

THE OUTLOOK OF LIFE IN ZHUANGZI'S PHILOSOPHICAL IDEOLOGY

Dr. Vo Van Dung, Khanh Hoa University.

Dr. Vo Van Dung , The Outlook Of Life In Zhuangzi's Philosophical Ideology , Palarch's Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 18(7). ISSN 1567-214x.

Keywords: Outlook on life, mindset, philosophy, Zhuangzi.

Abstract:

When human feel powerless towards the context of a volatile society and constant war, they fall into misery. However, the outlook on life in Zhuangzi's philosophical ideology not only has unique value in terms of history, culture, ideology of ancient China society, but also has a great influence on current society. This article focuses on researching on the inheritance and basic contents as well as gives an assessment on the outlook on life and the world in Zhuangzi's philosophical thought, also showing the limitations of the article to make some recommendations for other scientists in their next study.

1. Introduction:

Zhuangzi is both a sage and a writer, so his works contain both profound philosophical thought and appealing literature. The thought of Zhuangzi is mainly expressed through the Zhuangzi (book). This work consists of thirty-three chapters, which is divided into three parts: internal chapters, external chapters and miscellaneous chapters. Up to now, there have been a variety of studies on Zhuangzi and the Zhuangzi Book at different viewpoints such as Philosophy, Culture, Religion, Literature, Language, etc. However, only in terms of Philosophy, the studies, judgments and assessments of Zhuangzi in general and Zhuangzi Book in particular have been very diversified, rich and still open up many directions, many issues which need to be studied and clarified. In this article, we will focus on the study of the worldview in the Philosophy of Zhuangzi. To perform these set tasks, we utilize a number of main methods such as: the method of unifying historical logic, general analysis, comparison and systematization, and documentation. The main contribution of this article is to initially present systematically Zhuangzi's views on human life, and at the same time pointing out some recommendations for the next researches.

2. Content:

2.1. An outline of Zhuangzi's life:

Zhuangzi's real name was Chuang Tzu (369-28 BC), in the middle of the Warring States period. He is from Song state. He used to work as a minor mandarin who was in charge of making

paints, but then went into hiding until the end of his life. Zhuangzi is a great thinker in the Taoist school. He is a developer, contributing to perfecting the Taoist doctrine of Confucius. Hence, the next generation often call this thought as Confucian-Zhuangzi's one.

Zhuangzi's thought is clearly shown in the Zhuangzi Book. In this work, with his unique writing, concise and condensed words, which is described as "pure, gentle and naive like cloud flying around the mountains ". He sketched a rustic picture of the world and people in a state which is always moving, changing and being transformed like a winding dragon, swirling in the clouds. Zhuangzi always considered his doctrine not to be the up and down philosophy of Tao but as his practice of the Taoist life himself. He did not focus clearly on the content but mainly suggested the method according to the principle "Having words is for the sake of ideas, getting the ideas can forget the words then".

Zhuangzi's philosophical thought was born in the historical-social context of the Spring-Autumn period - Warring States when social conflicts became dramatic and required to be resolved, which determined the socio-political characters and purposes of contemporary doctrines. However, Zhuangzi's doctrine has its own characteristics and differences compared to contemporary theories.

If Confucius upheld social transformation by maintaining social order according to the hierarchy, order and the regime of Zhou Dynasty. Confucius's ambition and consistent political ideology were to restore the Zhou's regime and rituals. Therefore, they searched for the cause of the turbulent state and turmoil in the society at that time. Confucius said that social chaos was caused by unrighteousness or the name was not consistent with reality. Therefore, he introduced the theory of "human", "ritual", "righteousness" in order to stabilize the society, Zhuangzi opposed the distinction of hierarchy, the complex and lavish lifestyle. Zhuangzi believed that only Tao, which is natural, anonymous, pure and profound, is the way that governs the transformation of all things in the universe. That path is the relationship, interaction, and transformation according to the law of equilibrium and repetition (復fu4). Hence, Zhuangzi supported the harmony with the Heaven in social life, governing the country by Tao of non-action (Wuwei) which there was no need for institutions, law, dignity or culture.

Zhuangzi's thought born was influenced by contemporary theories, especially Taoist seniors. Taoism was founded by Lao Tzu around the 6th century BC in the Spring and Autumn period. However, Zhuangzi's viewpoints have several different points from Lao Tzu. Zhuangzi could be considered as the founder of a particular school – Zhuangzi's sect. Some authors such as Phung Huu Lan, Nguyen Hien Le, Tran Dinh Huou said that Zhuangzi received a spiritual legacy from many philosophers in the previous period such as Lao Tzu, Yang Zhu, Lieh-tzu and at the same time as Peng Mong, Dien Bien, Than Dao ... This statement is probably more reasonable and the contents mentioned in the Zhuangzi Book have proved it. The conception of Tao, the non-action effect of Tao, the path of transformation of Zhuangzi are basically in agreement with Lao Tzu's ones. However, there are still some differences between Zhuangzi and Lao Tzu such as Lao Tzu thought that "hardness and strength are the same species as death, weakness is the same kind as life" (Lao Tzu 1998, Tao Te Ching, p. 270). Whereas, Zhuangzi also reckoned that "people should be both happy with the Heaven and feel fun with plants and friends". They are the same problem; however, the views of two thinkers are completely different. Zhuangzi developed Lao Tzu's dialectic into relativism, absolutizing the movement, proceeding to deny objective truth. In terms of epistemology, Zhuangzi went from relativism to agnosticism. The worldview of Zhuangzi basically enhanced radically the pessimistic and cynical factors in Lao Tzu's doctrine. Also, due to the more radical pessimism, Zhuangzi introduced the concept of unique freedom; upholding the idea of escaping the mundane world by spiritual practice to integrate with the great path, which can achieve absolute freedom by intrinsic human power.

2.2. The problem of the life and life of Zhuangzi:

Human's outlook of life is the consideration and thought about human life as well as the concept of the laws that manifest in general human life and personal human life. Human's outlook of life always poses some questions such as: what is human's ideal of life? What are the purposes, meaning and value of human life and how to live to deserve those? Human's outlook of life reflects human social existence. Its content shows the needs, interests, aspirations and ambitions of human in each specific social regime. In a caste society, human's outlook of life has features of social class. It has a great impact on activities, beliefs and lifestyles, creating orientation and goals for the ideal of life. In current terms, philosophy consists of three major parts such as the cosmology with the purposes of finding the theory of the world; Human's outlook of life with the purposes of finding the theory of life; epistemology with the purposes of finding the theory of knowledge. Human's outlook of life is divided into two parts including (1) to research on what the ultimate human purposes are, which is the subject of psychological research ;(2) to study what a person must be like in the end. It is the object of examination of Ethics (in the narrow sense), philosophy of politics and society, etc. In those three divisions, the cosmology and human's outlook of life are closely related and unseparated because the human's outlook of life of a philosophical ideology must be born from a certain cosmology.

If contemporary philosophical schools such as Confucianism and Mohism which viewed the original universe as "Heaven", Zhuangzi thought that Tao is the starting point of the world and dominates all activities of all creatures. Therefore, the idea of Tao is the content throughout and prevails over all the remaining contents in the Zhuangzi(Book) . The category of Tao is not only found in the Tao Te Ching of Lao Tzu or the Zhuangzi Book of Zhuangzi , but also it has appeared in the folk life of ancient Chinese people as several terms of Tao of Heaven, morality , ethics ... , which has been used quite commonly. However, it was not until the Taoist school appeared that the category of Tao has been gradually improved with profound contents, which was considered in philosophical perspectives and codified to become the main ideology in Taoism. Since then, it cannot be confused with any school of philosophy in history. Yang Chu claimed that the nature of the universe is matter. When basically standing on a naive materialistic stance, Yang Chu strongly criticized the concept of religion and belief in immortality. Yang Chu declared that everything would perish, and life inevitably must be replaced by death. "Life of all things and human follows by their natural nature", which are born and die naturally; a body is healthy by itself, and itself is frail. Therefore: "One's life does not have to be precious but cannot preserve it. We should keep loving our body, then it is healthy. Life does not have to be contemptuous, but it is frail ..." (**Lieh-tzu**, Chapter VII, 15). According to Zhuangzi, the primacy of the universe would be inadequate at the end. Due to being an object, like all other things, they must have roots, causes and as if being traced back, it is impossible to find what the origin of the universe is. In his opinion, there is an absolute, infinite and complete truth that is the eternity of the Heaven and the Earth, which is called Tao. Any objects in the Heaven and the Earth have Tao inside, which is called Nature. Nature and Tao are one state, returning to one's own nature is the sole duty of each thing. In chapter II, Zhuangzi writes that " There were people in the old days whose knowledge reached the climax. Where is that climax?." Since there was the fact that the universe had not had objects in the primitive time, that is the extremely furthest and highest point that knowledge can reach, which cannot be added anything. The lower class thought that in the primordial time there was something, but that was not certain. They said that it was certain but there was no gossip. Thus, Zhuangzi was not the first thinker to propose the original theory of things, but he had had a variety of theories on this matter, all of which proved that in ancient Chinese time, the philosophical problems of the universe were posed very early. The first theory claims that the origin of the universe is not a thing. The second theory declares that in the primitive time, the universe has an object, but it was a chaos form that had not been divided into one object or another. The third theory affirms that the beginning of everything is a certain thing, but there is

no division between yes and no (right and wrong). He favorably supported the initial hypothesis that the universe did not have objects and that it was the extreme point that ancient intellectuals achieved.

The conception in which Tao is the origin and the law of all things is a crucial point in Lao Tzu's cosmology. Then, Zhuangzi continued to inherit and supplement that viewpoint. Zhuangzi said that if there is an origin of all things, it cannot be similar to anything that already exists, and by the experience of common perception, it is impossible to find it out. In a vast world, Zhuangzi admitted that there is something unifying, gathering and linking things. He called out the essence which does not change when all things move. The content and meaning of a number of terms used by Zhuangzi are consistent and aim to confirm that something truly exists, which is the primitive source of all things that was temporarily called as Tao by Zhuangzi. Like Lao Tzu, Zhuangzi thought that Tao cannot be obvious, if it is apparent, Tao is no longer Tao. No language can express Tao, a description of the origin is impossible. Thus, Tao is the origin as well as the root of birth and transformation of all things. The universe and all things naturally exist and Tao also exists objectively, independently compared to everything. Zhuangzi more thoroughly dealt with the concept of Tao in comparison with Lao Tzu - what is the origin of all things with the concept of "own ability". Lao Tzu and Zhuangzi both assumed the origin of all things to be Tao. In terms of the origin of Tao, Lao Tzu still doubted and did not know who Tao's mother is", which means maybe before Tao, there was something that gave birth to Tao but he could not know clearly. Thus, it can be seen that Lao Tzu had showed a contradiction in which the universe has a beginning as Tao - but it originated from another thing. With its own ability, Zhuangzi affirmed that Tao is the origin of itself and all things are rooted from Tao. Tao is the most primitive and original nature. Zhuangzi believed that there was no starting point and ending point in Tao and Tao exists before the Heaven and the Earth. Tao is eternal, independent and immutable. Tao predates ancient times but it is still not getting old, Tao has no starting point or ending point. The difference between Zhuangzi and contemporary thinkers when discussing the origin of the universe that they often traced back from low to high, while Zhuangzi went from high to low to show the supreme and overarching feature of Tao. Tao weaves everywhere, from big to small things, from precious to less valuable things, everything has Tao. Zhuangzi partly showed the origin of the universe which is both universal and specific. According to him, Tao exists in all things but he could not name the components of Tao in things. It is a deep and hidden thing which does not manifest through form and state. If there are common perception and reasoning, then it is impossible to imagine Tao.

Inheriting and being consistent with Lao Tzu's concept of non-being, Zhuangzi mentioned a lot about relative non-being. In sketching out the characteristics of origin, Zhuangzi introduced the concept of non-action and non-vision. In the realm of human life, he used the concepts of being unintentional, inanimate, unconcerned, impermanent, etc. According to Zhuangzi, non-being which is as the nature of origin is not an emptiness or non-characteristics, but it is the purity which has undivided with no conflicts. In fact, Tao with its non-action nature, always seems to contain mixed abilities like an undisclosed energy which hasn't been exposed its form and identity. In terms of originality, Zhuangzi inherited the basic points and continued to develop some limitations in Lao Tzu's conception of Tao. For example, Zhuangzi reckoned that Tao predates and gives birth to the heaven and the earth, on the other hand, it makes demons and gods become miraculous, Tao is real and existent but it is non-active, invisible and transmitted but cannot be comprehended; it is understandable but cannot be seen (cannot be perceived). Thus, the concept of the cosmic origin of Zhuangzi still contains many mysteries. In essence, Zhuangzi failed to escape from the contradictions in his thought and also had a superstitious explanation of Tao. As can be seen, as the origin of all things, Tao in Zhuangzi's ideology is just a general abstract category for all things in which it has only spiritual features but not material ones.

The world in Zhuangzi is a stream of giving birth and being transformed, in which the life of things rushes like a horse; there is no movement that does not change; there is always conversion which the death and life happen simultaneously. Where this ceaseless chain of transformations originates is unknown. Things are inherently seen like that, so determining the nature of things to distinguish one thing from another is only relative. In Zhuangzi's opinion, the criteria that people define themselves about the nature of things are unreliable and do not reflect the essence of things. The world that people perceive is only the world that people see the differences, which is relative, one-sided and subjective. Whereas, the world where all things are equal and not different from each other, following the endless flow of the law of equilibrium, is an absolute world. The world considered by Zhuangzi is always changing and everything makes no difference; besides, he did not reckon that the world is nothingness.

Zhuangzi said that all knowledge that human has is not objective but is merely subjective. He not only expressed his skepticism about cognitive standards, the correctness of knowledge, but more radically he doubted the objective existence of things and phenomena. Zhuangzi distinguished two levels of perception from the object, the subject and the method of perception completely different that is the sub-cognitive layer and the epistemic perception. The object of sub-cognitive layer is all things - the manifestation of Tao, the subject of the sub-cognitive level is small wisdom, its purpose is to distinguish everything from the method of using words and wisdom. In contrast to sub-cognitive layer, it is the epistemic perception layer; the object of the epistemic perception is Tao, the subject is great knowledge, the purpose of great knowledge is to reach the peak of Tao and use the pure mind as the method. From the point of view that everything is a differentiation of Tao, Zhuangzi came to conclude that everything is absolutely equal. He distinguished the regulation of things, phenomena and standards of perception that they are not based on an objective basis but merely on subjective activity. In fact, Zhuangzi absolutized the relativity of things and took the relativism as a basis for the concept of perception, which led Zhuangzi to the viewpoints of agnosticism.

Zhuangzi's outlook of life is based on cosmology, continuing his epistemology as well as a consideration and thought about human life with the belief of all things born from Tao, so he thought that human is also the unity between Tao and Te. Hence, from life to death or immortality, from politics to society, human must follow Tao to preserve his Te.

Mankind's life in general and Chinese people in particular in ancient times mainly depended on and closely knitted to nature. Therefore, right from the beginning of knowing how to think, the question of where human is born, or what role does man have in the world has been raised. On the contrary to Confucianism which considers human to be the Tao of the heaven and the earth, the harmony of Yin and Yang, the convergence of demons, Gods and the stars of the Five Elements (Wu xing); human who is capable of understanding things and occupying a noble position is more magical than all things. Zhuangzi believed that human has the ability to surpass all other species thanks to their ability to return their innate nature of Tao. Human beings as well as all things have an inevitable and natural constraints. However, since things have no mind, they follow Tao unintentionally, existing naturally and live conceitedly. As for human, they realize that the constraints, the dependence and the state of being-dominated are due to the fact that human has thoughts, emotions and the mind which they can create himself, accepting more ties that are not found in things. That is just like sea water which is softer than both hands but can burnish stone, glass and iron thanks to its durability; however, it doesn't feel hurt because water has no heart. Since human has a heart and mind, he can perceive that life is finite, knowing how relatives- strangers and richness- poorness are, understanding how to hate, love and constrain himself to his responsibilities and relationship among human, human to society and human to nature. Zhuangzi said that people, due to their human body, have to live with human and in these relationships, they cannot escape from the bonds of society. They always have to live in invisible and inevitable traps. In the work *Zhuangzi (Book)*, chapter III he writes "Doing kind things will suffer from reputation, doing evils will suffer from punishment. Most

people do not know that life is dangerous, so they are eager to fame, falling into wealth and taking snares by themselves. Zhuangzi said that in order to avoid social pitfalls and live happily, freely like all things, people living in society must not be biased and outrageous, keeping the faithful Tao to preserve their destiny and enjoy their life.

Life and death are cyclic repetition and so on. Thus, it is impossible to distinguish life and death or death and life. In the work of the Zhuangzi (Book), chapter XXII, he writes "Life is the path leading to death, death is the clue of life. Who knows the first and next order of that thing. Human life is the gathering of energy. When the energy gas is condensed, a life is born; when it is dissolved, there is death ". If death and life are considered as friends, then there is nothing to worry about since everything is the one. Zhuangzi doubted and opposed the attitude of being eager of living but frightened of death". He thought that the desire to live or the fear of death is just the same illusion which is deviant. Confucianism examines human from social perspectives while Taoism views man as an organic part of nature. Zhuangzi's ideology of human is to be in harmony with nature, living naturally with each own nature, transcending both the realm of life and death and being free of slander.

Facing the social situation of the Warring States period when there were full of turmoil and upheaval, a variety of philosophers turned to find the cause and came up with different solutions to rule the people. Zhuangzi claimed that the cause of social chaos was due to the fact that people's actions were not harmonious with Tao and nature, losing their pure nature; the overwhelming wealth makes people so ambitious, self-interested and manipulative that they became competitive and could kill each other. He said that the Tao's arrangement in the natural world is perfect and human should be in-active to transformation of nature. He opposed the way human trespasses nature on every level. Fish can live in the water, people living in the water die. Each human has his own abilities, so it is impossible to employ everyone to do one thing. A position must match the reality, an obligation must adapt to an ability. Hence, everything can achieve their nature to maintain happiness. All socio-political regimes according to behaviorism define goodness as the common standard for all behavior and thoughts, which makes everyone to follow and act like those. That is forcing the disagreements to be the same. Zhuangzi said that legislators and moralists who desire to turn each individual to live in a social life and follow a rigid framework, no matter how good their legitimate intentions are, they would be like Lo Hau who raised seabirds, he thought that he loved them so much; however, he hurt them more than he thought in fact. According to Zhuangzi, not ruling the world is to respect the different characteristics of all things, treating them according to their natural nature, doing nothing but letting everything live freely according to their abilities and preferences, then the society will be at peace. From Zhuangzi's perspectives, the nature of human is pure and natural if something luxury, beautiful, pleasant, ingenious ... are brought to teach human, which would only lose human's own nature. Therefore, Zhuangzi opposed the way of "taking the world to rule the world" and supported the way of "taking non-action to rule the world." An ideal society in Zhuangzi's viewpoint is the one in which all people are gentle; they weave cloth to wear by themselves, doing cultivation to have food and unifying together without ganging up, all of which are called the harmony with nature.

Zhuangzi said that life and death are equivalent, so life is not precious at all to be nurtured. In his opinion, the motivation and the purpose of the method of keeping life are not to prolong lifespan or to live eternally, but the death and life are spontaneity and the destiny of the heaven. Hence, human should not be upset, we should be happy to live our whole life and accept the death calmly and leisurely. Human making their living always chase their dreams and are intoxicated by their victory but forget that their energy and spirit are slowly dying with and by slavish purposes. Zhuangzi said that in a man, there are two unified parts namely body and mind. If only appreciating and nurturing the body but not nourishing the mind, it is the bias and the most important part in man can be ignored. The key point in Zhuangzi's method of

nourishing life is to nurture the mind, which means to foster the soul. According to him, taking care of the soul can nourish the life because when people are only a little frightened of something, they will create anxiety and agitation; and if they are too terrified, it can make them become dull as if they are in some sort of trance. So in Zhuangzi's viewpoint, if human desire to go beyond things so that they can live freely and leisurely, they have to be harmonious with nature and then nurture their mind to reach Tao. The methods of nourishing mind of Zhuangzi, which originated from a philosophical thought about human life, became a prerequisite for the development of turning Taoist philosophy into a Taoist movement which resisted against the Chinese government at that time. The thought of nourishing the mind and nurturing the life of Zhuangzi applied in practice turned into religion and mixed with folk beliefs and ancient mysteries.

2.3. Evaluation:

From studying the main contents towards human's outlook of life in Zhuangzi's philosophical thought, we believe that Zhuangzi's human philosophy aimed at human liberation, leaving all the moral chains of Confucius which was somewhat outdated compared to the changing era and the harsh laws of the Dharma. Zhuangzi introduced the ideal of living freely in order to condemn the strict law and rituals of contemporary society, highlighting the calamities of the ambition of power and upholding the righteous right to live of human; He praised personal freedom and liberated individuals from the injustice of the society at that time. Zhuangzi appreciated individual freedom, the pursuit of human rights, which were issues that contemporary society trampled on and other sects shirked. In his time, Zhuangzi was a sage with a unique, immense and generous thought when he raised a free idea and image, evoking a noble life which was apart from ambitions. He dignified happiness, protecting the equality and freedom of development of each individual. In the Chinese history up to Zhuangzi's time, there was not any philosophers even Lao Tzu like Zhuangzi who praised deeply, thoroughly the equality and freedom of human as well as had an abstract art about these issues. He recommended everyone to be in harmony with nature in order to live freely and comfortably, considering all the same including life and death, never having to worry about anything. Zhuangzi considered everything to be equivalent and equal, so he advocated that all people would be free with their innocent characteristics; if everything is equal, then society will be equal; when people and people are equal, all nations and countries are equal; Zhuangzi's outlook of life is deeply humanistic. According to him, man should not oppose himself to nature as well as not consider himself "the master" of nature, but man must conform with the nature and adjust the harmonious relationship between man and nature.

In addition to the positive aspects, it can be seen that Zhuangzi's thought, as an ideology, aimed at combating the upheavals of the Warring States era; however, it had no positive solutions to the revolutions to suppress the chaos and brought Chinese social stability at that time. Although Zhuangzi lived in poverty, he was still cavalier and cold-hearted towards all changes of society at that time. He turned his back to the turbulent contemporary social situation, denying all practical human activities, living in harmony with nature and his own nature, so he absolutely turned the power of the natural world into a mysterious natural force that partially sanctified everything. The uncooperative and antagonistic attitude in Zhuangzi's ideology towards the policies of exploitation by the ruling class made his ideology be little anarchism.

3. Conclusion:

Born in a volatile historical situation, the outlook of life in Zhuangzi's philosophical ideology has placed a very important impression on Chinese philosophy. Stemming from the concept of "everything is homogeneous", Zhuangzi came up with his own solutions that everything has Tao, so they have equal value. Human under the eyes of Zhuangzi are just a part of the natural world, so they are members and operated according to the inherent laws of Tao,

then their life is also limited. All happenings in each person's life are fixed and cannot be changed as well as different values in life are just relative. An overall review of the life and the worldview in Zhuangzi's philosophy shows that the issue he was most concerned with and concentrated his energy on is not the problem of cosmology, epistemology but it is a matter of individual, which how to rescue themselves in the chaotic world and how to become "a true person". Therefore, the philosophical system of Zhuangzi is mainly the human philosophy one. This article will be more comprehensive if we analyze its merits for current society.

References:

- Lao Tzu (1998), *Tao Te Ching*, Cultural Publishing House, Hanoi.
- Zhuangzi (1994), *The Zhuangzi Book*, Cultural Publishing House, Hanoi
- Sima Qian (1988), *Chronicle*, Literature Publishing House, Hanoi.
- Allinson, Robert E. (1989). "On the Question of Relativism in the Chuang-tzu". *Philosophy East and West* 39, no. 1: 13–26. doi: 10.2307/1398878 [Crossref], [Web of Science ®].
- Alt, Wayne. (1991). "Logic and Language in the Chuang-tzu". *Asian Philosophy* 1, no. 1: 61–76. doi: 10.1080/09552369108575336 [Taylor & Francis Online].
- Ames, Roger. (1998). *Wandering at Ease in the Zhuangzi*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Bokenkamp, Stephen R. (1997). *Early Daoist Scriptures*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Boltz, William. (2005). "The Composite Nature of Early Chinese Texts." In *Text and Ritual in Early China*, ed. Martin Kern. 50-78. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Burton Watson (1964), *Chuang tzu: Basic Writings*, New York: Columbia University Press; 2nd edition (1996); 3rd edition (2003) converted to pinyin.
- Burton Watson (1968), *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Capra, Fritjof. (1975) *The Tao of Physics: An exploration of the parallels between modern physics and eastern mysticism*. New York : Random House.
- Chan, Wing-Tsit. (1969) *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*. 4th Edition. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Christine Gross-Loh, Michael Puett. (2016) *The Path: What Chinese Philosophers Can Teach Us About the Good Life*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Csikszentmihalyi, Mark and Ivanhoe, Philip J., eds. (1999). *Religious and Philosophical Aspects of the Laozi*. Albany: State University of New York.
- Fraser, Chris. (2014). "Wandering the Way: A Eudaimonistic Approach to the Zhuāngzǐ". *Dao* 13, no. 4: 541–65. doi: 10.1007/s11712-014-9402-1 [Crossref]
- Fung Yu-lan (1933), *Chuang Tzu, a New Selected Translation with an Exposition on the Philosophy of Kuo Hsiang*, Shanghai: Shang wu.
- James Legge (1891), *The Texts of Taoism, in Sacred Books of the East*, vols. XXXIX, XL, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Giles, Lionel. (1948). *A Gallery of Chinese Immortals*. London: John Murray.
- A. C. Graham (1981), *Chuang-tzu, The Seven Inner Chapters and Other Writings from the Book Chuang-tzu*, London: George Allen and Unwin. Translation notes published separately in 1982 as *Chuang-tzu: Textual Notes to a Partial Translation*, London: School of Oriental and African Studies.
- Graham, Angus. (1981). *Chuang tzu: The Inner Chapters*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Graham, Angus C. "Taoist Spontaneity and the Dichotomy of "Is" and "Ought"". In *Experimental Essays on Chuang-tzu*, edited by Victor H. Mair, 3–23. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983.

- Hansen, Chad. "A Tao of Tao in Chuang-tzu". In *Experimental Essays on Chuang-tzu*, edited by Victor H. Mair, 24–55. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983.
- Hansen, Chad. *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought: A Philosophical Interpretation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Hansen, Chad. "The Relatively Happy Fish". *Asian Philosophy* 13 (2003): 145–64. doi: 10.1080/0955236032000174157 [Taylor & Francis Online].
- Graham, Angus. (1989). *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China*. La Salle, IL: Open Court.
- Graham, Angus. [1998 (1986)], "The Origins of the Legend of Lao Tan." In *Lao-tzu and the Tao-te-ching*, ed. Kohn, Livia Kohn and Michael LaFargue, 23-41. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Hansen, Chad. (1992). *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hansen, Valerie. (2015). *The Open Empire: A History of China to 1800*. 2nd Edition. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Henricks, Robert. (1989). *Lao-Tzu: Te-Tao Ching*. New York: Ballantine.
- Herbert Giles (1889), *Chuang Tzū: Mystic, Moralist and Social Reformer*, London: Bernard Quaritch; 2nd edition, revised (1926), Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh; reprinted (1961), London: George Allen and Unwin.
- Idema, Wilt; Haft, Lloyd (1997). *A Guide to Chinese Literature*. Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan. ISBN 0-89264-123-1.
- Idema, Wilt (2010). "Prosimetric and Verse Narrative". In Chang, Kang-i Sun (ed.). *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature, Volume II: From 1375*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 343–412. ISBN 978-0-521-85559-4.
- Ivanhoe, Philip J. (2002). *The Daodejing of Laozi*. New York: Seven Bridges Press.
- Kamitsuka, Yoshiko, (1998). "Lao-Tzu in Six Dynasties Taoist Sculpture." In *Lao-tzu and the Tao-te-ching*, ed. Kohn, Livia Kohn and Michael LaFargue, 63-89. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Kern, Martin (2010). "Early Chinese Literature, Beginnings through Western Han". In Owen, Stephen (ed.). *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature, Volume I: To 1375*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 1–115. ISBN 978-0-521-85558-7.
- Kim, Tae Hyun. (2010). "Other Laozi Parallels in the Hanfeizi An Alternative Approach to the Textual History of the Laozi and Early Chinese Thought." *Sino-Platonic Papers* 199 (March 2010), ed. Victor H. Mair. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Kohn, Livia (2008). "Laojun yinsong jiejing [Classic on Precepts of Lord Lao, Recited to the Melody in the Clouds]." In *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, ed. Fabrizio Pregadio. London: Routledge.
- Kohn, Livia, (1998). "The Lao-Tzu Myth." In *Lao-tzu and the Tao-te-ching*, ed. Kohn, Livia Kohn and Michael LaFargue, 41-63. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Kohn, Livia, (1996). "Laozi: Ancient Philosopher, Master of Longevity, and Taoist God." In *Religions of China in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, 52-63. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kohn, Livia and LaFargue, Michael. (1998). *Lao-tzu and the Tao-te-ching*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Kohn, Livia and Roth, Harold (2002) *Daoist Identity: History, Lineage, and Ritual*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Li, Wai-yee (2010). "Early Qing to 1723". In Chang, Kang-i Sun (ed.). *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature, Volume II: From 1375*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 152–244. ISBN 978-0-521-85559-4.
- Lao-Tzu. (1991). *Tao Te Ching*. Trans. Stephen Mitchel. New York: Harper Collins, 1991.
- Mair, Victor H. (1994). *Wandering on the Way: Early Taoist Tales and Parables of Chuang Tzu*. New York: Bantam Books. ISBN 0-553-37406-0. (Google Books)

- Mair, Victor H. (1998). "Chuang-tzu". In Nienhauser, William (ed.). *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature, Volume 2*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. pp. 20–26. ISBN 0-253-33456-X. (Google Books)
- Mair, Victor H. (2000). "The Zhuangzi and its Impact". In Kohn, Livia (ed.). *Daoism Handbook*. Leiden: Brill. pp. 30–52. ISBN 978-90-04-11208-7.
- Nivison, David Shepherd (1999). "The Classical Philosophical Writings". In Loewe, Michael; Shaughnessy, Edward (eds.). *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 745-812. ISBN 0-521-47030-7.
- Nylan, Michael and Csikzentmihalyi, Mark. (2003). "Constructing Lineages and Inventing Traditions through Exemplary Figures in Early China." *T'oung Pao* 89: 1-41.
- Penny, Benjamin. (2008). "Laojun bashiyi huatu [Eighty-one Transformations of Lord Lao]." In *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, ed. Fabrizio Pregadio. London: Routledge.
- Penny, Benjamin. (2008). "Laojun shuo yibai bashi jie [The 180 Precepts Spoken by Lord Lao]." In *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, ed. Fabrizio Pregadio. London: Routledge.
- Puett, Michael. (2001). "Philosophy and Literature in Early China". In Mair, Victor H. (ed.). *The Columbia History of Chinese Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press. pp. 70–85. ISBN 0-231-10984-9.
- Roth, H. D. (1993). "Chuang tzu 莊子". In Loewe, Michael (ed.). *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*. Berkeley: Society for the Study of Early China; Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley. pp. 56–66. ISBN 1-55729-043-1.
- Shang, Wei. (2010). "The Literati Era and Its Demise (1723–1840)". In Chang, Kang-i Sun (ed.). *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature, Volume II: From 1375*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 245–342. ISBN 978-0-521-85559-4.
- Slingerland, Edward. (2005) *Trying Not to Try*. New York: Broadway Books.
- Smith, Kidder (2003). "Sima Tan and the Invention of Daoism, 'Legalism,' et cetera." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 62.1: 129-156.
- Watson, Burton. (1968). *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Watson, Burton; Graham, A. C. (1999). "The Way of Laozi and Zhuangzi — Transformation and Transcendence in the Zhuangzi". In de Bary, Wm. Theodore; Bloom, Irene (eds.). *Sources of Chinese Tradition, Vol. 1: From Earliest Times to 1600 (2nd ed.)*. New York: Columbia University Press. pp. 95–111. ISBN 978-0-231-10939-0.
- Watson, Burton. (2003). *Zhuangzi: Basic Writings (3rd ed.)*. New York: Columbia University Press. ISBN 0231129599.
- Wilkinson, Endymion. (2015). *Chinese History: A New Manual (4th ed.)*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center. ISBN 978-0-674-08846-7.
- Welch, Holmes. (1966). *Taoism: The Parting of the Way*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Welch, Holmes and Seidel, Anna, eds. (1979). *Facets of Taoism*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Zhuangzi. (1968). *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*. Translated and edited by Burton Watson. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Zhuangzi. (1981). *Chuang-Tzu: The Inner Chapters*. Translated and edited by Angus C. Graham. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett.
- Zhuangzi. (1981) *Zhuangzi: The Essential Writings, With Selection From Traditional Commentaries*. Translated and edited by Brook Ziporyn. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2009.