CHAPTER TWO

THE *ZHUANGZI* AND ITS IMPACT

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DESCRIPTION

As a literary text, the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 is *sui generis* and its influence upon later literature has been enormous. No other work of the pre-Qin period, with the possible exception of the *Shijing* 詩經 (Book of Songs) and the *Chuci* 楚辭 (Elegies of Chu), can begin to compare with it in this regard. The *Zhuangzi* has been translated and studied variously. Among the most influential translations are the Japanese by Fukunaga (1956a) and Akatsuka (1974). In English, the text appeared first in the nineteenth century (Giles 1889; Legge 1891) and again in the early twentieth (Fung 1931), but the most widely used translations are more contemporary (Watson 1968; Graham 1981; also, newly, Mair 1994a).

The importance of the *Zhuangzi* for literature can be measured in two ways: first, the unique qualities of creativity and fictionality that it presents through metaphor, allegory, fable, and parable written in a combination of vibrant prose and memorable poetry; and second, the indebtedness of writers from the Han (206 B.C.E.- 220 C.E.) to the present who have drawn on it extensively for images, expressions, themes, and overall inspiration. No other Chinese text dating from before the advent of Buddhism in China displays the awesome imaginative powers and linguistic dexterity of the *Zhuangzi*. Indeed, the *Zhuangzi* in all these respects is highly unusual and utterly unprecedented. In addition, its rhetorical mode, style of argumentation, Yogic practices, mythic reverberations, and nirvana-like wish to get beyond life and death [samsara] also are unusual to the point that one suspects an international dimension to its formation which is only now being cautiously investigated by Victor H. Mair (1994b; 1998), Kristofer M. Schipper (pers. comm.), E. Bruce Brooks (1981), and others. Until their research is complete, however, we must restrict our inquiry to the text itself and its influence upon later authors.

Since I have already treated the literary aspects of the *Zhuangzi* in a series of other recent publications, in this chapter I shall concentrate on the significance of the text for philosophy and religion. Studies in this area that I will draw on include several collections of essays (Mair 1983b; 1983d; Kjellberg and Ivanhoe 1996—the latter with a good bibliography) as well as studies of individual chapters or topics (Creel 1970; Girardot 1983; Allinson 1990; Wu 1990; Herman 1996). Although I will focus on the philosophical and religious facets of the *Zhuangzi*, it should always remain clear that the *Zhuangzi* is distinguished from other books associated with pre-Qin thinkers by its literary playfulness and satiricalness.

History

THE AUTHOR. Any study of the *Zhuangzi* begins with the recognition that neither the composition of the text nor its authorship is a simple matter. Because the book bearing the name *Zhuangzi* is obviously associated with the thinker known as Zhuangzi or "Master Zhuang," it behooves us to address his historicity and claims to authorship. For this, we have little else to depend upon than Sima Qian's 司馬遷 (145-86 B.C.E.) "**biography**" of Zhuang Zhou 莊周 in ch. 63 of the *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Historian). He says:

> Master Zhuang was a man of Meng and his given name was Zhou. He once served as a minor functionary at Lacquer Garden and was a contemporary of King Hui of Liang and King Xuan of Qi [3rd c. B.C.E.]. There was nothing upon which his learning did not touch, but its essentials derived from the words of the Old Masters. Therefore, his writings, consisting of over a hundred thousand words, for the most part were allegories. He wrote "An Old Fisherman," "Robber Footpad," and "Ransacking Coffers" to criticize the followers of Confucius and to illustrate the arts of the Old Masters. Chapters such as "The Wildnerness of Jagged" and "Master Gengsang" were all empty talk without any substance. Yet his style and diction were skillful and he used allusions and analogies to excoriate the Confucians and the Mohists. Even the most profound scholars of the age could not defend themselves. His words billowed without restraint to please himself. Therefore, from kings and dukes on down, great men could not put him to use.
>
> King Wei of Chu heard that Zhuang Zhou was a worthy man. He sent a messenger with bountiful gifts to induce him to come and promised to make him a minister. Zhuang Zhou laughed and said: "A thousand gold pieces is great profit and the position of minister is a respectful one, but haven't you seen the sacrificial ox used in the suburban sacrifices? After being fed for several years, it is garbed in patterned embroidery so that it may be led into the great temple. At this point, though it might wish

> to be a solitary piglet, how could that be? Go away quickly, sir, do not pollute me! I'd rather enjoy myself playing around in a fetid ditch than be held in bondage by the ruler of a kingdom. I will never take office for as long as I live, for that is what pleases my fancy." (see also Fung and Bodde 1952, 1:221; Cheng 1997)

Examining this, we should first of all note that Sima Qian's "biography" was written around the year 104 B.C.E., nearly two centuries after the death of Zhuang Zhou. It is curious that, of the five chapter titles he mentions, one (ch. 10) is from the "Waipian 外篇 (Outer Chapters), four (chs. 31, 29, 10, and perhaps 23 [cited twice under two different titles]) are from the "Zapian" 雜篇 (Miscellaneous Chapters), and not one is from the "Neipian" 內篇 (Inner Chapters). Furthermore, the allegory he quotes in the second paragraph is a longer and somewhat garbled version of the thirteenth section of chapter 32. Sima Qian's choice of chapters to cite is puzzling because it is the "Inner Chapters" that modern scholars believe to contain the most authentic chapters in the book, those linked most closely to Zhuang Zhou. It is odd, though, that even in the "Inner Chapters" he is referred to as Zhuangzi and not Zhuang Zhou, using a polite designation one would not think he would choose for himself.

It is thus clear that, already by the time of Sima Qian, the *Zhuangzi* had evolved far beyond the work of a single individual. To be sure, a close reading of the extant edition, which derives from the 33-chapter recension of **Guo Xiang** 郭象 (252-312), reveals that the text could not possibly have been written by one author. Aside from the obvious internal inconsistencies in language, style, and content among the various chapters, it is highly improbable that the distanced, third-person appraisal of Zhuang Zhou and other thinkers in the final chapter could have been written by him. In fact, we may now turn to this impressionistic assessment of Master Zhuang as another primary source which may help somewhat to expand our vague picture of the man:

> Obscure and formless, ever transforming and inconstant. Are we alive? Are we dead? Do we coexist with heaven and earth? Do we go along with spiritual intelligence? How nebulous! Where are we going? How blurred! Where are we aiming? The myriad beings being arrayed all around, there is none fit for us to return to--a portion of the ancient techniques of the Way lay in these practices.
>
> Zhuang Zhou heard of such usages and delighted in them. With absurd expressions, extravagant words, and unbounded phrases, he often gave rein to his whims but was not presumptuous and did not look at things from one angle only. Believing that all under heaven were sunk in stupidity and could not be talked to seriously, he used impromptu words

> for his effusive elaboration, quotations for the truth, and metaphors for breadth. Alone, he came and went with the essential spirits of heaven and earth but was not arrogant toward the myriad beings. He did not scold others for being right or wrong, but abode with the mundane and the vulgar.
>
> Although his writings are exotic and convoluted, there is no harm in them; although his phraseology is irregular and bizarre, it merits reading. His fecundity is inexhaustible. Above he wanders with the creator of things, and below he is friends with those who are beyond life and death and without beginning or end. Regarding the root, he is expansive and open, profound and unrestrained; regarding the ancestor, he is attuned and ascendant. Nonetheless, in his response to evolution and in his emancipation from things, his principles are not exhaustive and his approach is not metamorphosing. How nebulous! How cryptic! Someone who has never been fully fathomed. (ch. 33; see also Watson 1968, 373-74).

Although there is really nothing of substance in this description to assist us in our quest for the historical Master Zhuang, it does enable us to understand how he was viewed when this chapter was written, probably around the third quarter of the second century B.C.E. at the court of the Prince of Huainan, Liu An 淮南王劉安(179?-122 B.C.E.). The emphasis on Zhuang Zhou's peculiar language and the difficulty of pinning him down to any hard and fast philosophical positions is evident throughout.

The historical development of the text is as difficult to pinpoint as its author. According to chs. 32 ("Lie Yukou") and 20 ("The Mountain Tree"), Zhuang Zhou had a number of disciples, but there are no clear records of exactly who they were. Possible traces of his intellectual lineage may be discerned in several chapters dealing with quietism and Yogic practices in other philosophical texts of the same period, including the *Guanzi* 管子, the *Hanfeizi* 韓非子, the *Huainanzi* 淮南子, and the *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋. From these documents it appears that Master Zhuang's "school" was rather influential in the states of Chu and Qi during the late Warring States period and helped shape the cosmo-political thinking of Huang-Lao under the Han (see Roth 1993; 1997).

LATER DEVELOPMENTS. Later, however, during the staunchly Legalist Qin Dynasty and the overtly Confucian Han Dynasty, the text *Zhuangzi* was not much acclaimed. It rose somewhat more to the foreground again after the Three Kingdoms period when it received attention from writers such as He Yan 和晏 (d. 249). In the biography of Cao Zhi 曹植(192-232), He Yan's fondness for the *Daode jing* and *Zhuangzi* is noted, while the biography of Wang Can

王粲 (177-217) says that Ruan Ji 阮籍 (210-263) took Zhuang Zhou as his model and Ji Kang 嵇康 (223-262) admired the words of Master Lao and Master Zhuang. Clearly, as also documented in the contemporaneous movement of *Xuanxue* 玄學 (Profound Learning), a great intellectual and religious shift was taking place in China at this time, which saw a revival of Daoist and divination texts, such as the *Yijing*, over and above the Confucian classics, dominant until then. Best represented by the thinkers Wang Bi 王弼 (226-249) and Guo Xiang, it expressed itself in commentaries to the ancient Daoist classics. The elevation of the *Zhuangzi* is a gauge of the direction this religious shift was headed. Numerous early medieval poets, thinkers, and artists (notably calligraphers) took recourse to the *Zhuangzi* in formulating their visions and ideals (see Fukunaga 1960; Knaul 1985b; Liu SJ 1989).

Around the same time, Zhuang Zhou is first described as an object of veneration. The Western Jin writer, Ji Han 稽含, created a *Diao Zhuang Zhou tuwen* 吊莊周圖文 (Essay on a Painting of Mourning for Zhuang Zhou), in which he remarked that "in houses they sing praises of Tian Kuang 恬曠; in homes they paint the likenesses of Laozi and Zhuangzi" (*Quan Jinwen* 全晉文 65.8a). In his preface he also notes that a certain noble, the imperial son-in-law Wang Hongyuan 王弘遠, had a portrait of Zhuang Zhou installed in his mansion and encouraged courtiers to come and mourn before it.

Impact on Daoism and Buddhism. In the fourth century, the *Zhuangzi* in both its terminology and vision of ecstatic freedom became a major contributor to the imagery and literary world of Shangqing 上清 (Highest Clarity) Daoism, which takes up a number of its key terms. Examples are the "perfected person," "Great Clarity," the "Great One," "freedom from affairs," "fasting the mind," "making all things equal," and "sitting in oblivion" (Robinet 1983b, 63). Still, the use of the same terms does not mean an identity in worldview, and there are a number of key concepts in which the thought of the *Zhuangzi* differs significantly from that of Shangqing (Kohn 1992, 115). Nevertheless, the fact that *Zhuangzi* terms play an important role in the religion documents continued the impact of the text.

After that, it was influential in the adaptation of Buddhism into China and it is no accident that a prominent commentary to the text was written by Zhi Dun 支遁, the first aristocratic monk of medieval China (see Fukunaga 1956b). In addition, the *Zhuangzi* contributed significantly to the formation of Chan (Jap. Zen) Buddhism as a fusion of Buddhist ideology and ancient Daoist thought. Both share a

mutual distrust of language, an insistence that the Dao is found in everything, even excrement, and a dialogue style involving riddles or *gong'an* 公案 (Jap. *kôan;* see Fukunaga 1969; Knaul 1986).

Liu Guangyi, discussing the same issue, goes even further and, without making an outright claim of any direct influence, proposes that there is a historical bond of a deeper sort between Master Zhuang and the Buddha (1989). His view, moreover, was anticipated by Ma Xulun (1958, preface) and Takasu Yoshijirô (1944, 32-57) who separately theorized that there are enough passages in the *Zhuangzi* having ideas similar to Buddhist dogma, and there are enough possible references to Buddhist followers in North China during the transitional period in which the text was compiled, to demonstrate the influence of this Indian religion on some of its authors, if not upon Zhuang Zhou himself (Rand 1983, 48-49). Even if Ma and Takasu are right, it may be more accurate to refer generally to Indian or Indo-European, rather than specifically Buddhist influence (see Mair 1990).

Under the Tang dynasty, the *Zhuangzi* finally became a bona fide "classic" when it was canonized as the *Nanhua zhenjing* 南華真經 (Perfect Scripture of Southern Florescence, CT 745) by an imperial edict of Emperor Xuanzong in 742, the first year of the Tianbao 天寶 (Heavenly Treasure) reign period. At the same time, Master Zhuang was awarded the title Nanhua zhenren 南華真人. This title was further expanded to Weimiao yuantong zhenjun 微妙元通真君 (Perfected Lord of Subtlety and Primal Comprehension; see Robinet 1983b) under the Song emperor Huizong (1100-1125). Then, as well as also under the Ming and Qing, a number of new religious commentaries and literary glosses to the text appeared (see Boltz 1987, 203-204, 226-228), assuring the continued fruitfulness and relevance of the text. Commentators then included major Song statesmen and poets, such as Wang Anshi 王安世 (1021-1086) and Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), and were most successfully collected in Jiao Hong's 焦竑 (1541-1620) *Zhuangzi yi* 莊子翼 (Aid [for Reading] the *Zhuangzi*, CT 1487).

THE TEXT

CHAPTERS. The 33 chapters of the extant recension of the *Zhuangzi* are as follows:

1 *Xiaoyao you* 逍遙遊
(Carefree Wandering)
2 *Qiwu lun* 齊物論
(On the Equality of Things)
3 *Yangsheng zhu* 養生主
(Essentials for Nurturing Life)
4 *Renjian shi* 人間世
(The Human World)
5 *Dechong fu* 德充符
(Symbols of Integrity Fulfilled)
6 *Dazong shi* 大宗師
(The Great Ancestral Teacher)
7 *Ying diwang* 應帝王
(Responses for Emperors and Kings)
8 *Pianmu* 駢拇
(Webbed Toes)
9 *Mati* 馬蹄
(Horses' Hooves)
10 *Quqie* 胠篋
(Ransacking Coffers)
11 *Zaiyou* 在宥
(Preserving and Accepting)
12 *Tiandi* 天地
(Heaven and Earth)
13 *Tiandao* 天道
(The Way of Heaven)
14 *Tianyun* 天運
(Heavenly Revolutions)
15 *Keyi* 刻意
(Ingrained Opinions)
16 *Shanxing* 繕性
(Mending Nature)
17 *Qiushui* 秋水
(Autumn Floods)
18 *Zhile* 至樂
(Ultimate Joy)
19 *Dasheng* 達生
(Understanding Life)
20 *Shanmu* 山木
(The Mountain Tree)
21 *Tianzi Fang* 田子方
(Sir Square Field)
22 *Zhi beiyou* 知北遊
(Knowledge Wanders North)
23 *Gengsang Chu* 庚桑楚
(Gengsang Chu)
24 *Xu Wugui* 徐無鬼
(Ghostless Xu)
25 *Zeyang* 則陽
(Sunny)
26 *Waiwu* 外物
(External Things)
27 *Yuyan* 寓言
(Metaphors)
28 *Rangwang* 讓王
(Abdicating Kingship)
29 *Dao Zhi* 盜跖
(Robber Footpad)
30 *Shuojian* 說劍
(Discoursing on Swords)
31 *Yufu* 漁父
(An Old Fisherman)
32 *Lie Yukou* 列禦寇
(Lie Yukou)
33 *Tianxia* 天下
(All Under Heaven)

The first seven chapters of the text, ever since the Han dynasty have been referred to as the "Inner Chapters;" since Guo Xiang, the next fifteen have been known as the "Outer Chapters," and the last eleven as the "Miscellaneous Chapters." The Inner Chapters are widely regarded as the most authentic, while the Outer and Miscellaneous

Chapters are considered to have varying degrees of closeness to the thought and style of Zhuang Zhou. As a matter of fact, scholars of all dynasties, from Guo Xiang (d. 312) and Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824) through Su Shi and Jiao Hong, to Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619-1692), harbored some doubts that all of the chapters in the *Zhuangzi* were from the hand of a single author. Modern scholarship has made enormous progress in separating out the various strands and layers of what is surely an accretional anthology composed of a rather diverse combination of late Warring States and Han period elements.

Schools. A rough consensus is that, in addition to the Inner Chapters which are attributed to Zhuang Zhou and his immediate disciples, the *Zhuangzi* contains material from the following five major "schools":

1. a group of "primitivists" who were influenced by the Old Masters (such as Laozi) and who were active around the end of the Qin Dynasty or the beginning of the Han (chs. 8-10; parts of 11, 12, and 14);
2. advocates of the "hedonist" Yang Zhu 楊朱 (5th century B.C.E.) who were active around 200 B.C.E. (chs. 28-31);
3. a "syncretist" group of eclectic thinkers who may have been responsible for compiling the text sometime between 180 and 130 B.C.E. (chs. 12-16, 33).
4. later followers of Zhuang Zhou who strove to imitate the style and themes of the Inner Chapters (chs. 17-22); and
5. "anthologists" who collected fragmentary materials, including some that may derive from Zhuang Zhou himself and which could therefore also be placed in the Inner Chapters (chs. 23-27, 32);

Taken together, the "stuff" of the *Zhuangzi* appears to have coalesced over a period of a little more than a century, i.e., from the late fourth to the early second century B.C.E. The Prince of Huainan 淮南, Liu An 劉安, and advisers at his court may have played a major role in the selection, arrangement, and interpretation of the material of the text that thenceforth came to be known as the *Zhuangzi* (see Graham 1990; Roth 1991).

Composition. The composition of the *Zhuangzi* is actually less neat and tidy than the above scheme would indicate. Even the "Inner Chapters" are problematic and the fact that the process of redaction

continued actively down to the fourth century C.E. means that the text was subject to substantial editorial manipulation beyond the formative period of the late Warring States and early Western Han. The most sophisticated, systematic and thorough analysis of the various components of the *Zhuangzi* is that by Christopher Rand (1983). He offers a complete list of all 212 sections of the extant recension, with characterizations in each section of the matrical patterns—mystical, individualist, primitivist, rationalist, and indeterminate—and commonalities, such as dialecticial reasoning based on relativism, intuitive imagination based on experiential knowledge, recognition and acceptance of an all-encompassing and eternal Dao 道 (Way), preservation of one's *de* 德 (virtue) as the functioning of Dao in man, and *wuwei* 無為 (inaction, nonaction) in accordance with the Daode. Liu (1994) presents a more traditional, but nonetheless influential, vision of the text's composition, asserting its origin before the Qin dynasty.

Regardless of the details of composition, over which scholars will continue to debate, the *Zhuangzi*—as it has come down to us—cannot possibly all be attributed to a single author. The writing varies greatly in quality and contains many different points of view, some of which are quite contradictory. Thus, we encounter in the *Zhuangzi* both idealism and materialism, nonaction and purposeful action (at least on the part of underlings), reclusion and engagement, an ascetic limitation of desires and epicureanism, eclecticism and exclusivism, etc. Strangely enough, several of the chapters (e.g., the "heaven" chs., 12-14) even seem to be championing Confucian attitudes. This is peculiar in light of the fact that Confucius is Master Zhuang's favorite target of satire in other parts of the book. These stark contrasts of viewpoint reflect the developments and interactions that took place within Huang-Lao and other schools of thought during the late Warring States and Qin-Han periods in response to the social and political transformations occurring at the time. Not only was the composition and formation of the *Zhuangzi* an extremely complicated process, the same may be said of its subsequent textual history. Indeed, there is much about the early editorial and redactional history of the text that is quite vague.

COMMENTARIES. According to the "Bibliographical Treatise" of the *Hanshu* 漢書 (History of the Han), written by Ban Gu 班固 (32-92) on a foundation prepared by Liu Xin 劉歆 (d. 23), the *Zhuangzi* contained 52 chapters. During the third and fourth centuries C.E., several commentaries, all now lost, were written on the *Zhuangzi* and two of these were based on a 52-chapter recension. One was by a

certain Mr. Meng 孟氏, of whom nothing is know. Another, by Sima Biao 司馬彪 (240-306) in 21 scrolls, consisted of 7 inner, 28 outer, 14 miscellaneous, and 3 interpretive chapters. Three further commentaries from around the same time were based on redactions with different numbers of chapters:

1. Cui Zhuan 崔譔, 10 scrolls with 7 inner and 20 outer for a total of 27 chapters;
2. Xiang Xiu 向秀, 20 scrolls presumably with 7 inner and approximately 20 outer chapters;
3. Li Yi 李頤, 30 scrolls with 30 or 35 chapters (see Knaul 1982).

Four significant observations may be made about these Jin period commentaries on the *Zhuangzi*: 1. the 52-chapter version of the Han period survived until at least the fourth century; 2. the number of outer chapters begins to destabilize during the third century; 3. most versions from the third and fourth centuries still do not have a section of miscellaneous chapters; 4. most versions would appear to share a relatively stable core of seven inner chapters. The latter characteristic is somewhat reassuring in the sense that it tends to sanction the Inner Chapters as those which the majority of early editors and commentators agreed on as typifying the *Zhuangzi*, whether or not they were written by Zhuang Zhou himself. Aside from the relative stability of the Inner Chapters, the most notable feature of the flurry of Jin-period editorial activity is that it clearly shows the high degree of flux that the text was in at that time.

Guo Xiang. By far the most important Jin period commentary and rearrangement of the *Zhuangzi* is that by Guo Xiang which consisted of 33 chapters in 33 scrolls (CT 745). Guo's version eventually replaced the other competing redactions and is the basis of all extant editions of the *Zhuangzi*. According to information provided in the preface of Lu Deming's 陸德明 (556-627) *Jingdian shiwen* 經典釋文 (Explanation of Terms in the Classics) and in Guo's own annotations, the latter must have carried out a major revision of the text. If, as is likely, Guo began with the 52-chapter version bequeathed from the Han period, he would have reduced the text to a little over two thirds of its original size. His editorial activity may have included the removal of passages that made no sense to him and of those similar to works such as the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (Classic of Mountains and Seas) and books of dream prognostications (see Fukunaga 1964; Knaul 1982).

In his commentary, which was written under the aegis of the reigning tendency of Profound Learning, Guo Xiang dwells on the

relationship between being and nonbeing, between action and nonaction, emphasizing spontaneity or naturalness and the attainment of harmony with the cosmos by realizing one's inner nature (*xing* 性), the share (*fen* 分) one is given of the Dao, and destiny (*ming* 命), the principle (*li* 理) of the cosmos active in one's life (see Seki 1965; Hachiya 1967; Knaul 1985a; 1985c; Robinet 1983a). Guo Xiang's commentary is usually accompanied by the subcommentary of the early Tang Daoist master Cheng Xuanying 成玄英 (fl. 630-660). In subsequent centuries, numerous commentaries, subcommentaries, phonological and philological notes and so forth were composed for the *Zhuangzi*. There were also collections or selections of previous commentaries and subcommentaries, particularly during the Qing period. Some of these are massive and comprehensive. The most convenient and widely used of these compilations is Guo Qingfan's 郭慶藩 (1844-1896) *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋 (Collected Explanations on the Zhuangzi) of the year 1894 (see Roth 1993).

Lin Xiyi. Because of its protean nature and extremely complicated textual history, it is inevitable that the *Zhuangzi* will be read in many different ways. One of the most remarkable pre-modern interpretive studies, and one which is poorly known, is that of Lin Xiyi 林希逸 (c. 1200-1273), the *Zhuangzi kouyi* 莊子口義 (Oral Signification of the Zhuangzi, CT 735, dat. 1261). The author of similar interpretations of the *Daode jing* and the *Liezi*, Lin sought to provide clear and easy explanations of the sort that could be used in the oral portions of an examination. He also claimed to have dabbled with Buddhist books and applied what he learned there to his exegesis of the *Zhuangzi* and other Daoist books. This enabled him to "find something that, in fact, earlier scholars had not fully realized." It is especially interesting that he "wished to wash away the crudities of Guo Xiang for the Old Transedent of the Southern Florescence."

Luo Miandao. Another intriguing interpretation of the *Zhuangzi* from a slightly later period is Luo Miandao's 羅勉道 (d. 1367) *Nanhua zhenjing xunben* 南華真經循本 (Complying with the Original Meaning of the Perfect Scripture of the Southern Cultural Florescence, CT 742). Luo opines that previous commentators had seriously distorted the *Zhuangzi* by "elaborating Pure Talk, or dragging in the language of Zen, or forcefully applying the orthodox opinions of the Confucians, none of which point to the meaning of the original text." Consequently, he strove to explicate the *Zhuangzi* as much as possible with pre-Qin materials.

Lu Xixing. A common assumption among Daoist scholars and practitioners is that the *Zhuangzi* constitutes an outgrowth of the *Daode*

jing. A good example of an interpretive text which espouses this view is Lu Xixing's 陸西星 (1520-1601) *Nanhua zhenjing fumo* 南華真經副墨 (The True Scripture of the Southern Florescence and Assistant Ink, dat. 1578), in 8 scrolls, today contained in the *Zangwai daoshu* 藏外道書 (Daoist Texts Outside the Canon). Although the title is taken from a figure briefly alluded to in chapter 6 as the immediate source of esoteric knowledge about the Way, Lu's text is an explication of the whole of the *Zhuangzi*. Dividing the latter up into sections, it relates the gist of each. At the conclusion of every chapter there are verses of a song which briefly summarize its contents.

Lu Xixing believes that the *Zhuangzi* functions as a commentary on the *Daode jing* and that, if one wishes to understand the former, one must first carefully read the latter. Thus, in explicating the titles and contents of the various chapters in the *Zhuangzi*, Lu frequently asserts that they are derived from certain passages or ideas in the *Daode jing*. For example, he maintains that the main idea of the second chapter, "On the Equality of Things," most likely comes from Laozi's "mysterious identity" (*xuantong* 玄同). Similarly, the eighth chapter, "Webbed Toes," takes the Way and virtue as fundamental but considers benevolence and righteousness as adventitious excrescences. This is held to be precisely comparable to the formulation in the *Daode jing* that after the Way is lost then there is virtue; after virtue is lost, there is benevolence; and after benevolence is lost, there is righteousness (ch. 18).

A noteworthy feature of this study is that, in an effort to demonstrate the essential unity of the *Zhuangzi*, it frequently uses passages from the book itself to explicate and verify its sections. Yet Lu's approach is also eclectic in that he applies Buddhist ideas to elucidate the *Zhuangzi*. Likewise, he also occasionally alludes to debates among Confucian scholars to convey his understanding of passages in the text. Lu's commentary was well regarded by other exegetes and was frequently cited in comprehensive commentaries such as Jiao Hong's *Zhuangzi yi*.

WORLDVIEW

Aside from the numerous and difficult compositional, textual, and transmissive complications attendant upon the *Zhuangzi*, if we accept the received text as a whole, it does present us with an analyzable and interpretable body of thought that we identify with the corporate personality who is known as Master Zhuang and whose dominant com-

ponent (at least in spirit) was probably Zhuang Zhou. As such, the *Zhuangzi* presents certain key concepts which are widely recognized as being characteristic of the work. Among these, the most outstanding are spontaneity, the perfected person or true man, heart-mind, fasting of the heart-mind, sitting and forgetting, and the Great Clod (Robinet 1997, 30-35; Creel 1970, 25-36).

It is interesting that the classical term *ziran* 自然 (literally, "self-so") has come to mean "nature" in modern Mandarin; in the *Zhuangzi*, it signifies doing/being what comes naturally, i.e., following one's inner nature or character (see Liu 1998). The perfected is the ideal person who practices the truth and is perfectly in accord with the Way. One of the most important means of becoming a perfected person is to calm and empty the heart-mind, the human organ of sentience, by "fasting" and thus making it as clean and pure as a mirror which reflects everything but absorbs nothing. Cultivation of the heart-mind is accomplished through sitting and forgetting which is clearly a type of meditation. All of this is directed toward the achievement of harmony with the Great Clod, a metaphor for the universe, the sum total of reality.

Other prominent topics in the *Zhuangzi* include the relativity of language, paradoxes and riddles, the nature of knowing, skepticism concerning the efficacy of pure logic, letting things be (noninterference), heaven and humanity, dreaming and reality, life and death, activity and tranquillity, and supreme detachment (see Graham 1981, 6-26; Fung 1989, 5-21; Cheng 1997, 102-31). Taken together, these interrelated themes in the *Zhuangzi* contribute to the special appeal that it has held for readers during the last two millennia.

MAIN CHAPTERS. **Carefree wandering**. To specify the main aspects of Master Zhuang's thought, one may use several rubrics associated with important chapters of the *Zhuangzi*. The first chapter, "Carefree Wandering," opens the door to comprehending the whole of Master Zhuang's outlook on life. In it, he espouses that freedom attained by forgetting reality and transcending material objects. He uses the parable of the gigantic Peng bird and the tiny dove along with other metaphors to show that everything is confined by material limitations and is thus prevented from attaining complete freedom. Only the ultimate man (*zhiren* 至人) can attain unbounded freedom by being oblivious to achievement and fame, by not distinguishing between self and other, and by entering a realm of creative unconventionality. In this chapter, we are introduced to the concept of wandering (*you* 遊), the key to understanding the spirit of the entire book (see Fukunaga 1946; Graham 1976; Crandell 1983; Mair 1983d

The great teacher. Another important chapter is the sixth, "The Great Ancestral Teacher." This chapter presents a worldview centered on the concept of the Dao. The Dao, Way or Track, is the source of all phenomena in the universe. It existed before heaven and earth but cannot be described as possessing action or form (see Mair 1994a, 55). If one wants to practice and attain it, nothing is better than to model oneself after the perfected of old who were its embodiment. The chief qualities of these perfected persons are that they were unmindful of moral strictures and unconstrained by knowledge, had few desires, were unconcerned about life and death, and merged with nature.

The equality of things. The second chapter, "On the Equality of Things," has received the lion's share of attention in recent decades, particularly from philosophers (see Graham 1969). It complements the ontological, experiential concerns of the sixth chapter by offering a theory of knowledge according to which all phenomena are coequal. By negating the distinction between "this" and "that," between "yes" and "no," it offers a notion of what might be called "absolute relativity." In place of dualism and distinctions, this chapter holds that all entities return to the Dao which has no beginning or end (see Graham 1983; Hansen 1983; Chinn 1997).

The remaining chapters of the inner chapters deal with such subjects as how to nourish life (ch. 3), how to get on in the world (ch. 4), what to do about the exigencies of politics (ch. 7), and how to cope with socially determined morality and materially conditioned reality by reverting to primal simplicity (ch. 5; for discussions, see Saso 1983; Wu 1990; Allinson 1990; Gao 1992; Billeter 1994).

Of the **outer chapters**, the most magnificent in terms of conception and literary execution is "Autumn Floods" (ch. 18). The ideas expressed in it are close to the thought of the first two chapters. Beginning in the form of a lengthy dialogue between the Earl of the Yellow River and the Overlord of the Northern Sea, it holds that—as viewed in the Dao—big and little, honor and dishonor, life and death, right and wrong are all relative. Not only are all things relative, they are constantly evolving and transforming. Based on this principle, one should follow nature, acquiesce in fate, and avoid all striving, especially for fame or rank. Only then can one be free.

Of the **miscellaneous chapters**, the most consequential is the final one which is a *tour de force* survey of the main schools of thought during the Warring States period. This chapter can safely be regarded as the first treatise on the history of Chinese philosophy. Its author believed that, in high antiquity, the arts of the Dao were uni-

fied, but they diverged and split when competing thinkers emphasized various aspects of the Dao. The author grants that each of them—including Zhuang Zhou!—captured a part of the arts of the Dao. It is significant that, in his discussion of Zhuang Zhou, translated earlier, he stresses two salient qualities: mastery of language and ludic propensity.

RELATION TO THE *DAODE JING*. The *Daode jing* and the *Zhuangzi* have been intimately linked since the Han period, though notably not before. For example, the "Yaolue" 要略 (Outline of Essentials) of the *Huainanzi* mentions *Lao Zhuang zhi shu* 老莊之術 or "the arts of Laozi and Zhuangzi." Similarly, in his "biography" Sima Qian is at pains to declare twice that Zhuang Zhou's primary purpose was to amplify the teachings of the Old Master. This linkage became especially prevalent in the Six Dynasties period and has remained in use as a common expression up to the present day (e.g., *Lao-Zhuang sixiang* 老莊思想 or "the thought of Laozi and Zhuangzi").

But there has, at the same time, been a faction of adherents to this school of thought who preferred to put Master Zhuang ahead of the Old Masters: Ji Kang in his *Yu Shan Juyuan juejiao shu* 與山巨源絕交書 (Letter Breaking off Relations with Shan Juyuan) says that he "relied equally on the works of both Zhuangzi and Laozi;" Guo Xiang in his commentary to the first chapter states that "this is the talk of Zhuangzi and Laozi;" Sun Sheng 孫盛 of the Jin in his *Laozi yiwen fanxun* 老子疑問反訊 (Counter-Questions to Inquiries on Doubts Concerning the Old Master) states that "someone inquired about Zhuangzi and Laozi;" Liu Xie 劉勰 (465-520) in the "Mingshi" 明詩 (Elucidating Poetry) chapter of his *Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍 (The Literary Mind and Ornate Rhetoric) insists that "only after Zhuangzi and Laozi receded did landscape flourish;" and Yan Zhitui 顏之推 (531-590?) in the "Mianxue pian" 勉學篇 (Exhortation to Study) chapter of his *Yanshi jiaxun* 顏氏家訓 (Mr. Yan's Family Instructions; see Dien 1995) ranked the *Zhuangzi* first among the *Sanxuan* 三玄 or "three mystery texts," i.e., *Zhuangzi*, *Daode jing*, and *Yijing*.

PRACTICE

DAOIST TEXTS. Master Zhuang served as an inspiration for a wide variety of Daoist practitioners. For instance, we may examine the anonymous *Zhuang Zhou qi juejie* 莊周氣訣解 (Explanation of Zhuang Zhou's Esoteric Formula on Energy, CT 823), which is

based on the final, one-sentence section of chapter 3: "Resins may be consumed when they are used for fuel, but the fire they transmit knows no end." Just as fire relies on fuel to be transmitted, so is life extended by *qi* 氣 [vital energy, breath], and by drawing in *qi*, one may nurture life and extend longevity. Master Zhuang may have made light of those who wished to prolong the physical body, but that did not prevent them from seeking guidance in the book which bears his name.

The Chifeng sui. The Ming-period Daoist Zhou Lüjing 周履靖, also known as Meidian daoren 梅顛道人 or the "Daoist Confounded by Plum Blossoms," composed an illustrated work of ascetic cultivation in three scrolls entitled *Chifeng sui* 赤鳳髓 (Marrow of the Red Phoenix, dat. 1578; trl. Despeux 1988; Takehiro 1990), edited in the *Congshu jicheng chubian* 叢書集成初編 (Compilation of Collectanea, First Series). One of the key portions of this text are the "Forty-six Postures of the Red Phoenix Marrow," a form of inner-alchemical sleep exercises, the ninth of which is "Zhuang Zhou's Butterfly Dream." The accompanying inscription reads: "The practitioner lies down on his back and pillows his head on his right arm; his left arm rests loosely. The left leg is extended straight, the right leg is bent. He holds his breath and circulates twenty-four mouthfuls of energy. This will cure nocturnal emissions."

DAOIST TECHNIQUES. **Fasting the mind** (*xinzhai* 心齋). Although Master Zhuang did not necessarily approve of them, some of the techniques for stilling the senses and circulating the energy described in the *Zhuangzi*, which ostensibly had a basis in actual Yogic practice, were perpetuated and practiced in succeeding centuries. Prominent among them is "Master Zhuang's Method for Fasting the Mind," later also known the "Method of Listening to One's Breath," which derives from ch. 4:

> ...listen not with your ears but with your mind. Listen not with your mind but with your primordial *qi*. The ears are limited to listening, the mind is limited to tallying. The primordial *qi*, however, awaits things emptily. It is only through the Dao that one can gather emptiness, and emptiness is the fasting of the mind.

Observe that this Yogic quotation is ironically, almost perversely, placed in the mouth of Confucius!

Later adepts understood this method to mean listening to one's own breathing as follows: When one begins, one is supposed to listen only with the "roots of the ears," not with consciousness; nor should one concentrate on the air passing through the sinuses or collecting in the thoracic cavities. Instead, one should only be aware of the inhala-

tions and exhalations themselves. As for the speed of one's breathing, its depth, and its amount, one should allow these qualities to vary effortlessly and naturally instead of striving to control them.

In this manner, one will gradually become adept to the point that spirit and *qi* become unified. At that point, all distracting thought will have vanished and one will become completely oblivious of the phenomenal world. When this stage is reached, one has entered the realm of "fasting the mind," having realized the emptying of the mind of desire and the purification of the spirit. It is obvious that this elaborate description goes beyond what was in the *Zhuangzi* itself, so that there either was a tradition of oral exegesis accompanying the text or subsequent Yogic practices were grafted onto the text by way of elaboration.

Sitting in oblivion. In later Daoism a technical term used to describe a state of deep trance or intense absorption, the notion of *zuowang* 坐忘 occurs first in the *Zhuangzi*, with the classical passage found in ch. 6: "I smash up my limbs and body, drive out perception and intellect, cast off form, do away with understanding, and make myself identical with the Great Thoroughfare" (see Watson 1968, 90). The idea here as well as in the later tradition is a mental state of complete unknowing that involves a loss of personal identity and self and is the utter immersion in the nonbeing of the universe.

Guo Xiang interprets the state as a twofold oblivion that begins with forgetting "all outer manifestations," then moves on to the forgetfulness of the inner truth of things, the underlying ground that "causes the manifestations." He sees it as a way of attaining his ideal state of oneness, realized by going along with all the changes of the universe. The Tang commentator Cheng Xuanying, representative of the philosophy of Twofold Mystery (Chongxuan 重玄), further linked this twofold scheme of Guo Xiang's with Jizang's theory of two truths and developed a Mâdhyamika-like pattern of twofold forgetfulness (*jianwang* 兼忘). This in turn was taken up by the twelfth patriarch of Shangqing, Sima Chengzhen (647-735) who developed the method of "sitting in oblivion" into a seven-stage process of attaining the Dao, writing a treatise known as *Zuowang lun* 坐忘論(CT 1036; see Kohn 1987).

Other yogic techniques described in the *Zhuangzi* that almost certainly reflect actual hygienic practices of old are the "bear strides and bird stretches" of chapter 15, which can be considered the forerunner of the Han-dynasty *Daoyin tu* 導引圖 (Gymnastics Chart) and Hua Tuo's 華陀 famous "Five Animals Exercises" (see Despeux 1989), although again the author of this chapter is wryly critical of

such practices. Another set of practices that anticipates Daoist returns to the chaotic state of primordiality are the "Arts of Mr. Hundun," 混沌術, mentioned in chapter 22 and directly related to the Hundun myth in ch. 7 (see Girardot 1983). In addition, it should be noted that there is a radical difference between the abstract, "empty" *qi* of the *Zhuangzi* and that of Mencius's concrete, physical "expansive" *qi* described in roughly the same period.

YUAN DRAMA. A different form of the *Zhuangzi*'s practical impact is its adaptation in Chinese theater plays. Most prominently, Zhuang Zhou's "Butterfly Dream," which was probably the favorite passage of most readers of the *Zhuangzi* (see Wu 1990), is the subject of a Yuan drama entitled *Zhuang Zhou meng die* 莊周夢蝶 (Zhuang Zhou Dreams of the Butterfly), written by Shi Zhang 史樟 (ca. 1279). In the play, Zhuang Zhou is a celestial Daoist god with the title "Perfected Lord of Southern Florescence and Ultimate Virtue, [Residing in] the Jade Capital of Highest Clarity." Once he smiled when seeing golden lads and jade maidens holding banners, pennants, and bejeweled umbrellas, which infuriated the Jade Emperor who banished him to earth as a member of the Zhuang family. On earth, Zhuang lives a besotted life, chasing after women and showing himself to be fond of drink. Hearing that Hangzhou is a romantic place, he goes there on an excursion, but the star Venus transforms itself into an old man who comes before Zhuang Zhou to enlighten him. The old man makes him drunk three times and causes him to have three dreams, in which he sees a large butterfly that instructs him to refine the pills of immortality. After concocting the elixir, Zhuang Zhou suddenly realizes that he is a god from a Daoist heaven who was banished to earth and that he should "complete his spiritual progress and pay court to the Prime." Otherwise, he now understands, if he ever again has mortal thoughts, he will be banished still further down and eternally stray from the Dao of the immortals. In its strictures against wine, women, and wealth, the drama is manifestly influenced by the Quanzhen 全真 (Complete Perfection) school who emphasized strict monastic discipline.

The above are but a few examples of the disparate interpretations and amplifications that have been applied to the *Zhuangzi* by Daoist adepts during the past two millennia. One may object that, to varying degrees, they have distorted the true intent of Master Zhuang and his immediate followers. On the other hand, one cannot deny that their veneration of the text is genuine and that it has played a vital role in the evolving tradition of Daoist religion and thought.

To summarize, the *Zhuangzi* has had an overwhelming literary, philosophical, and religious influence upon writers, thinkers, and practitioners of various persuasions and is one of the oldest and most pervasive Daoist documents. Its significance and impact, not only in Daoism but also in Chinese culture in general, is all the more remarkable in light of the fact that the text is quite anti-Confucian. Although there are chapters, such as those with the word "Heaven" in their titles, which seem to constitute an unsuccessful attempt to subvert the *Zhuangzi* to a Confucian agenda, Confucius and his school of thought are ridiculed—with a high degree of effectiveness—on many occasions throughout the text. It is probable that the *Zhuangzi* survived, in spite of its anti-orthodoxy, because of its sheer wit and charm. Although Confucius and his followers are frequently made to appear like fools in the *Zhuangzi*, the satire is executed with such humor and good grace that even the most staid Confucians must have smiled (at least inwardly) when they read it. Above all, the *Zhuangzi* succeeded because it represented a necessary countercultural foil or relief to the solemnity and seriousness of the host of other political thinkers who have crowded the pages of the history of Chinese thought, particularly in its formative stage during the Warring States period.

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