

Rediscovering China

# Zhuangzi

## Dancing with the World

Written by Geling Shang

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

Zhuangzi: 英文/商戈令著. —上海: 上海译文出版社,  
2010.5  
(发现中国)  
ISBN 978-7-5327-5053-5

I. Z      II. 商      III. 庄周(前369~前286) —生平事  
迹—英文      IV. B223.5

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字(2009)第052785号

**Zhuangzi**

Dancing with the World  
Geling Shang

Copyright © 2010 by Shanghai Translation Publishing House  
(a division of Shanghai Century Publishing Co., Ltd.)

For more information, please contact:  
Shanghai Translation Publishing House  
(a division of Shanghai Century Publishing Co., Ltd.)  
193 Fujian Road (C) Shanghai  
China, 200001

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

No part of this work covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means—graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, web distribution or information storage and retrieval systems—without the written permission of the publisher

Printed in Shanghai

ISBN 978-7-5327-5053-5/K · 206

# CONTENTS

9	PREFACE
11	PROLOGUE: WHAT IS DANCING?
12	CHAPTER I. ZHUANGZI THE PERSON AND THE BOOK OF ZHUANGZI
12	1. Zhuangzi the Person
18	2. The Book of <i>Zhuangzi</i>
22	CHAPTER II. ZHUANGZI'S PHILOSOPHY OF <i>TONG</i> — <i>DAO</i> THROUGHTS AS ONE
22	1. <i>Dao</i> is the Ultimate Concern of Chinese Philosophy
24	2. Zhuangzi's Making of a Concept of <i>Tong</i>
28	3. <i>Dao</i> Thoughts as One
31	4. Zhuangzi's Notion: <i>Dao</i> Is What Thoughts
36	5. Throughness as One Could Be the Alternative to Metaphysical Oneness
40	CHAPTER III. THE INNER CHAPTERS
40	1. <i>Xiao Yao You</i> — Dancing with the World
46	2. Equalizing Things and Opinions
73	3. The Nucleus of Nurturing Life
79	4. Being in the Marketplace
93	5. Flourishing of Virtue
104	6. The Greatest Guidance
117	7. Idealistic Rulers of a Nation
124	CHAPTER IV. SELECTED ALLEGORIES FROM ALL CHAPTERS

- 
- 125 The Man in Miaogu Mountain  
127 Three in the Morning  
127 How Would I Know  
129 The Character of a Shadow  
130 The Weeping Lady  
132 Is There Winner  
134 To Hide Heaven Under Heaven  
135 Friends  
138 Shaman Jixian—Four Stages of Cultivation of *Qi*  
141 The Empty Boat  
142 Avoiding Machinate One's Heart by Using Machines  
145 What Cannot Be Read in Books  
147 The Sophist Encountering Zhuangzi  
151 Talking to a Skull  
152 Danger of Indulgence  
153 How Many Confucians Are There  
155 In Between Worth and Worthless—*Thing* Things Without  
    Being *Thinged* by Things  
157 Hunchback's Art of Catching Cicadas  
158 Ferryman's *Dao*  
159 Gamecocks  
160 Swimming in Accordance to the *Dao* of Water  
161 Comfort of Forgetting What Is Comfortable  
162 The Old Man's Fishing of no Fishing  
164 Know *Dao* and Know-not *Dao*  
166 No-thing and No-nothing or Nonexistence and No-  
    nonexistence

167	The Talented Monkey
168	The Zhuangzi thus Characterized
170	CHAPTER V. ZHUANGZI'S INFLUENCE IN CHINESE HISTORY
170	Philosophical Daoism
176	Religious Daoism
179	New Daoism, or " <i>Xuanxue</i> "
182	Confucianism
186	Chinese Buddhism
191	Other Schools of Thought
191	Chinese Art
194	Zhuangzi in Modern China
195	Zhuangzi in the World
197	EPILOGUE: RESPONSE TO YUNFEI
200	SELECTED REFERENCES

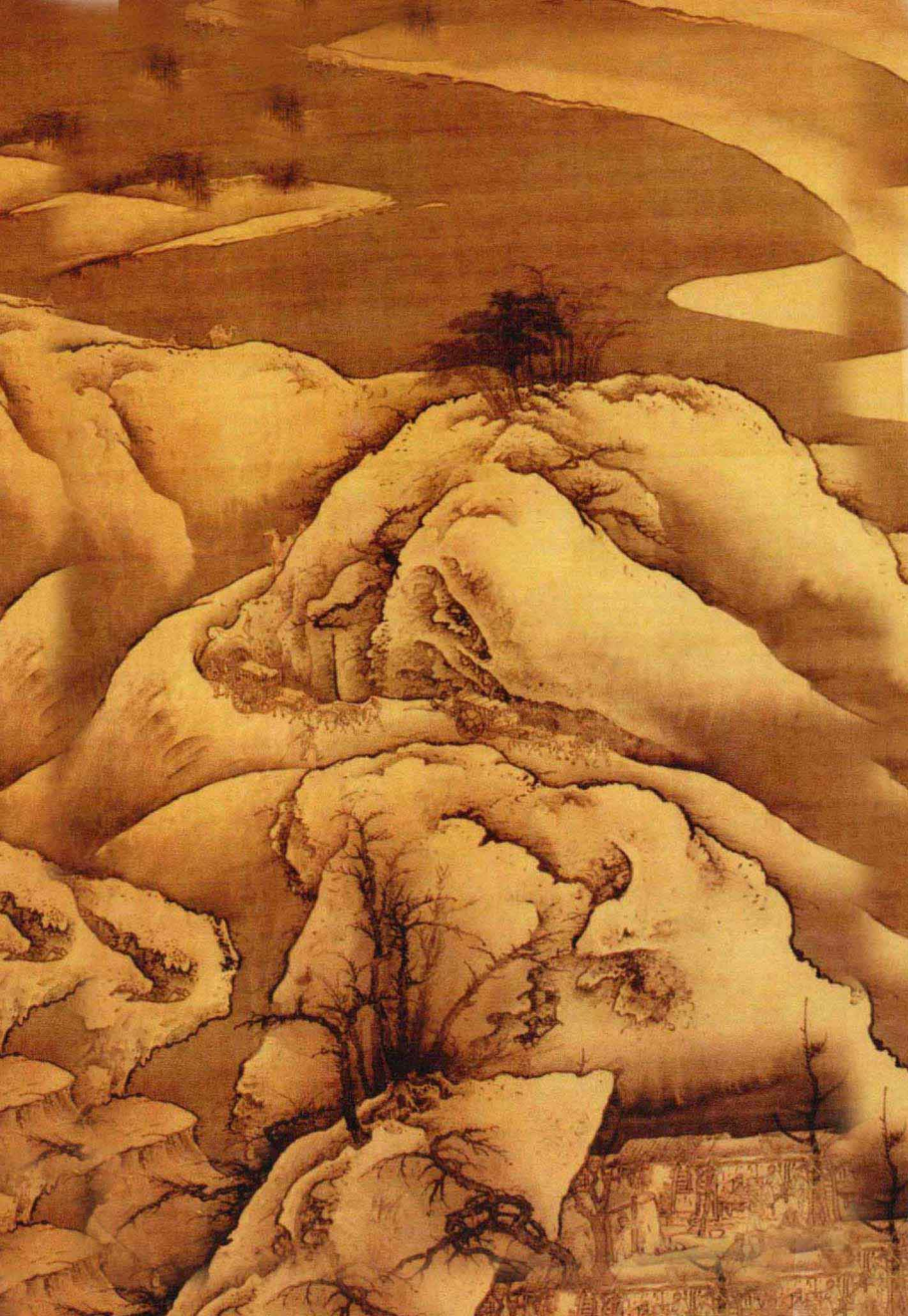






月落江天罷釣魚  
倚柳坐睡夢華胥  
荷葉叢中何處舟  
驚波深處欠金魚







# CONTENTS

9	PREFACE
11	PROLOGUE: WHAT IS DANCING?
12	CHAPTER I. ZHUANGZI THE PERSON AND THE BOOK OF ZHUANGZI
12	1. Zhuangzi the Person
18	2. The Book of <i>Zhuangzi</i>
22	CHAPTER II. ZHUANGZI'S PHILOSOPHY OF <i>TONG</i> — <i>DAO</i> THROUGHTS AS ONE
22	1. <i>Dao</i> is the Ultimate Concern of Chinese Philosophy
24	2. Zhuangzi's Making of a Concept of <i>Tong</i>
28	3. <i>Dao</i> Thoughts as One
31	4. Zhuangzi's Notion: <i>Dao</i> Is What Throughs
36	5. Throughness as One Could Be the Alternative to Metaphysical Oneness
40	CHAPTER III. THE INNER CHAPTERS
40	1. <i>Xiao Yao You</i> — Dancing with the World
46	2. Equalizing Things and Opinions
73	3. The Nucleus of Nurturing Life
79	4. Being in the Marketplace
93	5. Flourishing of Virtue
104	6. The Greatest Guidance
117	7. Idealistic Rulers of a Nation
124	CHAPTER IV. SELECTED ALLEGORIES FROM ALL CHAPTERS

- 
- 125 The Man in Miaogu Mountain  
127 Three in the Morning  
127 How Would I Know  
129 The Character of a Shadow  
130 The Weeping Lady  
132 Is There Winner  
134 To Hide Heaven Under Heaven  
135 Friends  
138 Shaman Jixian—Four Stages of Cultivation of *Qi*  
141 The Empty Boat  
142 Avoiding Machinate One's Heart by Using Machines  
145 What Cannot Be Read in Books  
147 The Sophist Encountering Zhuangzi  
151 Talking to a Skull  
152 Danger of Indulgence  
153 How Many Confucians Are There  
155 In Between Worth and Worthless—*Thing* Things Without  
    Being *Thinged* by Things  
157 Hunchback's Art of Catching Cicadas  
158 Ferryman's *Dao*  
159 Gamecocks  
160 Swimming in Accordance to the *Dao* of Water  
161 Comfort of Forgetting What Is Comfortable  
162 The Old Man's Fishing of no Fishing  
164 Know *Dao* and Know-not *Dao*  
166 No-thing and No-nothing or Nonexistence and No-  
    nonexistence

167	The Talented Monkey
168	The Zhuangzi thus Characterized
170	CHAPTER V. ZHUANGZI'S INFLUENCE IN CHINESE HISTORY
170	Philosophical Daoism
176	Religious Daoism
179	New Daoism, or " <i>Xuanxue</i> "
182	Confucianism
186	Chinese Buddhism
191	Other Schools of Thought
191	Chinese Art
194	Zhuangzi in Modern China
195	Zhuangzi in the World
197	EPILOGUE: RESPONSE TO YUNFEI
200	SELECTED REFERENCES



*Rediscovering China*

# **Zhuangzi**

Dancing with the World

*Written by Geling Shang*

*Shanghai Translation Publishing House*

To my mother Wei Xiaoyun 魏小云

# PREFACE

The distinctive feature of this book is to interpret Zhuangzi's philosophy in light of the concept of *Tong* (通), or *thoroughness*. So far, no one has made this attempt. The word caught my attention over fifteen years ago when I was trying to translate it into English, and has haunted me ever since. So you, reader, have in your hands the fruit of over fifteen years philosophical labor.

*Thoroughness* seems to be the closest English equivalent to *Tong*, though many readers will perhaps not fully grasp its meaning upon first glance. The more I myself contemplated its meaning, the further it pervaded every aspect of my life. Then, on some unremarkable day I cannot remember, *thoroughness* disclosed itself to me as a way (*Dao*) of viewing the world, a *Weltanschauung* if you will. Returning to Zhuangzi thence, it became clear to me that his entire philosophy was grounded in *thoroughness*. Granted, throughout the history of Zhuangzian studies, Guo Xiang, Cheng Xuanying, Chen Jingyuan, and Wang Fuzhi, but few among many, placed heavy emphasis on *Tong* in their interpretations of *Zhuangzi*. Their aims brought them close, yet they did not quite hit the mark, that being the philosophy of *Tong* exposed in this book.

One should think of my book as a companion to the original *Zhuangzi*, since my intention is to let the text speak for itself. The English translation of the *Zhuangzi* is therefore integral to the composition of my book. I used Burton Watson's work as a primary source of translation, and others by Lin Yutang, Victor H. Mair, James Legge, A.C. Graham, Fung Yu-Lan, Thomas Merton and Wu Kuang-ming served as additional sources. I have also taken liberties here and there to make things correspond better with the Chinese text.



I am grateful to Aaron Hobson for his help in organizing the book and improving its literary quality. My appreciation also goes to my young friends Eric Hanson, John P. Cohan, John Way, Kathlene Lee Frisbie and many more; their questions and suggestions became valuable sources of inspiration. I would like to thank Li Jie as the editor of the book; her hard work made the process of publication easier. And of course, but for the joy and love of my family, my wife Lin Yu and my son Christopher, Zhuangzi would always be an enigma to me.

Thank you!

Geling Shang  
Grand Rapids, Michigan  
February 2, 2010

# PROLOGUE: WHAT IS DANCING?

Dancing is not at all a passive gesture nor an indifferent attitude, but a positive affirmation of life. Today's world is miserable in so many ways: war, injustice, poverty, hatred... there seems to be no end. Fighting has become a customary way of life. Everyone is everyone's enemy. Without fighting one cannot survive or rest in peace.

Who is responsible for this mess? Us! Who is going to change or clean it up then? Us! How? Dance! It takes tremendous courage for a person to dance *in* this world, let alone to dance *with* the world.

Imagine, a soldier at the frontier dropping her weapon and dancing. How crazy and brave would we think she is? She would be shot dead immediately, no questions asked.

But maybe, just maybe... her dance would attract others to change the battleground into a dancing party? Regardless, her dance is an incredibly courageous *fight against fighting*. In this sense, dancing with the world is a special way of fighting, fighting *for* the world, rather than *with* the world!

You can easily experiment this in your life: if you dance with your "enemy," you have a good chance of making her your friend. What if we all dance, individual with individual, nation with nation, religion with religion, and star with star? What would happen to the world? Dancing is not subduing, but acknowledging the enemy as a friend.

## CHAPTER I.

# ZHUANGZI THE PERSON AND THE BOOK OF ZHUANGZI

### 1. Zhuangzi the Person

Zhuangzi, originally named Zhuang Zhou (庄周, about 369–286 BCE), was a contemporary of King Hui of Liang or Wei (梁惠王, 400–319 BCE), King Xuan of Qi (齐宣王, 350–301 BCE) and Mencius (372–289 BCE). Zhuangzi was a resident of Meng (蒙) which belonged to Chu State, now probably somewhere in Anhui Province or somewhere between Henan and Anhui province of China. According to *Shi Ji* (史记) or *The Historical Record* by Sima Qian, Zhou worked as a low ranked clerk in a small town of Meng. His study covered all ranges of subjects and his basic teaching was developed primarily from that of Laozi's; he wrote more than one hundred thousand words, most of them allegories (*Shi Ji*, *The Biography of Zhuangzi*). Beyond this, we have very little factual information about Zhuangzi, so scholars instead rely on anecdotes in *The Book of Zhuangzi* to construct a possible historical biography. For the purpose of an introduction, below is a selection of biographical