

CHUANG TSU INNER CHAPTERS

A COMPANION TO *Tao Te Ching*

莊子內篇

TRANSLATED BY GIA-FU FENG AND JANE ENGLISH

UPDATED TRANSLATION WITH OVER 100 NEW PHOTOGRAPHS

INTRODUCTION BY CHUNGLIANG AL HUANG

CHUANG TSU

INNER CHAPTERS

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道途存



CHAPTER ONE

HAPPY WANDERING

北冥有矣其名爲鯨鯨之天不知其幾千里也
化不爲鳥其名爲鵬之背不知其幾千里也怒不
飛其翼若垂天之雲是鳥也海運則將托於南冥
南冥者天池也春運者也陸者也謂之曰回風之
從於南冥也水擊乎三千里持扶搖而上者九萬里
去以六月息者也野馬也塵埃之生物以息相吹也
天之蒼蒼其色也野馬也此所至也則其視下也亦若此則之矣且夫以之積也厚
則其負大舟也無力而覆杯水於坳堂之上則芥爲之舟
置杯焉則覆杯水於坳堂之上則芥爲之舟
故九萬里則風斯在下矣而後乃今培塿背負青天而莫之夭阏者及乃今聞南



In the Northern Ocean there is a fish called Kun which is many thousand li³ in size. It changes into a bird named Peng whose back is many thousand li in breadth. When it rises and flies, its wings are like clouds filling the sky.

When this bird moves across the ocean, it heads for the South Sea, the Celestial Lake. In Chi Hsieh's record of wonders it says: "When Peng is heading toward the Southern Ocean it splashes along the water for three thousand li. It rises with the wind and wings its way up to ninety thousand li; it flies for six months, and then it rests." Heat shimmers in the air like galloping horses, dust floats like the morning mist, and living creatures are blown about in the sky.

The sky is blue. Is that really so? Or does it only look blue because it stretches off into infinity? When Peng looks down from above, it will also seem blue. A large boat draws a great deal of water. Pour a cup of water into a hollow in the ground, and a mustard seed can float there like a little ship. Place the cup in it, and it will not move, because the water is shallow and the boat is large. Only at a certain height is there enough air space for a great wingspan. So Peng rises to ninety thousand li, and there is enough air below him. Then he mounts the wind, and with the blue sky at his back, and nothing in his way, he heads for the south.



A cicada and a young dove laugh at Peng, saying, “When we try hard we can reach the trees, but sometimes we fall short and drop on the ground. How is it possible to rise ninety

thousand li and head south?” If you go into the country, you take enough food for three meals and come back with your stomach as full as ever. If you travel a hundred li, you grind enough grain for an overnight stay. If you travel a thousand li, you must have three months’ supply.

What do these two small creatures know? Little knowledge is not to be compared with great knowledge, nor a short life with a long life.

How do we know this is so?

The morning mushroom knows nothing of twilight and dawn, nor the chrysalis of spring and autumn. These are the short-lived. South of Chu there is a ming-ling tree whose spring is five hundred years and autumn five hundred years. A long time ago there was a tortoise whose spring was eight thousand years and autumn eight thousand years. Peng Chu is a man famous for his long life. Isn’t it sad that everyone wants to imitate him?

謂與學鳩笑曰我求益不獲枯槁時則入室而控其地予已不
忘其以九年志不寧為茶管者三歲不及暇物果然適百世者亦極
道十生者三月聖種之五部又何知小和不及下初小年不及下年以和平也
朝園不知地種也幼之和春秋此小年也聖之身有冥靈焉以古所為各之古所為秋
言自天信者以千歲為春公千歲為秋而對初及今以久始則眾人之念也予





In the dialogue of Tang and Chi there is the same story: “In the barren north there is a dark sea, the Celestial Lake. There is a fish living there several thousand li in breadth and no one knows its length. Its name is Kun. And there too lives a bird called Peng. Its back is like Mount Tai and its wings are like clouds across the heavens. It spirals up to ninety thousand li, beyond the clouds and the wind, and with blue sky above it heads south to the South Sea. A quail by the marsh laughs, saying, ‘Where does he think he is going? I bob up and down a few feet, fluttering among the weeds and bushes. This is perfection in flying. What is he up to?’

“This is the difference between small and great.”

Thus, those who are wise enough to hold an official position, fair enough to keep the peace in a community, virtuous enough to be a ruler and govern a state, look upon themselves in the same way.

Yet Sung Yung Tsu laughs at them. For if the whole world praised him, he would not be moved. If the whole world blamed him, he would not be discouraged. He knows the difference between that which is within and that which is without. He is clear about honor and disgrace. But that is all. Though such a person is rare in the world, he is still imperfect.

Lieh Tsu rode on the wind, light and at ease, and returned after fifteen days. Ones as happy as he are rare. Though he no longer needed to walk, he still depended on something. But suppose someone rides on the flow of heaven and earth and the transformation of the six elements and wanders in the infinite. On what is he dependent?

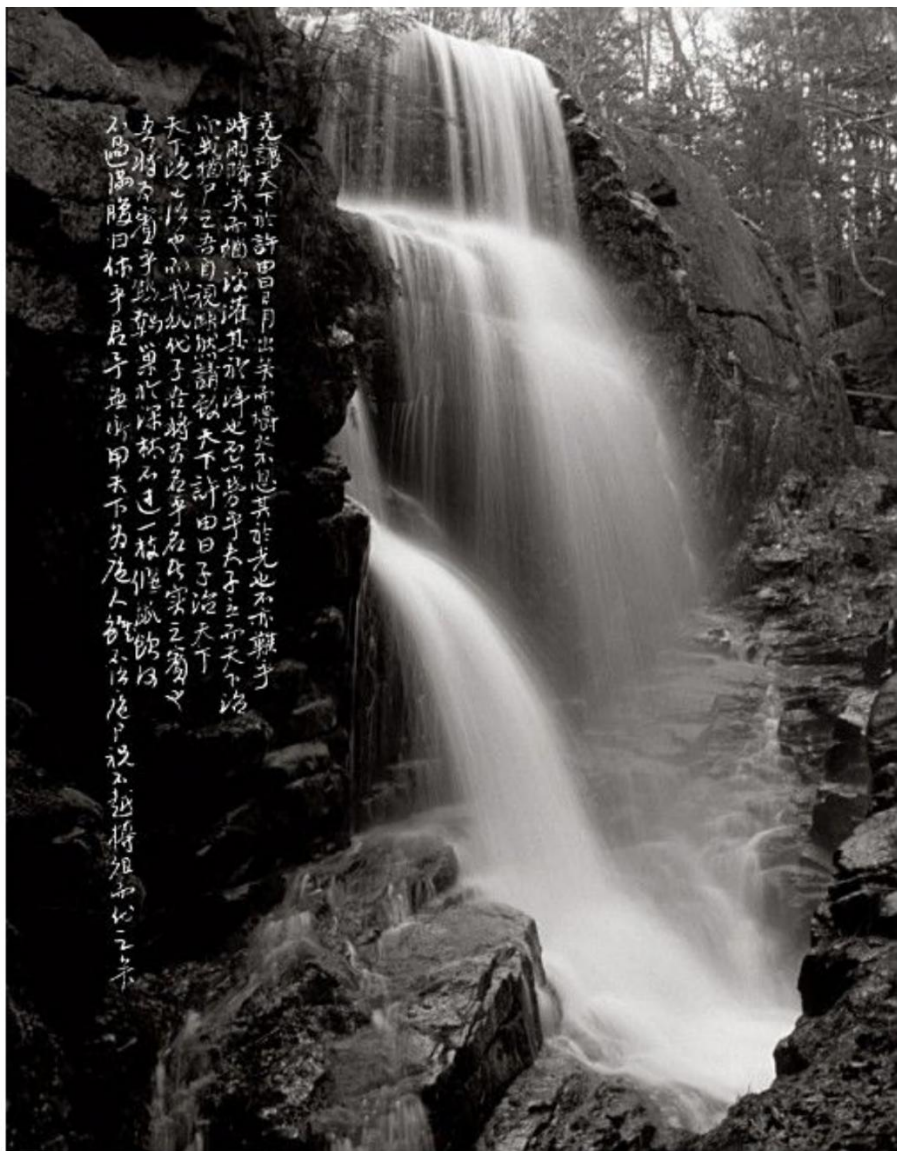
Therefore it is said, “The perfect person has no self, the holy one has no merit, the wise have no reputation.”



Yao thought he would cede the empire to Hsu Yu, saying,
“When the sun and moon are shining, isn’t it hard to see a

torch? When the rainy season starts, isn't it a waste of labor to continue to water the fields? If you take over, the empire will be well ruled. I am now the ruler, and I feel inadequate. May I give the empire into your care?"

Hsu Yu said, "You are ruling the empire, and the world is already at peace. If I took your place, I would be doing it for the name. Name is only the shadow of reality. Do I want to be just a shadow? The sparrow building its nest in the deep wood occupies but a single twig. The muskrat drinks only enough from the river to fill its belly. Go in peace, my lord. I have no use for the empire. If the cook at a ritual ceremony is not attending to the food offerings, the priests and the representatives of the dead do not leap over the wine and the meat to take his place."



竟謂天下於許田日月出矣而猶於其不思其於尤也不亦難乎
時則時矣而猶於其不思其於尤也不亦難乎
心哉物尸之吾自視雖然請教天下許田日子治天下
天下治之日也而猶於其不思其於尤也不亦難乎
方將不實乎鈔鈔果於深杯石道一柱惟誠飲好
不過過隱曰休乎君子無所用天下為危人故不為危戶說不越樽祖和化之七亦

Chien Wu questioned Lien Shu: “I heard Chieh Yu telling strange stories, long and fantastic, going on and on without end. I was amazed at his words. They seemed to be as boundless as the Milky Way and had no connection with the way things really are.”

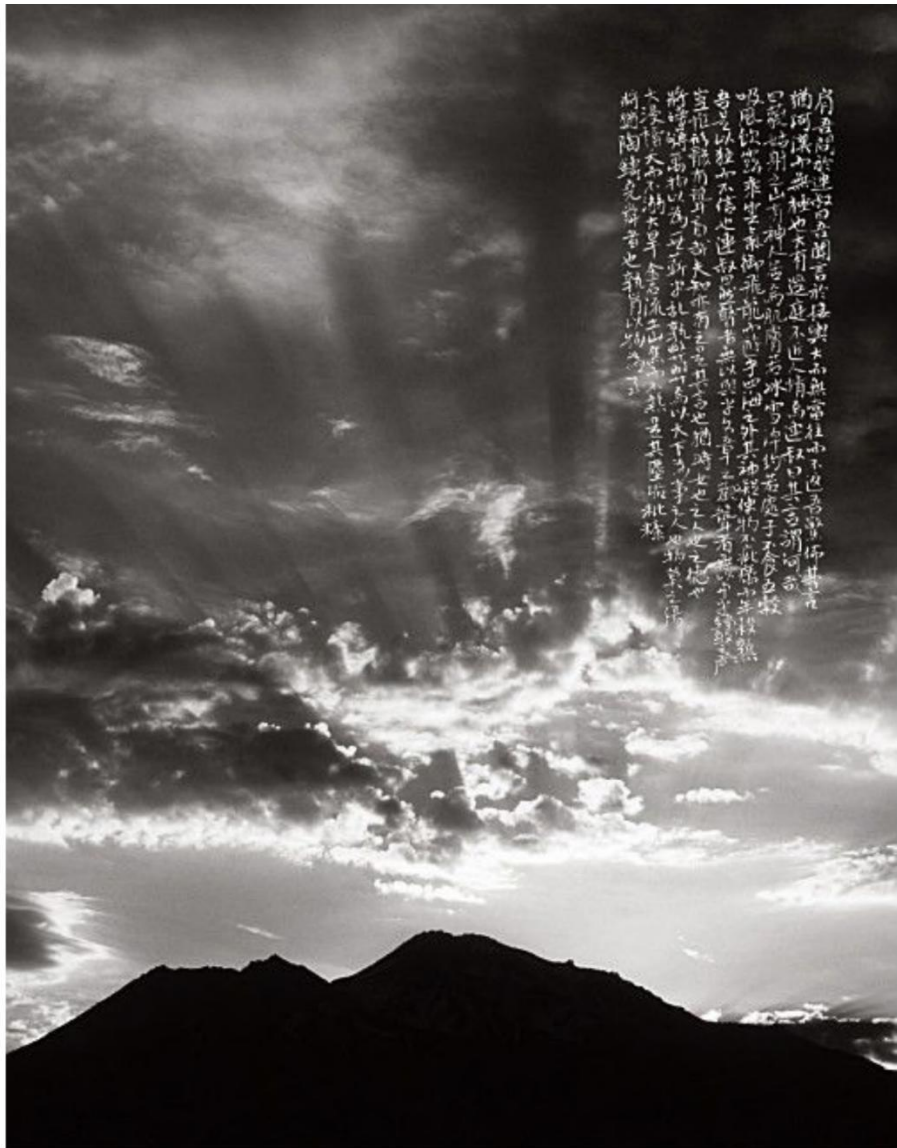
Lien Shu asked, “What did he say?”

“Far away on Mount Ku lives a holy man. His flesh and skin are like ice and snow; he is as gentle as a young girl. He eats none of the five grains, but takes deep draughts of the wind and drinks the dew. He rides on clouds and mounts a flying dragon and wanders beyond the four seas.⁴ By using his spiritual powers he can protect creatures from sickness and decay, and ensure a rich harvest. I think this is ridiculous and do not believe it.”

Lien Shu said, “So it is. The blind cannot appreciate beautiful patterns, the deaf cannot hear the sounds of bells and drums. Blindness and deafness are not just physical; they can be mental too. Yours is a case in point. That holy man with all his virtues looks on all the confusion of the ten thousand things as one. Because of his very existence, the world is emerging from chaos. Why should he do anything about it? Nothing can harm him. A great flood reaching the sky could not drown him. Though a great drought caused metals and rocks to melt and scorched the earth and hills, he would feel no heat. From his own substance he can create

philosopher kings like Yao or Shun. Why should he bother with worldly things?”





肩吾說於單曰吾聞古者與天而無常柱也下也吾聞其甚者也
爾河漢也無柱也夫有遠遊不也一情動連程曰其言謂何云
曰家也則言山有神也吾聞其言曰冰也乎山也均若處于天也之較
吸風飲露乘雲御龍飛馳而于四海之外其神使物不此際也其神
吾是以難不降也連叔聞其言無以與言也其年之夏曾者曾曰其言
宣惟其神有預身也夫知亦而吾言其言也則時也之也之也也
將增其兩物以為聖斯亦孔孰出也其言以天下為一子人與物莫不
大浸皆不不其早金志氣也其言其言其言其言其言其言其言其言
將變陶鑄充其言也其言以物為一子



宋人實章用道識越越人無藝久身無所用之
竟為天下之民中地用之故往見四子穀姑射之山
海水之陽宵也表具天下志

A person from the state of Sung selling ceremonial caps made a trip to the state of Yueh. But Yueh people, having short hair and tattooed bodies, had no use for them. Yao brought order to the people of the world and ruled wisely over the lands bounded by the four seas. But returning south of the Fen River after his visit to the four sages on Mount Kui, he lost his interest in the empire.



Hui Tsu said to Chuang Tsu, “The King of Wei gave me some seeds from a huge gourd. I planted them and they bore a fruit big enough to hold five bushels. I used it to carry water, but it was too heavy to lift. So I cut it in half to make ladles, but they were too shallow to hold anything. They were big, unwieldy, and useless so I smashed them into pieces.”

Chuang Tsu said, “My friend, you are not very intelligent in your use of large things. There was a man from Sung who could make a good salve for chapped hands. His family had had a silk-bleaching business for generations. A traveler heard of this and offered to buy the secret formula for one hundred pieces of gold. The family gathered together to have a conference and said, ‘We have been bleaching silk for generations and have earned only a few pieces of gold. Now in one day we can sell the secret for one hundred pieces of gold. Let him have it.’

“The traveler took it and offered it to the King of Wu. Wu and Yueh were at war. The King of Wu entrusted the traveler with the command of his fleet. In the winter the fleet fought a naval battle against Yueh and totally defeated it. The traveler was rewarded with a fief and title.

“In both cases, the cure for chapped hands was the same but was used differently. One man got a title, while the others are still bleaching silk. Now, you had a gourd big enough to hold five bushels. Why didn’t you think of making it into a

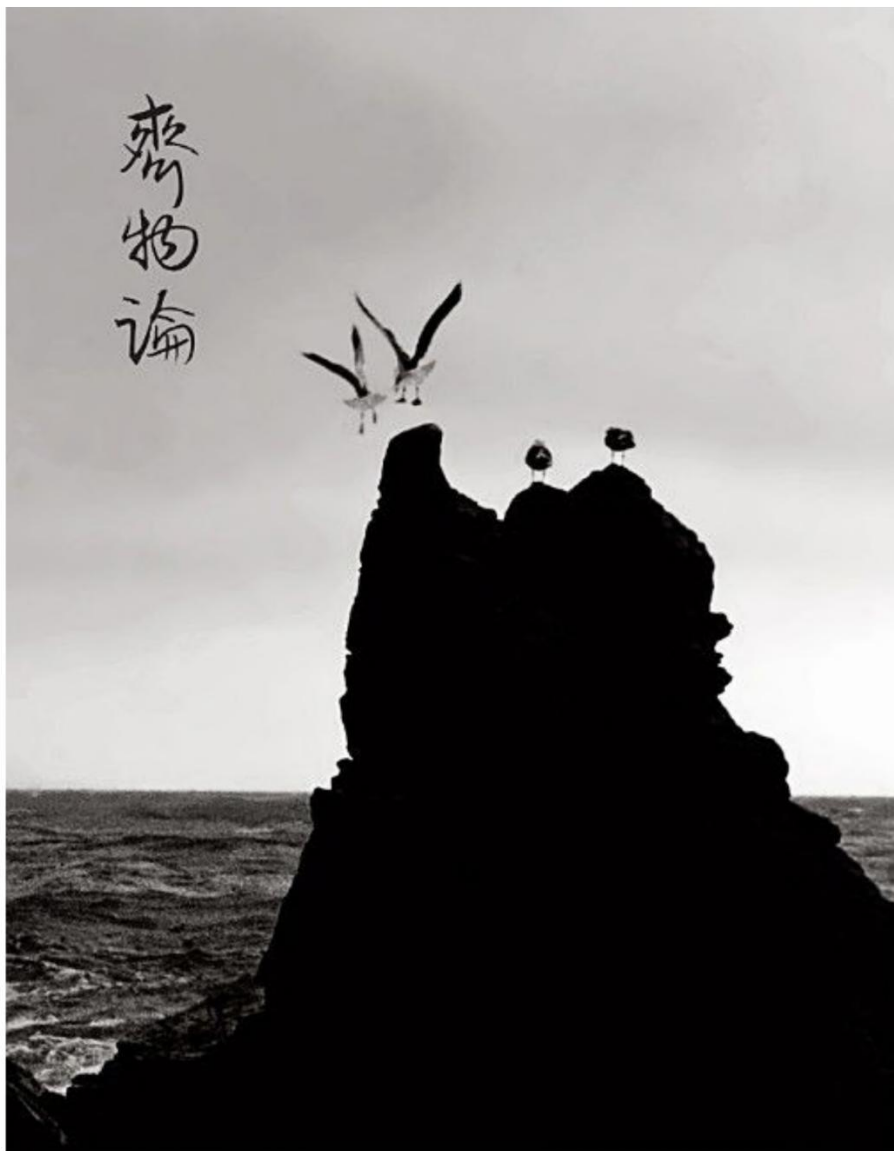
great barrel and using it to float along the rivers and lakes instead of worrying about its being useless for holding anything? Your mind, my friend, is still very cluttered with trivia.”

Hui Tsu said, “I have a big ailanthus tree. Its trunk is so gnarled and full of knots that it is impossible to measure it accurately. Its branches are too twisted and crooked for anyone to measure with a compass and square. It stands at the side of the road, but no carpenter would give it a second glance. Now, your words are as big and useless; no one wants to hear what you have to say.”

Chuang Tsu replied, “Have you ever watched a wildcat or a weasel? It crouches close to the ground and waits for its prey. Then it leaps up and down, first one way, then the other, until it catches and kills its prey. Then again there is the yak, as great as a cloud shadowing the sky. Big as it is, it cannot catch a mouse. Now, you have this giant tree and are concerned that it is useless. Why don’t you plant it on land where nothing grows, in a wild, barren place? There you may saunter idly around it, doing nothing, and lie down to sleep beneath its boughs. No one will try to cut it down. Nothing can harm it since it has no use. How can it cause you any anxiety?”



齊物論



CHAPTER TWO

THE EQUALITY OF ALL THINGS



Nan Kuo Tsu Chi sat leaning on a low table, gazing at the heavens and sighing; he appeared to be in a trance. His disciple Yen Cheng Tsu Yu, who was standing beside him, exclaimed, “What is this? Can you really make your body like dry wood and your mind like dead ashes? The man leaning on the table is not the one who was here a moment ago.”

Tsu Chi said, “Yen, it is good that you asked that. Just now I lost myself. Do you understand? Perhaps you have heard the music of the people but not the music of earth. You may have heard the music of earth but not the music of heaven.”

Tsu Yu said, “May I ask you to say more about this?”

Tsu Chi answered, “The universe has a cosmic breath. Its name is wind. Sometimes it is not active; but when it is, angry

howls rise from ten thousand openings. Have you ever heard a roaring gale?

“In the mountain forest, deep and fearsome, there are huge trees a hundred arm spans around, with gaps and hollows like nostrils, mouths, and ears, like gouges, goblets, and mortars, and like muddy pools and dirty puddles. The sounds rush out like water, whistle like arrows, scold, suck, shout, wail, moan, and howl. The leading notes are hissing sounds followed by a roaring chorus. Gentle breezes make a small harmony, fierce winds a great one. When the violent gusts subside, all the hollows become quiet. Have you ever seen the shaking and trembling of branches and leaves?”

Tsu Yu said, “The earth’s music is the sound from those hollows. The people’s music comes from the hollow reed. May I ask about the music of heaven?”

Tsu Chi said, “When the wind blows through the ten thousand different hollows, they all make their own sounds. Why should there be anything else that causes the sound?”





Great knowledge is all-encompassing; small knowledge is limited. Great words are inspiring; small words are chatter. When we are asleep, we are in touch with our souls. When we are awake, our senses open. We get involved with our activities, and our minds are distracted. Sometimes we are hesitant, sometimes underhanded, and sometimes secretive. Little fears cause anxiety, and great fears cause panic. Our words fly off like arrows, as though we knew what was right and wrong. We cling to our own point of view, as though everything depended on it. And yet our opinions have no permanence; like autumn and winter, they gradually pass

away. We are caught in the current and cannot return. We are tied up in knots like an old clogged drain; we are getting closer to death with no way to regain our youth. Joy and anger, sorrow and happiness, hope and fear, indecision and strength, humility and willfulness, enthusiasm and insolence, like music sounding from an empty reed or mushrooms rising from the warm, dark earth, continually appear before us day and night. No one knows whence they come. Don't worry about it! Let them be! How can we understand it all in one day?

If there is no other, there is no I. If there is no I, there is no one to perceive. This is close to the truth, but we do not know why. There must be some primal force, but we cannot discover any proof. I believe it acts, but I cannot see it. I can feel it, but it has no form.

The hundred joints, nine openings, and six organs⁵ all function together. Which part do you prefer? Do you like them all equally, or do you have a favorite? Are they not all servants? Can they keep order among themselves, or do they take turns being masters and servants?

It may be that there is indeed a true master. Whether I really feel his existence or not has nothing to do with the way it is.

Once one is given a body it works naturally as long as it lasts. It carries on through hardship and ease and, like a galloping horse, nothing can stop it. Isn't it sad? All through life one toils and sweats, never seeing any result. Weary and exhausted, man has no place to rest his bones. Isn't this a pity? One may say, "There is no death." What good does that do? When the body decays, so does the mind. Is this not a great sorrow? Is life really this absurd? Am I the only one who sees the absurdity? Don't others see it too?



If one is true to one's self and follows its teaching, who need be without a teacher? Not only those who are experienced and wise may have a teacher; the fools have theirs too. When those who are not true to themselves try to choose between right and wrong, it is as if they set off for Yueh today and arrived yesterday. That would be making what does not exist, exist. How do you make what does not exist, exist? Even the holy man Yu did not know how to do this, much less a person like me.

Words are not just blown air. They have a meaning. If you are not sure what you are talking about, are you saying anything, or are you saying nothing? Words seem different from the chirping of birds. Is there a difference, or isn't there? How can Tao be so obscure and yet admit of truth and falsehood? How can words be so obscure and yet admit of right and wrong? How can Tao cease to exist? How can words not be heard?



Tao is hidden by partial understanding. The meaning of words is hidden by flowery rhetoric. This is what causes the dissension between the Confucians and the Mohists.⁶ What one says is wrong, the other says is right; and what one says is right, the other says is wrong. If the one is right while the other is wrong, and the other is right while the one is wrong, then the best thing to do is to look beyond right and wrong.

物无死彼物无死也自彼知不免自是知之
 故曰彼生于是是亦用彼彼生于是之說也
 名之曰生之而死之亦生之而亦死之亦死
 而亦生是也心之生之而亦死之亦死
 而亦生也
 是之彼也彼之是也
 彼之是也彼之是也
 畢且自彼是生也即身自无彼之生也
 彼是生也生也生也生也生也生也
 生也生也生也生也生也生也生也
 生也生也生也生也生也生也生也
 故曰生也生也生也



Every thing can be a “that”; every thing can be a “this.” One person cannot see things as another sees them. You can only know things through knowing yourself. Therefore it is said, “‘That’ comes from ‘this,’ and ‘this’ comes from ‘that’”— which means “that” and “this” give birth to one another. Life arises from death and death from life. What is inappropriate is seen by virtue of what is appropriate. There is right because of wrong, and wrong because of right. Thus, the wise do not bother with these distinctions but seek enlightenment from heaven. So they see “this,” but “this” is also “that,” and “that” is also “this.” “That” has elements of right and wrong, and “this” has elements of right and wrong. Do they still distinguish between “this” and “that,” or don’t they? When there is no more separation between “this” and “that,” it is called the still-point of Tao. At the still-point in the center of the circle, one can see the infinite in all things. Right is infinite; wrong is also infinite. Therefore it is said, “Behold the light beyond right and wrong.”





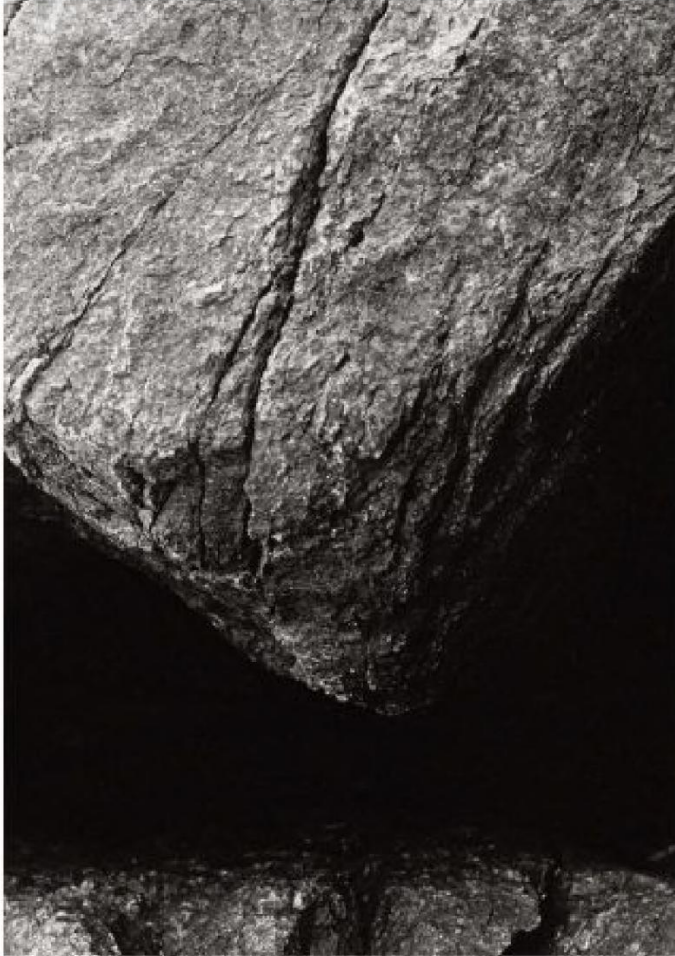
To use one's fingers to demonstrate fingers not being fingers is not as good as using something else to demonstrate fingers not being fingers. Using horses to demonstrate horses not being horses is not as good as using something else to demonstrate horses not being horses. "Heaven and earth" are like a finger; "the ten thousand things" are like a horse.

What is acceptable is acceptable; what is not acceptable is not acceptable. A path is formed by walking on it. A thing has a name because of its being called something. Why is it like this? Because it is! Why is it not like that? Because it is not! Everything has its own nature and its own function. Nothing

is without nature or function. Consider a small stalk or a great column, a leper or a beauty, things that are great or wicked, perverse, and strange. They are all one in Tao.

When there is separation, there is coming together. When there is coming together, there is dissolution. All things may become one, whatever their state of being. Only those who have transcended see this oneness, have no use for differences, and dwell in the constant. To be constant is to be useful. To be useful is to realize your true nature. Realization of your true nature is happiness. When you reach happiness, you are close to perfection. So you stop, yet do not know that you stop. This is Tao.

When you rack your brain trying to unify things without knowing that they are already one, it is called “three in the morning.” What do I mean by “three in the morning”? A man who kept monkeys said to them, “You get three acorns in the morning and four in the evening.” This made them all very angry. So he said, “How about four in the morning and three in the evening?”—and the monkeys were happy. The number of acorns was the same, but the different arrangement resulted in anger or pleasure. This is what I am talking about. Therefore, the wise harmonize right with wrong and rest in the balance of nature. This is called taking both sides at once.



Among the ancients, knowledge was very deep. What is meant by deep? It reached back to the time when nothing existed. It was so deep, so complete, that nothing could be

added to it. Then came people who distinguished between things but did not give them names. Later they labeled them but did not choose between right and wrong. When right and wrong appeared, Tao declined. With the fall of Tao, desire arose. Is there really rise and fall? When there is rise and fall, Chao Wen plays the lute. When there is no rise and fall, Chao Wen does not play the lute.

Chao Wen played the lute, Shia Kuang kept time with a baton, and Hui Tsu leaned on a stump and debated. Each of these three masters was nearly perfect in his own art. Their names will be remembered forevermore. Because they excelled, they were distinguished from others. Because they excelled, they wanted to enlighten others through their art. They tried to teach what could not be taught. This resulted in obscure discussions as to the nature of “hardness” and “whiteness.” Their sons followed in their fathers’ footsteps all their lives but accomplished nothing. However, if this can be called accomplishment, then even I have accomplished something. If this cannot be called accomplishment, then neither I nor others have accomplished anything. Therefore, the wise seek insight from chaos and doubt. Not making distinctions but dwelling on that which is unchanging is called clear vision.



今日則之於此不在天而於地不於宇
 於地不於相與而於別而彼天以男一夫也
 法者皆言之有收也女有不收而收也女
 初乎收夫者收而收也女而有也女有元也女
 有平收有天也女有者收夫者收日无也女
 以守有元矣而未有天之男就有收天也
 今判初已有收矣而未有天者收之果有收乎
 云果無收乎天下莫大於收臺之未也山也小
 莫壽於孫子而收視而天天地與我而生
 而乃知少我為一段已有一矣且乃有言乎
 既已收之一矣且乃天言乎一而言為二
 二而一而三自中以收巧歷不少也亦况乎
 故自天適而以至於三而况自有南有年
 无商也為是也

Now I am going to tell you something. I don't know what heading it comes under, and whether or not it is relevant here, but it must be relevant at some point. It is not anything new, but I would like to say it.

There is a beginning. There is no beginning of that beginning. There is no beginning of that no beginning of beginning. There is something. There is nothing. There is something before the beginning of something and nothing, and something before that. Suddenly there is something and nothing. But between something and nothing, I still don't really know which is something and which is nothing. Now, I've just said something, but I don't really know whether I've said anything or not.

There is nothing in the world greater than the tip of a bird's feather, and Mount Tai is small. None have lived longer than a dead child, and old Peng Tsu died young. Heaven and earth grow together with me, and the ten thousand things and I are one. We are already one—what else is there to say? Yet I have just said that we are one, so my words exist also. The one and what I said about the one make two, and two and one make three. Thus it goes on and on. Even a skilled mathematician cannot reach the end, much less an ordinary person. If we proceed from nothing to something, we reach three. How much farther would it be going from something to something? Enough. Let us stop.



夫道未始有封言未始有常言未始有定也法言天始
 有左有右有倫有義有分有辯有競有子
 此之謂八德之合之外無人之存亦不
 論之也
 吾秋理地生五之志
 心不議而不辯
 辯也女有不分也
 曰何也
 眾人辯之以相示也
 曰曰辯也女有不見也





At first Tao had no name. Words are not eternal. Because of words, there are distinctions. Let me describe these distinctions. There is left, and there is right; there is relationship, and there is duty; there is discernment, and there is discrimination; there is competition, and there is struggle. These are called the eight virtues.

Beyond the six realms of heaven, earth, and the four directions, the wise accept but do not discuss. Within the six realms, they discuss but do not pass judgment. In the Book of Spring and Autumn, the chronicle of the ancient kings, the wise pass judgment but do not question. When there is

division, there is something which is not divided. When there is questioning, there is something beyond the question. Why is this? The wise keep their wisdom to themselves while ordinary people flaunt their knowledge in loud discussion. So I say, “Those who dispute do not see.”



Great Tao is beyond description. Great argument uses no words. Great goodness is not kind. Great integrity is not incorruptible. Great courage is not aggressive. Tao that is manifest is not Tao. Words that argue miss the point. Perpetual kindness does not work. Obvious integrity is not

believed. Aggressive courage will not win. These five are round and mellow, yet they may become square and inflexible.

Knowing enough to stop when one does not know is perfection.

Who can understand an argument that has no words and Tao that cannot be expressed? One who can understand this may be called the treasure house of heaven. Pour into it, and it will never be filled; pour out of it, and it will never be emptied. Yet no one knows why this is so. This is called the hidden light.

Long ago, Emperor Yao said to Shun, “I would like to attack the states of Tsung, Kuei, and Hsu Ao. This has been on my mind ever since I came to the throne. Why is this so?”

Shun said, “These three states eke out their existence in the weeds and bushes. Why bother? There was a time when ten suns rose all at once and the ten thousand things were illuminated. And yet how much greater is virtue than these suns!”



Yeh Chueh asked Wang I, “Do you know what is common to all things?”

“How should I know?” he replied.

“Do you know that you don’t know?”

“How should I know?” he replied again.

“Then are all things not knowable?”

“How should I know? Still, let me put it this way: How do you know that what I say I know may not really be what I don’t know? How do you know that what I say I don’t know may not really be what I know? Now let me ask you

something. If a person sleeps in a damp place, their back will ache and they will be half paralyzed. But does this happen to eels? If a person lives up in a tree, they will tremble with fright. But does this happen to monkeys? Of these three, who knows the right place to live? People eat flesh, deer eat grass, centipedes delight in worms, and owls and crows like mice. Of these four, which know what to eat? Monkeys mate with monkeys. Elk and deer run together, and eels play with fish.

“Mao Chiang and Li Chi were considered beautiful by people. But if fish saw them, they would dive to the bottom of the river. If birds saw them, they would fly off. If deer saw them, they would run away. Of these four, who recognizes real beauty?”

“As I see it, the rules of goodness and wisdom and the paths of right and wrong are inextricably mingled and confused. How can I tell which is which?”

Yeh Chueh asked, “If you cannot distinguish between good and evil, then can the perfect person distinguish between them?”

Wang I replied, “Perfect people are spiritual. Though the great swamp burns, they will not feel the heat. Though the great rivers freeze, they will not feel the cold. Though thunderbolts split the mountains and gales shake the sea, they will have no fear. Such people can ride the clouds and mist, mount the sun and moon, and wander beyond the four

seas. Life and death do not affect them. How much less will they be concerned with good and evil!”

