

Zhuangzi

Text and Context

by

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Three Pines Press
P. O. Box 530416
St. Petersburg, FL 33747
www.threepinespress.com

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9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

First Three Pines Edition, 2014
Printed in the United States of America
⊗ This edition is printed on acid-free paper that meets the American National Standard Institute Z39.48 Standard.
Distributed in the United States by Three Pines Press.

Cover art: The character *you* for “free and easy wandering” in the calligraphy of Marcello Assandri.
Art work: “The Peng Bird” (p. 32) and “Rocks of Beauty” (p. 254) by Marcello Assandri.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

ISBN 978-1-931483-27-8

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Acknowledgments

“Work is love made visible,” says Kahlil Gibran’s *The Prophet*. Writing is work made visible. This book thus represents the double visibility of my academic work and my long-standing love for Daoism in all its forms, and especially of the ancient classic *Zhuangzi*.

However much we love something, though, and however much we are ready to work for it, nothing ever happens without opportunity and outside stimulation. The stimulation for this book came from Xu Liying, academic director of the Taoist College Singapore, where I taught a twelve-session, semester-equivalent class on Daoist cultivation in the spring of 2012. The students enjoyed the class so much that they requested my return in the following year, and Dr. Xu, knowing that I had recently published a selected translation of the *Zhuangzi*, suggested the classic as my focus. I agreed, although daunted at the time. A whole semester only on *Zhuangzi*, how am I going to do *that*? I sure hope there’s enough. Well, I needn’t have worried. There’s enough here for two semesters easily.

Once the decision is made to pursue a certain task, again we have choices—as the traditional Scottish folksong has it, to take the low road or the high road. I could quite easily have assigned the twelve chapters of my topic-based translation to the students and spent each class talking about the theme in general terms, encouraging discussion and letting things unfold as they would. But I decided to take on the challenge of doing something deep and solid, to really confront and work through all the different aspects of the text.

One reason for this decision was that I had some unfinished business with the *Zhuangzi*, going back to the early stages of my academic life. I had started my Daoist career in the 1970s with a dissertation on the Song-dynasty immortal Chen Tuan, pursuing the question of what “immortality” meant to the people at the time, what the key personal characteristics were that made someone an immortal. Chen Tuan, in layers of records and stories throughout the Song and Ming, appeared very much as a *Zhuangzi*-style mystic, not only in his name but in his activities: wandering at ease through life, happily connected to heaven, highly perceptive with regard to the energies of others, respectful toward authority but not intimidated by it, entirely his own person from beginning to end.

Wishing to understand what role the *Zhuangzi* played in the Chinese mystical tradition, I applied for and received a grant from the Japan Society

for the Promotion of Science, spent a year studying intensive Japanese, and moved to Kyoto. There I was immensely fortunate to work with the great *Zhuangzi* specialist Fukunaga Mitsuji, whose rendition of the text forms the backbone of Burton Watson's translation, still to my mind the most powerful English version. For two years, I breathed, ate, and slept *Zhuangzi*, studying the text, its commentaries, its role in poetry, its impact on Chan Buddhism, and more, always guided and supported by Fukunaga who made his numerous articles available to me—often having to dig deep in old boxes or climb high to reach the top of his bookshelves.

The work resulted in five articles, published in various journals in the mid 1980s, but it stopped there. Guided by Max Kaltenmark and Anna Seidel, I moved on to more religious Daoist texts, such as the *Xisheng jing* and the *Zuowang lun*, and from there further afield into Daoist mythology, monasticism, history, medicine, and body cultivation. While the *Zhuangzi* never completely dropped out of my sight, influencing many aspects of later Daoism in worldview, terminology, and imagery, it did not take center stage again until 2009, when the editors of Skylight Path Press asked me to do a selected translation with commentary for their classics series. I agreed and spent the summer of 2010 in Albuquerque, cheerfully perusing different translations, reacquainting myself with the original, making selections, and deciding how best to present the worldview of the *entire* text in a semi-coherent fashion. The resulting book, *Chuang-tzu: The Tao of Perfect Happiness*, came out in 2011, and I gave a copy to Dr. Xu when I taught in Singapore in 2012.

Now confronted with the task of providing a semester's worth of serious lectures on the text, I knew I was not completely unprepared, since I could draw on my translation as well as on those five old articles and my various discussions of the *Zhuangzi* in conjunction with later Daoist texts and cultivation methods. However, it became very clear very quickly that there was an enormous amount of material to cover and that there were multiple aspects and dimensions to the project. The greatest issue was inside versus outside, emic versus etic: the careful reading of the text itself, understanding its meaning, interpreting its concepts, and discussing its implications *versus* the various relationships it stands in: history, society, philosophy, Daoist schools, commentaries, poetry, art, and Buddhism, as well as cross-cultural comparisons with Western concepts and thinkers, from Aristotle through Meister Eckhart to Derrida.

The choice I made was to include both text and context and to give equal weight to both. However, rather than focus on either one for any length of time, I decided to interweave the two in a dynamic interaction of patterns, writing chapters short enough so I could present two topics in each of the twelve class sessions. The book, therefore, has twenty-four chapters: all the odd-numbered chapters are on context, from the compilation of the

text to its reading in 21st century ecology; the even-numbered chapters are on text, presenting and explicating the core concepts of the *Zhuangzi* from perfect happiness to playful uselessness.

Each sequence can be read on its own—all about the text in the even chapters, all about its history and comparison in the odd ones—but the sections also connect in an integrated synthesis. It is, therefore, no accident that “Ordinary Thinking” comes after “Axial Age Philosophy,” “Meditation and Self-Cultivation” follows “Religious Daoism,” “The Self” is presented next to “Mysticism,” and so on. The *Zhuangzi* exerts its powerful magic even when writing about it, so that—with some modification and tweaking in the actual writing process—the book has grown, quite by its own making, into an intricate warp and weft of concepts and connections, interpretations and insights.

I have kept myself largely in the background, summarizing the readings of previous scholars. But the very act of comprehensive compilation has created patterns and led to a new and different appreciation of the inherent system of the *Zhuangzi*. In addition, I have presented my own take on occasion, bringing one or the other dimension of modern science to bear on what I think the text is really after. I have also, except when citing someone else’s study, refrained from talking about Zhuangzi when I meant the text. Zhuangzi *not* in italics is the person who has a biography in the historical records and appears as a protagonist in the text. The philosophy, the work, is of the *Zhuangzi*, a conglomerate that incorporates different strands yet has a power and integrity all its own.

In the actual writing I am indebted to supporters in all four directions of the globe. To the north, in North Carolina and Alabama, I much appreciate the immense help I received from Shawn Arthur and Daniel Doyle, who provided me with much needed resources and sound advice. To the south, in my own town of St. Petersburg, I am deeply grateful to Greg Colgan of the Eckerd College Library, interlibrary-loan master *extraordinaire* who never tired to supply me with books and articles, however obscure.

To the west, in Los Angeles, I much wish to thank Robin Wang and her assistant Fan Ni who helped me obtain research materials and connected me to Chinese scholars. And to the east, I am indebted to Chen Guying who invited me to the Third Cross-Strait Sinology Forum in Xiamen in November, 2012, where I met and heard and read all the major players on the Chinese *Zhuangzi* front, learning a lot and receiving immense inspiration.

Last, and most importantly, I thank Xu Liying for her instigation and my students at the Taoist College Singapore for their enthusiastic participation and never-ending questions and comments during the class, which have made this study what it is. The final presentation of the book, moreover, owes much to the wonderful artwork of Marcello Assandri, friend and fellow China enthusiast.

Chapter One

The Text

The text *Zhuangzi* 莊子 is named after the Warring States thinker Master Zhuang (d. 286 BCE). As described in chapter 63 of Sima Qian's 司馬遷 *Shiji* 史記 (Historical Records) of 104 BCE, his full name was Zhuang Zhou 莊周 and he lived during the rule of Kings Hui of Liang 梁惠王 (r. 370-319) and Xuan of Qi 齊宣王 (r. 319-301). Of lower aristocratic background, he held a minor post in Meng 盟, which formed part of the state of Song 宋 (in modern Henan). Most likely well trained in the arts of the gentleman (Billeter 2010, 83-84) and occupying a minor office in the “Lacquer Garden” (Wang 2004, 186), he became known for his erudition and the quality of his language. King Wei of Chu 楚威王 (r. 339-329) tried to tempt him into accepting the post of prime minister, but Zhuangzi compared this office to the role of the sacrificial ox and insisted that he would rather pursue his own enjoyment (Fung 1952, 1:221; Höchsmann and Yang 2007, 3; Møllgaard 2007, 11; Roth 1993a, 56; Wang 2004, 13; Yang 2007, 3).

Flourishing in the 4th century BCE, and living in the vibrant and exuberant southern culture of Chu (Coutinho 2004, 28; see Zhang 1987), Zhuang Zhou was a contemporary of the Confucian thinker Mencius 孟子 (372-289), the dialectician Hui Shi 惠施 (380-305), and the poet Qu Yuan 屈原 (343-278), to whom several shamanic songs in the *Chuci* 楚辭 (Songs of the South; trl. Hawkes 1959) are attributed (Nienhauser 1986, 975). Seeing the annexation and partition of his home state by Qi, Wei, and Chu, he received a rather negative impression of political power (Billeter 2008, 262; see also Deng 2011).

As for his personality, various anecdotes in the *Zhuangzi* show him as a man of “considerable fire, deep compassion, fortitude of character, intellectual audacity, as well as radical wit and originality” (Höchsmann and Yang

2007, 1)—an altogether engaging and rather whimsical personality (Klein 2011, 309). Never partisan or exalting himself, he was rather poor, wearing a patched gown (ch. 32) and simple sandals (ch. 20), and on occasion poached for food in a local aristocrat's game reserve (ch. 20). Yet he refused to take office for more money and better status (ch. 17), accepting the vagaries of life's circumstances, his own as well as that of loved ones, as part of the natural flow (chs. 18, 24, 32) (Graham 1989, 174-76; 1981, 116-25; Chen 2010, 5-7, 10).

Zhuang Zhou distrusted official rules, standardized categories, established opposites, and the dictates of language, instead inspiring people to see things from different perspectives, illuminating the flow of cosmic spontaneity, and allowing heaven to work through him in all his thoughts and actions (Graham 1989, 191). Part of a culture that sought solutions to social upheaval in theory and practice, Zhuangzi in his life and work focused on the realization of freedom in individual life and on harmony with the whole of existence (Höchstmann and Yang 2007, 4).

Zhuangzi's Work

A member of the political and philosophical community of his time, Zhuang Zhou interacted with various thinkers and political figures, making arguments, telling stories, presenting metaphors, and generally engaging in intellectual exchange. Although he was most certainly literate, writing a book would not have been a major priority compared to discovering the best way to live in the world. As Carine Defoort notes, following Joel Thoraval (2002), in ancient China “writings were usually not self-contained, consistent, theoretical instructions, but rather footnotes to living practices” (2012, 460). Within this setting, “thinkers did not write books, they jotted down sayings, verses, stories, and thoughts” (Graham 1981, 30; Lin 2003, 268). Thus, the first formally structured essays did not appear until the 3rd century BCE, and only after that were gradually collected into more integrated works.

In addition, only institutions or people of means—governments, aristocrats, local rulers—could afford the luxury of having materials committed to writing, hiring trained scribes and procuring the expensive base materials: carefully cut and cured bamboo slips plus fine carving knives during the Warring States (479-221 BCE) and rolls of plain silk and condensed ink sticks in the Han (221-206 BCE). Written texts, moreover, were regarded with awe, since they could transmit knowledge without personal contact and were in themselves carriers of power. They could also potentially fall into the wrong hands, and their owners protected them accordingly, either stash-

ing them away safely in a treasury or transmitting them only in conjunction with various reliability tests, pledges of valuables, and serious vows of trust—not unlike the blood covenants of antiquity, sworn to establish fighting alliances (Harper 1998, 63; Lewis 1990, 44).

Aristocrats with an interest in world improvement thus collected relevant materials. Some searched out already written works and had them transcribed; others invited knowledgeable people to their estate and had them dictate their wisdom to an experienced scribe. Even the *Daode jing* 道德經 (Book of the Dao and Its Power, DZ 664)¹ supposedly came into being this way. The story goes that Laozi was on his way into western emigration when he encountered the border guard Yin Xi 尹喜 who had him dictate his teachings to a scribe (Kohn 1998a, 264–67).² Similarly, the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (Book of the Prince of Huainan, DZ 1184), another important collection of around 150 BCE, was created on the basis of the knowledge of various masters, assembled at his estate by Liu An 劉安 (197–122) (Major et al. 2010, 7–13). Most texts, moreover, “did not assume a standard form until Liu Xiang 劉向 (77–6 BCE) edited them for the imperial library of the Han dynasty” (Graham 1981, 29), and the idea of a “school” of thought only grew gradually with the assembly of manuscripts presenting a similar outlook (Schwartz 1985, 215).

The likelihood is thus that Zhuangzi himself left behind only disjointed pieces, soon mixed with his disciples’ record of his teaching and their own take on what the master meant (Coutinho 2004, 35). With no firm concept of single authorship, constantly revising and adding to the corpus, they kept his teachings intellectually alive (Lewis 1999, 55, 94). Over the years they formed a lineage that can be identified as the Great Scope School (*dafang zhijia* 大方之家; Hoffert 2006, 161). The various members of this lineage then created a multifaceted collection, the first “text,” which underwent further rounds of editing over the centuries. According to the “Yiwen zhi” 藝文志 (Record of Literature) in Ban Gu’s 班固 *Hanshu* 漢書 (History of the Han Dynasty), this consisted of 52 chapters that included materials from Zhuangzi himself through various layers of disciples to assorted related materials. The earliest text, then, was a physical “record,” containing the “message” then most closely associated with Zhuangzi (Roth 1993b, 215; Yang 2012, 522; Graziani 2006, 19).

It is not clear when exactly this first record was put together. Liu Xiaogan 劉笑敢 (1994a) argues for the existence of the entire book around

¹ Texts in the Daoist Canon (DZ) are cited according to Schipper and Verellen 2004. Other Daoist texts follow the listing in Komjathy 2002.

² Its historical origins, on the other hand, are documented in its rather fragmented early version, found in bamboo strips at Guodian and dating to the 4th century BCE, plus its first complete text uncovered in several silk manuscripts at Mawangdui with a date of 168 BCE. See Chan 2000.

250 BCE, well before unification in 221 and even before the *Lüshi chungiu* 呂氏春秋 (Mr. Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals), associated with Lü Buwei 呂不韋 (291-235), wealthy merchant and prime minister of Qin, dated to 239 (Knoblock and Riegel 2000, 1). His argument for this early date is that, according to his count, 42 percent of the standard *Zhuangzi* is already cited in the *Lüshi chungiu* and *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 (Book of Master Han Fei; trl. Watson 2003), which to him suggests that the work existed even before unification and certainly before the Han.

Others place the text later, arguing that different parts were compiled over many years (Graham 1980; 1990e) and that the final collection took place only in the Han dynasty, probably at the court of Liu An between 150 and 122 BCE (Roth 1991, 120; 1997b, 58; Graham 1991, 282; Klein 2011, 361).

The Standard Edition

The earliest citations of the 52-chapter text appear in the *Huainanzi* commentary of the Later Han official Gao You 高誘, which dates from about 200 CE (Major et al. 2010, 8); commentaries which recoup the text and thus form its first editions only survive in citations (Knaul 1982, 53). The standard edition in 33 chapters that we still use today, what Harold Roth calls the “foundational edition” (1993b, 223; also Roth 1992), goes back to its main commentator, Guo Xiang 郭象 (252–312). Like Wang Bi 王弼 (226–249), the principal editor and commentator of the *Daode jing* (see Chan 1991), he was part of an intellectual movement known as Mystery Learning (*Xuanxue* 玄學).

Mystery Learning arose after the end of the Han in reaction to the strong control of intellectual life by officials of this dynasty. It focused on a search for a more spiritual dimension of life through the recovery and reinterpretation of less political classics, including Daoist works and the *Yijing* 易經 (Book of Changes). In accordance with their quest of a deep and meaningful philosophy of life, thinkers at the time interpreted the Daoist classics in a new and often more abstract way. Guo Xiang followed this trend and eliminated more popular and fanciful elements he found unworthy of Zhuang Zhou. As he says in his postface, preserved in an edition at the Kōzanji 高山寺 Temple near Kyoto, Japan (trl. Knaul 1982, 54-55; Wang 2004, 146; 2007a, 13-14), these included “parts similar to the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (Classic of Mountains and Seas; trl. Mathieu 1983), others that resemble the scripts of dream-interpreters; . . . vulgar and far-fetched expressions, without any essence or depth whatsoever.”

Guo Xiang mentions five chapter titles. First, he speaks of a chapter called “Final Words” (Weiyán 尾言), which resembles the “Imputed Words” (Yuyan 寓言) of chapter 27. Following the Qing commentator Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619-1692), many scholars consider this chapter to be the postface to an earlier edition (Wang 2004, 17). Fukunaga believes it to be identical with “Final Words” mentioned by Guo Xiang (1979, 5:278). The latter also writes of “Intention Cultivated” (Yixiu 意修) or “Intention Followed” (Yixun 意循), which is somewhat reminiscent of “Constrained in Intention” (Keyi 刻意), i.e., *Zhuangzi* 15.

Next, there is “Zixu” 子胥, a personal name variously found in the *Lüshi chunqiu* (ch. 14/8.1) as well as in the *Huainanzi* (13.12) and the transmitted *Zhuangzi* (ch. 26). Also known as Wu Yun 伍韻, Wu Zixu 伍子胥 was a minister of the state of Wu who was forced to commit suicide, his body being thrown into the Yangtze (W 294). It is possible that this chapter contained various stories about him.

As to the remaining two titles, “Eyi” 闕亦 and “Youyi” 遊易 or “Youfu” 遊覺 (Takeuchi 1979, 6:249), they also refer to people’s names. Passages associated with them were collected by Wang Yinglin 王應麟 (1223-1296) in his *Kunxue jiwen* 困學紀聞 (After Hard Times in my Studies, Record of Hearsay; see Hervouet 1978, 131). He lists a total of 38 *Zhuangzi* passages, including those about Eyi and Youyi:

A slave of Eyi, a grandson of Yinyi 殷翼, and a son of Clansman E 遏氏 decided to visit the creative power together. So they ascended to Primordial heaven. Upon reaching its top, they were ranked among the stars. (10.24a)

The early commentator Sima Biao 司馬彪 notes that Primordial heaven is the name of a mountain. This is, however, the only reference to its meaning. The names of the three men are indicative of a tribal identity rather than individual personages in that they are called “slave,” “grandson,” and “son” of the clans E 遏, Yin 殷, and E 遏. Yin among them may refer to the Shang Chinese, whereas E is a Xiongnu name, already in the “Xiongnu zhuan” 匈奴傳 (Record of the Huns) in the *Shiji* written with the character 闕 as well as in the variant 遏. This fragment is comparable to the story of the four eccentric masters and their way of dealing with the marvels of creative change as well as with that of Fu Yue 傅說 who “climbed up to the Eastern Governor, straddled the [constellation] Winnowing Basket and the Tail, and took his place among the stars,” both found today in *Zhuangzi* 6 (Watson 1968a, 82; hereafter abbreviated “W”).

Other sources refer to several further lost chapters. For example, Sima Qian notes that “Weilei Xu” 畏累虛 like “Gengsang Chu” 庚桑楚 (i.e., *Zhuangzi* 23) must have been a chapter title as well as a personal name.

Weilei Xu is usually understood as the name of the mountain to which Gengsang Chu retired. As a person, he would have been Gengsang Chu's teacher, who in turn taught Zhuang Zhou (Takeuchi 1979, 6:249).

Also, there was probably a chapter called "Hui Shi" 惠施, evidence for which is found in the biography of Du Bi 杜弼 in the *Beishi* 北史 (History of the North, ch. 72) and the *Liangshi* 梁史 (History of the Liang, ch. 50). This could have consisted of the discussion of Huizi in *Zhuangzi* 33. Then there was a chapter called "Horses' Bridles" (Machui 馬捶), somewhat resembling "Horses' Hoofs" (Mati 馬蹄), i.e., *Zhuangzi* 9. This chapter title is also mentioned by He Zilang 何子朗 in his *Baizhongfu* 敗冢賦 (On the Marker of Defeat) as well as in the "Wenxue zhuan" 文學傳 (Record of Literature) of the *Nanshi* 南史 (History of the South; Takeuchi 1979, 6:250).

In terms of contents, these various chapters apparently contained materials of popular religion, dealing with magic, exorcism, dream interpretation, ecstatic journeys, medical lore, and natural transformations. Many stories of this kind have been recouped in the *Liezi* 列子 (Book of Master Lie, DZ 668; trl. Graham 1960), another potential source of lost *Zhuangzi* materials (see Littlejohn 2011; Takeuchi 1979, 6:251). Although such materials may well be later than the oldest parts of the *Zhuangzi*, they yet indicate that the text in the Han dynasty contained a great deal more magical and popular material and was only philosophically purified by Guo Xiang.

Divisions and Layers

Already Ban Gu records that the *Zhuangzi* chapters (*pian* 篇) divide into three groups: Inner (*nei* 內), Outer (*wai* 外), and Miscellaneous (*za* 雜), a division that may go back to either Liu An (ca. 150 BCE) or Liu Xiang (ca. 50 BCE) (Chai 2008, 10; Klein 2011, 359). All editions, including Guo Xiang's, have seven Inner Chapters (chs. 1–7). In addition, the 33-chapter version has fifteen Outer (chs. 8–22), and eleven Miscellaneous (chs. 23–33). There is a distinct difference between the Inner Chapters and the others in terms of titles: they consist of three characters instead of two, are vague in meaning, and refer to content rather than just picking up the first words of the essay (Wang 2004, 143; 2007a, 10).

It is thus possible that the titles of the Inner Chapters were created by the author as opposed to those of the others which were added by later editors, providing grounds for an earlier dating. On the other hand, comparisons with other texts of the period show that first-word titles are common in the Warring States period, while thematic titles appear first in the 2nd century

BCE, making them later (Chai 2008, 12). Some scholars even date them to the Tang dynasty (Billeter 2008, 254; Wang 2002, 220). Until the Song, this was not a problem: scholars considered all of the *Zhuangzi* as being written by Zhuang Zhou. Only under the Ming and Qing did they become doubtful and suggested that the Outer and Miscellaneous Chapters might have been compiled by disciples.

Modern scholars have viewed the division variously. Ren Jiyu 任繼愈 observes that the titles of the Inner Chapters match a historically later pattern and notes that the *Shiji* mentions various titles of the Miscellaneous Chapters, concluding that the Inner Chapters are later additions by Zhuangzi's disciples. Cui Dahua 崔大華 counters this by saying that titles could have been added by anyone at anytime and emphasizes the narrower and more pessimistic world-view of the Inner Chapters, concluding that they are earlier and go back to Zhuangzi himself (see also Lin 1994, 48; Wang 2004, 144; 2007a, 12). Zhou Tongdan 周通旦, in a yet different take, assumes that all chapters were written by Zhuangzi but the Inner Chapters were later, their pessimism showing sign of old age. Yet others contend that all *Zhuangzi* chapters present a multitude of authors and were mixed up thoroughly by Guo Xiang (Chai 2008, 16-18).

The evidence used for any of these positions tends to be external to the text: mentions of titles in the *Shiji*, descriptions of lines of thought in other works, as well as *Zhuangzi* criticism in early works. Another method is internal examination, looking particularly at single versus compound terms: *dao* 道, *de* 德, *ming* 命, *jing* 精, *shen* 神. All these occur singly in the Inner Chapters as well as in the works of other Warring States thinkers, such as Confucius, Mozi, and Laozi. Their compounds (*daode*, *xingming* 性命, *jing-shen*) are not found until the early Han, but occur frequently in the Outer and Miscellaneous chapters (Chai 2008, 20; Chai 2007; Yang 2007, 10-11).

On the other hand, even this usage could have been added by a later editor (Klein 2011, 312; Wang 2002, 216). If the Inner Chapters were indeed early, one would expect them to be cited visibly in early documents. However, this is not the case. Chapters cited in pre-Han materials show a distinct preference for Outer and Miscellaneous chapters, notably 10, 14, 17, 23, 26, and 28-32 (Klein 2011, 324-33). The latest research accordingly finds that the Inner Chapters were written by multiple hands and constitute a later stratum of the text, "representing someone's judgment of what was best in the proto-*Zhuangzi*," i.e., the collection of materials that circulated under this name in the Han dynasty and did not take firm shape until Liu An was active in the mid-2nd century (2011, 361). Alternatively the Inner Chapters—applying a common Han designation that bestowed dignity on sections in closest accordance to imperial ideology—could have served to claim the text as supporting official doctrine (Billeter 2008, 193; 255-56).

The oldest layer of the text, then—matching patterns in the Bible and other Western sources (Billeter 2010, 83)—is the material formulated in dia-

logues, which places many parts of the Outer and Miscellaneous chapters in the most ancient portion of the work. Sections that consist of dialogues plus abstract discourse are slightly later, while the most recent level presents philosophical theory proper (Billeter 2008, 260-61; Wang 2002, 214-25). What is now chapter 27, “Imputed Words,” outlines these different forms of presentation, and may well have been the preface of the most ancient version, with chapter 33 serving as a postface (Billeter 2008, 259; Lin 1994, 49; Wang 2004, 18; Yang 2012, 524).

Analyzing the *Zhuangzi* beyond the traditional chapter division with a focus on styles and contents of its various chapters, A. C. Graham has identified several textual layers that outline the heterogeneous teachings of several “Daoist” philosophical schools. His analysis has since been further supported by studies on the inherent rhyme structure of the text (see McCraw 1995; 2010). It divides the text into six groups of chapters, each written by a specific group:

1. Zhuangzi himself (chs. 1-7)—centering on the words and stories of Zhuang Zhou, dating from around the 3rd century BCE;
2. Primitivists or anarchists (chs. 8-11)—focusing on simplicity and the return to life before the development of culture, dated to the later Qin dynasty (ca. 205 BCE);
3. Syncretists (chs. 12-16 and 33), possibly identical with the Huang-Lao school of the Han—integrating formalized cosmology into the understanding of Dao, dating from the 2nd century BCE;
4. Later Zhuangzi followers (chs. 17-22)—often matching the style and content of the Inner Chapters;
5. Anthologists (chs. 23-27 and 32)—collecting heterogeneous, fragmentary materials, including some of Zhuangzi himself that might have been part of the Inner Chapters;
6. Individualists or hedonists, also called Yangists after their main thinker Yang Zhu 楊朱 (chs. 28-31)—emphasizing a worldview of ease and leisure that serves only one’s own satisfaction, dating from the early Han dynasty (Graham 1980; 1990e; Hoffert 2002; Lin 2003, 269; Mair 2000, 37; Rand 1983; Roth 1991, 80-81; 1993a, 56-57; Schwartz 1985, 216).

In a more subtle textual analysis, Graham further reconstructs the “Inner Chapters” (chs. 1-7), which he considers the oldest part, linked with Zhuang Zhou himself. To supplement what his work might have looked like originally, Graham transposes several passages from the Miscellaneous chapters, for a new interpretation (1981, 100-16).

Another vision of the different layers of the text appears in the work of Liu Xiaogan who rejects Graham’s dating, his division of schools, and his reconstruction of the Inner Chapters. Instead of six schools and layers, Liu sees three:

1. Transmitters—followers of Zhuangzi whose work shows great similarities with the “Inner Chapters” (chs. 1-7, 17-27, 32);

2. Anarchists—opponents of all government and social organization (chs. 8-10, parts of 11, 28, 29, 31);

3. Huang-Lao 黃老 thinkers—mergers of various philosophical schools with Daoism (chs. 12-16, 33, part of 11). (1994, 88)

Instead of assuming a corruption in the Inner Chapters, moreover, which can be remedied with the help of later materials, he finds any reconstruction “unnecessary and in any event impossible to realize” (1994, 170), arguing rather for an acceptance of the standard text as transmitted. In a careful reading, Liu finds many common points among all the Inner Chapters, concluding that they formed an integrated set of materials from early on and were never seriously altered.

He also uncovers a high rate of coincidence between the Inner Chapters and the works he attributes to the transmitters, judging the latter to be the immediate followers of Zhuangzi and active later propagators of his thought. The coincidence rate declines with the Huang-Lao and anarchist documents, but it is still there, which suggests to Liu that the compilers of these parts of the text, even with their differences in overall outlook, were still Zhuangzi followers. Rather than seeing the text as a compilation of different materials, as Graham seems to do, he thus prefers to understand it as a documentation of the thought of Zhuangzi in its original form and various later developments.

Liu Xiaogan’s reading, if different, is not always incompatible with other views. While he does not see the hedonists as separate, claiming that most of the materials Graham attributes to them form part of the other schools, he joins the majority of scholars in finding harmony, integrity, and antiquity in the Inner Chapters. Also, his transmitters closely match Graham’s Zhuangzi followers, and his anarchists are basically the same as the latter’s primitivists. In addition, his definition of Graham’s syncretists as precursors of the Huang-Lao school, the leading form of Han Daoism (see Peerenboom 1993), rounds off the picture of a continuous evolution of Daoist thought in the time before and after unification.

Translations

The *Zhuangzi* has been translated many times in various different languages (see Wilhelm 2010). The earliest English version is by Frederic Balfour (1881), followed by that of James Legge (1891), the early master translator of classical Chinese philosophy (see Girardot 2002), and by that of Herbert Giles (1889). The first French rendition is by Léon Wieger (1913); the first complete German version is by Richard Wilhelm (1912).

Major Chinese editions with modern rendition and commentary include those by Wang Shumin (1947), Guo Qingfan (1961), Qian Mu (1962), Chen

Guying (1975), Xuan Yi (1977), Sha Shaohai (1987), Wu Kuang-ming (1988a), Zhang Yanshang (1993), Fang Yong and Lu Yongping (2007), Fang Yong (2009a; 2009b), and Tian Bangxiong (2013). In addition, there bilingual (Chinese-English) translations by Qin Xuqing and Sun Yongchang (1999), and by Huang Hanqing (2006) (Billeter 2008, 263-64; 2009, 197; 2010, 11). Specific extensive commentaries include works on the first (Deng 2010), second (Chen 2004; Shen 2001), and last chapters (Ma 1958; Dan 2007). The leading Japanese version is by Fukunaga Mitsuji (1979), originally published in 1956. This formed the foundation for Burton Watson's complete translation (1968a), which established the modern standard. An index to the text was compiled at the Harvard-Yenching Institute (Hung 1956).

More recently, scholars have explored new and different dimensions of translation. As Shuenfu Lin points out, traditionally translation meant the appropriation of content of an original source without any particular concern for its style or linguistic idiosyncrasies. This led to the exploitation of the original for the purposes of enriching the linguistic and aesthetic dimensions of one's own culture, leaving the original far behind. Only in the 18th century did translators come to respect the foreign in the original text but it was not until the 19th and 20th centuries that they actually gained the courage to move toward the foreign nature and attempt to do it justice (Lin 2003, 264). These days, translators divide into two major camps. Following Octavio Paz (and Jean François Billeter), the first believe that it is essentially impossible to find precise equivalents and that translation is always transformation. In this view, it is more important to do justice to the totality of the source language rather than its specific parts and details. Translation always involves interpretation, reworking, reformulating, and reasserting the original (Billeter 2008, 218; 2010, 39). At the other end of the spectrum are those (represented most radically by Vladimir Nabokov) who insist that the only possible translation is strictly literal, all else being mere imitation and parody (Lin 2003, 264; citing Schulte and Biguenet 1992).

Among complete *Zhuangzi* translations into English, the most literal is by A. C. Graham (1981; 2001), while others follow the content orientation, using different Chinese and Western renditions as their backdrop. These include Mair (1994a; 1994b), Palmer (1996), Höchsmann and Yang (2007), and Ziporyn (2009). More theme-based and aimed at modern practitioners are the renditions by Cleary (1999), Mitchell (2009), and Kohn (2011). Illustrated versions, moreover, include Feng and English (1974), Cai and Bruya (1992), and Towler (2011) (see Small 2013). Each translation is different, and each has its own unique take on the text, opening various visions on this powerful, multifaceted work.

