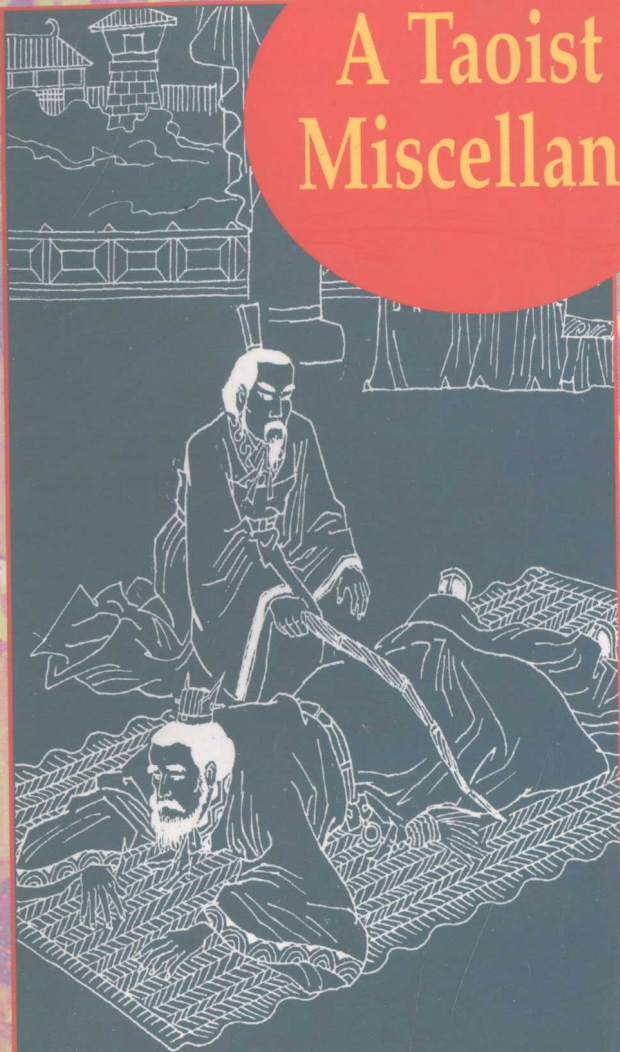


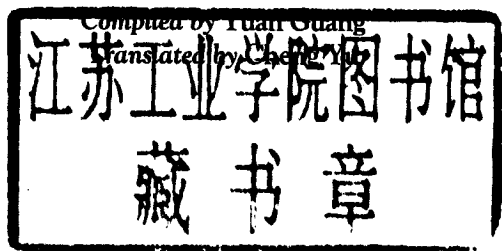
A Taoist Miscellany



Compiled by Yuan Guang
Translated by Cheng Yu

Foreign Languages Press Beijing

A Taoist Miscellany



Foreign Languages Press Beijing

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

中国道家故事选:英文/元光编. —北京:

外文出版社, 1999

ISBN 7-119-02163-X

I. 中… II. 元… III. 故事—作品集—中国—当代—英文 IV. I247.8

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (1999) 第 03589 号

责任编辑 吴灿飞

英文编辑 程宇

封面设计 王志

插图绘制 李士俊

外文出版社网页:

<http://www.flp.com.cn>

外文出版社电子邮件地址:

info@flp.com.cn

sales@flp.com.cn

中国道家故事选

元光 编

*

©外文出版社

外文出版社出版

(中国北京百万庄大街 24 号)

邮政编码 100037

北京外文印刷厂印刷

中国国际图书贸易总公司发行

(中国北京车公庄西路 35 号)

北京邮政信箱第 399 号 邮政编号 100044

1999 年(36 开)第 1 版

2006 年第 1 版第 2 次印刷

(英)

ISBN 7-119-02163-X/I·497(外)

03500(平)

10-E-3258P

First Edition 1999

Managing Editor: Cheng Yu

Home Page:

<http://www.flp.com.cn>

E-mail Addresses:

info@flp.com.cn

sales@flp.com.cn

ISBN 7-119-02163-X

© Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1999

Published by Foreign Languages Press

24 Baiwanzhuang Road, Beijing 100037, China

Printed by Beijing Foreign Languages Printing House

19 Chegongzhuang Xilu, Beijing 100044, China

Distributed by China International Book Trading Corporation

35 Chegongzhuang Xilu, Beijing 100044, China

P.O. Box 399, Beijing, China

Printed in the People's Republic of China

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
1. The Calabash and the Ointment for Chapped Hands	4
2. Carving Up an Ox as Skillfully as a Master Butcher	7
3. The Mantis and the Chariot	10
4. The Carpenter's Dream	14
5. The Forge and Nature	17
6. Fish and Water, Man and the Tao	19
7. Hu Zi Practices Physiognomy	22
8. The Yellow Emperor Asks About the Tao	26
9. Confucius Seeks to Store His Works in the Royal Library	30
10. The Lord of the Yellow River Learns Humility	33
11. Singing and Drumming on a Tub	37
12. The Tree and the Goose	40
13. The Mantis Stalks the Cicada	43
14. No Need for Words	45

15. Fancy But Useless Archery	47
16. Knowledge Journeys to the North	49
17. The Tao Can Be Found Even in Dung	53
18. Weeping Over a Prediction of Fortune	56
19. Craftsman Shi Whirls His Axe	58
20. The Turtle Oracle	60
21. Hiding One's Sickness for Fear of Treatment	63
22. The Lost Axe	67
23. Cheng Zi Loses His Jacket	69
24. Chimes Heard at Night	70
25. Shi Kuang Checks the Bells	72
26. Jiu Fang Yin Judges Horses	74
27. Excess Leads to Loss	77
28. Better to Light a Candle	79
29. Images Impart Wisdom	80
30. The Talker and the Doer	82
31. Rewarding Those with Singed Hair	84
32. Happily Gleaning Leftovers	86
33. The Man of Qi Who Feared That the Sky Might Fall	88
34. The Dream Deer	91
35. The Teacher of Immortality	93
36. Lao Zi Grasps the Tao	95

37. Abandoning the Name for the Fact	97
38. Lao Zi Visits His Sick Teacher	99
39. Xu Wugui Knows How to Judge Dogs and Horses	101
40. The Battling Snail Horns	104
41. Bo Ju Laments over a Corpse	107
42. Fishing in the Wei River	109
43. The Yellow Emperor and the Horseherd	113
44. The Lover of Swords	116
45. A Great Talent Takes Time to Mature	122
46. Know Oneself	124
47. Diving a Person's Thoughts from the Expression on His Face	126
48. Getting Wei While Attacking Yuan	128
49. Foresight and Premonition	130
50. The Muddle-Headed King and the Crafty Minister	132
51. Repenting at the Point of Death	135
52. Ren Zuo Speaks Bluntly	138
53. Winning the People's Confidence	140
54. If the Lips Are Gone, the Teeth Will Be Cold	143
55. The Oxherd Who Met Good Fortune	145
56. Bide One's Time Before One Acts	147

57. Jian Shu Wails for the Troops	149
58. A Long-Range Plan or a Temporary Expedient	152
59. Ximen Bao's Administration	154
60. Demanding the Wayward Ox	156
61. King Xuan's Predilections	158
62. The Poor's Pride	160
63. A Sobering Visitor	162
64. Longevity, Wealth and Honor	164
65. Ever-New Clothes, Ever-Full Granary	166
66. Yan Zi Snickers at Duke Jing	168
67. Two Views of Politics	170
68. Espying Robbers	172
69. Worried by Victory	174
70. Using a Three-Pronged Strategy	176
71. The Interrogation of Zou Ji	179
72. The Criteria of Talent	183
73. Three Years of Blame and Three Years of Praise	186
74. Qin Shi Mourns for Lao Zi	188
75. Running Water Can't Mirror Things	190
76. Three Wishes from the Guard of Hua	193
77. Called an Ox or a Horse	195
78. The Tale of the Skull	197

79. Making an Example of a Monkey	199
80. Gazing at Confucius' Carriage	201
81. Yang Zhu Asks About His Wrongdoing	203
82. Cao Shang Gains Carriages	205
83. Broken Stone and Smashed Cinnabar	207
84. A Temple Protects a City	209
85. Strong Points Cannot Obscure Weak Points	211
86. Dying for One's Teacher, Friend and Superior	213
87. A Good Teacher Gives His Clothes to His Pupil	215
88. Rotten Meat and Decayed Bone	217
89. The King of Chu Is Whipped	219
90. Wu Zixu Crosses the Yangtze	222
91. Returning Good for Evil	224
92. Swallow Humiliation and Bear a Heavy Load	226
93. Extreme Bravery Equals Non-Bravery	228
94. Three Rewards for Three Mercies	230
95. Honor Among Thieves	232
96. Good Deeds Will Be Vindicated	234
97. Unfair in Meting Out Rewards and Punishments	236

98. Biding One's Time	238
99. The Skillful Robber	241
100. An Old Farmer Explains the Tao	244
101. Master and Servant Have Opposite Dreams	247
102. The Three Doctors	249
103. No Mourning for a Son	251
104. The Way of Life and Death	252
105. He Who Can Run Quickly Does Not Run Slowly	254
106. A Hungry Man Refuses Rice	256
107. The Pen and the Sword	258
108. The Tooth and the Tongue	261
109. A Fraudulent Gift	263
110. Touching the Tiger's Forehead	265
111. One Hundred Questions for Divination	267

INTRODUCTION

Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism are regarded as the three intellectual pillars of traditional Chinese culture. Taoism, which emphasizes doing nothing (non-action) and letting things take their own course, has been especially influential in the history of Chinese culture and thought.

Taoism followed a unique process of development. During the Qin (221-206 B.C.) and Han (206 B.C.-A.D. 220) dynasties, it was known as the "study of Huang and Lao." Huang, or Huangdi, was the mythical ancestor of the Chinese nation, and Lao, or Lao Zi, was the purported author of the *Tao Te Ching*—also known as *The Book of Lao Zi*, the representative classic of Taoism. *The Book of Lao Zi* was written in the late Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.); some chapters of the book may have been written during the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.).

Sima Tan, father of the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 24) historian Sima Qian, said, "Taoism helps one to concentrate the mind, act unobtrusively and care for all things on earth. As a way to self-cultivation, it follows the nature of Yin and Yang

(the ultimate positive and negative, and male and female essences in Nature), takes up the strong points of Confucianism and Mohism, absorbs the essentials of Logicianism and Legalism, adapts to the changes of the times, follows the nature of everything and can be used everywhere. It is easy to practice, as its precepts are simple, and it can help people accomplish much with little effort." As it absorbed the strong points of all the major schools of thought and stressed self-cultivation as the way to rule the world, Taoism received great attention from the imperial court in the early years of the Western Han, when the country was just recovering from long years of war.

Taoism embodies knowledge of Nature, social development, human relationships and other rich and subtle wisdom of the ancient Chinese people. Tao literally means "the way." It includes the way of Nature, the way of all things on earth, the way of social changes, the way of running a country, the way of self-cultivation and managing a family, even the way of "living a long life with good eyes and ears," which encapsulates the ideal of the ancestors of the Chinese people as regards their approach to life.

The ancient Chinese medical and health-preservation techniques almost all drew their inspiration from Taoism, and works appeared expounding on ways of self-cultivation and long life based on Lao Zi's teachings. Eventually, Taoism was combined with religion, and Lao Zi was elevated to the status of an

immortal.

Unlike Confucianism and Buddhism, the hallmark of the Taoist school of philosophy is its eclecticism; its adherents have included many learned thinkers, magicians, doctors, pharmacists and alchemists. And, as an indigenous way of thought, Taoism is uniquely Chinese in its contents and forms. Many stories from the treasure trove of Taoist lore have pure and fresh artistic concepts, focusing on the ideas of "governing by doing nothing" and "letting things take their own course."

The stories in this book reflect the vast range of Taoist thought, which at the same time contains ideas culled from virtually all the other schools of ancient Chinese philosophy and religion. Drawing on the rich corpus of classical Taoist literature, these pithy stories embody the mysterious wisdom of the "Way," which stimulates the reader's imagination while at the same time amusing and diverting him or her.

1. The Calabash and the Ointment for Chapped Hands

Hui Zi (Hui Tzu) (c. 370-310 B.C.), prime minister of King Hui of the State of Liang, once said to Zhuang Zi (Chuang Tzu): "My master, the king, sent me some calabash seeds. I planted them and they bore a fruit as big as a five-bushel measure. I tried to use it as a bowl for holding water, but it was not solid enough for the purpose. So I cut the calabash in two and tried to make two ladles out of it, but each of them was far too big for the purpose. Thereupon, because of their uselessness, I smashed them to pieces."

"Sir," said Zhuang Zi, "it is clear that you do not know how to make all things serve their proper purpose. Now, there was once a man of the State of Song who had a secret recipe for ointment for chapped hands. From generation to generation, his family had made the bleaching and dyeing of silk their occupation, and the ointment helped them to do this. A stranger heard of the ointment, and offered the man 100 ounces of gold for the recipe. The family gathered to consider this proposal. 'We have,' said they, 'been bleaching and dyeing silk for generations, and we

never earned more than a pittance. Now all at once we can earn 100 ounces of gold simply by disclosing the recipe for the ointment we have been using. Let us not hesitate to sell it.' And so the stranger obtained the recipe. At the time, the State of Wu was at war with the State of Yue, during which many Wu soldiers could not fight with weapons because they had chapped hands in the cold weather. Having heard of this, the man from Song went straight to the king of the State of Wu and made him a present of the recipe. Later, the king of Wu gave the stranger the command of his fleet. When the Wu fleet crashed that of Yue, the stranger was rewarded with a fief and a title. Thus, while the efficiency of the ointment to cure chapped hands was the same whether it was used by the silk workers or by the stranger, in the former case it only served to help them perform a menial task, while in the latter case it brought a man fame and wealth. This was because they used it differently.

Now you, sir, had a five-bushel calabash; why did you not make of it a large bottle gourd, by means of which you could float in rivers and lakes? Instead of this, you were piqued that it was useless for holding anything. It seems that your mind is rather woolly."

Hui Zi said to Zhuang Zi: "I have a large tree, which people call the ailanthus, outside my house. Its trunk is so irregular and knotty that a carpenter cannot apply his line to it. Its small branches are so twisted that the square and compasses cannot be used on them. It

stands by the roadside, but no carpenter takes cognizance of it. They all think, it seems, that the tree is useless despite its large size."

Zhuang Zi said, "Have you not seen a wild cat or a weasel? It lies, crouching down, in wait for its prey. East and west it leaps about, avoiding neither what is high nor what is low. At last it is caught in a trap or dies in a net. Again, there is the yak, which is as large as a cloud which crosses the sky. But it cannot catch mice. Now you have a large tree and fret about its uselessness. Why do you not plant it in the domain of nonexistence, in a wide and barren wilderness? By its side you may wander in non-action; under it you may sleep in happiness. Neither bill nor ax would shorten its term of existence. Though of no use to others, it would not cause worry to you either."

*"Carefree Wanderings," The Inner Chapters
of Zhuang Zi*

Note: Hui Zi (c.370-310 B.C.) and Zhuang Zi (c. 369-286 B.C.) were friends as well as adversaries in disputation. Hui Zi uses the analogy of the big calabash to criticize Zhuang Zi's ideas as wide-ranging and impractical. Zhuang Zi, on the other hand, uses the analogy of the ointment to explain that everything has its strong and weak points; whether something is big or small, it can be either useful or useless, depending upon the use it is put to.

2. Carving Up an Ox as Skillfully as a Master Butcher

The personal cook of King Hui of Liang (400-319 B.C., reigned 369-319 B.C.) had a marvelously skillful way of carving up an ox. Every blow of his hand, every heave of his shoulder, every tread of his foot, every thrust of his knee, every sound of the rending flesh, and every note of the strokes of the cleaver were as graceful as music and dance. In the twinkling of an eye, a whole ox would be perfectly dismembered.

"How admirable," the king once cried, upon seeing this, "your consummate art! How did you achieve it?"

The cook laid down his cleaver and replied, "What your servant follows is the Tao, which is beyond mere art. When I first began to cut up oxen, I saw them as huge, whole animals and didn't know how and where to begin. Three years later, I had come to know the exact location of every part of their bodies—their bones, flesh, sinews, viscera, etc. I saw them no longer as whole animals. Now, I work with my mind, and not with my eyes. The functions of my senses stop; my spirit dominates. Following the natural veins, my