

## NOTES on the Dao De Jing Comparison Charts

By: Nina Correa

The Dao De Jing Comparison Charts provided here include the following Chinese texts:

WB - Wang Bi (226 - 249 BCE) was a Neo-Daoist who compiled a text of the Dao De Jing (with commentary) that has been most widely used by translators. Although there are variations to the Chinese characters ascribed to Wang Bi, I have used the most commonly accepted characters for this chart.

References used for Chinese characters:

LAO TZU'S TAO TE CHING, Robert G. Henricks

LAO-TZU'S TAOTECHING, Red Pine

LAO TSU TAO TE CHING, Gia-Fu Feng and Jane English

TAO TE CHING The Definitive Edition, Jonathan Star

HSG - He-Shang Gong (179 - 157 BCE) is a mystical Chinese personage who is said to have unearthed a copy of the Dao De Jing dating to about 579 BCE, but there is no proof of that text's existence. Gong's version of the Dao De Jing has been used mostly by scholars who compared the few textual differences between it and the Wang Bi version, as well as their very different commentaries on the text.

Reference used for Chinese characters:

A resource provided by Bradford Hatcher <http://www.hermetica.info>

FY - Fu Yi (555 - 639 CE) was a Daoist scholar and astrologer who compiled a text of the Dao De Ching called the Chiao-ting Gupen Laozi (Ancient Text of the Laozi Collated). Fu Yi claimed that his version was based on a text found in 487 CE at the excavation of the grave of one of Xiang Yu's (232 - 202 BCE) concubines in the town of Xuchou near the Grand Canal. If that is true, then the text Fu Yi based his version on had to be dated prior to 202 BCE, since Yu's concubine wouldn't be afforded such an elaborate grave after Yu died.

Reference used for Chinese characters:

[http://home.pages.at/onkellotus/TTK/Chinese\\_Uni-FY\\_TTK.html](http://home.pages.at/onkellotus/TTK/Chinese_Uni-FY_TTK.html)

MWDA - Mawangdui Text A

MWDB - Mawangdui Text B

Both Mawangdui texts (also referred to as the "Silk Laozi") were discovered in 1973 in a grave excavated in the town of Mawangdui (Hunan Province). The occupant of the grave was Li Ts'ang who died in 168 BCE. Texts A and B were written in different script styles of the period, and apparently by two different scribes. Many of the ancient characters are no longer in use today, and there are varying opinions as to which modern character should be used to represent the ancient ones. I've relied on Robert Henricks' opinions as to which characters to use for this chart. Since this chart is intended for the use of people who may not have access to dictionaries which include some of the most ancient Chinese characters, I've limited the characters listed here to those readily available (having the same or similar meanings), and which can be accessed in most Chinese dictionaries.

Reference used for Chinese characters:

LAO-TZU TE-TAO CHING, Robert Henricks

## LAO TZU'S TAO TE CHING, Robert Henricks

GD - Guodian. In 1993 a tomb was uncovered in Guodian (Hubei Province) which contained some (but not all) of the chapters of the currently used Dao De Jing. Since this text was written on bamboo slips, it's also referred to as the Bamboo Slip Laozi. Historians have dated the tomb to the Third or Fourth Century BCE, being the oldest version of the Dao De Jing in existence today. Many of the characters used on the bamboo slips are so old that even the scholars debate which modern characters should be used to represent them. I've relied on both Henricks and other scholars at the Dartmouth Conference on the Guodian in my character selection for this chart. For more extensive research on the Guodian characters, consult the book listed below written on the Dartmouth Conference. Photos of the actual bamboo slips from the Guodian tomb can be found at:

<http://www.daolisopen.com/GuodianLaozi.html>

References used for Chinese characters:

LAO TZU'S TAO TE CHING, Robert Henricks

THE GUODIAN LAOZI (Proceedings of the International Conference, Dartmouth College, May 1998), Sarah Allen and Crispin Williams

YDDJ - Your Dao De Jing is a book I wrote which includes a Chinese text of the Dao De Jing (with English definitions). It is a compilation of the Wang Bi, Mawangdui and Guodian characters - using the earliest characters available in each chapter. The book also includes an extensive Dictionary of the Chinese characters used in the Dao De Jing with a complete Concordance. It can be found at:

<http://www.daolisopen.com/YourDaoDeJing.html>

Symbols used in this chart:

- . put at the head of a section of text that may be understood by the copyist as a "chapter".
- denotes a character that is missing or undecipherable in the text due to deterioration
- represents an erroneous character which had been blotted out by the copyist.
- < indicates a mark in the text that looks like, and seems to serve as, a comma.
- indicates a pause or break within a chapter (Guodian texts)
- \_ a mark indicating the end of a chapter (Guodian texts)

Although I've checked these charts for accuracy, there's always the possibility of error.

Please notify me of any corrections, omissions or comments you might have at:

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-Thank you

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