

Exemplary Figures / Fayan. By Yang Xiong. Translated and introduced by Michael Nylan. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2013. Pp. xli + 315. \$75.00.

Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53 B.C.E.–C.E. 18) had been ranked together with the *Mengzi* or *Xunzi* in the Chinese tradition before Zhu Xi 朱熹. Sima Guang 司馬光 compared his writing favourably with that of these two other Confucian masters as being “simple and profound” 簡而奧. Yang Xiong’s fame rests mainly on the *Fayan* 法言, which emulates the *Analects* (*Lunyu*), and on the *Taixuan jing* 太玄經, which takes after the *Book of Changes*. His fame went into decline after Zhu Xi described him as a “grandee of Wang Mang’s” 莽大夫, the man Zhu Xi had denounced as usurper for his effort to set up the “New” Dynasty to replace the tottering Han. Only with the resurgence of interest in Han scholarship during the Qing did Yang Xiong’s standing recover with some of the big names in Qing philology starting to work on him. Their efforts culminated in Wang Rongbao’s 汪榮寶 gigantic critical commentary on the *Fayan*, the *Fayan yishu* 法言義疏. Much like Sima Guang long before him, Wang worked some forty years on this text, producing a first version in 1911, the *Fayan shuzheng* 法言疏證, and a second hugely expanded and improved version, the *Fayan yishu*, in 1933 after his already submitted manuscript had been burned in the Commercial Press building following the Japanese bombing raid of 28 January 1931. Wang was able to draw on his extensive experience with Japanese scholarship, on inspiration and encouragement from Hamburg sinologists, and on his own work in compiling the first modern Chinese terminological dictionary of political and social key terms, the *Xin Erya* 新爾雅.¹ His work on the *Fayan* has remained the main point of reference for all later studies and translations including the one under review here.

Michael Nylan brings to her translation of the *Fayan* into English many years of working and publishing on Yang Xiong. She published a translation of Yang Xiong’s *Taixuan jing* in 1993.² It is not the first translation of the *Fayan*. In fact it is the last in a long line of efforts to “translate” the consciously archaic colloquial of Yang Xiong’s short dialogues into a language accessible to readers.

Yang could follow the *Analects* only to a point. Confucius did not write the *Analects*, and there is no indication that he wanted it written. It is based on notes of his students and the Master’s answers very often are directly tailored to the character, calibre, and situation of the questioner. This has given commentators and translators some basis to fill in the implied context or counter-text. Yang Xiong wrote the *Fayan*

¹ Wang Rongbao and Ye Lan 葉瀾, eds., *Xin Erya* (Shanghai: Wenming shuju, 1903).

² Michael Nylan, “*The Canon of Supreme Mystery; T’ai hsüan ching by Yang Hsiung; a Translation with Commentary* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993).

himself, and his interlocutors remain anonymous although there are many direct references to contemporary discussions. It is thus a consciously coded text that called for decoding. The first such decoding was already written by Hou Ba 侯芭, one of Yang Xiong's students. This now lost text took the form of the commentary that had become popular at the time.

Such commentaries would do one or several of three things: glosses for words together with manuscript variants; translations or paraphrases into the contemporary vernacular in the manner Zhao Qi 趙岐 had done this for the *Mengzi*, Wang Bi 王弼 for the *Laozi* and *Zhouyi*, or Li Gui 李軌 for the *Fayan*; and interpretation. In 1975, Yan Lingfeng 嚴靈峯 counted 77 Chinese, 6 Japanese, and one Jurchen commentary as well as one German and one French translation;³ more have appeared since in more languages. These commentaries often had strong convictions of their own. One author was so frustrated about the difference between the historical record about Yang Xiong the follower of Confucius, and commentaries that read Daoist philosophy in the *Fayan* because Yang's teacher had written a commentary on the *Laozi*, that he decided the text must altogether be a fake.

Exemplary Figures is the first full and published English translation of the *Fayan*. This most certainly is a welcome addition and the great amount of work that went into this volume calls for full and critical attention. According to a cursory search there are at present 13 full earlier translations of this text into modern vernaculars. After von Zach's pioneering and still relevant German translation,⁴ the post-war period has seen 6 Chinese, 2 French, 2 Japanese, one Korean, and one English translation, which was finished in 2001 in a dissertation that was never formally published.⁵ To this has to be added the recent partial English translation by Christoph Harbsmeier that is included

³ Yan Lingfeng, *Zhou Qin Han Wei zhuzi zhijian shumu* 周秦漢魏諸子知見書目 (Taipei: Zhengzhong shuju, 1975).

⁴ Erwin von Zach, trans., *Yang Hsiung's Fa-yen (Worte strenger Ermahnung): Ein philosophischer Traktat aus dem Beginn der christlichen Zeitrechnung*, Sinologische Beiträge 4 (Batavia: Drukkerij Lux, 1939).

⁵ The six Chinese translations are: Ye Youming 葉幼明, tr., *Xin yi Yang Ziyun ji* 新譯揚子雲集 (Taipei: Sanmin shuju gufen youxian gongsi, 1997); Zhu Rongzhi 朱榮智, trans. and comm., Guoli Bianyi guan 國立編譯館, ed., *Xin bian Fayan* 新編法言 (Taipei: Taiwan guji chuban youxian gongsi, 2000); Luo Bangzhu 羅邦柱, trans. and comm., *Fayan* 法言 (Nanning: Guangxi jiaoyu chubanshe, 1995); Qin Yanhua 秦豔華, trans., Dong Zhi'an 董治安 and Zhang Zhonggang 張忠綱, eds., *Fayan* 法言 (Ji'nan: Shandong youyi chubanshe, 2001); Li Shoukui 李守奎 and Hong Yuqin 洪玉琴, trans. and comm., *Yangzi "Fayan" yi zhu* 揚子《法言》譯注 (Haerbin: Heilong Jiang renmin chubanshe, 2003); Ji Guotai 紀國泰, "Yangzi fayan" jindu 《揚子法言》今讀 (Chengdu: Ba-Shu shushe, 2010). The two Japanese translations are: Suzuki

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in the on-line dictionary *Thesaurus Linguae Sericae*, David Knechtges's translation of the chapter summaries which are included in Yang Xiong's biography in the *Hanshu*,⁶ and An Pingqiu 安平秋 and Zhang Chuanxi's 張傳璽 translation of the *Hanshu* into the modern Chinese vernacular.⁷

Surprisingly, *Exemplary Figures* introduces none of these earlier translations. The text and bibliography show that the author has seen only one of them (von Zach), has seen the very small part translated by Knechtges, and has received some personal communications from Harbsmeier. Two studies by Béatrice L'Haridon on the *Fayan* are listed,⁸ but no cognizance had been taken of her full translation of the *Fayan* as *Maîtres Mots*.⁹ More important, the Chinese text that is printed on the opposite page of the translations, seems to follow Han Jing's 韓敬 *Fayan zhu* 法言注 (more on this below), but one will look in vain for a trace of the fully annotated translation by Han Jing, the *Fayan quan yi* 法言全譯.¹⁰

Given the difficulties in translating classical Chinese texts in a comprehensible manner and the widespread perception among the Western language reading public that—if the available translations are to be taken as reliable indicators—Chinese philosophical texts are obscure, trivial, or both, this neglect (which is repeated in the Chinese translations, but not by L'Haridon who even mentions the planned publication of the present volume) is frustrating. While some of the earlier works (such as

(Note 5—Continued)

Yoshikazu 鈴木喜一, trans., *Hōgen* 法言 (Tokyo: Meitoku shuppansha, 1972); Tanaka Masami 田中麻紗巳, trans., *Hōgen: mō hitotsu no "Rongo"* 法言—もうひとつの「論語」 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1988). The Korean translation is: Hyōng-ju Ch'oi 崔亨柱, 법언 (法言) *Pōbōn* (Seoul: Chayu Mun'go, 1996). The unpublished American translation is in Andrew Colvin, "Patterns of Coherence in the *Fayan* 法言 of Yang Xiong 揚雄" (Ph.D. diss., University of Hawai'i, 2001), Appendix 1 "*Fa Yan* (Words to live by): An Unannotated Working Translation." For the two French translations, see notes 9 and 11 below.

⁶ *The "Han shu" Biography of Yang Xiong (53 B.C.–A.D. 18)*, trans. and annot. David R. Knechtges (Tempe, AZ: Center for Asian Studies, Arizona State University, 1982).

⁷ An Pingqiu and Zhang Chuanxi, eds., *Ershisi shi quanyi: Hanshu* 二十四史全譯：漢書 (Shanghai: Hanyu dacidian chubanshe, 2004).

⁸ Béatrice L'Haridon, "Le *Fayan* 法言 de Yang Xiong 楊雄 et le questionnement confucéen de l'Histoire," *Études chinoises* 24 (2005), pp. 233–47; idem, "La recherche du modèle dans les dialogues du *Fayan* de Yang Xiong (53 av. J.-C.–18 apr. J.-C.): écriture, éthique, et réflexion historique à la fin des Han occidentaux" (Ph.D. diss., Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales, 2006).

⁹ Béatrice L'Haridon, *Maîtres Mots* (Paris: Éditions Les Belles Lettres, 2010).

¹⁰ Han Jing, *Fayan zhu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992); idem, *Fayan quan yi* (Chengdu: Ba-Shu shushe, 1999).

Belpaire's French version¹¹) hardly qualify as translations for any serious discussion, and while there is an (indeed all too common) practice among translators of classical Chinese texts into modern East Asian vernaculars to fudge the difficult passages by simply using the terms of the original with some added grammatical markers, this general dismissal of earlier translations signals that the translation starts from scratch instead of building on the successes and failures of its predecessors in a falsifiable manner. The work under review will nonetheless have to be measured against the earlier paraphrases and translations into whatever language.

The translation of what the translator advertises as a "master work" of Chinese philosophy addresses two kinds of audience: those willing to question the common assumption among Western-language philosophers that philosophy is a regional phenomenon and interested to learn about Chinese philosophy without knowing either the language or the historical context; and sinologists. To reach the first audience, a receiver-oriented translation is required; to satisfy the second, the translation must be verifiable on the basis of the Chinese text (the "sender"). The work under review does not offer information about the translation strategies that have been adopted so that we have to go by the translations actually produced. To simplify matters, the two perspectives will be discussed separately on the basis of the same examples. The "philosophers'" perspective will come first.

The "philosopher" will learn from the introduction that the *Fayan* chapters have a structured sequence, at least as far as the first chapters are concerned. In this sequence the first chapter is considered pivotal, following, as it does the precedent of the *Analects* which start with the same topic. We are thus to expect this first chapter to be the door through which to enter this text. The "philosopher" will follow this pointer and enter here, reading:

Learning and Practicing

Verse Summary

When heaven first came down to give birth to the people, they were dense and dim-witted. As they gave free rein to their own instincts, their faculties of sight and hearing were quite undeveloped. In order to instruct them [the people] according to certain principles, I compiled chapter 1, "Learning and Practicing."

.....

To practice what one has learned is best; to articulate it is second best; and to teach it to others, a distant third. Those who fail in all of these are but ordinary men. (p. 3)

¹¹ Bruno Belpaire, trans., *Le catechisme philosophique de Yang-Hiong-tse* (Brussels: Éditions de l'Occident, 1960).

The first part after the title of the chapter is announced as a “summary” of this chapter. It seems to tell a historical narrative. Somewhere in the dim past “heaven came down to give birth to people.” It must be some individuated higher being to “come down” to earth very much like in the Genesis story from the Hebrew Testament. How it proceeded to “give birth,” and this not to “people” but to “the people,” is not clear. Is this “heaven” only “giving birth” to the “Chinese” “people”? Being “dense and dim-witted” at this dawn of time, they only followed their instincts. This is comprehensible. But why it should follow from their following their instincts that their “faculties of sight and hearing were quite undeveloped” is not—one might even expect the exact opposite. Obviously, however, being dim-witted they lacked education of any sort, be it technical or moral. But the author of the *Fayan* intervenes now to improve their “faculties of sight and hearing” by instructing them according to certain principles. What principles, our philosopher will wonder, might be able to improve eyesight and hearing?

The first chapter will contain these principles under two headings, Learning and Practicing. Learning is a nominalized verb that has become a noun in its own right, which now denotes the effect of learning; practicing only is a nominalized verb. As the two are put here on par next to each other, they must share the same function. The chapter thus deals with two things that are independent of each other but of parallel importance, learning something and practicing something. The “principles” spelled out by the author for these two items are to improve eyesight and hearing. Obviously the author Yang Xiong is quite full of himself. Since the dawn of time to the present the people are dim-witted, act on their instincts, and have bad eyesight and hearing, and now comes the author with this book to change this situation for the first time by teaching them “principles” for their learning something and practicing something. The Introduction had claimed that he regarded Confucius as the master to follow, but in his own writing—or the translation of it—Yang Xiong himself is the great event.¹²

Moving to the first statement within the chapter, the “philosopher” learns that “to practice what one has learned is best.” As the quality of what one “has learned” is not made clear, this is a surprising statement. What if one has learned to cheat at cards or to ride a horse? More important, the relationship between the “learning” and the “practicing,” which in the Summary seemed parallel but unconnected, suddenly changes here. “Practicing” is not an independent activity, but it now refers to practicing only what one has learned. The same is true for articulating and teaching further down the scale.

¹² It is of marginal interest that the translator claims to follow in these chapter summaries, with minor adjustments, only the version offered by David Knechtges in his translation of Yang Xiong’s biography, because doing so means that she agrees with them.

The grand pair of the two kinds of activity, learning and practicing, in which the author promises to reveal “principles” is gone, replaced by a single noun, “learning” and the main “principle” seems to be that it should be put into practice. The “philosopher” is left with the rather trivial and most definitely not further substantiated claim of a “master work” of Chinese philosophy that it is better to practice what one has learned than to teach others about it. The “philosopher” might have a suspicion that this is perhaps not what the text actually wanted to say, but this is all the information offered to the “receiver” by this translation.

Maybe the translation with its rich annotation is only talking to the sinologist? Sinologists have over the years developed a special language of their own where the foreign terms do not have the semantic values normally associated with them by speakers of these foreign languages, but are mostly pointers to specific Chinese words. Every sinologist recognizes that words such as “the sage,” “the holy man,” “der Weise,” “der Heilige,” “le sage,” and “le saint” do little more than alert the reader to the fact that this is a statement involving one or all of a group of thirteen individuals of Chinese antiquity called by the binomial *shengren* 聖人. Reading “virtue,” “Tugend,” and “vertu” informs him that the Chinese word here is *de* 德, but does not even claim to provide any information about its specific content. And so on. The sinological reader then fills in this translation word with whatever his understanding of the Chinese word in question is, and the translation makes a contribution by fixing the grammatical relations in the very explicit modern vernaculars. Chinese or Japanese translations often follow the same practice by actually using the original term but inserting it into a modern grammar.

In the passage quoted above, a sinological reader would spot that “learning” must translate *xue* 學, and would then supplement the contextual knowledge that this does not refer to learning to ride on horseback but to the Learning associated with the bequests of the “sages” of antiquity as summarized and edited by the last of them, Confucius. He might also spot that the awkward eyesight and hearing must refer to *congming* 聰明, a word that had become a stable binomial by the time of Yang Xiong with the meaning “sharpness of mind” or “intelligence.” It has been artificially broken apart here into its constituent elements, which in themselves, however, fail to give meaning to the sentence. The sinologist might even spot that “practicing” must refer to *xing* 行, and drawing on a recollection that *xing* has little standing as a noun “practice” but normally refers to putting a teaching into practice or “doing” what one is “saying” to be right, and that therefore this “practicing” must refer to putting the study of the bequests of the sages into practice. He would be at a loss, however, about the meaning of heaven coming down and creating the people.

For a “receiver” oriented translation, which is what our “philosopher” would need, these implications, which are for the original text supplemented by the original

addressees and by those later-born who have acquired this contextual knowledge (including the “sinologist”), must be spelled out to convey what the text wanted to say—but to a person living and thinking in a completely different environment. The translation sometimes does this, on occasion warning the reader by inserting the explanatory supplement into brackets, but mostly without this indicator.

The passage quoted from the beginning of the translation is indicative of the translation altogether and it would be meaningless to go through the same exercise with the next passage or some randomly selected later examples. It must be said with regret that this translation of the *Fayan*, its rich annotations notwithstanding, will do little to bolster the standing of Chinese philosophy in general and Yang Xiong in particular among non-sinologists.

The sinologist, as has been said, will be interested whether the translation is verifiable on the basis of the original. The segment under discussion here reads:

天降生民。倥侗顛蒙。
恣乎情形。聰明不開。
訓諸理。選學行。

Exemplary Figures does not indicate which edition it takes as its basis. The introduction mentions, however, that in the commentaries to the *Fayan* as well as in quotations from early texts many variants will be found. No effort has been made to establish a critical text; such an effort is even described as ill-fated on the authority of an oral communication from Michael Loewe that given the long history of the transmission “the curtain is firmly drawn” (p. xii). Wang Rongbao followed a Chinese tradition in philology to take a widely circulating text as the basis, register the variants in the comments, and settling for a reading that he sees as most convincing—without, however, changing the main text. Han Jing did the same in his commentary and translation. This means that the text Wang and Han actually comment on, paraphrase, or translate is not the text they print as the “original text.” While one might recognize this unwillingness to actually provide a critical text as a ritualized display of Chinese scholarly modesty, it is not quite clear why the text printed with the translation in *Exemplary Figures* should follow the same routine.

In the passage quoted above what is described as the “verse summary” is taken from Yang Xiong’s Postface 序, where all these summaries are included in a long string. In the oldest edition available of the *Fayan*, the Zhiping 治平 edition, the Postface with these summaries comes at the end, but none of these summaries actually occurs at the head of the individual chapters. This Preface itself is an excerpt from a longer preface on many of Yang’s works that is also quoted in his biography in the *Hanshu*, if this is not the source of the last chapter of the *Fayan*. Wang Rongbao has shown very nicely that the Shide tang 世德堂 edition which distributed these

summaries to the chapters is a Song Dynasty reorganization introduced by Song Xian 宋咸 based on a lack of knowledge about the relationship between autobiographical postfaces at the end of books and these books themselves, as visible in many Han Dynasty texts. Von Zach was the first and hitherto only translator inserting these summaries above the text; *Exemplary Figures* follows him without alerting the sinologist reader about the questionable background of this practice. We are reading the translation of a text that follows a later reorganization without being given a good reason for this rearrangement.

The practice of sticking with a current text but translating on the basis of the variants—in this case provided by Wang Rongbao—has the result that the translation often does not translate the Chinese text printed on the opposite side. This might refer to individual characters. In the summary of chapter 3, for example, we read something about “an infinite number of forms.” The Chinese text on the other side offers as a counterpart only *yi* 意 (“meaning”). A footnote alerts the reader that the translator followed the reading *yi* 億 (“ten thousand times ten thousand”) in the *Hanshu* excerpt. Or it might refer to punctuation, the truncation of phrase parts, or the separation between statements, in which case no explanation is offered. The punctuation itself is inconsistent. In most cases the Chinese text follows traditional Chinese punctuation (rather than Han Jing) by inserting Chinese-type stops. These signal separate rhythmical and grammatical elements without making a difference between such a subdivision of a phrase and a full stop. In quite a few cases, however, the work under review inserts commas into the Chinese text without further explanation. This changes the succeeding Chinese-type stop into a Western-type full stop. The option explored even in some traditional Chinese editions to use punctuation to highlight the rhetorical and argumentative arrangement of the text has not been followed.

An example is the first actual phrase of the *Fayan* as quoted above. The Chinese text is given as 學行之上也。言之次也。教人有其次也。咸無焉為衆人。The fine translation runs: “To practice what one has learned is best; to articulate it is second best; and to teach it to others, a distant third. Those who fail in all of these are but ordinary men.”

Obviously, the *xue* 學 in the first segment is the topic of all four segments, and the translation recognizes this. The punctuation, however, assigns it only to the first segment. Already the *Sibu beiyao* 四部備要 edition of the 1930s reprinted an early edition which inserted a Chinese-type stop after the *xue*, and Han Jing, for example, specified the information contained in the formal arrangement of the words by replacing this first Chinese-type stop with a colon and then adding commas where these sub segments break. 學：行之，上也；言之，次也；. . . The structuring of the Chinese text thus remains inconsistent, following neither the traditional Chinese punctuation style, nor its reformed version, nor the option offered by the differentiated

punctuation marks used in editions such as Han Jing's. The translation in *Exemplary Figures* offers its own segmentation of the text without visible connection to the punctuation of the Chinese text.

In the numbering of the statements within the chapters, the Chinese text printed here follows Han Jing without saying so (and without giving a reason for such a high appreciation of Han Jing's segmentation). The translation in fact shows that the translator sometimes does not agree with Han Jing's truncation. Instead of offering a critical rearrangement of the Chinese text, the Chinese text retains its Han Jing numeration while the translation treats two consecutive statements as one and gives them a hybrid number such as 3.9–10. The burden which these inconsistencies impose on the reader is exacerbated by the occasional layout error (as in 3.7 and 3.8) when a section of the Chinese text that in all available editions as well as the translation is seen as belonging to one section appears at the beginning of the next one.

The Chinese text offered here lacks professional stringency in both the wording offered and the punctuation inserted. It does not offer a reliable basis for a critical reading of the translation.

Moving to the translation, we return to the example from the first chapter quoted in the beginning. The most surprising statement in what is referred to as the "verse summary" is the end: "In order to instruct them [the people] according to certain principles, I compiled chapter 1, 'Learning and Practicing.'" (We have already mentioned that it should rather be something like "Learning and [Its Application in] Practice.") In the Introduction the translator had claimed that Yang Xiong was considered by some to be on par with Confucius himself, and that he himself was not immune to such thoughts. In this context, the claim that he would be the first to instruct "the people" would not be very surprising. A look through the other "verse summaries," however, shows that they all end with a three-word phrase that starts with *xuan* 選 and is followed by the two words that make up the title of the chapter in question. The translations offered for all the remaining chapters, however, treat these three words as a separate sentence. For chapter 2, this runs "Thus, I have compiled chapter 2, 'Our Masters'" (p. 23), or for chapter 13 "Thus, I have compiled chapter 13, 'Honoring the Ancestors, the Ultimate Duty'" (p. 223). (The element "chapter xx" has been added by the translator from the version quoted in Yang Xiong's biography in the *Hanshu* without this being made clear.) Only in this summary of the first chapter, the translation directly connects the last three words with the preceding sentence. It is this link, however, which makes this translation so surprising.

Going by the rule established by the rest of the translation, we thus have to treat the segment 選學行 as a grammatically independent phrase. From this follows that the preceding phrase 訓諸理 is a stand-alone statement or a phrase concluding the statement given before this. This is not easy as this phrase lacks a clear subject.

Earlier translators have grappled with this problem because of an ongoing assumption that the Chinese-type stops actually mark the end of a sentence and the ensuing assumption that Chinese sentences are short and simple in structure. The summary under discussion here before the statement about the compilation of the chapter is split up by von Zach into four sentences and by Knechtges and L'Haridon into three. Von Zach translated "Es musste daher durch die Lehre des heiligen Mannes (i.e. durch das Tao) belehrt und geführt werden" (It [the people, RW] therefore had to be instructed and guided through the teaching of the saint (e.g. through the Dao)). Early Chinese commentators quoted by Wang Rongbao had offered as equivalents for *xun* 訓 the words *dao* 導 (to guide) and *gao* 告 (to inform), and von Zach combined them into his "instructed and guided." At the same time, von Zach inserts from the general cultural background of the term *li* 理 and from Yang Xiong's own intellectual orientation the notion that this "teaching" or these "principles," which are not further defined by the text, must be those of the sage(s). From the perspective of the "receiver" this is a crucial addition to what otherwise remains an empty notion of "principles." By being specific, von Zach's version becomes falsifiable on this point. One now might investigate the actual use of the term *li* in the context of the *Fayan* and will perhaps find that it actually refers to principles of a different origin. One would then reject von Zach's insertion and replace it with one that is better founded with the effect of a gradual improvement in the quality of the translation. Von Zach reads the phrase 訓諸理 as belonging to the previous statement(s) in this summary. He bridges the difficulty in defining the relationship by adding "It [the people] therefore had to be . . ." although we neither have a logical ("therefore") link nor an imperative ("had to be . . .") in the Chinese text.

Before having a closer look at the relationship between the phrase 訓諸理 and the beginning of this summary, we may address some particular elements within this beginning segment. "When heaven first came down to give birth to the people . . ." in *Exemplary Figures* translates 天降生民. The verb 降 does occur with heaven in early texts, but only as a transitive verb with the meaning "sending down" or even "visiting on those below" things such as natural disasters. The general meaning is "to bring about" or "to generate" with the untranslatable downward thrust from heaven. There is no extant early source that has heaven itself "coming down" although James Legge and others who translated *tian* 天 (heaven) as "God" might have thought this possible. Only after gods had become individualized in China in later centuries they were said to "descend" into spirit mediums, and the word has much later been used to translate Jesus' "descent" into the world. In short, 降 will have to be read in this time horizon as a transitive verb. I can find no extant early source showing the combination of 降 and 生 as a binomial "come down and give birth." The 生民, however, is attested as a binomial in the general sense "the people" at least since the *Mengzi* 2A.2 "Since there have been people, there never has been a [=another] Confucius" 自有生民以來，未

有孔子也。The model for the *Fayan* phrase seems to be a *Shangshu* phrase quoted in the *Mengzi* that will not be found in the transmitted text: “The *Book of Documents* says: ‘As heaven brings about the lowly people it sets up for them rulers and sets up for them teachers. . . .’” 《書》曰：「天降下民，作之君，作之師。……」

Nothing in the *Fayan* phrase or the *Mengzi* indicates that this is meant as a historical narrative about the way humans came about and inhabited the earth ages ago. Heaven in these terms continues to be the condition for the possibility of humans, but in their primordial state they never have been and are not now endowed with either the capacity to rule themselves or the knowledge of higher principles. To take care of the first part, heaven sets up rulers for them, and for the second, teachers. Among the latter the “sages” are of primordial importance.

Against this background we have thus good plausibility to define the purpose of the argument in this first summary: because people in their raw state follow their instincts and have no understanding of moral principles, **they are instructed in them**. The purpose of the statement is not to show that heaven somehow provided the framework for people’s life, or that they come to the world uncouth and without an understanding of moral rules, but it comes in the conclusion “they are instructed in the [sagely] principles.” This highlights the importance of the topic of moral learning and a practice based on it, which in turn provides the topic of Yang’s first chapter. The last three characters of this summary then state that Yang Xiong’s first chapter is assembling statements that deal with this topic.

To read 訓諸理 in the manner of *Exemplary Figures* as part of a phrase with “I” as the subject is not consistent with other parts of this translation and eliminates the status of this segment as containing the actual point Yang Xiong wanted to make in this summary—quite apart from attributing to him a self-assessment inflated to a degree that it is unlikely that any intellectual lineage would be willingly associated with him, or that a translation of his work would offer more than a curiosity.

In the title of the chapter, “Xue xing” 學行, the relationship between these two terms is not further defined. The title actually comes from the first two meaningful words in the chapter, a practice adapted from the *Analects*. The relationship between *xue* and *xing* is directly defined in this first sentence so that it is quite clear that this is not “Learning and Practising” but something like “Learning and Its Application in Practice.” While this seems a simple enough observation, the title of chapter 2, “Wuzi” 吾子, already shows that it has not been followed. The translation offered is “Our Masters,” which is supposed to refer to the model figures mentioned in this chapter. The expression *wuzi* appears a single time in this chapter. This in the first phrase and there it means “you, my sir” in an address by a questioner to Yang Xiong, and it has been translated in this sense here. The translation as “Our Masters” signals a purpose of this title that is pretty, but also freely invented. The two words of these titles may, and they may not, actually highlight the content of a given chapter.

The question was whether the translation could have been improved in its accuracy—and even its accessibility for “receivers” without reading skills in classical Chinese—by engaging with the best efforts available. Han Jing’s 1992 *Fayan zhu* offers a segmentation that ends with a full stop BEFORE 訓諸理, and links this segment, separated by a comma, with 選學行. Summing up the content of this first summary in a footnote, Han repeats this with summary of the meaning of the last sentence being 為了導之以理義，寫了《學行》這一章 (So as to guide them through principled justice, [I] have written this chapter “Learning and its Practice”). This clearly was the model for the translation in *Exemplary Figures*.

In 1999, Han Jing published his full translation of the *Fayan* that also comes with a fully annotated version of the “original” text. In this version, Han kept the earlier punctuation for his edition of the text (p. 175), but in his translation, he revised himself, writing: 上天生下世界上的人，最初非常幼稚無知愚昧冥頑，任意放縱自己的情欲和本能，見識智慧沒有得到開發，要用聖人的道理給以教化引導。為了說明教化和學習的重要，撰寫了《學行》這一卷書 (p. 82). It reads the entire summary about like this (my English translation): “As heaven generates the people in the world below, they initially are extraordinarily naive, ignorant, dumb, and dense, randomly giving free rein to their desires and capabilities, and as their understanding and insight is not being unfolded, the principles of the sages have to be used to teach and guide them. In order to explain the importance of transformation by teaching and of studying, have I composed this chapter ‘Study and [Its] Application.’” This translation treats the entire segment between 天降 and 訓諸理 as one single phrase that culminates in the last segment. It is receiver-friendly by making the (assumed) implicit links explicit and thus reducing fuzziness. It is largely falsifiable. Han makes it clear that he reads 生民 as a binomial, and that 降 is a transitive verb. Translating the 聰明 as 見識智慧, he clearly reads it as a binomial representing the capacity for understanding. (David Knechtges had done so by rendering it as “intelligence.”) He identifies the source of the “principles” as being the sages, and makes it clear that these principles of the sages will help the unfolding of people’s insights. And he reads the *xuan* 選 of the text with the meaning “select” as a loan for *zhuān* 撰 with the meaning “to compile” as suggested by one commentator. Finally, he links the entire statement into one single phrase where the main point comes at the end, namely the importance of guiding the people, with their uncouth instincts and untrained minds, with sagely principles. His translation focuses on what the author is driving at. His earlier assumption that Yang Xiong is the first to teach the people moral principles is recast into a long unmarked supplement that establishes the connection between the main point of the summary and this chapter (“In order to explain the importance of transformation by teaching and of studying . . .”). The weak point is that his language does not clearly indicate whether the first part about heaven is a historical narrative about the beginnings of time or a narrative that drives home the point that,

at any given time, people in their raw state might be said to lack any understanding of sagely principles. (My translation does not reproduce this diffuseness.) An Pingqiu and Zhang Chuanxi's translation of the *Hanshu*, with the biography of Yang Xiong, follows Han Jing's translation in their segmentation of both their own translation and their punctuation of the *Hanshu* text. They translate: 天生萬民，懵懂無知，肆意縱情，聰明未開通，以理訓告。作《學行》第一。(As when heaven creates the ten thousand kinds of people they are dumb and without knowledge, recklessly follow their desires and their intelligence has not opened, they are being instructed by way of principles. I composed chapter 1, Learning and [Its] Practice.) In this version, we again have the purpose of the summary lodged in the "they are being instructed by way of principles."

It is irrelevant whether Han Jing's translation is correct or not; the decisive point is that it brings out the purpose of the entire argument of the summary and is largely falsifiable. It thus provides an excellent basis for a later translation that might overcome the remaining weaknesses or correct mistaken contextual information. Clearly, the translation in *Exemplary Figures* would have greatly benefitted from a critical engagement with these translations.

Drawing on Wang Rongbao continues to be essential and useful, but Wang neither produces a critical text nor a falsifiable translation, restricting himself to summaries of the content. Drawing on the translation by von Zach and the small segment translated by David Knechtges is of benefit because of their vast learning in early Chinese literature and experience with translation. At the same time, the modern research environment has changed and improved in a dramatic way. A modern translator is able to benefit from access to full-text databases of early Chinese texts including recently found manuscripts, which allows for a quick verification of the plausibility of the translation of a given word in the context of the time and of the position a writer is arguing against.

Finally, there has been much reflection on translation strategies that addresses the different priorities and needs of the various kinds of readers. To produce a workbook of the *Fayan* that includes a learned introduction, a Chinese text with explanatory notes, and a translation with more explanatory notes is a wonderful and welcome idea. But the lack in the professionalism of engaging with existing scholarship in the handling of the text and in the translation, as well as the tolerance of a translation that will leave the non-sinological reader in serious doubt about the intellectual calibre of the original, shows how far Chinese Studies still has to go to match what in other fields such as Greek and Latin Studies was a process more or less concluded well over a hundred years ago.

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