Zhuangzi AND THE HAPPY FISH

Edited by Roger T. AMES and Takahiro NAKAJIMA

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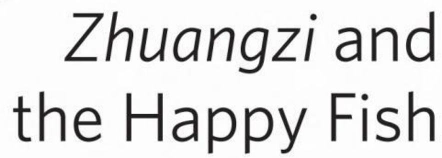

Zhuangzi and the Happy Fish

ROGER T. AMES
TAKAHIRO NAKAJIMA

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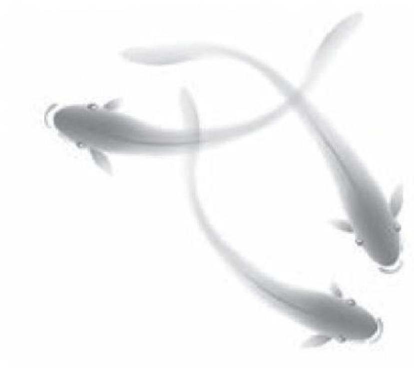

Introduction

This book—like so many good things—began in a classroom. With the generous support of the Uehiro Foundation on Ethics and Education, we were able to convene the first meeting of the University of Tokyo–University of Hawai'i (UTUH) Residential Institute for Comparative Philosophy in August 2012 at the East-West Center on the University of Hawai'i campus. Our teaching team included five professors from UT and UH (Kobayashi Yasuo, Takahiro Nakajima, Kajitani Shinji, Ishida Masato, and Roger T. Ames), and the participants included some thirty graduate students from the two institutions with an additional ten international scholars. In addition to hosting a series of thematic lectures, our mission as faculty was to introduce our participants to a close reading of original texts in Chinese and Japanese philosophy, a skill that is deemed essential for every student in our comparative philosophy programs.

During the UTUH institute it became apparent that we needed to establish an interpretive historical and intellectual context in the reading of canonical texts. Specific Japanese, Confucian, and Daoist readings were used to demonstrate the argument that locating the discussion within such a context makes a profound difference in the possibilities available for interpretation and allows the reader to avoid a pernicious cultural reductionism at least to some degree. A further argument was that such an interpretive context is a concern not only for Western students of Asian

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culture but also for contemporary Chinese and Japanese students who in their studies have appropriated a philosophical lens heavily colored by Western theoretical and conceptual assumptions.

THE *ZHUANGZI*

Of course, in a close reading of classical Chinese texts, the *Zhuangzi* seems invariably to be the text of choice for students and at the same time one of the most challenging of the canons for their teachers. The *Zhuangzi* is traditionally coupled with the *Daodejing* (or *Laozi*) as one of the two most seminal texts associated with classical Daoist philosophy that is often referred to simply as the Lao-Zhuang lineage. Beyond these two seminal texts, we might also include the Han dynasty's syncretic *Huainanzi* (c. 140 BCE) and the *Liezi,* a text compiled into its present form around the fourth century CE, as constituting the traditional corpus of philosophical Daoism.

As a canonical text, the *Zhuangzi* for the most part addresses the project of personal realization and is only derivatively and incidentally concerned with social and political order. In many ways the *Zhuangzi* establishes a unique literary and philosophical genre of its own, and although clearly the work of many hands, it is still one of the finest pieces of literature in the classical Chinese corpus. It uses every trope and literary device available to set off rhetorically charged flashes of insight into the freest and most unrestrained way to live one's life without being constrained by often oppressive conventional values and judgments. And as the essays collected in this volume demonstrate all too well, the *Zhuangzi* as a text and as a philosophy is never one thing; indeed, as we will see, it always has been and continues to be many different things to many different people.

In keeping with the fact that the inspiration for this volume emerged from an international collaboration in comparative philosophy, the editors have consciously selected the essays to be included herein from the broadest possible compass of world scholarship on this seminal text. Many of the essays have been written especially for this volume and are being published for the first time. Some of the chapters have come to print before in other world languages—Chinese, Japanese, German, and Spanish—and have been translated specifically for this anthology. Moreover, several of them have been previously published in English-language forums over the past several decades and have been selected for the quality of their

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arguments as they have engaged each other in formulating their very different positions.

This volume of essays constitutes an attempt by a range of different scholars to provide their own exegesis of one of the most frequently rehearsed anecdotes of the *Zhuangzi* that appears at the end of the "Autumn Floods (*qiushui* 秋水)" chapter and that is often referred to as "the Happy Fish debate." Perhaps the first step in establishing an interpretive context for this text is to identify, to the extent possible, its dramatis personae: Zhuangzi, Huizi—and the fish as well.

WHO IS ZHUANG ZHOU 莊周 (369–286 BCE)?

The primary source of information we have about Zhuang Zhou is a series of anecdotes included in a book that bears his name, the *Zhuangzi*.[1] This text includes several vignettes found primarily in the "Outer" and "Miscellaneous Chapters," including a short bibliographical sketch in the curious and uncharacteristically judgmental chapter that closes this work, "All under the Heavens" (*tianxia* 天下). We might begin from the only source beyond the *Zhuangzi* itself: a brief account given in the *Records of the Grand Historian* by Sima Qian (145?–89? BCE), who, in compiling this unofficial history, typically drew on whatever sources were available in the court archives of the early Han dynasty:

> Zhuangzi was a man of the Meng district in the state of Song (modern Anhui or Henan province) and was named Zhou. He once served as a minor official in the Lacquer Garden in Meng and was a contemporary of King Hui of Liang (r. 370–319 BCE) and King Xuan of Qi (r. 319–301 BCE). In his scholarship he was broad and eclectic, though the roots of his teachings trace back to Laozi. Thus, in his oeuvre of over 100,000 words, he in large measure relied upon the metaphorical and the allegorical.[2] He wrote chapters such as "The Old Fisherman," "Robber Zhi," and "Rending Satchels" to satirize the followers of Confucius and to shed light on the teachings of Laozi.[3] Other chapters such as "Leigui Xu" [presumably "Xu Wugui"] and "Gengsangzi" are all fictitious and have no historical provenance. Zhuang Zhou was good at formulating his ideas in words and at rhetorical flare and was adroit at making connections and characterizing situations that he would then marshal in attacking and refuting the teaching of the Confucians and the Mohists. Not even the most distinguished and erudite scholars of the age could

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defend themselves against his prowess. His torrents of language surged forth without constraint with no other purpose than to entertain himself; thus no one from the king and his high ministers on down were able to turn his words to their own account.

King Wei of Chu (r. 339–329 BCE) had heard that Zhuang Zhou was a person of high character and ability and sent an emissary with handsome gifts to invite him to his court, promising to make him his Prime Minister. Zhuang Zhou laughed out loud and said to the emissary from Chu: "A thousand weight of cash would be a substantial gain for me and the title of Prime Minister is certainly a high and much respected office. But have you not seen the ox used in the southern suburban sacrifice? It is groomed and fed for many years, clad richly with embroidered cloth, and then at last is led into the Grand Ancestral Hall. On reaching this moment, even if the ox would gladly change places with a stray piglet, how could it manage this? Be gone with you! Don't you get me dirty! I would rather wallow happily in a muddy ditch than be hogtied by some ruler. Happily doing as I please, I will never—to the end of my days—serve in office."[4]

This biographical notice makes much of perhaps the most salient characteristics of the *Zhuangzi* text: its authors' evident mastery of the written language and their power of expression, as well as the difficulty commentators have had in classifying the often metaphorical and allegorical stories that constitute this text as being committed to any one specific and identifiable philosophical position or outlook. The biography claims that Zhuang Zhou's philosophical position is rooted in the teachings of Laozi and that his text has to be read as a deliberate challenge to the doctrines of the Mohists and the Confucians, which were circulating at the time of its compilation.

Sima Qian's short account concludes with a version of one of the stories told in the *Zhuangzi* about its own ostensive author.[5] Indeed, it is from these same anecdotes that we can glean our clearest profile of a Zhuangzi persona. Still, we would do well to read the larger-than-life portrait we are able to piece together from these stories as a literary construct that conveys recommendations for a particular style of living rather than as an episodic account of the narrative and career of a historical figure.

The exaggerated caricature of Zhuangzi we can cobble together from these anecdotes is consistent with the story told in this biographical sketch, which portrays him as an impoverished yet highly educated and distin-

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guished scholar who, by the considerable literary and philosophical talents that are evidenced in his extensive writings, becomes known to those in the highest seats of authority. Although these kings and princes would reward him handsomely for his services, he is unwilling to stoop so low as to accept high office and, rebuking them roundly, refuses to be compromised and co-opted by their promises of wealth and power. He instead chooses to continue his nomadic and philosophically promiscuous existence, which can perhaps be best captured in the much-repeated aspiration for a life of "carefree and easy wandering" (*xiaoyaoyou* 逍遙遊).

Another possible avenue for bringing the person of Zhuang Zhou into clearer focus would be to rely on the traditional assumption that the seven "Inner Chapters" of the text were by his own hand and then on that basis to lift out of these same pages a "philosophical" biography. We might be encouraged in this project by Steve Coutinho's report on the conventional understanding of the authorship of the *Zhuangzi* as a text:

> Despite frequent differences of opinion there is, surprisingly, a great deal of agreement with regard to the classification of major portions of the text. It is generally agreed for example that the historical Zhuangzi was in all probability the author of the first seven chapters, which have come to be known as the *Inner Chapters,* while the rest, divided into the *Outer* (8–22) and *Miscellaneous Chapters* (23–33), is taken to have been written by followers, and others, from the time of his death to at least the founding of the Qin empire.[6]

This traditional attribution of the Inner Chapters of the *Zhuangzi* to one author has recently been contested by David McCraw, who chooses to use quantitative methods and statistical measurements to analyze the structure of the text rather than an appeal to the more subjective and speculative method of assessing differences in ideas to argue that these Inner Chapters are themselves a patchwork from the ink of many different authors:

> We have demonstrated that most likely many hands took part in forming Zz; indeed, allowing for later passages tacked onto various chapters, probably more than a dozen hands took part in forming the Inner Chapters alone. Does this mean we have to abandon the notion of a coherent "Zhuangzian" philosophy? Not necessarily; notions of "family resemblance" and the labors

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> of Zz's editors will still allow those so inclined to perceive coherence among its parts.[7]

Again, Coutinho takes McCraw up on this challenge to find philosophical coherence and a pattern of "family resemblances" amid the putative linguistic dissonance in claiming the following:

> [R]egardless of who wrote them, the *Inner Chapters* and passages attributed to followers of the *Inner Chapters* express a distinctive worldview and approach to life. Moreover, while there may be problems of consistency, as in any philosophical text, half the pleasure of reading such texts is precisely to come up with a coherent interpretation that plausibly resolves the apparent inconsistencies.[8]

Indeed, it is precisely the delight one finds in this search for one's own sense of coherence that has motivated the authors of this volume to proffer their various interpretations of the Happy Fish debate.

In the bibliographical chapter titled "All under the Heavens" at the end of the *Zhuangzi* we encounter a description not of the person of Zhuangzi per se but again of the flamboyant and unconstrained language in which his ideas are expressed:

> Shadowy and vast, it is shapeless; transforming, it is without constant horizon. Is this life or death? Do I emerge together with the heavens and earth? Do I journey forth with the spirits and gods? Ever so hazy, where do I go? Ever so obscure, where have I arrived? Everything is laid out before me and there is nothing worth returning to.
>
> The ancient art of the way lies in such language, and when Zhuang Zhou got wind of these questions, he delighted in them. Expressing himself in strange and hyperbolic language, in wild and uncanny words, in indecipherable and unbounded phrases, he was always a free spirit and unbiased in his opinions and never saw things from just one particular point of view. Watching a world sinking in turbidity before him, he could not speak to it in solemn language. He used his "tipping goblet words" for the steady flow of his writings, canonical words for authenticity, and metaphorical words to give him broad compass. He alone came and went with what is quintessential in the heavens and earth and yet did not look with arrogance on other things. Refraining from being judgmental, he dwelt among the common lot.

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> Though his writings hang together circuitously like a string of jade, they are harmless enough. And though his language is erratic and unrestrained, his pretenses and simulations are worth a second look. The capaciousness and solidity of these teachings make them inexhaustible. Above he wandered freely with the maker of all things, below he kept company with those who stand outside of life and death and for whom there is neither beginning nor end. With respect to the root of all things, he opened it out in its breadth and expanse and was unbridled in surveying its penetrating depths. With respect to the ancestor of all things, he could be said to be in tune with it and accommodating of it, following it to new heights. Even so, in his responsiveness to the process of transformation and in his unraveling of things, his understanding of them was inexhaustible, and in his approach he could not be deterred. So abstruse and obscure, his writings are unfathomable.[9]

It would seem that these early commentators are more comfortable in treating Zhuangzi as the language of an unmanageable and obscure text rather than as a person, and for good reason. These early accounts are dealing with the same problem that we are left with today. The Outer and Miscellaneous Chapters appear to be the work of later students of the *Zhuangzi,* who, attracted to the text by its brilliance and its allusiveness and inspired by it to find their own exaggerated, allegorical language, proffered their diverse and sometimes conflicted commentaries based on discernable themes they might have drawn from selected portions of the text. And this same commentarial narrative continues today. As we will see, a happy gaggle of the best scholars of our generation continue to participate in the hermeneutical unfolding of this text in their own way to offer markedly different accounts of what, if anything, would constitute the philosophical coherence of the *Zhuangzi*.

WHO IS HUI SHI 惠施 (380–305 BCE)?

But first an earlier voice in this continuing Zhuangzian saga: Hui Shih.

A good example of how establishing an interpretive context makes a difference in our reading of the canonical texts is the recent work by an international group of sinologists and comparative philosophers who have taken on the challenge of reinstating the *Mozi* as integral to the intellectual debates that flourished in the pre-Qin period: A. C. Graham, Robin D. S. Yates, David B. Wong, Chad Hansen, Chris Fraser, James Behuniak,

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Carine Defoort, Nicolas Standaert, Dan Robins, Hui-chieh Loy, Ben Wong, Ian Johnston, and many more.[10] Although it would serve these scholars poorly to assume that they have a univocal interpretation of the Mohist doctrines and a shared understanding of the responses these teachings elicited from contemporaneous philosophers, they would at least be in agreement on registering a strong Mohist current in the prevailing intellectual tide of the pre-Qin period and on the claim that this Mohist current provoked a sharp response from both Daoist and Confucian rivals alike.

Lisa Raphals makes the compelling argument that the portraits of Hui Shi as he appears in the classical corpus are several and conflicted, and we would do well to respect the disparities of these representations without overwriting them with some contrived uniform identity.[11] In so doing, the pervasive presence of the sophist Hui Shi wandering through the pages of the *Zhuangzi* adds another layer of complexity to the philosophical milieu from which it emerged.

Few scholars would describe Hui Shi (or Huizi 惠子) as a Mohist. For example, A. C. Graham would argue that although Hui Shi resembles "the Mohists in defending universal love and condemnation of aggressive war," he would more closely associate him with the earlier sophists and paradox-mongers such as Gongsun Long 公孫龍 who "practice disputation (*bian* 辯) for its own sake"[12] in arguing against the commonsensical. Nonetheless, Graham perceives some alignment of Huizi with the Mohists: "The loss of almost all the writings of the sophists makes it impossible to judge how much the Mohists owed to the founders of disputation in the 4th century."[13]

The image that we have of Hui Shi as he appears in the many anecdotes of the *Zhuangzi* as Zhuangzi's faithful foil is fairly consistent, with the exception of the decidedly negative description of him as a wasted talent and bombastic bore provided in the bibliographical chapter, "All under the Heavens," which seems to be tagged on at the end of the *Zhuangzi:*

> Hui Shi was a man of many ideas, and his writings filled five carts, but his doctrines were unconventional and strange, and his teachings fell wide of the mark. . . . Hui Shi thought his sophistries to be a grand advance in the world of thought, bringing real clarity to the art of disputation. And all of the world's debaters shared his enjoyment in them. . . . These debaters responded to him with just such sophistries that continued inexhaustibly throughout their lives.

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> Huan Tuan and Gongsun Long were followers of these disputers. They could dazzle the hearts and minds of people and alter their views. But the limitation of these disputers was that even though they could triumph over others verbally, they would still fail to win over their hearts and minds. Hui Shi would daily exercise his wits in debating with others and was especially admired as being exceptional among the other disputers in the world—this was all that he accomplished. And so he took himself to be rhetorically the cleverest among this crowd. "Who can best me in this world?" he would say. He was the cock of the walk, but had no art.
>
> In the south there was a curious fellow named Huang Liao, who would ask: Why doesn't the sky fall? Why doesn't the earth collapse? And where do the wind, rain, thunder, and lightning come from? Hui Shi, undaunted, would take him on, babbling without thinking and leaving nothing out in his ramblings. Talking without end in a bottomless abundance, when it seemed as though he was at last running short of things to say, he would pile on more bizarre assertions. He took what was contrary to be true and looked to make a name for himself in winning the argument. This is why he did not get on with ordinary people. Thin on virtue and thick on acquisitiveness, his was a dark and devious path. If we take a look at Hui Shi's abilities in the big scheme of things, they were nothing more than the buzzing of a mosquito or gnat. What was he good for?
>
> To master one thing is commendable, and it might be said that the more value there is to it, the closer it is to the proper way. But Hui Shi was incapable of settling for this and never tired of scattering himself over everything so that in the end he had a reputation for no more than being a good debater. What a pity—that the considerable talents of Hui Shi were wasted and came to naught. Chasing after everything without turning back, he was like the voice trying to get the better of its echo or the body trying to outrun its shadow. How sad indeed![14]

Angus Graham, who spent a lot of time with the later Mohist Canons, reads them as in degree being derivative of these earlier sophists. He thus offers us a very different assessment of the ancient Huizi. Allowing that the author of this "All under the Heavens" vignette is discussing what is taken here to be "the one school that is entirely worthless, Hui Shih and the Sophists," Graham would blame this author for failing to take Huizi's proper measure: "This passage deriding Hui Shih *because* he is an original thinker remains our main sources for the little we know about his

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thought."[15] Indeed, the seemingly conflicting accounts of Hui Shi that Raphals has registered are taken by Graham to reflect the enormous scope and originality of his ideas:

> The sparseness of the remains of Hui Shih [Shi] is perhaps the most regrettable of all the losses in ancient Chinese literature, for everything recorded of him suggests that he was unique among the early thinkers for his breadth of talents and interests, a true Renaissance man. . . . How did a sophist become chief minister of the state of Wei? And how is it that we keep meeting this most successful man of the world in the company of that disreputable layabout Chuang-tzu [Zhuangzi], who mocks his rigid logic but laments him after his death as his only truly stimulating opponent?[16]

As we will learn later, praise for the characters found in the *Zhuangzi* and the ostensive philosophical commitments of these characters are frequently a reflection of the interpreters' own philosophical proclivities, and Graham in this regard seems to be no exception. Graham takes what is clearly a condemnation of Hui Shi's boundless verbosity in the biographical vignette translated earlier (which in substance is consistent with Graham's fuller rendering of this chapter in his own translation of the *Zhuangzi*) to be descriptive of "a further dimension missing from almost all thinkers of the classical period, a genuine curiosity about the explanation of natural phenomena."[17] On this basis, Graham translates this same passage into what seems to me to be commendation (rather than condemnation) for what Graham takes to be philosophical and scientific skills that he himself most admires:

> There was a strange man of the south called Huang Liao, who asked why heaven did not collapse or earth subside, and the reasons (*ku* [*gu*] 故) for wind, rain, and thunder. Hui Shih answered without hesitation, replied without thinking, had explanations for all the myriad things, never stopped explaining, said more and more and still thought he hadn't said enough, had some marvel to add.[18]

Thus, the answer to the question "Who is Hui Shi?" seems to depend on who is asking it.

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WHO ARE THE FISH?

And then there are the fish. In this particular Happy Fish debate, the character "fast" (*shu* 儵) is used in the text as a variant of its cognate, *tiao* 鰷, which describes a small fish, requiring the addition of the generic character for "fish" (*yu* 魚) to give "fast" its reference. The text here seems to privilege the quality of action—"a darting-about kind of fish"—over the semantic specificity that would in fact identify the species of fish.

This same character, *shu* 儵, occurs as the personal name of the inadvertently thoughtless Lord of the "South Sea" (an association with water) in the *Zhuangzi*'s account of the killing of Lord Hundun, again referencing the abruptness in this case of his untoward action in drilling orifices in the amorphous "Hundun" or "Spontaneity": "The Lord of the South Sea was 'Fast (*shu* 儵),' the Lord of the North Sea was 'Sudden,' and the Lord of the Central Kingdom was Hundun."[19]

Fortunately, beyond this technical textual note, we can rely on the Franklin Perkins essay in this same volume to provide us with a clearer understanding of the important role that fish play in the *Zhuangzi*. Perkins begins by noting that although a full parade of insects and animals migrates through the text, fish in particular are the most prominent among these creatures, occurring in more than thirty passages. In interpreting the prominent role played by the fish, Perkins observes the following:

> The immediate importance of fish lies in the assumption that fish have a world and that this world is radically different from our own. . . . At the same time, insofar as fish are thought to have a world or a perspective, they have a status equal to that of human beings, whose own world or perspective has no privileged place in nature. In this sense, fish represent an equality or evenness across the most radical difference.[20]

Indeed, it is this compelling conclusion—that the *Zhuangzi* gives no special privilege to the human world—that has required us to give equal notice to the fish as a member of the cast of characters in the Happy Fish debate.

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PREVAILING INTERPRETATIONS OF COHERENCE IN THE *ZHUANGZI*

Having introduced the original dramatis personae in this particular vignette, we now turn to the more recent additional cast of characters who continue to play their own particular roles in this never-ending story of interpreting.

Piggybacking on Harold Roth in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* we wish to review some of the positions offered by a generation of Western comparative philosophers who have engaged each other in a continuing debate over whether Zhuangzi and his text should be classified as a skepticism, a relativistism, a perspectivistism, or, indeed, something else.[21] A pioneer in this effort is Chad Hansen, who has a self-conscious affinity with the loquacious but resolutely rigorous Zhuangzi, offering himself personally as a clear example of Zhuangzi's perspectival relativism by announcing with high praise that "Chuang Tzu's [Zhuangzi's] familiarity with and confident handling of the technical language of ancient Chinese semantics make it probable that he had the ancient Chinese equivalent of analytic philosophical training."[22] Indeed, in Roth's account, Hansen uses this language of "perspectival relativism" to argue that all discrimination and classification are relative to some changeable context of judgment. Since relative judgments necessarily yield only relative, conditioned knowledge, there is no perspective from which the world can be known to be objectively true. In Hansen's own words:

> Lacking any theoretical limit on possible perspectives, guiding systems of naming, we lack any limit on schemes of practical knowledge. No matter how much we advance and promote a practical guide, a way of dealing with things, there are things we will be deficient at. To have any developed viewpoint is to leave something out. This, however, is not a reason to avoid language and a perspective; it is the simple result of the limitless knowledge and limited lives.[23]

David B. Wong's own qualified relativism reads the *Zhuangzi* as offering a continuing seesawing between the confidence one might have in having acquired a grasp on genuine knowledge and a productive skepticism that requires us to continue the search:

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> The dialectic includes a stage of skeptical questioning of whatever one's current beliefs are, but the aim is not merely to undermine but to reveal something about . . . the world that is occluded by one's current beliefs. However, one is not allowed to rest content with the new beliefs but is led to question their comprehensiveness and adequacy precisely because they are suspected of occluding still something else about the world.[24]

Janghee Lee again has his own interpretation, reading the *Zhuangzi* as a radical kind of "naturalism" that rejects all human artifice as an offense against nature and spontaneity:

> Zhuangzi represents Daoist "naturalism" in the late Warring States period. Naturalism denotes a unique Chinese worldview; it is based on neither a mechanical, impersonal notion of nature, nor a shamanistic "animated" one. "Nature" or "*tian*" is what produces all of the myriad things, including human beings; it provides human beings with the model or norm to follow, as well as being the source of morality. . . . Zhuangzi is a very radical "naturalist" in his rejection of any human activity as "falsity or fake (*wei* 偽)."[25]

In addition, P. J. Ivanhoe argues that Zhuangzi should not be read as a relativist at all because he clearly recommends a certain way of being in the world. And with respect to skepticism, although Zhuangzi was neither a "sense skeptic" nor an "ethical skeptic," we can say that he was both an epistemological skeptic about intellectual (in contrast to intuitive) knowledge and a language skeptic who doubted distinctions between right and wrong and the capacity of words to give full expression to the *dao*.

Ivanhoe argues contra Lee that Zhuangzi's "Heavenly" perspective, although underscoring the inherent value of everything in the world, does not therefore exclude the human point of view. Instead, "These passages, in which Zhuangzi argues for the Heavenly point of view, are better read as a form of therapy, designed to curb our terrible tendency toward self-aggrandizement. They are to remind us that we are part of a greater pattern within which we are simply one small part."[26]

Lisa Raphals finds that, although Zhuangzi uses skeptical methods, he is not committed to skeptical doctrines and thus does not advocate a "true skepticism." Zhuangzi's distinction between ordinary "small knowledge"

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(*xiaozhi* 小知) and an extraordinary, greater form of knowledge that he calls "illumination" (*ming* 明) is a claim that we have access to a higher plane of knowledge. Raphals concludes the following:

> While Zhuangzi does state unambiguously that language is the source of the false distinctions of the Ruists and Mohists, that statement is not in itself a skeptical doctrine. . . . Zhuangzi and Plato each presents a hierarchy of knowing that contrasts a kind of superior knowing, which is never precisely defined, with inferior "knowledges" that are discussed at great length. . . . In the *Zhuangzi,* the superior knowledge is *dazhi* "great knowing" and is identified with *ming* and *dao.*[27]

We can add Paul Kjellberg to our list of positions as the attribution of a species of Pyrrhonian rather than epistemic skepticism to Zhuangzi that, like Ivanhoe's interpretation, is "therapeutic" rather than "conclusive." In answer to the question, why should skeptical arguments be made?, Kjellberg would argue that "Sextus says they should, because suspension of judgment gives rise to peace of mind. Zhuangzi agrees, but for the different reason that uncertainty leads to a skillful and natural life."[28]

In characterizing his own position, Roth joins Lee Yearley in allowing that, in addition to elements of skepticism and relativism, Zhuangzi was also a mystic. Whereas Yearley argues for an "intraworldly mysticism," in which the goal is not union with some unchanging monistic principle but instead full participation in the natural world, Roth sees a "bimodal" mystical experience in Zhuangzi. Roth argues that the higher kind of knowledge posited by Raphals and the acceptance of intuitive knowledge allowed by Ivanhoe derive from a firm grounding in a meditative practice attested to in both the *Zhuangzi* and other texts of early Daoism. Roth calls this apophatic practice an "inner cultivation" that involves sitting quietly and systematically circulating the breath until mind and body become tranquil and the contents of consciousness gradually empty, thus ultimately providing the adept with a direct experience of *dao.*

And Steve Coutinho rejects the categories of mysticism, relativism, and skepticism, arguing instead for a pragmatic and existential interpretation of the *Zhuangzi:*

> I see the Zhuangzian worldview and way of life as a nature-oriented form of pragmatism involving mind-body discipline and cultivation of tranquility; it

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> is existential in spirit and comparable, but not identifiable, with the way of life recommended by the ancient Stoics.[29]

Indeed, Coutinho would read Zhuangzi as a pragmatic fallibilism rather than as any kind of skepticism:

> Fallibilism is sometimes confused with scepticism, but the fallibilist does not challenge our claim to know things, as does the sceptic. The fallibilist merely challenges our claim to know things with finality and certainty.[30]

However, Deborah H. Soles and David E. Soles argue against the attribution of perspectivalism, relativism, or skepticism to Zhuangzi as being fundamentally mistaken, maintaining that Zhuangzi's attacks on the concepts of truth and knowledge are better seen as a species of epistemological nihilism that rejects the concepts of truth, reality, and knowledge as ultimately meaningless:

> The man of far-reaching vision has no use for categories. The point is that *all* attempts at categorisation fail. And if all attempts at categorisation fail, to categorize a judgment as true, even true from a perspective, is to attempt what cannot be done, and it is to miss the whole point of Zhuangzi's nihilism. . . . Any attempt to use language in a declarative or assertoric manner will fall into the trap of classifying and discriminating. But a paradoxical use of words may allow one to "see" past the parameters of one's perspective. To be sure, this "seeing" cannot be judgmental; its content cannot be conceptualised; it cannot be described. And to even speak of an "ineffable reality" is to inject more content, as an "object" of this "seeing," than Zhuangzi wants. That is the *point* of the *Tao.*[31]

And so these contemporary scholars continue their hermeneutical quest as they take their seats on the seemingly endless carousel of the well-argued and textually grounded interpretations that have come before.

AND THE MERRY-GO-ROUND KEEPS ON TURNING

The authors of the essays in this volume on the Happy Fish debate join ranks with and make their own unique contributions to this evolving commentarial tradition, demonstrating that even within the bounds

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circumscribed by this one single Zhuangzian anecdote of just a few lines, the scope of the available interpretations is as boundless and conflicted as Zhuangzi's rhetorical style is purported to be in the several biographical sketches cited earlier.

The introductory essay is a happy reminiscence by distinguished Nobel laureate Hideki Yukawa about how his early childhood reading of the *Zhuangzi* and other philosophical canons has been an inspiration to him in revisioning assumptions that have guided professional thinking in elementary particle physics. Indeed, in the *Zhuangzi*'s Happy Fish debate he is able to find the two extremes offered by science itself. The first attitude insists on accepting only what has been proven, whereas the second gives us carte blanche in our speculations. His conclusion, of course, is that good science needs both attitudes but can only be found somewhere in between them.

In his essay "*Yuzhile*: The Joy of Fishes, or, The Play on Words," for example, Hans Peter Hoffmann offers a new, literary approach to what has truly become one of the most famous stories in the entire *Zhuangzi.* On the basis of a new philological interpretation of the expression *yuzhile* 魚之樂, coupled with his close, self-consciously literary rather than philosophical reading of the text, Hoffmann is committed to providing a novel interpretation of this anecdote without introducing assumptions or generating contradictions that do not fit with the *Zhuangzi* text as a whole.

In his chapter, "The Relatively Happy Fish," Chad Hansen argues that Hui Shi and Zhuangzi are fellow relativists but with different foci and conclusions. Hui Shi typically pushes his relativism to absurdity—radical monism or subjectivism. He starts with a relativist analysis and then applies his conclusions to knowledge or meaning *univocally.* In this exchange, Hui Shi challenges Zhuangzi's simple assertion that the fish swimming "free and easy" below them are "at leisure" by insisting that such a judgment can be made only from the fish's point of view. Zhuangzi snares him on the absurdity of his challenge and then points out how the relativity of knowledge is assumed in both Hui Shi's initial challenge and in Zhuangzi's claim about the fish. We know things from the outside *here,* not from the inside *there.* Hansen concludes that this illustrates Zhuangzi's greater focus on indexicals as the basis of his relativism and his consistency in applying it to epistemic norms as well as semantics and other social mores. For Hansen, this short dialogue illustrates how Zhuangzi's philosoph-

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ical parables work and serves to demonstrate how a focus on philosophy of language can inform our interpretation of these stories.

Eske Janus Møllgaard in "Zhuangzi's Notion of Transcendental Life" argues that a strong sense of transcendence is expressed in Zhuangzi's notion of transcendental life, or the life of Heaven (*tian* 天) as opposed to the life of human beings (*ren* 人). He further insists that Zhuangzi's central notion of "wandering" (*you* 遊) must be understood against the background of this notion of transcendental life. Since such wandering is the setting for this debate about the happy fish, this dialogue must be read by reference to Zhuangzi's notion of a transcendental plane of experience. Møllgaard concludes that such an interpretation of the dialogue shows that Zhuangzi does not, as is often claimed, fall into naturalism.

Sham Yat Shing in his essay "Knowledge and Happiness in the Debate over the Happiness of the Fish" rehearses and critiques two articles found in recent issues of the Taiwan philosophy journal *Ehu* by contemporary scholars Pan Boshi and Chen Guimiao. Each of these scholars comes to the debate with a very different interpretation and set of arguments. In important respects they reveal very different approaches. Sham is able, after careful deliberation, to come away with real insight from these two essays, especially Chen's article, but also attempts to offer his own more capacious reading of the anecdote. Indeed, in his analysis of these two contributions Sham offers up nothing less than a clinic in rigorous philosophical analysis by formalizing the arguments offered and following them to their logical conclusions. But he does not stop there. He suggests that one way of approaching his debate is with philosophical rigor and the adjudication of arguments, a path taken by several of the contributors to this volume. The second way of reading the text is through an appreciation of a Zhuangzian transcendentalism that is reminiscent of the interpretation offered by Eske Møllgaard in the essay that immediately precedes this one in this volume.

In "The Relatively Happy Fish Revisited," Norman Y. Teng engages the Hansen essay by employing the logic more familiar to early Chinese thinkers developed in the "Lesser Pick" (or "Lesser Selection") of the later Mohist Canons as a methodological device to analyze the dialogue between Zhuangzi and Hui Shi. He argues that the logical terms and patterns of discourse expounded in the Lesser Pick provide us with a way of modeling in a suitably historical perspective the intricate dialectic of the reasoning in the dialogue. It is thus that Zhuangzi's final statement, which is

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notoriously recondite when viewed through the modern inferential frameworks, becomes a natural conclusion for the dialogue.

Kuwako Toshio in "Knowing the Joy of Fish: The *Zhuangzi* and Analytic Philosophy" locates this Happy Fish anecdote within the "other minds" debate, which has been a central theme of analytic philosophy over the recent century, taking into account the "other species" concerns expressed in the more recent philosophical literature by Thomas Nagel and Peter Singer. He then extends his concerns to contemporary discussions about access to "other cultures." Kuwako argues for a singular experience beyond a subjective perceptual demonstrability available only to some and which is called "the joy of fish." Such an experience is to be had in a particular situation where in this case the "I" encounters the fish at the Hao River.

In his essay, "Of Fish and Knowledge: On the Validity of Cross-Cultural Understanding," Zhang Longxi uses Zhuangzi's "happy fish" episode as a model for the acquisition of knowledge. He argues for the validity of a cross-cultural understanding that takes us beyond relativism and universalism. For Zhang, Zhuangzi's perspective also informs a critical reexamination of the Chinese rites controversy and the relativist insistence on untranslatability and helps open up our horizon for understanding that transcends linguistic and cultural differences.

Takahiro Nakajima in "*Zhuangzi* and Theories of the Other" builds on the Kuwako essay and provides an argument in which he is able to recover what he takes to be two different logics from Huizi and Zhuangzi. The logic of Huizi is "tautology," which absorbs the other into the self as an isolated subjectivity. Contrary to this, the logic of Zhuangzi is the logic of "proximity" as "that place" shared by the "I" (not the self) and others. If we follow the logic of proximity, the "joy of fish" is not an experience of the isolated self as subjectivity but is one coestablished in a fundamental passivity of the "I" and others who are put into "proximity." This in turn provides us with a different attitude toward the "others" that constitute our context.

In "Of Fish and Men: Species Difference and the Strangeness of Being Human in the *Zhuangzi*," Franklin Perkins locates the "happy fish" within the broader role of fish stories in the *Zhuangzi*. According to Perkins, fish play such a prominent role in the text because they are taken as having a perspective or world, but one that is decidedly different from our own. In this way, fish illustrate the limits of any perspective and what it means to

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be at home in a perspective (for better or worse). Interactions between human beings and fish thus provide various models for addressing the problems of communication across different perspectives, with stories of fishing providing one model and the story of the "happy fish" another. Perkins argues that the ways in which the *Zhuangzi* presents human beings as like and unlike fish help to illuminate the inevitable strangeness of being human.

In "The Happy Fish of the Disputers" Han Xiaoqiang argues the happy fish story addresses the difficulty that arises when analyzing the dialogue in terms of familiar patterns of inference and provides a reasoned explanation for its apparent oddness. Indeed, Han suggests that the dialogue becomes perfectly intelligible if it is read against the backdrop of the disputations practiced in ancient China. His contention is that the real purpose of the dialogue is to expose the fundamental unreliability of the disputers' logic by means of the logic itself.

Peng Feng with his "Fact and Experience: A Look at the Root of Philosophy from the Happy Fish Debate" asks this question: in this Happy Fish debate are the fish really happy, or is Zhuangzi experiencing the happy fish? After carefully scrutinizing Zhuangzi's text and surveying representatives of its vast commentaries, he argues that the debate can only allow for Zhuangzi's experience of the happy fish and cannot state with certainty that the fish are happy. For Peng, a philosophy based on fact would be only a philosophy of discourse, whereas a philosophy based on experience could provide a philosophy as a way of life. This story in the *Zhuangzi* is a testimony to the claim that traditional Chinese philosophy prefers life to discourse.

Hans-Georg Moeller, in "Rambling without Destination: On Daoist '*You*-ing' in the World," discusses the prominent notion of *you* 遊 (to roam, to ramble) in the *Zhuangzi*'s Daoism as nothing less than a technical philosophical term. Based on a careful analysis of the meanings of this term in the text, two interpretations of the "Happy Fish" story emerge, one more "poetic," one more "prosaic." In accordance with the "prosaic" interpretation of the Happy Fish debate, Moeller endorses "*you*-ing" or "rambling on" as an entirely defensible philosophical method.

In the final essay, " 'Knowing' as the 'Realizing of Happiness' Here, on the Bridge, over the River Hao," Roger Ames argues for the need to set an interpretive context in the reading of canonical texts such as the *Zhuangzi*. He then explores what might be taken to be some pervasive assumptions

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that ground a general Daoist cosmology, beginning from what he calls a commitment to process and to a radical contextuality. He then tries to locate the example of *Zhuangzi*'s "Happy Fish" story within this cosmology as it is contested by the Mohists to determine what if any difference such an effort to register its context might make for the substance of our own interpretation. Indeed, a capacious epistemology that embraces both the processual nature of experience and its radical contextuality transforms "knowing" into a realizing of the happiness that is to be found in learning to be fully situated.

While editing this volume, we—Ames and Nakajima—have had the occasion to recall the happy event that inspired it—the 2012 UTUH Institute for Comparative Philosophy. Indeed, indelible memories of a truly novel experiment in higher education have come flooding back. It was with enormous satisfaction that, at the closing dinner of the institute, the faculty from both of our institutions—the University of Tokyo and the University of Hawai'i—found a long moment seemingly outside of time to sit down quietly and enjoy a glass of wine together and to contemplate the animated and happy philosophical discussions taking place among our students sitting at their various tables. We were keenly aware that something had happened in the summer of 2012 that would make a profound difference in the professional and personal lives of these bright young people and that somehow or other they, too, had found their way to *you* 遊 together on the bridge over the river Hao.

Roger T. Ames
Takahiro Nakajima

NOTES

1. Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 35.

2. The present *Zhuangzi* is only about sixty thousand characters, but the present thirty-three-chapter volume was edited down from an earlier fifty-two-chapter text by Guo Xiang 郭象 (died c. 312).

3. The first two of these chapters purport to be a record in which Confucius is sorely undone in a debate in which he attempts to defend his ideas. The third chapter invokes themes such as getting rid of erudition as a distraction from what is spontaneous—a repeated injunction in the *Laozi*.

4. Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Records of the Grand Historian* (*Shiji* 史記) (Peking: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 2143–2145: 莊子者，蒙人也，名周。周嘗為蒙漆園吏，與梁惠王、齊宣王同時。其學無所不闚，然其要本歸於老子之言。故其著書十餘萬言，大抵率寓言也。作漁

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父、盜跖、胠 篋，以詆訿孔子之徒，以明老子之術。畏累虛、亢桑子之屬，皆空語無事實。然善屬書離辭，指事類情，用剽剝儒、墨，雖當世宿學不能自解免也。其言洸洋自恣以適己，故自王公大人不能器之。 楚威王聞莊周賢，使使厚幣迎之，許以為相。莊周笑謂楚使者曰：「千金，重利；卿相，尊位也。子獨不見郊祭之犧牛乎？養食之數歲，衣以文繡，以入大廟。當是之時，雖欲為孤豚，豈可得乎？子亟去，無污我。我寧游戲污瀆之中自快，無為有國者所羈，終身不仕，以快吾志焉。」

5. *Zhuangzi* 17 has a parallel story with the exception that the "Autumn Floods" chapter describes the plight of a three-thousand-year-old sacred tortoise preserved in an ornamented chest rather than that of a sacrificial ox awaiting its doom—situations similar in that both of these objects of reverence would gladly be elsewhere.

6. Steve Coutinho, *Zhuangzi and Early Chinese Philosophy: Vagueness, Transformation, and Paradox* (Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate, 2004), 35.

7. David McCraw, *Stratifying* Zhuangzi: *Rhyme and Other Quantitative Evidence* (Taipei: Institute of Linguistics, Academia Sinica, 2010), 47.

8. Steve Coutinho, *An Introduction to Daoist Philosophies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 203 note 8.

9. *Zhuangzi* 33: 芴漠無形，變化無常，死與生與！天地並與！神明往與！芒乎何之？忽乎何適？萬物畢羅，莫足以歸，古之道術有在於是者。莊周聞其風而悅之。以謬悠之說，荒唐 之言，無端崖之辭，時恣縱而不儻，不以觭見之也。以天下為沈濁，不可與莊語；以卮言為曼衍，以重言為真，以寓言為廣。獨與天地精神往來，而不敖倪於萬物， 不譴是非，以與世俗處。其書雖瑰瑋而連犿無傷也，其辭雖參差而諔詭可觀。彼其充實不可以已，上與造物者遊，而下與外死生、無終始者為友。其於本也，宏大而 辟，深閎而肆；其於宗也，可謂稠適而上遂矣。雖然，其應於化而解於物也，其理不竭，其來不蛻，芒乎昧乎，未之盡者。

10. For a recently published summary of the ongoing scholarly research on Mohism and its corpus, see Carine Defoort and Nicolas Standaert, eds., *The* Mozi *as an Evolving Text: Different Voices in Early Chinese Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

11. Lisa Raphals, "On Hui Shi," in *Wandering at Ease in the Zhuangzi,* ed. Roger T. Ames (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 143–161.

12. A. C. Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics and Science* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press and School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1978), 19.

13. Ibid., 61.

14. *Zhuangzi* 33: 惠施多方，其書五車，其道舛駁，其言也不中。。。 惠施以此為大觀於天下而曉辯者，天下之辯者相與樂之。。。 辯者以此與惠施相應，終身無窮。 桓團、公孫龍辯者之徒，飾人之心，易人之意，能勝人之口，不能服人之心，辯者之囿也。惠施日以其知，與人之辯，特與天下之辯者為怪，此其柢也。 然惠施之口談，自以為最賢，曰：「天地其壯乎！」施存雄而無術。南方有倚人焉，曰黃繚，問天地所以不墜不陷，風雨雷霆之故。惠施不辭而應，不慮而對，遍為 萬物說；說而不休，多而無已，猶以為寡，益之以怪。以反人為實，而欲以勝人為名，是以與眾不適也。弱於德，強於物，其塗隩矣。由天地之道觀惠施之能，其猶 一蚉一虻之勞者也，其於物也何庸！夫充一尚可，曰愈貴，道幾矣！惠施不能以此自寧，散於萬物而不厭，卒以善辯為名。惜乎！惠施之才，駘蕩而不得，逐萬物而不反，是窮響以聲，形與影競走也。悲夫！

15. Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics and Science,* 376.

16. A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1989), 76.

17. Ibid., 77.

18. Ibid.

19. 南海之帝為儵，北海之帝為忽，中央之帝為渾沌。

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20. Franklin Perkins, "Of Fish and Men: Species Difference and the Strangeness of Being Human in the *Zhuangzi,* " in this volume.

21. Harold Roth, "Zhuangzi," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2008 edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/zhuangzi/.

22. See Hansen's website at http://www.philosophy.hku.hk/ch/zhuang.htm.

23. Ibid.

24. David B. Wong, "Chinese Ethics," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2013 edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2013/entries/ethics-chinese/.

25. Janghee Lee, *Xunzi and Early Chinese Naturalism* (Albany: State University of New York, 2005), 15.

26. P. J. Ivanhoe, "Was Zhuangzi a Relativist?" in *Essays on Skepticism, Relativism, and Ethics in the* Zhuangzi, ed. Paul Kjellberg and P. J. Ivanhoe (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 200.

27. Lisa Raphals, "Skeptical Strategies in the *Zhuangzi* and *Theatetus,*" in Kjellberg and Ivanhoe, *Essays on Skepticism, Relativism, and Ethics in the* Zhuangzi, 35, 41.

28. Paul Kjellberg, "Sextus Empiricus, Zhuangzi, and Xunzi on 'Why Be Skeptical?' " in Kjellberg and Ivanhoe, *Essays on Skepticism, Relativism, and Ethics in the* Zhuangzi, 21.

29. Coutinho, *Introduction to Daoist Philosophies,* 83.

30. Coutinho, *Zhuangzi and Early Chinese Philosophy,* 139–140.

31. Deborah H. Soles and David E. Soles, "Fish Traps and Rabbit Snares: Zhuangzi on Judgment, Truth and Knowledge," *Asian Philosophy* 8, no. 3 (1998): 162–163.

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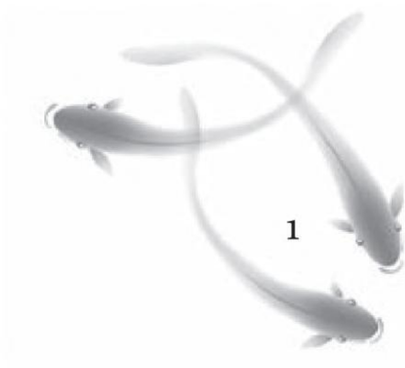

1

Zhuangzi

The Happy Fish

Hideki YUKAWA

Even before primary school, I had studied various Chinese classics. In practice, this means merely that I repeated aloud after my grandfather a version of the Chinese texts converted into Japanese. At first, of course, I had no idea what it meant. Yet, oddly enough, I gradually began to understand even without being told. Most of the works I studied were connected with Confucianism, but, with the exception of historical works such as *The Historical Records,* the Confucian classics held little interest for me. They dealt almost exclusively with moral matters, and I found them somehow patronizing.

Around the time I started middle school, I began to wonder whether the Chinese classics might not include other works that were more interesting, with a different way of thinking, and I searched my father's study with that in mind. I hauled out *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi* and began reading them and soon found that *The Book of Zhuangzi* in particular was interesting. I read it over and over again. I was only a middle-school boy, of course, and later I sometimes wondered whether I had really understood it and what exactly was so interesting to me.

Originally published in *Experimental Essays on Chuang-Tzu (Zhuangzi),* ed. Victor H. Mair (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1983). Reprinted with permission. Romanization of Chinese terms was changed to the standard pinyin used throughout this anthology.

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Four or five years ago, I was thinking one day about elementary particles when, quite suddenly, I recalled a passage from *Zhuangzi*. Freely translated, the passage in question, which occurs in the last section of the inner part of *Zhuangzi*, runs as follows:

> The Emperor of the South was called Shu, and the Emperor of the North, Hu. [Both characters mean "very fast," "to run swiftly," and the two characters together in Chinese signify something like "in a flash."] The Emperor of the Center was known as Hundun ("chaos"). One time, the emperors of the South and the North visited Hundun's territories, where they met with him. Hundun made them heartily welcome. Shu and Hu conferred together as to how they could show their gratitude. They said, "All men have seven apertures—the eyes, the ears, the mouth, and the nose—whereby they see, hear, eat, and breathe. Yet this Hundun, unlike other men, is quite smooth with no apertures at all. He must find it very awkward. As a sign of our gratitude, therefore, let us try making some holes for him." So each day they made one fresh hole, and on the seventh day Hundun died.

Why should I have recalled this fable? I have been doing research on elementary particles for many years, and by now more than thirty different types of such particles have been discovered, each of which presents something of a riddle. When this kind of thing happens, one is obliged to go one step further and consider what may lie beyond these particles. One wants to get at the most basic form of matter, but it is awkward if there prove to be more than thirty different forms of it; it is more likely that the most basic thing of all has no fixed form and corresponds to none of the elementary particles we know at present. It may be something that can be differentiated into all kinds of particles but has not yet done so in fact. Expressed in familiar terminology, this is probably a kind of "chaos." It was while I was thinking along these lines that I recalled the fable of *Zhuangzi*.

I am not the only one, of course, who is occupied with this question of a fundamental theory of elementary particles. Werner Karl Heisenberg in Germany, speculating on what lies beyond elementary particles, used the term *Urmaterie* (primordial matter). Whether one calls it "primordial matter" or "chaos" does not matter, but my ideas and Heisenberg's, although alike in some respects, also have their differences.

Recently I have found a renewed fascination with Zhuangzi's fable. I amuse myself by seeing Shu and Hu as something like the elementary

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particles. So long as they were rushing about freely nothing happened—until, advancing from south and north, they came together on the territory of Hundun, or chaos, where an event like the collision of elementary particles occurred. Looked at in this way, which implies a kind of dualism, the chaos of Hundun can be seen as the time and space in which the elementary particles are enfolded. Such an interpretation seems possible to me.

It may not make much sense, of course, to fiddle with the words of men of old in order to make them fit in with modern physics. Zhuangzi, who lived some twenty-three hundred years ago, almost certainly knew nothing of the atom. Even so, it is interesting and surprising that he should have had ideas that, in a sense, are very similar to those of people like me today.

Science developed mostly in Europe. Greek thought, it is often said, served in the broad sense as a basis from which all science was to develop. Erwin Schrödinger, who died in 1961, wrote that where there was no influence from Greek thought, science underwent no development. Historically speaking, this is probably correct. Even in the case of Japan since the Meiji Restoration, the direct influence of Greek thought may have been minor, yet indirectly at least it has provided a starting point for Japan's adoption of the science developed in Europe, and in this way we Japanese have inherited the Greek tradition.

Concerning what happened in the past I have nothing further to add. Yet when one considers the future, there is surely no reason for Greek thought to remain the only source for the development of scientific thought. The Orient produced all kinds of systems of thought. India is a good example, and the same is true of China. The ancient philosophies of China have not given birth to pure science. So far, this may have been true. But one cannot assume that it will remain so in the future as well. Today, just as in my middle-school days, Laozi and Zhuangzi are the two thinkers of ancient China for whom I feel the most interest and affection. In some ways Laozi's ideas are, I realize, more profound than those of Zhuangzi, but the precise meaning of what Laozi writes is far from easy to grasp. His use of words and phrasing is difficult, and even the commentaries often fail to elucidate the obscurities. What one gets, in the end, is only the framework of his thought. Zhuangzi, on the other hand, has all kinds of interesting fables; biting irony is balanced by a grand imagination. Under the surface exists a profound and consistent philosophy. Simply seen as prose, moreover, the work is incomparable. Many things in Zhuangzi,

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I believe, stimulate the reader's mind and make it work better. The fable I quoted earlier was in itself almost certainly written not about a microcosm but about the great universe as a whole. Quite obviously, it deals neither with the infinitesimally small particles that form the basis of the natural world nor with the correspondingly small time and space in which they move. Yet in practice I have the feeling that in it one can dimly discern the microcosm that we have finally arrived at as a result of our studies of physics; one cannot dismiss the parallel as a coincidence. When one looks at things in this way, I believe that one cannot say that Greek thought is the only system of ideas that can serve as a basis for the development of science. The ideas of Laozi and Zhuangzi may appear to be essentially alien to Greek thought, yet they constitute a consistent, rationalistic outlook that holds much that is still worthy of respect today as a natural philosophy in its own right.

Where both Confucianism and the mainstream of Greek thought grant significance to the self-determined, voluntary actions of humankind, believing them to offer a valid prospect of realizing the ideals that we cherish, Laozi and Zhuangzi believe that the power of nature is overwhelmingly the greater, and that human beings, surrounded by forces beyond their control, are simply tossed now one way, now the other. During my middle-school days, I found this outlook extreme, yet was attracted to it. From my high-school days on, I began to find the idea of humanity's impotence intolerable, and for a long time I stayed away from the philosophy of Laozi and Zhuangzi. Yet all the while I cherished at the back of my mind a suspicion that, however unpalatable it might be for human beings, their ideas harbored an incontrovertible truth.

Laozi has a passage that runs as follows: "Heaven and Earth are without compassion; they see all things as straw dogs. The wise ruler is without compassion; he sees the common people as straw dogs." The brevity and the air of finality are typical of Laozi. Zhuangzi, on the other hand, prefers attractive metaphors such as the following:

> A certain man was afraid of his own shadow and loathed his own footprints. So he started running, thinking to rid himself of them. But the oftener he raised his feet as he ran, the greater the number of his footprints became; and however fast he ran, still his shadow followed him. Telling himself that he was still not going fast enough, he ran faster and faster without stopping, until finally he exhausted his strength and dropped dead. Foolish man: if he had

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stayed in the shade, he would have had no shadow; if he had been still, there would have been no footprints.

The outlook expressed here is without doubt fatalistic—a mode of thinking usually described as "Oriental"—but it is far from irrational. Indeed, for us who, with the advance of scientific civilization, find ourselves, ironically enough, increasingly hard pressed by time, the story contains an uncomfortable home truth.

Half my mind revolts against this outlook, and half of it is attracted by it, which is precisely why it remains forever in my memory. Books make their appeal in many different ways, but I am particularly fond of the kind of work that creates a world of its own in which, if only for a short time, it succeeds in immersing the reader. *Zhuangzi* for me ranks as a typical example of that type of book.

People are constantly coming and asking me to write some words for them on the traditional strip of paper used for the purpose or to do a piece of calligraphy for them to frame. In the former case, I can usually get by with a poem of my own, but with a request for calligraphy—where some suitable short phrase from the classics is usual—I have trouble finding something suitable. In some cases recently, though, I have been writing the three Chinese characters that mean, literally, "know," "fish," and "pleasure." When I do so, I am invariably asked to explain the meaning. The phrase comes, in fact, from the seventeenth chapter, "The Autumn Floods," of *The Book of Zhuangzi*. The general meaning of the original passage is as follows:

> One day, Zhuangzi was strolling beside the river with Huizi. Huizi, a man of erudition, was fond of arguing. They were just crossing a bridge when Zhuangzi said, "The fish have come up to the surface and are swimming about at their leisure. That is how fish enjoy themselves." Immediately Huizi countered this with: "You are not a fish. How can you tell what a fish enjoys?" "You are not me," said Zhuangzi. "How do you know that I can't tell what a fish enjoys?" "I am not you," said Huizi triumphantly. "So of course I cannot tell about you. In the same way, you are not a fish. So you cannot tell a fish's feelings. Well—is my logic not unanswerable?" "Wait, let us go back to the root of the argument," said Zhuangzi. "When you asked me how I knew what a fish enjoyed, you admitted that you knew already whether I knew or not. I knew, on the bridge, that the fish were enjoying themselves."

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