the five lines would rhyme, because they are the same graph, 也:

道 OC lû?

也 OC lai? (2 - not present in *Zhòng Guǎng*)

也 OC lai? (3 - not present in *Zhòng Guǎng*)

也 OC lai? (4 - not present in *Zhòng Guǎng*)

也 OC lai?

For sake of comparison, there is potential rhyming in both texts ignoring the 也 which suggests the changes in graphs, restricted to addition or omission of 也, is not for rhyming purposes:

天地之 道 OC lû?

萬物之綱 紀 OC kə?

變化之父 母 OC <*mô?

生殺之本 始 OC lhə?

神明之 府 OC po?

In addition to the above, the *Tài Sù* has *shā* 煞 where the *Zhòng Guǎng* has *shā* 殺 in 生[殺]/
*煞*之本始. Professor Kroll states *shā* 煞, “terminate, conclude; kill”, is an alternate character for 殺 (A
Student’s Dictionary of Classical and Medieval Chinese, 398). The *Kāng Xī Zì Diǎn* 康熙字典 says of 煞:
“本亦作殺”, “originally also written as 殺”, and reports that the *Guǎng Yùn* 廣韻 says “俗殺字”, “it is
common to write the 殺 graph”. These characters, thus, constitute graphical variants; the character
varies, but the word does not.

Also in this section, the *Tài Sù* has *zhě* 者 and *zhī* 之 where the *Zhòng Guǎng* does not: 治病*者*
必求*之*於本. In the *Tài Sù* 者 is acting as a sentential topic marker for the verb phrase 治病 “treat
disease”: “When treating disease”. 之 is acting as the direct object pronoun of the verb 求 “to seek”,
“seek it”. In the *Zhòng Guǎng*, 治病必求於本, the portion preceding the omitted 者, 治病, is read as the
topic of the sentence: 治病 “[When] treating disease”. Further, the verb of which 之 is the direct object,
求, implies such an object: “Seek [it] in the source”. Therefore, those graphs present in the *Tài Sù* and
omitted in the *Zhòng Guǎng* do not lead to a change in the meaning of the two texts.

This difference could be ascribed to variation in writing styles, that of the *Tài Sù* reflecting more
emphasis on clarity by making it clear what the topic is, as well as explicitly stating a direct object. For
example, Sabine Wilms points out that there is a common understanding of this line as being “To treat
disease, seek the root” (2018, 37), and I can confirm this as widely held belief within the modern U.S.
acupuncture field. It could be argued that this incorrect reading is exactly what the author of the *Tài Sù*
was trying to avoid by explicitly stating the object of seeking, 之 “it”, which in this case refers to the
disease. This, as opposed to reading 求於本 in a haphazard manner, ignoring *yú* 於 or misreading its

establishing of a relationship, 於, between the seeking, 求, and foundations, 本, instead taking the foundations *as* what is sought³⁷.

Worth noting, the Han dynasty herbal classic, and thus medical contemporary to the original *Sù Wèn*, the *Shén Nóng Běn Cǎo Jīng* 神農本草經 *Shen Nong's Materia Medica Classic*, contains a parallel line in its opening passages, 凡欲治病先察其源 “Generally, [if one] desires to treat disease, first examine its source.” The topic is identical to the *Sù Wèn* line, 治病. The guidance, though with varying words, 察 instead of 求, and 源 instead of 本, seems to reiterate this passage.

³⁷ This reading of 治病必求於本 as “[When] treating disease, [one] must necessarily seek its foundations” is what appears in several of the *Sù Wèn* texts reviewed for Section 3, for example, Unschuld, 2011, “To treat diseases, one must search for the basis” (95); and from the *Huáng Dì Nèi Jīng Sù Wèn Jí Zhù* 黃帝內經素問集注 (Qing dynasty): “Therefore [it] says ‘[When] treating disease, [one] must necessarily seek its foundation.’” (Zhang Zhi-cong, 2014, 17).”

Section 2

Zhòng Guǎng:

故積陽[為]³⁸天. 積陰[為]地. 陰靜陽躁. 陽生陰長. 陽殺陰藏. 陽化氣陰成形. 寒極生熱. 熱極生寒. 寒氣生濁. 熱氣生清. 清氣在下則生飧[泄](1). 濁氣在上則生臌脹. 此陰陽(2)反[作] (3). 病之逆[從](4)也. 故清陽[為]天濁陰[為]地.

1. *Tài Sù* has *洩* in place of 泄.
2. *Tài Sù* has *之* after 陰陽.
3. *Tài Sù* has *祚* in place of 作.
4. *Tài Sù* has *順* in place of 從.

Tài Sù in full: 故積陽*為*天. 積陰*為*地. 陰靜陽躁. 陽生陰長. 陰煞陽藏. 陽化氣陰成形. 寒極生熱. 熱極生寒. 寒氣生濁. 熱氣生清. 清氣在下則生飧洩. 濁氣在上則生臌脹. 此陰陽*之*反*祚*. 病之逆*順*也. 故清陽*為*天濁陰*為*地.

In 陽殺陰藏 the *Zhòng Guǎng* has 陽 where the *Tài Sù* as 陰. This is the sole example in this project of contents that are polar opposites in meaning, one text giving the literal opposite of the other, here 陽 and 陰. Modern commentary on the *Tài Sù* sates the *Tài Sù* is in error here, citing the *Jiǎ Yǐ Jīng* as stating the same as the *Zhòng Guǎng*³⁹. Paul Unschuld reveals extensive discussion on this line, citing

³⁸ The *Zhòng Guǎng* 為 and *Tài Sù* 為 though varying in superficial appearance are merely typographical variants and thus not addressed in detail here.

³⁹ Yang, 2018, 24.

several sources as indicating these lines are examples of 互文 “reciprocal phrasing”, that the four activities , 生長殺藏, should “be associated with yin and yang alike” (2011, 96).

In 清氣在下則生殮泄 the *Zhòng Guǎng* has xiè 泄 where *Tài Sù* has xiè 洩. Paul Kroll gives slightly varying definitions for these words:

泄 “drain, spill out, leak away... divulge; unveil...” (506)

洩 “spill(age), leak, ooze... disperse, diverge... drained...” (506)

Thus the graphs differ, as do meanings if only slightly. However, their modern pronunciation is identical in all aspects, initial, vowels, ending, and tone, xiè. We, therefore, could investigate their pronunciations going back to the Han dynasty. Their respective Middle Chinese and Old Chinese are as follow:

	Modern	Middle Chinese	Old Chinese
泄	xiè	sjet ⁴⁰	*slat, *lats ⁴¹
洩	xiè	sjet ⁴²	*slat (for that word meaning “leak”) ⁴³

Based on the above, despite the varying graph it appears the word indicated is the same, from modern times back to the Han. Thus, these two should be understood as graphical variants, the same word, but different graph.

⁴⁰ Kroll, 506.

⁴¹ Schuessler, 234.

⁴² Kroll, 506.

⁴³ Schuessler, 235.

In 此陰陽反作 the *Tài Sù* has 之 following 陰陽 where the *Zhòng Guǎng* doesn't, and the latter has 作 where the *Tài Sù* has 祚. Paul Kroll defines *zuò* 祚 as “celestial favor... benediction... continuous lineage...” (636). Both the *Kāng Xī Zì Diǎn* 康熙字典 and the *Shuō Wén Jiě Zì* 说文解字 give a synonymous definition of 福. Modern commentary on the *Tài Sù* believes the *Tài Sù* is in error here, giving definitions of 祚 consistent with Kroll and others above⁴⁴. The 11th century editors of the *Zhòng Guǎng* cite Wáng Bīng as saying:

“反,謂反復. 作,謂作務. 反復作務,則病如是.” *Fǎn* means ‘reverse and go back’. *Zuò* means ‘start and pursue’. [When one] reverts and goes back and starts pursuing, then diseases like these [arise]”⁴⁵.

The *Tài Sù* has *祚* in place of 作. The modern pronunciation of the word written by 作 is “*zuò*”, the same as that of *祚*. And they share the same phonetic component *zhà* 乍. Additionally, their Middle Chinese and Old Chinese pronunciations are quite similar, especially the Old Chinese:

	Modern	Middle Chinese	Old Chinese
作	<i>zuò</i>	tsak ⁴⁶	*tsâk ⁴⁷
祚	<i>zuò</i>	dzuH ⁴⁸	*dzâkh ⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Yang, 2018, 24.

⁴⁵ Lin, Yi, 39.

⁴⁶ Kroll, 636.

⁴⁷ Schuessler, 72

⁴⁸ Kroll, 636

⁴⁹ Schuessler, 72

This would suggest these are lexical variants, different words with different meanings, but with the same pronunciation.

Both words are, strictly speaking, reasonable within this specific line:

此陰陽[之]反作/祚 – “These are the contrary actions/blessings of yin and yang.”

However, 作 “actions” is consistent with Wáng Bīng’s comments and simply makes more sense in the larger context including the relevant preceding lines:

清氣在下則生飧洩。濁氣在上則生臌脹 – “[When] clear qi is in the lower [part of the body] then [it] engenders undigested food diarrhea⁵⁰. [When] turbid qi is in the upper [parts of the body] then [it] engenders bloating and distension⁵¹.”

Events resulting in diarrhea, bloating, and distension seem better reflective of “actions”, 作, than “blessings”, 祚. This in concert with the fact that the *Jiǎ Yǐ Jīng* has 作, same as the *Zhòng Guǎng*, strongly compels me to concur with modern commentary on the *Tài Sù*, that it is in error here⁵².

The only remaining question would be whether the difference in graphs is intentional. That is, perhaps the *Tài Sù* is not in error but is intentionally avoiding the quite common 作 and using 祚 as a graphical variant. If so, the intended meaning is likely being conveyed by the *shì* 示 semantic classifier

⁵⁰ *Sūn* 飧 – dinner; “liquify food with water” (Kroll, 436). *Xiè* 洩 – “spill, leak” (Kroll, 506); “discharge” (PD). 飧洩 “outflow of [undigested] food” (Unschuld, 96).

⁵¹ 臌 – *Shuōwén* “起” to stand up... rise...protrude” (Kroll, 357); *Guǎngyǔn* “肉脹起也” flesh bloated and distended. 脹 – “...distension...” (Kroll, 593). 臌脹 – “bloating” Unschuld, 97.

⁵² JYJ, 631.

found in 祚. *Shì* has the meaning of to show, reveal, make manifest. This is in contrast to the 人, person, humankind, semantic classifier found in 作:

Tài Sù - to show, reveal, make manifest

Zhòng Guǎng - person, humankind

The variation, then, the intended variant meaning of the *Tài Sù* could be summarized as actions manifest or revealed, 示, as opposed to effected by people, 人. This would shift the focus away from humankind and onto perhaps a spontaneous, non-human-initiated event, or where an agent is needed to nature, itself. Nature, as Classical Chinese term, is best embodied by the word *tiān* 天, translated by default as “heaven”, but in fact carrying the meaning typically intended by the English “nature”, e.g., “climate, weather, seasons... natural... the natural world”⁵³. Thus, we have a key difference of human invoked actions versus those which are natural or nature-invoked. And this is in fact a specific use of *tiān* classically, “natural, not initiated by or deriving from humans”⁵⁴.

Keeping this mind, we can return to the line:

清氣在下則生飧洩。濁氣在上則生臌脹。此陰陽之反祚。

And render it thusly:

“[When] clear qi is in the lower [part of the body] then [it] engenders undigested food diarrhea. [When] turbid qi is in the upper [parts of the body] then [it] engenders bloating and distension. These are the contrary actions/natural manifestations of yin and yang.”

⁵³ Kroll, 450.

⁵⁴ Kroll, 450.

Yin and yang are in fact spontaneous actions of nature not those created by humans. Thus, understanding 祚 as a graphical variant of 作 meaning “action”, but specifically those arising from the natural movements of yin and yang is justified. This argument is solidified when we recall the title of this chapter *Yīn yáng yīng xiàng dà lùn* 陰陽應象大論, the resonant, 應, phenomena, 象, of yin and yang. The *Tài Sù* could be understood to be referring very directly to the title by replacing humankind with the spontaneous movements of yin and yang in replacing 人 with 示. The ultimate question remains of whether the *Tài Sù* did so in an attempt to convey the *Sù Wèn*. This would need to be reconciled with the fact that the *Jiǎ Yǐ Jīng* has 作, not 祚.

The 11th century editors of the *Zhòng Guǎng* report the *Tài Sù* as having “之反祚” in place of 反作 adding 之, which is consistent with my source *Tài Sù*⁵⁵. As seen before, this 之 makes the intent of the author more clear.

Unschuld reports Zhang Yizhi, et al. as stating: “反 is identical with 翻.” 翻 *fān* is birds flapping or fluttering their wings, also to “turn over, invert”⁵⁶. These graphs, then, write different but related words: *fǎn* meaning turn over/upward; reverse, return; counter or contrary to; *fān* refers, directly or metaphorically, to the actions of a bird’s wings, 羽 羽, fluttering or turning over in the air so as to cause propulsion for the bird. To generate lift, a bird must employ her wings in one direction to cause lift. She subsequently needs to “turn” them “over” and return them to their original position in order to flap again generating more thrust. The wings in their flapping, thus, must turn over, go against their previous movement, and return to a previous position. *Fǎn* speaks directly to that returning, reverting action, while *fān* gives one an image of this action in nature. The meanings, however, are essentially the same.

⁵⁵ Lin, 39.

⁵⁶ Kroll, 105.

He further relays that 作 means 行, ‘to pass,’ ‘to move.’ 陰陽反作 is: the movement of yin [qi] and yang [qi] has lost its regularity.” (2011, 97).

In 病之逆*從*也 the *Zhòng Guǎng* has 從 where the *Tài Sù* has 順. These appear to be lexical variants, *cóng* 從 “to follow” and *shùn* 順 “to go along with”. Although, their modern, Middle Chinese, and Old Chinese pronunciations have some superficial similarities, there is not so much that they could be construed as the same word. This is especially so as we look all the way back to Old Chinese:

	Modern	Middle Chinese	Old Chinese
從	<i>cóng</i>	dzjowng ⁵⁷	*dzoŋ ⁵⁸
順	<i>shùn</i>	zywinH ⁵⁹	*m-luns ⁶⁰

There is also similarity in meaning, but again not so much as to be considered wholly interchangeable⁶¹. This does, however, reveal a unique type of difference between the two texts, one where the basic meaning is consistent, but the explicit statement is different. This would seem to indicate a higher value placed on conveyed meaning than on the specific graphs chosen⁶². This set of values could very well likely, at some places, result in a critical if nuanced difference in meaning. These differences could result in significant variation in meanings over time. This is crucial considering we are

⁵⁷ Kroll, 66.

⁵⁸ Schuessler, 168.

⁵⁹ Kroll, 426.

⁶⁰ Schuessler, 338

⁶¹ This semantic similarity is worthy of more focused research such as investigation into their use in other Han and pre-Han works. Such research is deemed outside this current project.

⁶² This is common in Han and pre-Han texts as many of these works from this time period were recordings of oral traditions. Varying graphs could be used by different scribes each recording the same spoken word.

looking at the transmission of a fundamental text - literally establishing an all-encompassing worldview, as well as a myriad of specific theories - of a technical, specialized field, medicine, that was intended to and did in fact act as an authority, arguably an exclusive authority for innumerable physicians, since its creation. For instance, if each subsequent version of the *Sù Wèn* was effectively 95% similar in meaning - nearly identical from a purely practical perspective - to the one preceding it, that nominal variation here being represented by *cóng* versus *shun*, then, over centuries the accretion of each 5% could reasonably be expected to amount to variations amounting to something like a fifty-fifty chance of a contemporary version being the same as a centuries older version.

Notably, the *Jiǎ Yǐ Jīng* from the third century has 順 same as the *Tài Sù*, as does the *Sù Wèn Wú Zhù* from the Ming dynasty which also repeats 順 in the commentary: “‘逆順’, 不順也”^{63,64}.

Contemporary commentary states the source text has 從, but that it's a taboo word 避諱字, so the text changes the graph⁶⁵. The fact that the *Jiǎ Yǐ Jīng* has 順 suggests, on its own, that this term is more likely the one that that appeared in the original Han dynasty *Sù Wèn*, versus 從, as the *Jiǎ Yǐ Jīng* transmits quotes from the Han *Sù Wèn* and is, thus, our best access to that original *Sù Wèn*. There is of course issues with this argument as the received *Jiǎ Yǐ Jīng* is a Song creation, much like the received *Sù Wèn* is the *Zhòng Guǎng*. However, agreement between the *Jiǎ Yǐ Jīng* and *Tài Sù*, both predating the *Zhòng Guǎng*, tilts the argument even more heavily in favor of 順 being the original Han term⁶⁶.

⁶³ *Zhēn Jǔ Jiǎ Yǐ Jīng Jiào Shì*, 631.

⁶⁴ Wu, 28.

⁶⁵ Wu, 28.

⁶⁶ One could investigate the occurrence of 逆 with 順 and 從 in search of an established pairing, classically, as these are on their face opposites.

The possessive marker *zhī* is implied in the *Zhòng Guǎng*, explicitly stated in the *Tài Sù*.

This use of an additional graph to better illuminate the meaning in the *Tài Sù* has also been seen in previous sections.

Section 3

Zhòng Guǎng:

地氣上[為]雲天氣下[為]雨. 雨出地氣雲出天氣(1). 清陽出上竅濁陰出下竅. 清陽發腠理. 濁陰走五藏.
清陽實四支. 濁陰[歸](2)六府

1. *Tài Sù* has 雨出地氣出天.
2. *Tài Sù* has *實* in place of 歸.

Tài Sù in full: 地氣上*為*雲天氣下*為*雨. *雨出地氣出天*. 清陽出上竅濁陰出下竅. 清陽發腠理. 濁陰走五藏. 清陽實四支. 濁陰*實*六府.

In 雨出地氣雲出天氣 (*Zhòng Guǎng*) versus 雨出地氣出天 (*Tài Sù*), there are two ways of comparing these. An attempt could be made to retain an exact, character-for-character match between the two. This is possible up through the fourth character:

Zhòng Guǎng 雨 出 地 氣

Tài Sù 雨 出 地 氣

This however leads to significant problems, as it leaves the second half the *Tài Sù* line as simply 出天.

Instead, the second method of comparison divides each into parallel lines, the *Zhòng Guǎng* of four characters, *Tài Sù* three:

Zhòng Guǎng 雨出地氣 雲出天氣 “Rain comes out the qi of earth; clouds come out of the
qi of heaven.”

Tài Sù 雨出地 氣出天 “Rain comes of earth; Qi comes out of heaven.”

The paired words being (*Zhòng Guǎng/Tài Sù*): 雨/雨, 地/地, 雲/氣, 天/天

This reading is successful in revealing pairs within each line. However, it is problematic in establishing semantic equivalence between the two lines. The first half of each is tenable. The *Zhòng Guǎng*'s 雨出地氣 could be read as equivalent to *Tài Sù*'s 雨出地, the “qi” being implied in the latter, not specifically required. This is possible when we understand *qi* to mean something to the effect of “force” or “energy”⁶⁷.

雨出地氣 “Rain comes out of the qi of earth.”

雨出地 “Rain comes out of [the qi of] earth.”

The second half each poses a greater hurdle. Here, a correspondence between 雲 and 氣 arises (as well as an omission of 氣 in the *Tài Sù*, addressed next):

Zhòng Guǎng 雲出天氣 “Clouds come out of the qi of heaven.”

Tài Sù 氣出天 “Qi comes out of heaven.”

There is a meaning of *qi* that indicates fumes or vapor which clouds are reasonably similar to. However, the former seems to be more non-specific. Where “clouds” refers unequivocally to the floating masses of water vapor in the sky, “qi” has been used to refer to a wide-ranging array of related meanings. In this case, then it would seem the *Tài Sù* has the more opaque writing than the *Zhòng Guǎng*. To be sure, these are different words with different meanings, though related. This similar is to the 從/順 comparison., though with far greater variance in meaning.

⁶⁷ Kroll, 358.

One could investigate the pair found within the *Zhòng Guǎng*, 雨 and 雲, in search of an established classical pairing, such as that which exists between 陰 “feminine” and 陽 “masculine”, 濁 “turbid” and 清 “clear”, and 地 “earth” and 天 “heaven”. However, while Paul Kroll reports each of the three preceding as being directly related, “opposites” (陰 and 陽, 554), terms to be compared, 濁 “cf. 清” (625), and for 地 “earth, as paired with ‘heaven’ (*tiān* 天)” (83), 雨 and 氣 have no such tight relation despite their obvious association as rain 雨 and clouds 雲. Direct investigation of classical texts would be required to address this question further.

Lastly, 氣 is seen at the end of each parallel line in the *Zhòng Guǎng*, but absent in the *Tài Sù*.

Zhòng Guǎng 雨出地氣 雲出天氣

Tài Sù 雨出地 氣出天

These 氣 can be seen as part of modifier-head pairs: 地氣 and 天氣.

The *Tài Sù* has 實 in place of 歸 in 濁陰歸六府. Both meaning and pronunciation are different indicating these are lexical variants:

	Modern	Middle Chinese	Old Chinese
實 “replete”	<i>shí</i>	zyit ⁶⁸	*m-lit ⁶⁹
歸 “return”	<i>guī</i>	kjw+j ⁷⁰	*kwəi ⁷¹

⁶⁸ Kroll, 412.

⁶⁹ Schuessler, 300.

⁷⁰ Kroll, 146.

⁷¹ Schuessler, 291

This, then, leads us to the question of which is the better, closer reflection of the Han dynasty *Sù Wèn*⁷². The greater context includes the following:

清陽發腠理. 濁陰走五藏. 清陽實四支. 濁陰歸六府.

“Clear yang effuses from the [flesh] lines and patterns. Turbid yin moves to the five viscera. Clear yang replenishes the four limbs. Turbid yin returns to the six palaces.”

As this contextual line uses 實: 清陽實四支, the same as in the disputed line, it could be argued the *Tài Sù* version of this line is closer to the original and that appearing in the *Zhòng Guǎng* is an alteration. This is based on the prevalence of parallel structure in Classical Chinese. The placement of graphs within the overall structure of a given line, as well as that of larger grouping of lines, frequently reflects a pairing of either graphs, words, meaning, or combination thereof. For instance, a given line will have the same syntax and contain paired opposites in corresponding positions. Or, as has been seen above, lines may contain the same number of characters. For instance, from the *Shāng Hán Lùn* 傷寒論, “Differentiating Pulse Patterns” 辨脈法:

脈陽盛則促陰盛則結此皆病脈 can be broken down into

脈	- Topic
陽盛則促	- Statement One
陰盛則結	- Statement Two
此皆病脈	- Conclusion

⁷² The *Jiǎ Yǐ Jīng*, here, is consistent with the *Zhòng Guǎng*, having 歸 not 實 (631).

Here, in Statements One and Two we see 陽 and 陰 in corresponding places within the repeated syntactic structure X 盛則 Y, “If X is exuberant, then Y”. 陽 and 陰 stand as opposites here. We also see repetition in the number of graphs per line, four, following the introductory 脈.

[Regarding] pulses, if the **yang** [positions] are exuberant, then [this indicates an] urgent [-type condition in the patient]. If the **yin** [positions] are exuberant, then [this indicates a] bind [-type condition in the patient]. All of these pulse types are indicative of illness.

Often this pattern is useful in interpreting the line. For instance, again from the *Shāng Hán Lùn* we see:

太陽病或已發熱或未發熱... →

- a) 太陽病
- b) 或已發熱
- c) 或未發熱...

Lines B and C are parallel in structure, repeating the number of graphs, syntactic structure, and even contents save the second graph of each line, 已 and 未. The fact that variation occurs only in that second graph strongly suggests those two graphs are closely related, typically contrastive. Here, they are “already” and “not yet”:

“[In] Greater Yang disease, whether there has **already** been effusion of heat or [there has] **not yet** been effusion of heat...”

In the subject of the study here we have the following lines in parallel:

- a) 清陽實四支
- b) 濁陰歸六府

Every graph corresponds with that in its paired line, often indicating opposites, but not always:

Line A	Line B	
清	濁	Opposites, 清 “clear” and 濁 “turbid”
陽	陰	Opposites, 陽 <i>yīn</i> and 陰 <i>yáng</i>
實	歸	Varying graph, in column "B" <i>Tài Sù</i> has 實, <i>Zhòng Guǎng</i> 歸
四	六	Both numbers
支	府	Opposites, outer and inner aspect of the body

The preponderance of parallel structure in Classical Chinese, well as the manifest parallels in this specific line, “clear” and “turbid”, *yīn* and *yáng*, suggests there very well could be some direct relation between the third set of graphs, 實 and 歸. When an older text, such as the *Tài Sù*, has the *same* graph, 實 repeated, and a more recent version has a graph with no clear relation, 實 “replete” has no relation to 歸 “to return” (with one exception, see below), the weight of evidence leans towards the older text⁷³.

Of course, when comparing a selection from two versions of text to determine which preceded the other and one is parallel in nature while the other not, the latter would seem to be earlier. This, due to the fact that parallelism could be seen as something reasonably imposed by an editor as opposed to actively being removed. That is, the one containing parallel lines is more likely to have been edited, while the one without is likely closer to original. This would argue against the *Tài Sù* as being closer to the Han specifically *because* of its demonstrating parallelism, when compared to the *Zhòng Guǎng* which does not.

Of interest, there is one way to read 實 and 歸 as, in fact, being related, and thus giving some reason for the use of 歸 in place of 實 in the Song version of the *Sù Wèn*. Paul Kroll’s dictionary reports a

⁷³ The same line of reasoning serves to refute this conclusion in that the *Jiǎ Yǐ Jīng* is consistent with the *Zhòng Guǎng* on this issue not the *Tài Sù*.

“resuming pronoun” usage. Here 實 acts as a pronoun placed between the subject of the sentence and the verb or verb phrase. In this usage, it is a pronoun referring back to the subject. This act of referring to the subject after which it occurs is in fact a guide for the reader’s mind to return to the subject just mentioned. For example, from Kroll: 此二人者實弑寡君, These two people, they were the ones who assassinated our lord (412). Here, “they” returns the reader’s attention to the aforementioned subject, “these two people”.

Granted, this is not 實 as a verb “to return”, but a pronoun guiding the reader to effect a return in analysis in order to comprehend the sentence. With this understanding, it is theoretically possible to read both 實 and 歸 similarly in 清陽實四支濁陰歸六府. This means understanding the first sentence in an alternate manner:

清陽 – Subject, “The clear yang”

實 – Resuming pronoun guiding the reader back to the subject

四支 – Verb phrase, “to make the limbs four”

“The clear yang, this is what makes the limbs four.”

The two paired sentences 清陽實四支濁陰歸六府, then:

“The clear yang, this is what makes the limbs four. The turbid yin returns to the six bowels.”

Although this reading is technically defensible, the attempt at parallelism, 實 and 歸 both meaning something like “return”, is lost. Both 實 and 歸, as well as 四 and 六 are functioning differently. The argument, then, that this constitutes some degree of reasoning for the replacing of 實 with 歸 is untenable.

Further, the portions of the lines following the disputed third graph position, also seem to support the argument that the *Tài Sù* has the more likely original Han graph. Both lines begin with parallel nouns, “clear yang” and “turbid yin”, and both lines end with body parts which themselves correspond in nature with the initial nouns:

- Clear yang corresponds with 支 “limbs”, being the outer-most aspects of the body, thus the most yang;
- Turbid yin corresponds with 府 “palaces”, organs located on the inside, yin aspect, and arguably the most opposite of the corresponding parts, limbs, of the body⁷⁴.

Wáng Bīng appears to have similar thinking, “The four limbs move on the *outside*. Hence clear yang fills them. The six palaces transform *inside*. Hence the turbid yin turns there”⁷⁵.

A similar assessing through parallel structure can be extended to include the previous two lines as well:

- A) 清陽發腠理
- B) 濁陰走五藏
- C) 清陽實四支

⁷⁴ One could argue that a more likely paired opposite to 府 would be 藏, the yang organs and yin organs respectively. And I would agree, should the realm of discussion be organs. However, the current realm is the body as a whole. Thus, yang limbs and yin organs is a perfectly reasonable pairing. Related, one could argue that 府 is specifically an unlikely pairing when the corresponding opposite is yang, such as limbs. This, because 府 is in fact the yang organs, thus not an opposite-pair with yang limbs. Again, however, in this specific context, i.e., the body as a whole, the yang-limbs, yin-organs holds.

⁷⁵ Emphasis added, Unschuld, 2011, 98.

D) 濁陰歸六府

As demonstrated in the table below, this seems an appropriate context for analysis for the following reasons. C and D, as a set, begin with the same yang-yin pairing, 清陽-濁陰, as A and B as a set. This suggests all four lines should be read as a contextual whole. There is further parallel in each of the two sets, ending in paired opposites:

A	B		C	D	
清	濁	Yang-yin pairing, clear-turbid	清	濁	Repeating the same yang-yin pair, arguing this line is in parallel with the preceding
陽	陰		陽	陰	
發	走	Paired through similarity: movement	實	歸	Varying terms
腠	五	Yang-yin pair, skin-organs	四	六	Repeating of yang-yin pairing, limbs-organs
理	藏		支	府	

Notably, the use of 府, technically the yang organs, being used to represent the yin half of a pair is justified as its yin pair, 藏 yin organs, is also used as a yin pair in the first set of lines. That is, in each of the two sets, internal organs are used in the yin half of a yin-yang pair.

Lastly, when looking at this larger context of four lines it is possible to look for a rhyming pattern based on Old Chinese⁷⁶. We would look at the same four-character group, 發走實歸:

		Old Chinese
A	發	*pat
B	走	*tsô?
C	實	*zyit
D	歸	* kjw+j

⁷⁶ As with many texts of this era, much of the *Sù Wèn* is a recording of oral traditions. Many sections originally rhymed (Unschuld, 2011, 22). Thus, using rhyme as a means of analysis, assessing the presence or absence of rhyming when it is reasonably expected, is a legitimate method for effecting a critical reading of texts.

Though A and C have some aspects of rhyme, both ending “*-t”, there is not sufficient evidence to claim actual rhyming. Similarly, B and C do not appear to rhyme. Repeating 實 in the D position only mildly improves the rhyme, but is a better fit than 歸.

Section 4

Zhòng Guǎng:

水為陰火[為]陽. 陽為氣陰[為]味. 味歸形形歸氣. 氣歸精[精歸化](1). 精食氣形食味. [化生精氣生形](2). 味傷形氣傷精. 精化[為]氣氣傷於味(3). [陰]味出下竅[陽]氣出上竅(4). 味厚[者][為]陰薄[為]陰之陽(5). 氣厚[者][為]陽薄[為]陽之陰(6). 味厚則[泄]薄則通(7). 氣薄則[發][泄]厚則發[熱](10).

1. *Tài Sù* omits 精歸化.
2. *Tài Sù* omits this line 化生精氣生形.
3. *Tài Sù* has *於* where the *Zhòng Guǎng* has 為.
4. *Zhòng Guǎng* has 陰 and 陽 where the *Tài Sù* omits them.
5. *Zhòng Guǎng* has 者 where the *Tài Sù* omits it.
6. *Zhòng Guǎng* has 者 where the *Tài Sù* omits it.
7. The *Tài Sù* has *洩* in place of 泄.
8. The *Tài Sù* has *洩* in place of 泄. *Tài Sù* omits the first 發. *Zhòng Guǎng* has 熱 where the *Tài Sù* omits this.

Tài Sù in full: 水為陰火*為*陽. 陽為氣陰*為*味. 味歸形形歸氣. 氣歸精. 精食氣形食味. 味傷形氣傷精. 精化*為*氣氣傷於味. 味出下竅氣出上竅. 味厚*為*陰薄*為*陰之陽. 氣厚*為*陽薄*為*陽之陰. 味厚則*洩*薄則通. 氣薄則*洩*厚則發.

In 氣歸精[精歸化], the greater context in both reads 味歸形形歸氣, “Flavor returns to form; form returns to qi.”

The omitted section, 精歸化 “Essence returns to transformation”, appears to be commentary elevated to main text. Though it continues the repetitive pattern starting with 精 (below, characters indicated by ~), its final graph 化 “transformation” is written in parallel with “form” 形, qì 氣, and “essence” 精. This is a deviation from an apparent pattern, physical nouns to “transformation”:

味歸形	形歸氣	氣歸精	[精歸化]	
味	~形	~氣	~精	
歸	歸	歸	歸	
~形	~氣	~精	化	“Form”, “Qi”, “Essence”, “Transformation”

Further, 精歸化 “Essence returns to transformation”, serves the primary function of *explaining* the text, coming across as an opinion attempting to explicate envisioned meaning, as opposed to asserting primary statements. Lastly, the *Tài Sù* omits a subsequent line which expounds upon 化, the very character that is out of place in this line: 化生精氣生形, “Transformation engenders essence; essence engenders form.” Thus, references to 化 seem out of place, easily removable without altering the basic meaning, and are absent in the older version of the text, the *Tài Sù*.

In 精化為/*於*氣氣傷於味, The most straightforward explanation here is that the *Zhòng Guǎng*'s 為 erroneously replaces the *Tài Sù* 於. The reasoning is this line can be broken down into two, four-character lines 精化為氣 and 氣傷於味, and the latter has 於 in parallel position to 為:

精	氣	
化	傷	
為/*於*	於	Parallel position, supporting *於* as original over 為
氣	味	

Further, semantically, the line with *於* is the more probable use of the verb “to transform”:

Zhòng Guǎng – 精化為氣 “Essence transformation constitutes qi.”

Tài Sù – 精化*於*氣 “Essence transforms into qi.”

In [陰]味出下竅[陽]氣出上竅, the 陰 and 陽 seem, again, to be examples of elevated commentary. There is no inherent need for either here, as 味 has already been associated with 陰, 氣 with 陽, mere sentences earlier in this section: 陽為氣陰為味. These are, thus, redundant and essentially explanative of primary text.

The *Tài Sù*, atypically for this study, omits 者 in 味厚[者][為]陰; 薄為陰之陽. 氣厚[者][為]陽; 薄為陽之陰. This section breaks down as follows:

味	Topic #1
厚[者]為陰	Statement A
薄[為]陰之陽	Statement B
氣	Topic #2
厚[者]為陽	Statement C (mimicking the above Statement A)
薄[為]陽之陰	Statement D (mimicking the above Statement B)

“Flavor” 味 and *Qì* 氣 (Topic #1 and #2) are paired, as are the opposites “thick” 厚 and “thin” 薄 (Statements A-D). The Statements following the Topics “Flavor” and *Qì* are exactly parallel; the Statement set C and D follow the same pattern as the set A and B. However, those following “thick” and “thin” are not; B is not of the same structure as A, nor D of C. Both sets of Statements are nuclear sentences with the verb 為 “to constitute”. However, the first of each set, A and C, contain 者 in the

Zhòng Guǎng, and not in the *Tài Sù*. Consistent with earlier sections, the *Tài Sù* seems to be more clear to read. Though in previous sections this was accomplished by adding 者; here, by eliminating it.

者 nominalizes “thick” in both A and C:

A – 厚[者][為]陰 “...that which is thick constitutes yin...”

C – 厚[者][為]陽 “...that which is thick constitutes yang...”

The follow-up lines to each repeat the general structure, but without 者:

B – 薄[為]陰之陽 “... thinness constitutes the yang within yin...”

D – 薄[為]陽之陰 “... thinness constitutes the yin within yang”

That is, of the thick/thin pairing only thick is nominalized with 者. This jars against the expectation of parallelism. It suggests that perhaps “Flavor” and *Qì* should be paired with “thick” as the respective topics:

味厚[者] Topic #1

氣厚[者] Topic #2

However, the overall context demands this not be the case. Even were one to read it this way, “Flavor” and *Qì* would be implied (indicated below with {}) in the following lines referring to thinness:

{味}薄[為]陰之陽 (Statement B)

{味}薄[為]陽之陰 (Statement D)

That is, there truly is only one way of reading these lines, by setting off “Flavor” and *Qì* as topics with parallel, paired statements following. “Flavor” and *Qì* are clearly the main pair followed by

contrasting pairs thick and thin. The structure most reasonably, then, is as first laid out, with the 者 nominalizing one but not the other of the thick-pair. This, then, continues the trend of the *Tài Sù* being more clear and exact than the *Zhòng Guǎng*, be it through addition or omission of characters.

In 氣薄則[發]泄/洩; 厚則發[熱], the *Tài Sù* omits the verb “to effuse” 發. This verb is effectively redundant, as the semantically similar 泄/洩 are both verbs indicating a movement outward from the body, similar to effusion. In the latter half, the *Tài Sù* lacks a direct object for “effuse”. Read as a whole, the *Tài Sù* pairs thin-thick with drain-effuse:

氣薄則洩厚則發 “[Regarding] Qi, [if] thin, then [it] drains; [if] thick, then [it] effuses”.

This is satisfying semantically and structurally.

The *Zhòng Guǎng* read as a whole, 氣薄則[發]泄厚則發[熱], is similarly structurally sound, but suffers semantically compared to the *Tài Sù*. With the use of 發 in both halves, it loses the contrast seen in the *Tài Sù* between 洩 and 發. This would, of course, be immaterial if it were not to arouse the question of why the slight changes when clarity is lost?

3) Sù Wèn Texts

As part of this research, I investigated a selection of major *Sù Wèn* texts written from just after the Han through modern times. I looked to see if these works were a closer reflection of the *Sù Wèn* portrayed in the *Zhòng Guǎng* or the *Tài Sù*. I also wondered how widely differences between the *Zhòng Guǎng* and *Tài Sù* were discussed in this selection of *Sù Wèn* texts. That is, did these major texts follow the *Zhòng Guǎng* or the *Tài Sù*, and did they discuss these differences? In nearly all cases, these books mirrored the contents of the *Zhòng Guǎng*. Additionally, it was rare for any of them to discuss any differences between the *Zhòng Guǎng* and the *Tài Sù*. This affirms the predominate theories that, one, the *Zhòng Guǎng* has acted as the default version of the *Sù Wèn* since its writing and, two, differences between it and earlier versions are rarely discussed. This current research is limited to the portions of chapter five of the *Sù Wèn* reviewed and the selection of works listed below.

Table of *Sù Wèn* Texts Reviewed:

Date of Authorship	<i>Sù Wèn</i> texts	Author
3 rd century CE	<i>Zhēn Jiǔ Jiǎ Yǐ Jīng</i> 針灸甲乙經 <i>Systematic Classic of Acupuncture and Moxibustion</i> – written soon after and quoting directly from the Han <i>Sù Wèn</i> and, thus, those quotes constituting the oldest extant <i>Sù Wèn</i> material. Notably, as compared to other <i>Sù Wèn</i> studies texts such as listed below, Huángfǔ Mì only selected lines from the <i>Sù Wèn</i> to incorporate into his work; he did not add any new material ⁷⁷ .	Huángfǔ Mì 皇甫謐
Ming dynasty (14 th -17 th century)	<i>Lèi Jīng</i> 類經 <i>Classic of Categories</i> – widely respected classic of <i>Sù Wèn</i> studies, incorporating “what is in many respects	Zhāng Jǐngyuè 張景岳

⁷⁷ Unschuld, 2003, 23. Compare this specifically to Wáng Bīng's version, which would prove to be the template for twelve hundred years after its writing, wherein he added thirty thousand characters.

	the best-informed and most useful commentary on both [the <i>Sù Wèn</i> and <i>Líng Shū</i>] ⁷⁸ .	
	<i>Huáng Dì Nèi Jīng Sù Wèn Wú Zhù</i> 黃帝內經素問吳注, <i>Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic, Basic Questions, Wu's Commentary</i> – “exceptionally clear in its explanations, and grounded in deep experience of practice” ⁷⁹ .	Wú Kūn 吳崑
Qing dynasty (17 th – 20 th century)	<i>Sù Wèn Zhí Jiě</i> 素問直解 <i>Basic Questions with Straightforward Explanations</i> – “valued primarily as a clear, understandable digest of earlier annotation” ⁸⁰ .	Gāo Shìzōng 高士宗
	<i>Huáng Dì Nèi Jīng Sù Wèn Jí Zhù</i> 黃帝內經素問集注 <i>Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic, Basic Questions, Collected Commentaries</i> – “the first complete edition of the <i>Sù Wèn</i> with consecutive comments not only by Zhang Zhicong but also by earlier authors” ⁸¹ .	Zhāng Zhìcōng 張志聰
Modern	<i>The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine</i> , 1949 – The first scholarly translation of the <i>Sù Wèn</i> into English, limited to chapters 1-34. Note, source Chinese not given.	Ilza Veith
	<i>The Rhythm at the Heart of the World: Neijing Suwen Chapter 5</i> , 2011 A “superior”, but not philological, and “highly interpretive” translation ⁸² .	Rochat de la Vallée
	<i>Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen: An Annotated Translation of Huang Di's Inner Classic</i> , 2011 - one of two scholarly English translations with translation of many classical commentaries, such as that of Wáng Bīng.	Unschuld and Tessenow
	內經:高等中醫研究參考叢書, 2013. A Taiwanese <i>Nèi Jīng</i> studies text.	
	<i>Humming with Elephants: The Great Treatise on the Resonant Manifestations of Yin and Yang (A Translation and Discussion of Chapter Five of the Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic Plain Questions)</i> . 2018. One of two scholarly English translations with attention paid to commentaries (the other that of Unschuld).	Sabine Wilms, PhD

⁷⁸ Loewe, 205.

⁷⁹ Loewe, 204.

⁸⁰ Loewe, 205

⁸¹ Unschuld, 2003, 69.

⁸² Loewe, 207.

Variations by Section

There were a total of thirty enumerated differences between the *Zhòng Guǎng* and *Tài Sù* and ten *Sù Wèn* texts reviewed. This makes a total of three hundred places of potential variance, where the texts could either follow the *Zhòng Guǎng* or the *Tài Sù*. There were only eleven instances of the texts being similar to the *Tài Sù*. Of those, seven were the inconsequential difference of 爲 in the *Tài Sù* and 為 in the *Zhòng Guǎng*. This leaves a mere four of three hundred instances (1.3%) of the reviewed *Sù Wèn* texts being similar to the *Tài Sù*. This supports the claim that the *Zhòng Guǎng* has acted as the authoritative *Sù Wèn*, the text which is in fact referred to when “*Sù Wèn*” is claimed, since the writing of the *Zhòng Guǎng*.

Below is a sectional break-down of similarity between the reviewed *Sù Wèn* texts and the *Zhòng Guǎng* and *Tài Sù*.

Section 1

All sources followed the *Zhòng Guǎng*⁸³.

Section 2

All sources followed the *Zhòng Guǎng* except in the following line:

⁸³ Note, a perfect comparison was not able to be made for all sources. For instance, the Veith translation did not give source Chinese and the *Jiǎ Yǐ Jīng* did not contain all lines reviewed.

病之逆[從]也: the *Jiǎ Yǐ Jīng* and *Sù Wèn Wú Zhù* has 順, same as the *Tài Sù*^{84,85}.

Section 3

All sources followed the *Zhòng Guǎng*.

Section 4

All sources followed the *Zhòng Guǎng* except in the following lines:

味厚者[為]陰薄[為]陰之陽: the *Sù Wèn Zhí Jiě* omits 者, same as the *Tài Sù*⁸⁶

氣厚[者][為]陽薄[為]陽之陰: the *Sù Wèn Zhí Jiě* omits 者, same as the *Tài Sù*⁸⁷

⁸⁴ *Zhēn Jǔ Jiǎ Yǐ Jīng Jiào Shì*, 36.

⁸⁵ Wu, 28.

⁸⁶ Wang and Guo, 92.

⁸⁷ Wang and Guo, 92.

4) Outcomes and Further Study

It would be quite premature to make any definitive statements after investigation into such a limited data set, a mere section of one chapter. And, in fact, it would be quite difficult to do this even if so compelled as there are no resolutely clear conclusions. It could reasonably if hesitantly be stated that the *Tài Sù*, as a text, seems to reveal a greater effort on the author's part to be clear in conveying a message. We see this in many areas of this project with graphs such as 者, explicitly delineating the topic or initial noun phrase, and with 之, again making explicit the direct noun of a verb. The most impactful example of both these being seen in 治病*者*必求*之*於本. However this proclaimed distinction of the *Tài Sù* is contradicted even in this small date sample. In section three we saw the *Tài Sù* use a far more general, or at least more vague, term 氣 revealingly typically rendered “qi”, with no translation, where the *Zhòng Guǎng* had 雲 quite simply translated as “clouds”.

Further the presence of basic, foundational characteristics of the writing system, here parallelism, can work simultaneously for and against a given conclusion. Generally, Classical Chinese is written with the pairing of terms and phrases woven throughout, this associating of polar opposites seemingly directly reflective of the fundamental worldview. Where there is A, there must and always will be B. Yin 陰 and yang 陽, heaven 天 and earth 地, turbid 濁 and clear 清, their world truly seemed, at least as could be assessed via their writings, to be one of universe-wide parallels. Thus, we are justified in expecting such structure in their texts, looking for it, and with finding it understanding it as some degree of justification of the belief it belongs to that worldview. This argument is made as part of the 實 versus 歸 issue in this project. However, the existence of such clean parallel writing could also argue against a text having originated in that world. It could just as reasonably be said that of two paired

passages from varying versions of the same text the one containing a more semantically clean, parallel structure suggests it has more likely been edited, that it is not the more original.

Specific areas of and methods for further investigation have been mentioned throughout this work. The exact approach executed in all the above could be continued. A gap in research appears present, a focused comparison of the *Tài Sù* and *Zhòng Guǎng*. This gap is nominally addressed in this project. And there have been some findings of interest, despite the fact that they lack the power to support definitive conclusions. This, in concert with the information contained in the Initial Matters of this project, justifies continuing a close, character-by-character comparative reading. In addition, recent develops in Chinese historical phonology, specifically in the progress around Old Chinese, could be further exploited. At a minimum making greater use of Axel Schuessler's work seems more than reasonable. Lastly, contemporary, mainland China and Taiwanese writings on the subject were scarcely incorporated into this project, the emphasis instead placed on major pre-modern Chinese texts and modern English writings. This is an area that would surely bear fruit.

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