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Abstract

The primary concern of my thesis is the translation of the first chapter, *Untrammelled Wandering*, in *Chuang Tzu*, and the Hsiang-Kuo commentary on this chapter into English. Understandably the main onus has been the deciphering and transcribing of arcane and abstruse passages.

In the seminars my professors, a few kindred souls and myself have tried assiduously to unearth the meanings lodged in the Chinese sentences, sometimes quite forbidding sentences. The simpler parts were, with the guidance of the professors, quite easily dispensed with. But we have had difficulties negotiating with the really recondite portions. Textual corruption, of course, was the Ariadne's thread we on a few occasions resorted to.

We finished about half of the reconnaissance in the seminars. I consummated the task in my subterranean cell. I have read all the available English translations of *Chuang Tzu* and depart significantly on certain key points from all the translators. Translations of ancient Chinese texts are, indeed, oftentimes interpretations and are ineluctably coloured by the translator's particular leanings.

The Hsiang-Kuo commentary has only been attempted *in partibus*. It is decidedly more difficult to understand than *Chuang Tzu* proper. The commentators have injected, naturally, their own ideas and biases into their writing. At times they elaborate and expand rather freely what is only hinted at in the text.

In the prologue I have tried to present *Chuang Tzu's* philosophy as succinctly as I could. An analysis of *Untrammelled Wandering* ensues. Since the Hsiang-Kuo commentary is a classic in its own right, I have attempted a study of the commentators and their milieu. I must say available works on the commentary in English do not abound. I relied, in the main, on secondary sources in Chinese.

The chasm between ancient Chinese and English is really difficult to bridge. Furthermore *Chuang Tzu's* language is unique
and poetic. It is doubly hard to capture his spirit and suggestiveness in English. I hope my translation does not entirely miss him. As to the Hsiang-Kuo commentary, it is more difficult to understand but easier to do justice to. It has been said, by a Ch'an monk, that it was Chuang Tzu who wrote a commentary on Hsiang-Kuo. I do find, however, that from time to time the commentators' ideas do not entirely correspond with Chuang Tzu's original import. The definiteness and articulateness of the commentators, on the other hand, are quite meritorious and command praise.
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seeker of truth
follow no path
all paths lead where
truth is here

-- E. E. Cummings
Prologue

I have translated from English into Chinese (Hesse's *Siddhartha*, merely a novel) but not vice versa. Any undertaking is understandably fraught with dismay for the novice, and, alas, *Chuang Tzu* is ancient and veritably abstruse. The commentary is at times well-nigh Sphinxine. The work was at times quite vexing. Conversely I must confess I extracted, once the meaning was grasped, an enormity of pleasure from hunting for *les mots justes*. I suppose I am just finical enough to value words which are, according to *Chuang Tzu*, merely guests of reality.

Chuang Tzu's Philosophy

Chuang Tzu's grand motif is freedom. A wide consensus has it that *On Seeing Things As Equal* is the most important of the 33 chapters in *Chuang Tzu*. (1) *Untrammelled Wandering*, however, really contains the kernel of his philosophy. In it *Chuang Tzu* enjoins everyone to divest himself of all existential entanglements imaginable. The root of the problem is that we depend. We depend on things, people, positions, knowledge *ad nauseam*, and we cling with all the tenacity under the sun to value systems culled from social realms. And, ultimately, we depend on life itself. When we possess what we desire, needless to say we want more and better. Furthermore we are never totally free from a haunting psychic shadow. This shadow is the thought of the unavailability of the very things we cherish. When these cherished items are lost or absent, *omne miserum*.

To live is to journey, through diverse vicissitudes, from womb to tomb. Ultimately nothing is gained, nothing is added to us. As *Chuang Tzu* smugly suggests, even standing on tip-toe suffices not to enhance life by so much as a jot. Metaphysically we are nothing and have nothing. And yet we depend, or try to depend, on so much!
From these premises the darkest nihilism can be woven. Chuang Tzu sees beyond nihilism. By a very subtle turn of the mind he identifies with the cosmos and the cosmic laws. What is natural is cosmically good. This is the turn of the screw. The "Tao" of the Taoists denotes, I opine, the totality of the naturalness in the universe. The universe naturally comes into being through the "Tao" and is sustained by the "Tao". Chuang Tzu deems flawlessly good and truly divine all that is natural and spontaneous. Man's duty is to accept, with equanimity, all the transformations wrought by cosmic forces and to enjoy man's destiny, the destiny of an existent in the vast cosmos. Whatever exists and is natural is good. Hence Lao Tzu writes, "Tao is great, the heaven is great, the earth is great, and man is also great." (道大,天大,地大,人亦大) Man is great but artificiality and hubris must be banished, for Lao Tzu also writes, "Man models himself after the earth, the earth the heaven, the heaven the Tao, the Tao models itself after Tzu-Jan." (人法地,地法天,天法道,道法自然) Ultimately man is neither above nor beneath the Tao, but participates existentially in the cosmic evolution initiated, sustained and directed by the Tao. Man, if natural, is at one with the Tao, and in harmony with the manifold, which, unlike man, have always been natural. It follows that man should always be spontaneous and open-minded, but not judgemental and analytic. Thus he enjoys the universe entire without distinction.

Human nature in such a state would be truly primal. Whatever happens in such pristine environs would be good, good in cosmic terms. Taoism is Tao-centred, not human-centred, and the Tao is the cosmic Tao. Confucius can say, "The ways of heaven are far, the ways of man near." (天道远,人道迩) Chuang Tzu would say that if the ways of heaven prevail, man is at his most natural and the ways of man operate in unison with the ways of heaven. To separate the two is to commit an existential faux pas.

As long as one is natural, one is at one with the Tao and partakes existentially in the grand evolution. One's actions are
not tinged with social considerations but are truly religious. By cultivating such an attitude of mind one gradually comes to accept the universe and one's self, as well as the manifold, notwithstanding all the limitations which in actuality are not limitations but are just so. This is still not enough. The apotheosis is to enjoy wholeheartedly, nay, to relish, the universe and man's place in it. One thus observes the supreme doctrine of non-ado (無為) and enjoys existence per se, as an autarkic man. To observe non-ado is to be oblivious to all considerations but the quintessence of life -- living. This is the message and is, to employ Chuang Tzu's phraseology, tantamount to wandering absolutely untrammelled.

To convey his grand motif and thoughts Chuang Tzu eschews formal, discursive arguments -- like all Chinese philosophers of antiquity -- but, employing many allegories, metaphors, rhetorical devices, dialogues and anecdotes, is superbly humorous, and Untrammelled Wandering bears this typicality.

Analysis of Untrammelled Wandering

1. Use of Metaphors and Allegories :-

Chuang Tzu has a penchant for using poetic metaphors and allegories to convey his positive visions. Untrammelled Wandering is well-nigh suffused with such literary devices.

From page 1 to page 5 in the translation Chuang Tzu purports to show how differing limitations pertain to different entities. The commentators deduce this to mean that by remaining true to one's nature, one attains to the very pinnacle of being. Issues such as size and longevity are quite irrelevant. The point is not to crave for more, but to be satisfied with one's natural endowments. Chuang Tzu juxtaposes the great P'eng with the quail to illustrate their needs differ and must differ. The commentators amplify and state that these two creatures would be equally happy should they be in accord with their unique natures.
The stories about upsetting water into a hole and journeying varying distances are meant to show how different measures are warranted by different circumstances.

Then the metaphor of Lieh Tzu (列子) riding the winds on pp. 6 and 7 shows that dependence, even to a very negligible degree, is absolutely anathema. To be free one must needs be autarkic and not depend, not even on winds.

The story of Yao (堯) trying to cede the empire to Hsü Yu (許由) is quite obvious in its intent. If it is not one's business, then even the empire should be declined. After all, "priests do not step over the wine vessels and meat stands to supplant, even should the latter be indolent." (Untrammelled Wandering. This apophthegm of Chuang Tzu's has become common usage.)

The Divine Man on the remote mountain Ku Yeh is Chuang Tzu's apotheosis of an autarkic man. This Divine Man depends on nothing at all, is graceful as a young virgin, and lets the world be. He observes non-ado to the very hilt. The commentators note that Chuang Tzu situates his Divine Man beyond the extreme bounds and describes him in extravagant terms to emphasize the vast difference between him and ordinary people. Thus people are jostled out of their conventional mental attitudes and can appreciate better the sublime merits of non-ado.

In yet another story the Yüeh (越) people have no use for embroidered caps. This is likened to the four sages on Ku Yeh having no need for the empire or for Yao's throne. The commentators append that the emperor Yao does not deem the empire important and does not approach it as a task. He observes non-ado and lets the empire be, and the empire rights itself by itself. Thus Yao rules well by non-ado.

The passage containing the story about the salve for chapped hands, and the metaphor of the big calabash fruit purport to show, as the commentary notes, "All things dissimilarly
have their uses. If they are applied rightly, one can disport oneself utterly anywhere one goes."

The last conversation between Chuang Tzu and Hui Ssu (惠施), in which we find metaphors of a big tree, a wild cat, a weasel and a big yak, is intended to reveal the supreme value of uselessness and non-ado. The yak and the big tree are entirely useless, and therefore are immune from harm. The wild cat and the weasel agitate themselves excessively and thereby come to grief.

To recapitulate, Chuang Tzu often invents and quotes stories and employs metaphors to convey the merits of spontaneity and non-ado, and to lampoon artificiality and futile craving. He seems to entertain a great liking for living things -- birds, fish, cicada, trees, yak, and other animals -- and uses them as vehicles and exemplars to illustrate his subtle, mystical thoughts and insights. It is, perhaps, because he approves of their spontaneity.

2. The Concept of Non-ado :-

Non-ado is, along with Tao and Tzu-jan, the cardinal concept in Taoism. They constitute, shall we say, the Taoist Trinity. Chuang Tzu is the signal philosopher, probably the progenitor, in what H. G. Creel classifies as Contemplative Taoism. (2) The primary concern, in this wing of Taoism, is to be detached from the hurly-burly, to cultivate and realize the Tao immanent in each, and to enjoy, serene and free, the multifaceted phenomena in the cosmos without distinction.

But non-ado, even in Chuang Tzu, definitely does not mean doing nothing. I would have it mean, simply, to act in accordance with nature. The Hsiang-Kuo commentary notes, "Tao escapes not things." (道不逃物) In any set of variables there exists a Tao that governs and sustains. To observe this Tao, this natural law, and to act in harmony with this reigning Tao, harbouring no ulterior motives nor committing any redundant acts, is to observe non-ado.
It is very akin to being scientific, in the sense of respecting natural laws and refraining from interfering with these laws, just like the old cook carving an ox in a masterly manner, *Chuang Tzu*, chap. 3. He was thoroughly conversant with the anatomy of the ox and just manipulated his knife along the hollows and crevices. We can almost say he was imbued with the scientific spirit.

To contravene the Tao, according to the Taoists, is to vex oneself needlessly and the result oftentimes is much ado about nothing, sometimes even worse.

Non-ado is mentioned only once in *Untrammelled Wandering.* (The term appears only three times in the Nei P'ien, 'Inner Chapters', of *Chuang Tzu*.) In the last story involving the big tree, Chuang Tzu enjoins Hui Tzu to disport himself in non-ado by the tree's side and to repose untrammelled under it. The connotation seems that if one observes non-ado, one becomes untrammelled. The emphasis here, as in most of Chuang Tzu's anecdotes, is on withdrawal from the world.

Conversely, the commentary in several instances has "non-ado" and its equivalents. (5b; twice in 12a, 15a, 16a.) Chuang Tzu's metaphors and allegories all converge, in the final analysis, on non-ado and naturalness. The commentators perforce crystallize Chuang Tzu's intentions, as good commentators should, and enunciate by writing "non-ado", the crucial concept and signal contribution of Taoism.

3. *Chuang Tzu's Perfect Man, Sagely Man, Divine Man,*

The Commentators' Independent Man.:-

Many epithets are used by Chuang Tzu to delineate the man who has attained to the Tao, his apotheosis. One enumerates Perfect, Sagely, Divine and in the commentary one finds Independent. These epithets, inactuality, describe the same reality and can readily be subsumed under "autarkic". Such a man, according to Chuang Tzu, is without selfhood, achievement and name/fame. He,
consequently depends on nothing at all.

One who is at one with the Tao depends on nothing. Even Lieh Tzu only reached the penultimate stage — without wind he could not travel. Only the autarkic man who has divested himself of the very concepts of selfhood, achievement and name/fame can truly enjoy existence and evolution per se, regardless of circumstances. In very extravagant terms Chuang Tzu describes the mystique and powers of such a man. Chuang Tzu's autarkic man evolved, probably, into the apotheosis of the later Taoists — Hsien (仙). The physiological Taoists tried to approximate this ideal by nurturing perfect, immortal divine bodies — *embrjzyonic bodies*, (3) singularly akin to Chuang Tzu's mystical images and supposedly command supernatural powers.

4. The Powers of the Autarkic Man :-

Throughout the chapter Chuang Tzu makes references to the powers marvellous of the autarkic one to curtail calamities, to secure plenitude, and to enhance contentment for all and sundry. The commentators add that he is not one who "holds his hands in silence and sequesters himself in the mountains." but who governs by not governing and regulates by not regulating. He lets the world be, because, the commentators reason, the world naturally desires harmony, and without interference harmony is naturally attained.

In a deeper sense the Perfect Man is the truly ethical one. He is natural and he allows all with which he comes into contact be natural. His acts are not tinged with self-centred considerations. He merely communes with the all-pervasive Tao and assists in the eternal evolution of things. In essence, he observes what the cosmos decrees and refrains from distorting and troubling things. He lives out his allotted destiny, quiescent and serene, and tampers not with the destinies of others. In Chuang Tzu's words, such men far surpass even Yao and Shun.
5. Chuang Tzu's Language :–

Chuang Tzu's language has long been praised. It is vivid, brilliant, at times lyrical, always captivating. He can be concise, subtle, and grandiose. Mystical insights are clothed in vivid and germane metaphors and evocations of nature are never without charm. The book contains, in addition, many interesting anecdotes and illuminating disputations on difficult issues. Seldom has philosophy been written in such a lively vein. The inner chapters, at times, really seem extemporaneous utterances of a very brilliant man. It is a delight to read such wise and humorous words.

From Untrammelled Wandering several terms and phrases have become common usage. The Chinese possess a penchant for saying a lot in a few words. Chuang Tzu's apophthegms and metaphors provide excellent vehicles for this. I cull the following from Untrammelled Wandering:

(1) 適千里者，三月聚糧. One who journeys 1 thousand li spend 3 months to accumulate food.
(2) 朝菌不知晦朔. The morning mushroom knows not of the beginning or the end of a month.
(3) 傾父飲河，不過滿腹. When the tapir drinks at the river, it takes but a bellyful.
(4) 包人難不治庖，尸祝不越樽俎而代之. Although the cook does not attend to the cooking, the impersonator of the dead at the sacrifice and the priest do not step over the wine vessels and meat stands to supplant him.
A Study of The Hsiang-Kuo Commentary

What follows attempts to proffer a general picture of the milieu, the lives and the work of the commentators. Certain of their notions pertaining to Untrammelled Wandering are then juxtaposed with Chuang Tzu's original ideas and analysed.

1. The Milieu:

Sui's (隋) unification of China in A.D. 589 ended a prolonged period of disunity and confusion and crises aplenty, precipitated by Han's (漢) collapse in A.D. 220. During these troublesome 4 centuries wars were rampant, invasions of nomadic tribes from the north devastated the land, and usurpations desolated the people. China was even sundered into two dynasties, ruling the north and the south simultaneously. It was a period of social unrest, political confusion, and general turmoil. This period is known as the "Six Dynasties".

Politically the "Six Dynasties" were quite fraught with discord, internal and external, punctuated by numerous wars. Yet culturally China reached one of its peaks. "Painting, calligraphy, poetry, and philosophy were at this time all at their best." (4)

Invariably when the times were out of joint in Chinese history, Taoism attracted numerous scholars and poets. Taoism's messages of transcendence and serenity eminently suit the mentality of a purturbed age. In the Wei-Chin (魏晉) period, A.D. 220-420, Lao-Chuang (老莊) were indeed very much revered and studied.

After 2 hundred years of Confucian supremacy in the Han, time was ripe for a revaluation and study of the diverse schools. The meticulous and endless studies of the Confucian classics under the Han had become sheer scholasticism. (5) There was bound to be a reaction. Furthermore, after the prolonged controversy between the Ancient-Script School and Modern-Script School, there were nurtured the spirit and desire for critical study and independent
thinking. Intellectuals were no longer content to learn and memorize, but to inquire freely into both old and new issues. Taoism was thoroughly studied, new light was shed and novel interpretations appeared. Neo-Taoism made its entrance and flourished. Some scholars think Taoistic philosophy did not reach its perfection until now. (6)

Intellectuals in the Wei-Chin period, with their more developed sensitivity and concern, expressed themselves in two facets — Pure Conversation (Ch'ing-T'an 清談, "Discussion of abstract and unworldly matters"). The word "Pure" approximates to the spirit of Taoism — discussion for discussion's sake.) and Hsuan Hsueh (Abstruse Learning, 學), one involving the other. The Pure Conversationalists mostly eschewed governmental positions. They could be designated as quietists, observing the principle of naturalness (自然) and seeking a harmonious compliance with their own natures. Their counterpart, as far as politics was concerned, would be the activists who upheld Ming Chiao (The teaching of names — giving to every name its corresponding reality.). The activists were practitioners of the traditional Confucian ethics, sought office to right the wrongs of the world, and were concerned with harmonious human relationships and orderliness in the world. The Pure Conversationalists, on the other hand, were iconoclastic, carefree, avoiding to the point of fastidiousness mundane matters, and shocked conventional people "by their individualistic scale of values". (7) Nothing delighted these Feng-Liu (風流, romantic) worthies more than to drink wine together, sequestered in some quiet niche, to discourse wittily on pure philosophy, to display lofty ideals and transcendental ideas, and to write poetry. They freely consorted with Buddhists and enjoyed disputations and expositions of classics and sutras. Epigrams and witticisms were prized more than anything else under the sun. Their spirit was certainly Taoistic. The more renowned of these denizens of Bohemia came to be known as "The Seven Sages of The Bamboo Grove" (竹林七賢). Hsiang Hsiu, who wrote, at least in partibus, the commentary and whose life will be outlined later,
was a member. The authorities, of course, looked askance at them and some of them came to grief.

The Hsüan Hsüeh wing, however, was more important. The word "Hsüan" denotes "dark, mysterious, abstruse," and the Tao in Tao Teh Ching is once described as Hsüan of Hsüan, mystery of mysteries. So members of this school had as subject matter the abstruse and the mysterious, in short, metaphysics. They accorded the appellation of "The 3 Hsuan Books" to Tao Teh Ching, Chuang Tzu and the I Ching, and upheld the non-being in Lao-Chuang, while giving it a new interpretation, as the substratum of all things. Philosophers of this school, however, were, however, syncretic. They were interested in the Schools of Names (名家) and linked their Hsuan Hsueh with Ming-Li (明理, The distinguishing of terms and analysis of principles. (8)) In actuality they were Taoistic in their metaphysics, Confucian in their social and political philosophy. (9) Neo-Taoism was really a rather Confucianized Taoism in essence.

Hsiang Hsiu (向秀), Wang Pi (王弼, 266-249), Ho Yen (何晏, d. 249) and Kuo Hsiang (郭象) were the most outstanding Neo-Taoists. Wang Pi wrote brilliant commentaries on the Tao Teh Ching and the I Ching. He was a very signal thinker of his time. Some of the technical terms he employed later obtained wide currency. (T'ie, Yung, Li, so important in Neo-Confucianism. (10)) Wang and his fellow literati all revered Confucius more than Lao-Chuang. Hsiang Hsiu for one denigrated the hermits when he was granted an audience with the emperor. (Hsiang Hsiu Pieh-Chuan 伪别传) They all held, besides being celebrated scholars, fairly important ministerial positions at court.

Richard B. Mather thinks these philosophers compromised with the demands of the social institutions, despite their transcendental aspirations. (11) Feng Yu-Lan describes their work as "an effort to turn the early Taoists' original theories of the solitary and contemplative life with a philosophy of the world fit for ordinary beings in it, combining what is outside the world with what is inside it." (12)
2. The Authors:

The Hsiang-Kuo commentary, along with Wang Pi's commentaries on the *Tao Teh Ching* and the *I Ching* are probably the most renowned and profound philosophical works from the Six Dynasties. It was, in a peculiar way, the work of two men.

The Shih-Shuo Hsin-Yu (世説新語, chap. 4) mentions a Hsiang-Kuo interpretation of *Chuang Tzu*. Hsiang designates Hsiang Hsiu. The Chin Shu (晉書) in its biography of Hsiang Hsiu says Hsiang wrote a commentary on *Chuang Tzu* and Kuo Hsiang "extended it". Hsiang Hsiu (向秀, ca. 221-ca. 300) befriended the literati who observed Feng-Liu (romanticism, antinomianism). Then, when some of his friends, practitioners of an extreme laissez-faire philosophy and deeply imbued with Taoist thoughts, came to grief, Hsiang became an official at court. But the Chin Shu says, "He is at Court but does not assume his duties; he merely contains his traces there." (在朝不任職, 留迹而已.) When Hsiang finished his commentary on *Chuang Tzu*, he showed it to his learned friends. The Literature Chapter in Shih-Shuo Hsin-Yu records that his friends were so impressed that they exclaimed, "Chuang Tzu has not died." Such were Hsiang's astuteness and scholarship.

Kuo Hsiang (郭象, ?-ca. 315) was a fairly important minister at court. The Chin Shu in his biography writes, "He, even when very young, had talent and reason, loved Lao and Chuang, could discourse profoundly. Minister Wang Hsen often said, 'When Hsiang talked, it was like a waterfall pouring down water. It just poured and was never exhausted.'" The Chin Shu in addition says, "He wrote commentaries on *Autumn Flood*, *Extreme Happiness*, changed (Hsiang Hsiu's) commentary on *Horse's Hoof*" (All chapters in *Chuang Tzu*)

Both Hsiang and Kuo were important and learned personages in their time. Both were fond of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, and both were signal Neo-Taoists. Hsiang leaned towards the Pure Conversationalists and Kuo adhered to the Hsüan Hsueh School. But in Kuo's biography in the Chin Shu it is said, "The two Chuang Tzus of Hsiang and Kuo contain the same ideas."
So the commentary can be conceived of as an amalgam of Hsiang's and Kuo's work. Scholars agree to disagree on the amount of each man's contribution. No extant record, however, asserts that the two men truly collaborated in this celebrated expositions of \textit{Chuang Tzu}, a classic in its own right.

Chinese commentaries on classical works, if brilliant, become classics themselves. It is not infrequent that profound thinkers expressed their original ideas with a commentary on a classic as their vehicle, clothing their thoughts in technical terms established by the ancient authors. This is so, as Feng Yu-Lan suggests, (13) because these philosophers/commentators were quite willing to subsume themselves under some ancient authority, so as to obtain a supposedly larger audience. Secondly, I think, it is because the Chinese literati were traditionalists of the first water. An old bottle containing new wine would be eminently to their taste. The commentary on \textit{Chuang Tzu}, designated hereafter as Hsiang-Kuo, while clearly a brilliant interpretation of Chuang Tzu, is also a philosophical work itself.

It is in accordance with the general spirit of Chuang Tzu, but not the tenor. Novel ideas appear, and the focus is, to a certain extent, shifted. The commentators' particular philosophical leanings constitute the subject matter of the following section.

3. The Commentary:

\textit{Chuang Tzu} is a sublime writer. But he sometimes merely suggests, at times finesse rather cryptically, and oftentimes just postulates ideas. The first merit of the Hsiang-Kuo commentary, of course, is its definiteness. The commentators employ lucid and generalized statements, expanding Chuang Tzu's thoughts and transforming them into well-developed principles. One misses the poetic flights but is presented with a cogent and carefully worded prose work. Feng Yu-Lan calls this progress. I beg to differ. Hsiang and Kuo crystallized Chuang Tzu's ideas, it seems to me, and reiterated
them in their tame and clear prose. It is a merit, to be sure, but no more that that.

(1) Naturalistic Cosmology:

The Hsiang-Kuo commentary is very much centred on naturalness. The universe is denied a creator and, therefore, a transcendental purpose.

"There is no creator, everything creates itself. Everything creates itself and depends on nothing. This is the normal way of the universe." chap. 2.

"The universe is the collective name for the myriad things. The universe has the manifold entities as the contents, and the manifold must needs have the natural as its norm. What is spontaneously so, without artificiality, is the natural." chap. 1.

The central issue is not the Tao but Tzu-Jan (自然), and all things Tu-Hua (變化), transform by themselves. No outside agent interferes or tampers with the destinies of things; they are just spontaneously themselves.

The Tao in Lao-Chuang is that by which all come to be. The Hsiang-Kuo commentary states, "The Tao is capable of nothing. To say that anything is derived from the Tao means it comes of itself." (chap. 5.) This is a departure from primordial Taoism. The Tao is regulated to the realm of actual non-existence, and the commentary is entirely, as will be seen, permeated by its naturalistic cosmology.

(2) Change:

The universe is conceived to be in constant flux. Nothing, so to speak, stays put.

"For heaven and earth and the myriad things change and are different everyday. They go along with time. What causes this? it is merely Tzu-Jan." chap. 2.

It is well-nigh Heraclitean. Nietzsche said we cannot step into the same river twice. Buddhism derived its first premiss from the knowledge of the eternal transience of things. The Hsiang-Kuo commentary
also emphasizes this most salient truth. The entire universe goes through countless changes each and every minute. According to Hsiang and Kuo, all these multifarious changes are self-induced, spontaneous and natural.

"The myriad things and myriad predicaments approach and relinquish different things. It seems as if a true arbiter causes them to be so. To seek the traces of this true arbiter, however, would be in the end futile. Therefore it is clear that all things are Tzu-Jan. Nothing causes them to be so." chap. 2.

Again, it is natural that all these countless changes take place, and of themselves. The we of to-day differ from the we of yesterday. And, to-morrow is another day. This is so because nature decrees it. And nature, in Hsiang-Kuo, is the ultimate.

(3) Life and Death:

Confucius said, "Not knowing even life, how can we know death?" (Analects.) The Confucianists, therefore, are preoccupied with worldly affairs, such as the orderliness of the world and correct relationships among persons. Hsiang and Kuo, though predominantly Confucian, employed Lao-Chuang's identification with the all to combat death, the eternal onus of manunkind.

"Should we be content with whatever we meet with, why should we worry about death when we have just attained to life." chap. 2.

"For time does not stop for an instant, and the now quickly ceases to exist. Therefore the dream of yesterday is transformed now. The changes of life and death do not differ from this. Why belabour our minds with this?...........And yet the foolish are perturbed. They think they know that life is enjoyable, and death is lamentable. They have yet to hear about the natural transformation of things." ibid.

"For the body, life, old age and death are all Me. The body bears me, life belabours me, old age frees me, death rests me. Through these four changes I remains myself. Why should I lament them?" chap. 6.

"Do not evade or approach any realm. Go along with the transformations." chap. 6.

Aldous Huxley writes, "For we are but life's slave, and life time's
fool. And time, that holds sway over everything, must have stop." 

(Time Must Have Stop) The Hsiang-Kuo commentary does not adhere to such a mystical attitude but enjoins man to identify with the grand transformations of the universe, of which we are undeniably a part. For time is but change, and change is natural and, ipso facto, correct. Even birth and death should be conceived of as aspects of the same reality — Tzu-Jan.

(4) Fatalism:

Nature to the Hsiang-Kuo is paramount. Changes are natural, and things are what they are by nature, spontaneously. Hence the commentators' philosophy is tinged with elements of fatalism.

"It is not by accident that we have our life. It is not by chance that our life is what it is. The universe is very extended, things are very numerous. Yet in it and among them, we are just what we are. ...........What we are not, we cannot be. What we are, we cannot but be. What we do not do, we cannot do. What we can do, we cannot but do. Let everything be what it is, then there will be peace." chap. 5. Feng Yu-Lan, p. 223, A Short History of Chinese History

"We have our life, not because we wish to have it. Within our life, a span of one hundred years, sitting, rising, walking, standing, acting, resting, gaining, losing, feeling, instinct, knowledge, and ability, all that we have, all that we have not, all that we do, and all that we meet, are so, not because we want them to be so. By natural reason, they are what they are." chap. 5.

Although change is ubiquitous, there seems little we can actually do to change things. However, the Hsiang-Kuo teaches contentment whatever the situation and however the circumstances. "Neither free will nor choice has meaning in their system." (14) This is, nevertheless, not deplorable, for we find in the Hsiang-Kuo:

"Never mind what we are endowed with. Be content with whatever we meet with." chap. 5.

"For among things it is never the great that craves for the small, but the small invariably desires the great. Consequently Chuang Tzu enunciates the dissimilarity betwixt the great and the small and show that predes- tined limitations obtain in both cases. Craving and longing can avail but naught. Realizing this we can banish
The trammels accrued from craving and longing. For grief is born in trouble. If trouble is dispelled, grief departs. When grief has departed, life needs must be at ease."

chap. 1.

"To cultivate life is not to hope to travesty our lot, but to harmonize with Li 理, and live out our years."

chap. 3.

The Li in the above quote is the raison d'etre of a thing, the force that sustains it, the will that governs it. Also it is the principle in the universe that decrees its fate and is imminent in it. This Li became a signal concept for the Neo-Confucianists.

Because of their fatalism, Hsiang-Kuo states it is of paramount importance that we come to terms with our fate and vicissitudes. For one can never be another even if one elects to imitate.

"We have our life, not because we wish to have it. With conscious effort some people try to be great artists, they can never succeed. Yet without knowing how, the great artists spontaneously become artists. With conscious effort some people try to be sages, but they can never succeed. Yet without knowing how, the sages spontaneously become sages. Not only are the sages and artists difficult to imitate, we cannot even be fools, or dogs, by simply wishing and trying to be." chap. 5.

Now Coleridge writes in Ode On Dejection that, "Hope not I from outward forms win, the passion and the life, whose fountains are within." Hsiang and Kuo seem to think that this "Fountain of passion and life" is what we are naturally endowed with. What needs to be done is to obey and nurture it.

"The nature of everything has its limit. If one is induced by what is beyond it, one's nature will be lost. One should disregard the inducement and the others, live according to one's nature. If so, the integrity of one's nature will be preserved." chap. 10.

The commentators' philosophy is fatalistic and yet, because it is to a great extent imbued with Taoist metaphysics, they do not, as the Buddhists certainly do, deem change and impermanence as the root of all evil. What is natural is good, and men should be content to live out their destinys, decreed and fashioned by nature.
(5) Political Philosophy:

Now in the Hsiang-Kuo social and political phenomena are also subject to the natural law of change.

"There is nothing which is not natural -- peace or confusion, success or failure -- all are produced by nature, not man." chap. 7.

Hsiang-Kuo's conceptualization embraces the world of human affairs as well. Similarly, as in regards to cosmic changes, Hsiang-Kuo advocates adjusting and yielding to what is new in the political and social realms. Society is always, like the universe, in flux. Human needs and conditions change as well. When conditions change and new demands emerge, new measures should be adopted.

"The institutions of the former kings satisfied the needs of their time. If they continue to exist when times change, they become anathema to the people, and start to be artificial." chap. 7.

Institutions and morals good in one time might not be apposite when confronted with a new set of variables. It follows that the ruler should deal with all transformations without any deliberate mind of his own, (Wu Hsin, 虞信) but with non-ado. (Wu Wei, 處為), so that he can be always equal to the situation. One might almost say, in passing, that the Existentialist "Situation Ethics" is analogous.

"These two sages (Shun and King Wu) were to set the world in order when there was turmoil. One did it by peaceful means, the other by military force. They differed because their times differed. Between them there is no difference of superiority or inferiority." chap. 12.

Different times warrant different institutions and measures. The ruler should not cling to the past. He should be Wu Hsin and Wu Wei enough to allow new and adequate institutions and measures to appear spontaneously. (Toynbee's "Challenge and Response"?)

Confucius, not Lao Tzu or Chuang Tzu, according to Hsiang-Kuo, was, rising above all distinctions and contradictions, wise enough to do just that. Although the sage/king in Hsiang-Kuo observes WuWei, he actually governs human affairs. This is quite contrary to Chuang Tzu's contemplative leanings. Furthermore, the commentators were not against institutions and morals as such, as Lao!chuang were. They were
simply against the institutions and morals that were antiquated and therefore artificial and defunct.

The Hsiang-Kuo's ideal of a ruler is of one who embodies 'sageliness without and kingliness within'. Also, because of their belief that even complex situations come into being naturally, the commentators think it is natural to adopt complicated measures to harness them. Return to primitivity as expounded by Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu was quite discarded.

"Hearing the theory of non-ado, some people think that lying is better than walking. These people go too far and misunderstand Chuang Tzu's philosophy." chap. 9.

Furthermore,

"If by primitiveness we mean the undistorted, the man whose character is not distorted is the most primitive, though he may be capable of doing many things." chap. 15.

And so the Hsiang-Kuo eulogize Yao and Shun, who followed their natures and who, while occupying the highest positions, had interior lives as sound and as devoid of Hsin (心) as if they had been sequestered in vales and hills.

The upshot is Hsiang and Kuo write in the introduction to their commentary that "though Chuang's words were both true and sublime, they were useless for action in human society." Their political theory and their apotheosis of man are surely at variance with Chuang Tzu's.

Conclusion:

Hsiang Hsiu and Kuo Hsiang were essentially Confucianists who had grasped the metaphysics of Taoism. Through the alembic of their Confucian minds the "Taoist system was emasculated." and trimmed down to fit a milieu in which the Confucian conventions were dominant. The commentary provided theoretical justification for the literati with professed Taoist leanings to thrive at court, manipulating and arbitrating human affairs. Needham thinks all the commentators eminently distorted and "emasculated" the Taoism of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu. In a sense these commentators adopted, corrupted and practised the purposive wing of Taoism, embodied in
the Tao Teh Ching. It is in their political philosophy that we discern most salient deviations from early Taoism, particularly from Chuang Tzu. The commentators' *modus vivendi* significantly affected their thinking, and vice versa.
The object of Chuang Tzu's apotheosis is one who transcends all differences and distinctions, who roams in the realm of undifferentiatedness and is dependent upon nothing whatsoever. He enumerates in turn the P'eng, which depends on the wind for its grand flights; the cicada and the dove, which at least depend on the trees to rest on; petty officials or rulers of states, who merely resemble in actuality the cicada and the dove; Sung Yung Tzu, who did not bother with the world but still left something unestablished; Lieh Tzu, who could chariot the winds but therefore ipso facto depends on them. Chuang Tzu approves of none of them. He approves only of one who "rides upon the eternal fitness of the cosmos, harnesses the transformations of the airs, and roams in the realm of the infinite and needs absolutely nothing to depend on." Such a man has no self, no achievement, and no name/fame.

With the Hsiang-Kuo commentary, the focus has shifted. While the commentators do recognize the absolute freedom of the autarkic one, they emphasize the fact that when those that depend possess what they depend on, they are equally untrammelled. Nature decrees that they must perforce depend, and all actions should be commensurate with natural endowments. One discerns the fatalism of the commentators.

"If there is contentment with their natures, then even the P'eng has nothing to be proud of in contrast to the small birds; and the small bird harbours no desire for the Celestial Lake. And yet there is satisfaction enough to spare. Therefore though the big differs from the small, in their untrammelledness is one." chap. 1.

"Each thing has its nature, and each nature its limit."ibid.

The emphasis is here on contentment with one's nature, but not transcending distinctions.

Secondly I do feel that both the commentary and the sub-commentary (by Ch'en Hsuan Ying) eulogize the sage-king Yao too much. The text proper never gives the indication that Chuang Tzu approves of Yao. Yao is not presented as a perfect man, ruling with non-ado. Yao is, quite on the contrary, unfavourably
juxtaposed firstly with Hsu Yu, then with the four sages on the remote Mt. Ku Yeh. The parable about a Sung man transporting embroidered caps to sell to the tattooed Yueh people who have no need at all of the caps purports, doubtlessly, to show that Yao's empire and administrative acumen are quite useless to those who have attained to the Tao. Chuang Tzu repeatedly claims that even the dust and siftings from his Divine man make Yao and Shun.

Chuang Tzu's philosophy is really meant for the individual. It is primarily personalistic. The hermit for him far surpasses even Yao. In Untrammelled Wandering he writes,

"Why should he (The Divine Man) be willing to approach things as a task to be done?"

The Hsiang-Kuo commentary, on the other hand, makes much of Yao, stating that Yao ruled well with non-ado.

"Yao governs the empire well by not governing." chap. 1.

and again,

"Yao and Shun were not merely Yao and Shun, but were endowed with the essence of the divine man." chap. 1.

and yet again,

"Although Yao lorded over the myriad things, he has never been but untrammelled."

The Hsiang-Kuo commentary makes much of Yao and Shun because the commentators approve of functioning in the mundane realm and of arbitrating worldly affairs. Although they upheld the concepts of non-ado and naturalness, they were Confucianists, if not to the core, then at the core. Hsiang Hsiu traduced the ancient hermits whom Chuang Tzu obviously approved. Hsiang Hsiu said to his emperor, in response to a query, that he thought, "Ch'ao Fu (巢父) and Hsu Yu (許由) were timid, pusillanimous men, not worthy of much emulation." (18) Ch'ao and Hsu were ancient hermits of renown.

The Hsiang-Kuo commentary, in some instances, employs non-ado differently from Chuang Tzu. In the commentators' hands non-ado acquired the connotations of -- "Reign but not rule", "To rule by not ruling". Seldom in Chuang Tzu proper, and never in Untrammelled Wandering, can one find passages advocating involvement in worldly affairs, in ruling an empire with non-ado. (19)
The commentary, while grasping the importance of naturalness in all things and realms, quite emphasizes non-ado as a salient concept in governmental affairs and as a method of control. Chuang Tzu is preoccupied with transcending the world and harmonizing with the Tao, with non-ado. The commentators in some cases postulate non-ado as a panacea for the aspiring ruler. These two variant foci point to the differences between "Contemplative" and "Purposive" philosophical Taoism.
The Appeal of Taoism

Our modern world is frantic, our age is "an age of anxiety" (W.H. Auden), our time is surely out of joint. Scientism and Technology dwarf man, and life in metropolises resembles a veritable nightmare. Our version of Gorgon rears fearsomely its hideous heads -- Politics, Pollution, Over-population and Nuclear wars. To avoid sounding like a minor prophet, let me just say, isn't man like Icarus?

Taoism's non-interference with natural laws was at least conducive to proto-science in ancient China. Religious Taoism's preoccupation with the search of immortality led to alchemy, a primary step in the investigation of nature. I am, however, regretfully not qualified at all to mutter on the inter-relationships between Taoism and science. Joseph Needham's monumental magnum opus argues the case most convincingly. (20) Suffice it to say that even in science Taoist cosmology, and even cosmogony, at the present age are still not without values.

The appeal of Taoism is, for a flesh and blood person, its quietism, its serene acceptance of the cosmos, and its sublime conception of the oneness of all. Man, in Taoism, is never alienated from the all, as he should never be. Man is just an integral part of nature, neither above nor below the manifold, and whatever that exists. The social order may be topsy turvy, but the cosmic order remains marvellous, and will eternally be marvellous. Furthermore, even life is taught as not that indispensable, and the "icy claws" of death not that horrible. Taoism seduces us to disengage ourselves from our chores and worries, and to remember we exist in a grand universe and participates in a grand transformation.

It is the spiritual sustenance Taoism accords that is of paramount importance. Modern man, so rationalistic, finds here something kindred to religion, and yet is definitely not contra-rational. Taoism blesses us with some existential respite, and disposes us to let things be, and to grow fond of them. It placates the heart, satisfies reason and nurtures (nurses?) the soul.
I fear I can go on eulogizing till the cows come home. Before they do suffice it to say Taoism's joyful acceptance of the universe per se is a very nice idea to entertain. From it can grow the conviction that all is well, and a profound interest in the myriad things, and the courage to be. As it were Taoism's appeal is primarily spiritual and our world, surely, might lend it its ears. Taoism, admittedly, is anti-anthropocentric, and yet it does elevate man at the same time. Isn't that marvellous?
I have attempted to translate au pied de la lettre. Owing to the intrinsic difficulties of Chuang Tzu's language and possible textual corruption, my translation is really my interpretation. Indeed, any translation of ancient Chinese books is really an interpretation. In difficult instances I have presumed to decipher according to what I truly understand.

Kuo Hsiang edited the present Chuang Tzu. His commentary on the book may be, in partibus, the work of Hsiang Hsiu. The commentary is at times more difficult to fathom than the text itself. At times I feel Chuang Tzu rather elucidates the commentators. But on the whole the commentary is quite readable and dependable.

Ch'en Hsuan Ying (成玄英) is quite reliable. Sometimes I have relied on his sub-commentary to unearth the meaning of the commentary.

I have used Liu Wen-Tien's (劉文典) Chuang Tzu Pu-Cheng (莊子補正). Kuan Feng's modern Chinese translation is fairly helpful.

Of the available English translations of Chuang Tzu, Burton Watson's is the best. It is more lucid and livelier than all its predecessors.

James R. Ware's eminently unorthodox interpretation is quite peculiar, but negligible as a guide.

Herbert A. Giles is quite "literary" and at times translates erroneously.

Feng Yu-Lan is generally accurate by his English, albeit correct, is singularly uninteresting. His partial translation of the commentary now and then throws some light.

Thomas Merton's The Way of Chuang Tzu contains a good introduction and interesting rendering of Chuang Tzu's anecdotes a la Merton.

I have endeavoured to do justice to Chuang Tzu. Besides being a philosopher of the first magnitude, he is a superb stylist as well. His words are signal and wise, but, as Watson suggests, it is his spirit, his unthered spirit that is of paramount importance. He practised, I feel sure, what he philosophized.
Notes to The Prologue

(1) p. 137, Symposium On Taoism.
(3) p. 110, Symposium On Taoism.
(4) p. 216, Feng Yu-Lan, Short History Of Chinese Philosophy.
(6) p. 145, Feng Yu-Lan, Chuang Tzu.
(7) p. 434, Joseph Needham, Science and Civilization in China.
(10) p. 434, Joseph Needham, Science and Civilization in China.
(13) p. 145, Feng Yu-Lan, Chuang Tzu.
(16) ibid.
(17) ibid.
(18) p. 169, R. B. Mather, Symposium on Taoism.
(19) In the N'ei Piien, non-ado has nothing to do with administration. In the remaining 26 chapters, mostly not authored by Chuang Tzu, non-ado appears 53 times, denoting a technique of reigning only one-third of the time. cf. p. 78, H. G. Creel, What Is Taoism?.
(20) In p. 56 of Needham's Science and Civilization in China, vol 2, he points out that the Taoist temple has been designated as Kuan (觀). He traces its etymological and derivative meanings and states that embodied in this common name for a Taoist temple is the ancient significance of the observation of nature. This minatiae alone is quite symptomatic of the Taoist outlook on nature. From there on Needham argues very convincingly of the scientific spirit in early Taoism.
"Although the large and the small are dissimilar, yet if they disport themselves in the realm of self-contentment, then entities follow their natures, things correspond to their capacities. All assume their destinies (1) and are equally untrammelled. Amidst them there is no room for distinctions as superiority or inferiority."

In the Northern Ocean there exists a fish. Its name is Kun. The Kun is so huge I know not how many thousands of li it is. It metamorphoses into a bird, named P'eng.

"As to the substantiality of the Kun and the P'eng, I do not know the details. The general theme of Chuang Tzu dwells in untrammelled wandering, and self-contentment through non-ado. He, therefore, polarizes to their extremes the large and the small to illustrate the inclinations of natures and destinies. Men of all-penetrating vision must needs cull the quintessence and abandon that in which the thoughts are lodged, but not finically raise disputes on all matters. As long as deletion does not impoverish the grand motif, by all means delete."

The P'eng's back is I know not how many thousands of li. When it is aroused and flies (2), its wings resemble sky-obscuring clouds.

When this bird moves about in the ocean, it is to set off for the Southern Ocean, the Celestial Lake.

"Unless it be in the vast ocean, the P'eng cannot move about; unless it be on nine thousand li of air, its wings cannot be borne. This is, really, not due to a predilection for the strange. It is just because large things naturally spring from large places; and large places naturally bear large things. The principle is so of itself. Why, really, belabour the mind amidst these things."

A man named Ch'i Hsieh (3) recorded strange happenings. Hsieh enunciated, "When the P'eng journeys to the Southern Ocean, the waters are roiled for three thousand li. He mounts a whirlwind and soars up spirally ninety thousand li."
"Since the wings are gigantic, they are difficult to raise. So the P'eng must mount a whirlwind to rise, and must needs surmount a height of ninety thousand li to be air-borne. As the P'eng possesses such wings, how can it abruptly ascend, and get down at a few tens of feet? (4) The P'eng, not because it likes to, but perforce must act as it does."

The P'eng rests after going for six months.

"The big bird in one attempt flies for half a year. It reaches the Celestial Lake and rests. The little bird in one attempt flies for half a morning. It darts to the trees and stops. If their capabilities are compared, then there is a difference. But their actions correspond to their natures, and in this they are one."

There is the wandering air; there are the wandering motes; and living things blow each other about with their breath. (5)

"All of these are what the P'eng depend on to fly. Wild horses connote wandering air."

As to the sky's blueness, is it its true colour? Does the sky extend to without end? When the P'eng looks down, what obtains is just the same. (same ambiguity, same unsureness.) (6)

"Now when we look at the sky's blueness, we do not even know if it is really the sky's true colour. And we are not sure if the sky extends away to without end. When the P'eng gazes upon the earth from above, it is just as we see the sky from the earth. And yet it rises and attempts the south. This is to say the P'eng does not cognize distance. The penchant is sufficiently strong, and hence it vanishes."

And if water does not pile up deeply, it lacks the very capacity to float large boats. Upset a cupful into a hollow on the ground, a mustard seed becomes a boat. Place the cup and it will stick, for water is shallow and vessel large.

"All these clarify why the P'eng soars high. Its wings are big! For if the small needs not the great, then what the great needs cannot perforce be small. Therefore, truths have apposite limits (7), things fixed limitations. Each suffices (in its own realm) and can equally succeed. If the fundamentals of obliviousness of life (8) are lost, and life is nurtured outside the most germane, tasks become incommensurate with ability and actions not equal to situations. Then even sky-obscuring wings will be found wanting, and, similarly, the flight that is instantaneous will meet with trouble."
If wind is not piled up deeply, then it lacks the very capacity to uphold huge wings. At a height of ninety thousand li, it it really wind that is below. The P'eng then mounts the wind, shoulders the blue sky, and nothing at all can hinder or deter him. Only now does the P'eng attempt the south.

"As to the P'eng's attempting the south only under such circumstances, it is not that he loves height and values distance. He is well aware that should the volume of wind be small, he will be obstructed and his trip forestalled. Hence the P'eng's untrammelledness." (9)

The cicada and the little dove laugh at this, saying, "When we fly, we take off instantaneously, dart to the trees and stop. Sometimes we fail to reach and we just fall to the ground. Why ascend ninety thousand li and attempt the south?"

"If there is contentment with their natures, then even the P'eng has nothing to be proud of in contrast to the small birds; and the small bird harbours no desire for the Celestial Lake. And yet there is satisfaction enough to spare. Therefore though the big differs from the small, their untrammelledness is one."

He who goes to the green woods nearby and takes three meals with him, returns with his stomach as full as ever. He who travels a hundred li must grind enough food for a night's halt. He who journeys a thousand li must needs gather enough food for a three months' duration.

"The further one goes, the more food must be gathered. *Mutatis mutandis*, the bigger the wings, the thicker the airs must needs be."

The two little creatures -- what do they know?

"The two little creatures denote the cicada and the small dove. As the small differs from the large, each goes his different way. Their ways differ not because they know they are different and differ for difference's sake. They do not know why it is so but are merely being natural. Being natural is tantamount to observing non-ado. Such is the grand theme of untrammelledness."
Little understanding does not encompass as much as great understanding; short life does not extend as much as long life.

"Each thing has its nature, and each nature its limit. Just like understanding and longevity -- even standing on tiptoe will not enhance or lengthen. From here onwards to the example of Lieh Tzu the differing magnitudes of understanding and longevity are enumerated. Each believes in one realm and none can supersede another. The autarkic man, then, transcends them all. He forgets and abandons the dichotomy of I and Not-I, discards all multiplicities, attains equally in all dissimilar realms, and yet is himself devoid of concepts of merit and honour. Therefore the one who transcends the concepts of the large and the small does not harbour such distinctions. If such distinctions are entertained, then verily even the P'eng or the quail, and to officiate or to chariot winds, are without fail entangled by things. One who equalizes concepts of life and death does not harbour such distinctions. If such distinctions are entertained, then verily even the Ta-ch'un and the summer cicada, P'eng Tsu (11) and the morning mushroom, are without exception short-lived. Therefore one who roams in oblivion of the large and the small is without limits. One who dwells in obliviousness of life and death is without end. If one desires unt-rammelledness and yet is tethered to a realm, then even if he is to freely wander he will meet with difficulties. He is not truly autarkic."

How do we know this is so? The morning mushroom knows nothing of the end and beginning of a month; (12) the summer cicada knows nothing of spring and autumn. These instances of short lives. In the south of Chu (楚) there is a Ming-Ling (13) which counts five hundred years as one spring and five hundred years as one autumn. In ancient antiquity there was Ta-Ch'un (13) that counted eight thousand years as one spring and eight thousand years as one autumn. These are instances of long lives. Yet P'eng Tsu is now renowned for his longevity. And everyone, alas, apes him!

"The disparity between small and great understanding, long and short lives, is really so great! Compared to what people grieve about, this is truly grievous. Yet people do not regret this. It is because in the nature of things there exist natural limitations. If we take cognizance of the natural limitations and recognize that we cannot aspire, even tiptoeing, for a jot more than
is proper and natural, then what is so regrettable under the sun? "For amongst things it is never the great that strives for the small, but the small invariably desires the great. Consequently Chuang Tzu enunciates the dissimilarity betwixt the great and the small and shows that predestined (14) limitations obtain in both cases. Craving and longing can avail nothing. Realizing this we can banish the trammels of craving and longing. For grief is born in trouble. If trouble is dispelled, grief departs. When grief has departed, life needs must be at ease."

It was on this very subject that T'ang asked Chi.

"When T'ang asked Chi, in the question we also discern the statement that things have their limitations and if a free rein is allowed then all would be smooth and well. Therefore Chuang Tzu concurs with the discourse."

In the bald and barren north, there is a dark sea, the Celestial Lake. In it is a fish several thousand li across, and no one knows how long. Its name is Kun. There is also a bird, name P'eng. Its back resembles Mount T'ai and its wings sky-obscuring clouds. He mounts a whirlwind and ascends spirally, like a ram's horn, to ninety thousand li. It soars clear of the clouds and shoulders the blue sky. Then the P'eng attempts the south, and journeys to the Southern Ocean. The little quail laughs at him, saying, "Pray, where is he going? I spring up with a leap, and come down after no more than a few yards. I just flutter about amidst the weeds and brambles. This too is the epitome of flying. Where does he think he is going?" Such is the difference between the small and the large. (15)

"Each deems approximation of his nature as the epitome, and the full utilization of the self as ultimate. Formerly Chuang Tzu says the two creatures are endowed with dissimilar wings and consequently reach different places. One hovers above the Celestial Lake, the other gratifies his wishes fluttering amidst trees. Each acts in accordance to its physicality, and does cognize the why and whereof.

Now Chuang Tzu discourse that the differences between the small and the large are naturally so. Their unique properties cannot be attained by craving or longing. Each is at ease with its nature and does not lament that they differ. And hence the repetition."
Take, therefore, a man whose knowledge enables him to creditably fill an office, or a man whose flawless conduct impresses a community, or a man whose virtue befits him to be a ruler so that the empire will be benefited — his opinion of himself will be like the quail's.

"Such a man would be just like the bird disporting itself in a certain realm."

Yet Sung Yung Tzu would laugh at such a man.

"Sung laughs, because such a man cannot equalize things."

The whole world could praise Sung Yung Tzu and he would not be encouraged; the whole world could produce him and he would not be upset.

"This is to illustrate self-contentment."

For Sung distinguished between the intrinsic and the extrinsic.

"He recognizes the I is intrinsic, the non-I extrinsic."

He recognized the realms of honour and disgrace.

"He honours himself and lets down others."

At this Sung stopped, and he did not bother himself with the world. (16)

"Sung cannot surpass this level. He finds enough contentment in himself, and therefore lets the world be."

Yet he still left something to be desired.

"Sung can but affirm himself; he cannot approve of all."

As to Lieh Tzu, he could chariot the winds and pursue his way with a sublime ease, returning after 15 days.

"Lieh Tzu can ride the winds in a light and marvellous manner. Yet if there is dependency, although one chariots the winds to travel, one cannot circumscribe all in one try."

He did not have to bother himself much with the attainment of happiness. (17)

"Lieh Tzu can naturally ride the winds, he does not have to exert himself."

He dispensed with the trouble of walking, but still had to depend upon something.

"Lieh Tzu can not travel without the winds because he depends upon them. Only those who can ride anything are truly autarkic."
Had he been riding upon the eternal fitness of the cosmos, and charioting the transformations of the 6 airs (18), and roamed in the realm of the infinite -- what, then, had he to depend on?

"The universe is the collective name for the myriad things. The universe has the manifold entities as its contents, and the manifold must needs have as norm the natural. What is spontaneously so, without artificiality, is the natural. The P'eng ability to soar high, the quail's ability to fly low, the trees ability to live long, (19) and the morning mushroom's ability to live but shortly -- all these are natural abilities, not made or acquired. They are not concocted but naturally so; thus they are normal and fit.

Therefore to ride the fitness of the universe simply means following the natures of things.

To chariot the transformations of the 6 airs simply means roaming the way of change.

Going like this, wherefore the limit?

One rides whatever one encounters and depends on nothing at all.

This is the untrammelledness of the perfectly virtuous man who subtly unites the self and others.

If one depends on something, then one can be happy only when one has that very something that one depends on.

Even though Lieh Tzu journeys with a sublime ease, he still cannot travel without the winds, let alone the P'eng.

Only he who merges with things, and follows the great evolution can be really autarkic and always free.

He is more than just free himself. He lets those that depend have their own ways, and not lose what they depend on.

As long as those that depend do not lose what they depend on, they are equally enjoying freedom.

Therefore I cannot equate the dependent with the independent. (20)

As to things being at ease with their natures, with the universe naturally unfolding its secrets and decrees, and the things receiving unknowingly their at-easeness, I cannot discern difference. (in their spontaneousness and at-easeness.)

Even the autarkic one does not differ from those that depend in the manner each receives its natural endowments. Let alone the magnitudes of those that depend. (All differences are natural.)
Therefore it is said the Perfect Man has no self.

"One who has divested himself of selfhood accommodates things. By accommodating things he arrives at the pinnacle of being."

The Divine Man has no achievement.

"Things never thank nature for their lives, yet they depend happily on the multifarious things for their livelihood. So when the principle (of naturalness) prevails, traits (of artificiality) perish. Now the Divine Man accommodates but does not assist things. He (just lets things be and) is at one with the supreme principle (of naturalness). Hence he has no achievement."

The Sagely Man has no name/fame.

"The name sage is applied to someone who has attained to his nature, it suffices not to denote the very thing (sageliness) he has attained."

Yao wished to cede the empire to Hsu Yu. (21) He said, "When the sun and the moon have come out and yet we still burn the torches, it would be hard put for the torches to enhance the light, wouldn't it? When the seasonal rains are falling, and yet we still irrigate the fields, it would be, in apropos to our irrigating, a waste of labour, wouldn't it? Now master, should you be enthroned, the whole empire would be well-ordered. And yet I, like a corpse, still occupy the throne. I look at myself and detect many failings. I beg you will rule the empire."

"Those who well govern the empire are those who do not govern the empire. Therefore Yao governs the empire by not governing; he does not govern well by governing. Now Hsu Yu understands that the empire is already well-governed and there is really no room for him. The empire is well-governed owing to Yao's administration. Hsu Yu understands this and that is why he says, "You (should) govern the empire."

We should ignore mere words but search for the quintessence.

If one says that Yao well governs by governing, and that Yao gets to govern because Hsu Yu does not govern, then one misses by a wide margin. For the orderliness stems from not governing. To accomplish comes from non-ado. Yao alone suffices. There is no need to solicit from Hsu Yu."
"You, sir, govern the empire," said Hsu YU, "and it is already governed. The words of Chuang Tzu and Lao Tzu are ignored by those in power precisely because people misconstrue non-ado to mean holding one's hand in silence in the mountains and woods. Those who must be in the realm of action and do not return, labour under this misinterpretation."

Now if I still supplant you, sir, will I be doing it for a name? But name is but the guest of reality -- will I be doing it so as to be a guest?

"Those who affirm themselves antagonizes things. Those who accommodate things have no antagonists. Therefore Yao does not antagonizes the world, and Hsu Yu is on a par with Chi and Ch'i. Why do I say so? For if one harmonizes with things, then things perforce cannot be estranged from one. And so one responds deeply with no-heart (no artificials) and observes one's true sensations. One floats like an untethered boat and roams unceasing to the east and the west. Therefore one who acts in accordance with the people is the master of the world whereever he goes. If one acts thus and rules the world, he is as natural as the sky is high, and he really possesses a King's virtues. If one is attached to self-affirmation, and adheres to the partialities of a certain school, he would try to strain his neck and proudly stand alone on the summit of a high mountain. Such a one is merely an item in the mundane world -- and can only be Yao's outer courtier. If the outer courtier supplants the inner master, he has the name of a ruler, but not the reality of a ruler."

When the tit nests in the forest, it occupies but a single branch. When the tapir drinks at the river, it consumes but a bellyful.

"All natures have limits. If one is gratified to the limits of one's nature, then one can ignore all the treasures in the world."

Return and rest, sir, I have no use for ruling the empire.

"It is futile to share and Yao alone has it. One who harbours Vacuity (22) is without realms. The world understands this and never tires in electing and following him."

Although the cook does not attend to the cooking, the impersonator of the dead at the sacrifice and the priest do not step over the wine
vessels and meat stands to supplant him."

"If the cook, the impersonator of the dead at the sacrifice, the priest are all content with their duties, and if the birds, beasts and the myriad things are satisfied with their endowments, and if emperor Yao and Hsu Yu are serene with their destinies, then they all have the supreme reality in the world. Since the supreme reality is attained, what else is there to act for? One simply enjoys oneself. Therefore although Yao and Hsu differ in their actions, they are equally untrammelled."

Chien Wu asked Lien Shu, saying, "I heard from Chieh Yu some utterances. They were extravagant and unjustifiable, and they were not circumscribed and contained. I was astounded with what he said, boundless as the Milky Way. His words were wild and improbable and did not come near human experience."

Lien Shu asked, "What were his utterances?"

"He said," Chieh Wu replied, "Far away on the Mountain of Ku Yeh there dwells a Divine Man, with flesh and skin like ice or snow, graceful demeanours like a young virgin's.

"These are all allegories. The Divine Man is the present day Sage. Although the Sage is in the palace, his heart is no different should he be amidst the woods. What does the world know of this? People see the Sage sport yellow silk (23) and employ the emperor's seal, and they think that these tether his heart. They see him traverse the mountains and streams and harmonizes the affairs of the people, and think that these ventures exhaust his spirits. They have no idea that the supreme man is never impoverished. Now Chuang Tzu discourses on the man with kingly virtues. He puts him in the Ku Yeh mountain to show that the world has no reason to know him. This is why Chuang Tzu situates him outside the extreme bounds, and pushes him to beyond the senses. The metaphor of a young virgin is employed to show the Divine Man does not harm the intrinsic with the extrinsic."

The Divine Man does not eat the five grains but inhales the wind and drinks the dew.

"We all eat the five grains and he alone is the Divine Man. This show the Divine Man is not produced by the five grains but is especially endowed with the marvellous breath of nature."
He rides on the clouds and airs, chariots the flying dragons, and wanders beyond the four seas. His spirit is quiescent and saves things from sickness and plague. Yearly he causes the crope to ripen plentifully. I thought this was insane and disbelieved it."

"Although he sequesteres in a quiet dwelling-place, one whose body and soul dwell in the marvellous, and who exhausts the supreme principle of naturalness to the finest points, harmonizes with all that is even beyond the four seas. Therefore he rides heaven and earth, and chariots the six airs, harmonizes the people and shepherds the myriad things. If all things harmonizes with him, he can ride the floating clouds. If all shapes bear him up, he can chariot the flying dragons. He abandons his body and enjoys self-contentment, his life is serene and independent. He sits oblivious, walks oblivious, and acts oblivious. His body is resilient like withered wood being dragged, his heart is serene like accumulated dead ashes. And so his spirit is said to be quiescent. His spirit being quiescent, those with perturbed spirits benefit from him. People invariably draw from their limited experiences and judge accordingly. How can they believe in this?"

"Yes," Lien Shu said, "A blind man cannot appreciate beautiful patterns. A deaf man cannot listen to bells and drums. And blindness and deafness are not solely physical; the understanding has them too.

"Not to know in the extreme marvellousness of wise words and to think they are insane and disbelieve in them is to suffer from the deafness and blindness of the understanding."

His words (Chieh Yu's) are like a graceful young girl. "This is to say Chieh Yu talked about things naturally sought by things. But those suffering from deafness and blindness of the understanding say there is no such principle."

The virtue of such a man will encompass the myriad things. According to him the whole world is tired of turmoil (and naturally longs for peace). If so, why should he bother himself excessively with the world as if it's a task to be done?
"The Sage's heart epitomizes the acme of heaven and earth, and exhausts the subtleties of the myriad things. Hence he can embody evolutions and harmonize with change and is at peace ubiquitously; and he can encompass all the myriad things with not a single exception. The world seeks me because of chaos. I am devoid of heart (artificialities). If I am devoid of heart, why not accommodate the world?
One who embodies the quintessence and exhausts the subtleties of things can penetrate the nature of the myriad things, mould and fashion all the transformations under the sun and attain to the fame of a sage, just like Yao and Shun. Why is it so? He practises non-ado! Why labouriously exercises your spirits and torment your thoughts and tackle the world as a problem; as if it's the only way?"

Nothing can harm this man.

"If one accepts with equanimity when one is harmed, then harm cannot really harm one. If even harm cannot harm one, it follows that nothing can harm one."

He will not even drown even if a flood reaches to the skies. He will not even feel hot if a drought causes metals to melt and scorches mounds.

"When one is at ease anywhere one goes, then any place eminently suits. Even death and birth do not transform one, let alone such nonentities as flood and drought. The supreme man is not worried by disasters and adversities. It is so because he avoids them, but because he observes the principle of naturalness and advances spontaneously. Thus he naturally meets with the good." (24)

Even dust and siftings from him could still mould and fashion Yao and Shun. How should he be willing to tackle things as tasks?

"Yao and Shun are worldly names but they do not quite pinpoint what the names really imply. Therefore Yao and Shun were not merely Yao and Shun, but must needs be endowed with the essence of the Divine Man. Now what the names Yao and Shun imply to the world are merely the dust and siftings of the quintessence."
A Sung man purchased some embroidered caps and carried them to Yueh. But people in Yueh cut their hair and tattooed their bodies. They had no use for fineries as these caps.

Yao ruled the people of the empire and administered perfectly the affairs within the four seas. He went to see the four sages in the remote Ku Yeh mountain. On returning to his north of the Fen river, he quietly forgot his empire.

"Yao had no use for the empire, just like the Yueh people had no use for embroidered caps. Yet the empire precisely needs the man who forgets about the empire. Though the empire followed Yao, Yao himself never deemed the empire as his. He therefore quietly forsook it and let his mind wandered in the realm of non-distinction. Although he lorded over the myriad things, he has never been but untrammelled.

The four sages are meant to be taken allegorically. It is to show Yao is not centred upon his Yaohood. Yao actually observed non-distinction. He acted in accordance with this principle and left his, Yao's marks.

His principle of non-distinction and the marks he left pertain, respectively, to the inner and outer realms. One should not view the inner from the outer and be surprised at what one sees. The world in vain sees the Yao was Yao (only perceives the outer Yao). What does the world know of Yao's subtleties of observing the principle of non-distinction?

Therefore those who seek the four sages within the four seas, (25) and base Yao upon their perceptions, and say, as a result, that Yao moves along with things, has really missed the cause of Yao's untrammelledness.

These persons do not as yet know for the one in tune with things, the traces of the farthest would be all the nearer; and for those who come together and meet, the highest place is on the contrary low."
If one strictly deems self-supremacy as the epitome, and does not level with mundane entanglements, even he be a sojourner in the hills and vales, he is not an autarkic one. He does not qualify at all to discourse on the supreme and to wander in the infinite."

Hui Tzu said to Chuang Tzu, "The Emperor of Wei (魏) bestowed upon me a calabash seed. I planted it and its large fruit can contain 5 bushels. I employed it as a vessel. It was too fragile to hold water. I split it for ladles but despite the size they were too shallow for anything. I demolished it because it was utterly useless. Chuang Tzu replied, "My dear sir, you are rather obtuse in utilizing the large. A Sung man possessed a good recipe for salve for chapped hands. For generations his family washed silk as their occupation.

"The recipe protected hands from becoming chapped. Hence they could safely dip their hands into water and rinse silk."

A stranger heard of this and offered to purchase the recipe with one hundred ounces of gold. The clansmen gathered and discussed the offer. They considered, "For generations we have been washing silk and have earned no more than a few ounces of gold. Let us give the recipe to him."

The stranger obtained the recipe and impressed himself upon the king of Wu. When Yueh created trouble for Wu (吳), the king of Wu appointed the stranger as general. In the winter he engaged Yueh in a naval battle and soundly defeated Yueh. King Wu rewarded the stranger by feoffing and titling him.

Now the efficaciousness of the recipe in protecting hands remained the same and yet in one case a title was conferred, in the other the toils of washing silk were not even avoided. This was so because of the difference in its application.

Now you, sir, have this five-bushel calabash. Why don't you fashion a big bottle out of it and thereby float in rivers and lakes? You were distraught because it was too shallow to contain anything! Really, I fear you have a rather wooly head."
"Wooliness denotes inability to go straight to the point. This passage shows all things dissimilarly have their uses. If they are applied rightly, one can disport oneself utterly anywhere one goes."

Hui Tzu said to Chuang Tzu, "I have a big tree. People say it's the ailanthus. Its trunk is so swollen that measuring rods cannot be applied. Its branches are so twisted that squares and compasses cannot be used. By the roadside it stands, but carpenters do not even deign to look at it. Now your words, sir, are big, hollow and useless. People without exception just cast them aside."

Chuang Tzu said, "You alone have not watched a wild cat or a weasel? It crouches and waits for its careless prey. It leaps about east and west and avoids neither the high place or the low. It is finally entangled in a trap, or dies in a net.

There again is the yak, huge as sky-obscuring clouds. Indeed it is big. Yet it cannot even catch mice! (27)

Now you, sir, have a big tree and you worry that it's useless. Why do you not plant it in the land of nonexistence, in a wide and barren wilderness?

By its side you can disport yourself with non-ado. Under it you can repose untrammelled.

Neither bill nor axe would cut it down. Nothing can harm it. Being entirely useless, in what can it be troubled?"

"As to large and small things, if they are used without regard for their limitations, then it is probable to come to harm as to good. Conversely, as long as the thing is appositely employed, one can rest untrammelled."
Names Not in The Notes

T'ang, 湯, first emperor of Shang, p. 5.
Chi, 漢, a scholar in T'ang's time. p. 5.
Tai Mountain, 泰山, sacred mountain in the west of Shantung. p. 5.
Sung Yung Tzu, 宋榮子, alias Sung Yen, 宋軾, a virtuous and learned man in Sung in the Warring States. He appears in the T'ien Hsai chapter where Chuang Tzu thinks of him as agitating himself rather too much for the world.
Yao, 耀, sage-king of ancient China.
Hsu Yu, 詢由, renowned hermit, contemporaneous with Yao.
Chien Wu, 謋吾, and Lien Shu, 論叔, learned and virtuous men of antiquity.
Chieh Yu, ictionary, his other name was Lu Tung, 陸通, a hermit in Confucius' time. He preferred to till and plough the land than to serve under the king of Chu, 楚. In the Analects he je­ers at Confucius.
Shun, 禹, succeeded Yao.
Fen Shui Chi Yang, 滘水之陽, north of river Fen, site of Yao's capital.
Hui Ssu, 惠施, philosopher from Sung in the Warring States. He was prime minister of Lian, 灌, contemporaneous with Chuang Tzu. He was a grand master of the Ming Chia, 梅家, and often, aleast in Chuang Tzu, disputed with Chuang Tzu.
Notes to The Text

(1) Fen (分). I translate as destiny. The idea is some unique properties and allotted vicissitudes pertain separately to each and everyone. All are governed by something akin to a "Karmic Law", except in Taoism it is the natural law. One cannot, and should not, exceed what one is endowed with or fated to encounter. In other words one should assume one's destiny.

(2) Nu (怒). I cannot find an exact equivalent. Prof. Hurvitz, philologist par excellence as he is, has tried to dissuade me but I recalcitrantly think that the general idea, the ambience of dauntlessness, created by Nu cannot be captured as succinctly in English.

(3) Ch'i Hsieh (習). I follow Yu Yueh (俞樾) and take it to be a man's name. The prima facie evidence lies in Untrammelled Wandering itself. In the next sentence it is said -- "The words of Hsieh (習) are......." If Ch'i Hsieh (習) is a book, then Chuang Tzu cannot write as he does but should say -- "The words of Ch'i Hsieh (習)......."

(4) Jen (荀). 1 Jen is 7 Chou (周) feet.

(5) Yeh Ma Yeh (野馬汩). The commentary explicates the term as wandering airs. From Feng Yu-Lan's Chuang Tzu I cull the following notation by Kuo Ching-Fan -- "This is to illustrate that the action of the P'eng is just as natural as the movement of the wandering air, or the motes."

(6) Here I depart drastically from the other translators. My interpretation of the commentary on this passage will, I hope bear me out.

(7) Li Yu Chih Fen (理有至分 ). The general idea is when universal truths are concerned, there exist limits and realms that cannot be exceeded.

(8) Wang Sheng Chih Chu (忘生之主 ). I think it means the fundamentals of forgetting to bother with life, rather than a master who excels in forgetting about life.

(9) The P'eng's untrammelledness stems from the fact that he is aware of the nature of things, i.e., only thick air can bear big wings, and therefore can harmonize his own nature with them.

(10) Wu Tai Chih Jen (無待之人 ). I confess I harbour a partiality towards the epithet autarkic. The autarkic man approximates to the Wu Tai Chih Jen, one who depends on nothing. The T'ung i (統一) means the autarkic one presides over all. But to transcend is even better than to preside.

(11) Ta-ch'un, see note (13). P'eng Tsu (彭祖). He was a Shang (商) man, renowned for his longevity, encompassing 800 years.
(12) Hui (晦). This word means the end of a month. Shuo (朔) is the beginning of a month. The morning mushroom is so named because it is born in the morning and perishes in the evening. It never lives through a month.

(13) Ming Ling (冥靈) and Ta-ch'un (大椿). Some commentators say these are names of persons, some say trees. I tend to concur with the latter. See (19).

(14) Ting Fen (定分). I render this as predestined limitations. Literally it is "fixed portions".

(15) P'ien (稀). With reference to the context, P'ien here can mean either difference or dispute.

(16) Shu Shu Jan Yeh (數數覈也). Here the phrase can only mean "to bother with". It would be erroneous to interpret, as some translators have done, Shu Shu as meaning many. It has nothing to do with numbers here.

(17) The commentary usage of Shu Shu bears note (16) out and substantiates it.

(18) Lu Chi (五易). These six airs designate the male, the female, wind, rain, darkness and brightness.

(19) Ch'un Mu (春木). The commentary's usage of Ch'un Mu reveals that the commentators interpret Ming Ling and Ta-Ch'un (note 13) as trees, not persons.

(20) This is a difficult passage. This particular sentence can be interpreted two ways. First — Since the autarkic one and those that depend are utterly different, the commentators perforce cannot equate them. Second — The autarkic one is free, but when those that depend possess what they depend, they are equally at ease. Therefore the sentence can be read as — "Pu Neng Pu Chi Yeh (不能不能也)" meaning I cannot but equate them, adding a Pu before the Neng. I tend to think the emendation is germane.

(21) Tien Hsia (天下). I translate as the empire, bearing in mind that to the Chinese in antiquity, the Chinese empire encompassed the whole world.

(22) Huai Huo (懷豁) This term has the connotations of being able to accommodate all and encompass all. Vacuity with a capital V might do it justice. Huo (豁) means "a gap or hollow space which is open at both ends, hence, passable, as a ravine or valley between mountains." cf. A. Link, p. 197 of Symposium On Taoism.

(23) Wang Wu (望屋). In ancient times the emperor rode a chaise with canopy fashioned out of yellow silk.

(24) Chi (吉). It means the good, the happy, the fortunate.

(25) Wai (外) should really be Nei (内). Yao seeks the sages in remote Ku Yeh, supposedly outside the four seas. Conversely, the myopic persons would seek the sages within the four seas.
(26) In the Warring States Wu (吳) and Yueh (越) very often warred with each other.

(27) The yak is large. It cannot leap about or catch mice, like the wild cat or the weasel. Yet the yak disports itself serenely, till its natural end. The wild cat or the weasel exert themselves tremendously but cannot evade an abrupt and painful end. The yak is not so agile, in fact, is blatantly useless but enjoys a much happier lot. So, it follows, what is useless is really supremely useful, as far as itself is concerned.
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Appendix

A Gordian knot presents itself in the study of Taoism. The Tao, according to the Taoists, is perfect, eternal, all-prevailing. The Tao creates all and sustains all. But then, when and why the fall from, not grace, but the Tao? When and why did man start to differentiate, to fragment, to create values, to prefer some and eschew others, to become self-conscious, to think and act teleologically, in short, to be unnatural? If the Tao is the totality of all the naturalness in the universe, is there some Anti-Tao that is the totality of the unnaturalness in the universe? A Luciferian Anti-Tao? If Tao governs all, how can unnaturalness exist in the first place?

Chuang Tzu obviously regarded even the world he lived in (he would be aghast to view ours) rather imperfect and separated from the Tao. He, in his work, definitely does not explain what prompted this imperfection and separation.

Why from Wù (無) to Yu (有)? Why from non-ado to much-ado? In the Bellagio Conference on Taoism the same issue was raised but not solved. (3) The scholars present also pointed out that the Chinese of antiquity never mythologized the fall from Tao at all. The paradox of Tao producing something untao, i.e. unnaturalness, disorder, imperfection, was never realized by the Chinese.

The Christian paradox of evil existing in a world created by God, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, affords an apposite analogy. Anything that emanates from God perforce must be good. Mutatis Mutandis a world fashioned by Tao must be flawless. But not even the Taoist believed that the world was perfect.

In essence, Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu seemed to deplore a world created and fashioned by the Tao, the selfsame Tao they urge us to swear allegiance to. This is a bona fide paradox and remains, I confess, a Gordian knot to me. Hand me, prithee, Excalibur!

(1) p. 112, Symposium on Taoism.