

“NATURALNESS AND SPONTANEITY: A DAOIST COUNTERCULTURE”

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1. **Marcel Granet: “Chinese wisdom has no need for the idea of God.”**
2. **What is “God?” One behind the many. An independent, foundational, permanent, and determinative entity in religion (God), Newtonian mechanical science (natural laws), morality (irrecusable moral principles), philosophy (the logic of the changeless): apodictic knowledge, person (soul, human nature, human “beings”).**
3. ***Lex parsimoniae*: shaving with Ockum’s razor twice: Chinese wisdom has no need for either the idea of God or the idea of the human “soul”**
4. **唐君毅：中國文化之根本精神即 [將部分與全體交融互攝] 之精神；自認識上言之，即不自全體中劃出部分之精神（此自中國人之宇宙觀中最可見之）；自情意上言之，即努力以部分實現全體之精神（此自中國人之人生態度中可見之）。 Tang Junyi: “The basic spirit of Chinese culture is the spirit of symbiosis and mutuality between particulars and totality. From the perspective of understanding this means the spirit of being unwilling to isolate the particular from the totality (this is most evident in the cosmology of the Chinese people), and from the**

perspective of ties of feeling and affection, it means the spirit of the particular in doing its best to realize the totality (this is most evident in the attitude of the Chinese people toward daily life).”

1. What is the *Daodejing*? How does it achieve coherence?
2. What is paranomasia? Aristotle’s categories: genus and species. Calling something by another name.
3. How should we translate *Daodejing*? *The Classic of This Focus and Its Field. Of Making This Life Significant.*
4. What is *dao* 道?
 - a) Aristotle: “things” (nouns), “actions” (verbs), “modalities” (adverbs), “attributes” (adjectives): “life, experience, culture”
 - b) God or Plato’s Realm of Forms: *The Way and Its Power*
 - c) One/many, part/whole
 - d) An interpretive context: beginning from the “whole” as focus/field rather than *one-behind-the-many*, single-source idealism. Metaphysical (*archic*) thinking versus 一多不分 natural cosmology (*anarchic*) (*Book of Changes* 易經大傳 and Traditional Chinese Medicine 中醫): What is the heart-mind (*xin* 心)? Holistic, processual, relational, gerundive—primacy of doing: “thinking and feeling,” moving line, *how* and *what*.
 - e) “getting rid of God”: *the philosophical fallacy*

- f) **Focus/field (一多不分觀), nonanalytic, nondualistic, inclusive**
- g) **Priority of process and transformation to form and stasis**
- h) **Processual and provisional: experience, life, history, culture, ecology**
- i) **Relations: inseparability of “this” and its context**
- j) **Genealogical, historical, biographical**
- k) **What things are and how they are: pluralistic**

5. What is *de* 德?

- a) **Insistent particularity: *this* focus and *its* field**
- b) **Intrinsic, constitutive relations**
- c) **Appreciating 重視, 充分理解, 感謝, 感激, 漲價 the particular: interdependent, unique, bottomless**
- d) **Importance of the body: 身, 肉, 骨, 體**
- e) **Associations (rather than natural) kinds 類: 金, 木, 水, 火, 土**

6. What is *jing* 經?

- a) **Regular, constant (經常), the warp, pass through, manage (opposite of *quan* 權 contingent)**
- b) **Post-Han: classic, canonical text**
- c) **Pre-Han: primer, constant guidelines, basic precepts**

7. What is “Daoism?” Sima Tan’s *Shiji* 史記 : *Daodejia* 道德家

- a) **“Making This Life Significant”**: An Explanatory Vocabulary for **“personal cultivation”** 修身
- b) where does meaning come from?
- c) philosophy and religion in one: a way of life
- d) shares a natural cosmology with the 易經 and with 儒学
- e) Daoism has to do with the immediate human experience: a *radical* empiricism 自然主義, 經驗主義
- f) **life as process** 生生不息過程性的宇宙論
gerundive 動名詞
- g) **life as art**: negativity of coercion ,enchanting the ordinary
- h) **limitations of language**: 無言之教
- i) **ecological sensibility**
- j) **collaterality importance harmony rather than sameness** 和而不同
- k) **nothing is independent, individualism is wrong, neighbor does better**
- l) **appreciating”** 重视, 欣赏, 充分理解, 感谢, 涨价
the **bottomless particular** 无限的, 无底的个体

8. A Daoist vocabulary

- a) **He** 和 : **“Getting the most out of your ingredients”**
 - i) what makes Chinese food **“Chinese?”**
 - ii) **integrity and integration**: 道德 as character
 - iii) **doing and undergoing, shaping and being shaped**
- b) **How do we appreciate the particular? The *wu* 無 forms.**

- i. **wuwei** 無為: “noncoercive acting”
- ii. **wuyu** 無欲: “objectless desire”
- iii. **wuzhi** 無知 “unprincipled knowing”
- iv. **wushi** 無事 “noninterfering service”
- v. **wuqing** 無情 “immediate feeling”
- vi. **wuming** 無名 “nonreferential naming”

9. Daoism and Education

- i. **educare** and **educere** as *tiyong*: forming and functioning 體用
- ii. the problem of “creativity”: God or Prometheus
- iii. co-creativity (*creatio in situ*) as the only creativity
- iv. education as making meaning
- v. Daoist role ethics 倫理學: education versus training

10. “Making This Life Significant”: An Explanatory Vocabulary for 修身

- a) **He** 和 : “Getting the most out of your ingredients”
- b) what makes Chinese food “Chinese?”
- c) integrity and integration: 道德 as character
- d) doing and undergoing, shaping and being shaped

A path (*dao*) becomes a path by people walking.
 A thing being called something becomes it.
 Why is it so?
 It is so because it is so.
 Why is it not something other than what it is?

It is not because it is not. (Zz 2; compare Graham [1981]:53)

- I. ***Ddj 1:*** 道可道，非常道。名可名，非常名。無名天地之始；有名萬物之母。故常無欲，以觀其妙；常有欲，以觀其徼。此兩者，同出而異名，同謂之玄。玄之又玄，衆妙之門。

Way-making that can be put into words is not really way-making.

And naming that can assign fixed reference to things is not really naming.

The nameless is the fetal beginnings of everything that is happening,

While that which is named is their mother.

Thus to be objectless in one's desires is how one observes the mysteries of all things,

While having desires is how one observes their boundaries.

These two—the nameless and what is named—emerge from the same source yet are referred to differently.

Together they are called obscure.

The obscurest of the obscure,

The are the swinging gateway of the manifold mysteries.

- II. ***Ddj 47:*** 不出戶知天下；不闕牖見天道。其出彌遠，其知彌少。是以聖人不行而知，不見而名，不為而成。

Venture not beyond your doors to know the world;

**Peer not outside your window to know the
way-making of *tian*.
The farther one goes
The less one knows.**

**It is for this reason that sages know without
going anywhere
Understand clearly without seeing anything
And get things done without doing anything.**

**III. *Ddj* 18 and 19 and general critique of
Confucianism in 38: resistance to formal
prescription.**

大道廢，有仁義；智慧出，有大偽；六親不和，有孝慈；國家昏亂，有忠臣。

**It is when grand way-making is abandoned
That consummate conduct and
appropriateness appear.
It is when wisdom and erudition arise
That great duplicity appears.
It is when the six family relationships are
disharmonious
That family reverence and parental affection
appear.
It is when the state has fallen into troubled
times
That upright ministers appear.**

絕聖棄智，民利百倍；絕仁棄義，民復孝慈；
絕巧棄利，盜賊無有。此三者以為文不足。故
令有所屬：見素抱樸，少私寡欲。

Cut off sagacity and get rid of wisdom

And the benefit to the common people will benefit a hundredfold.

Cut off consummate conduct and get rid of appropriateness

And the common people will return to family reverence and parental affection.

Cut off cleverness and get rid of personal profit

And there will be no more brigands and thieves.

But these three sayings as they stand are still lacking

And need to be supplemented by the following:

Display a genuineness like raw silk and

embrace a simplicity like unworked wood,

Lessen your concern for yourself and reduce your desires.

IV. Chapter 8

上善若水。水善利萬物而不爭，處衆人之所惡，故幾於道。居善地，心善淵，與善仁，言善信，正善治，事善能，動善時。夫唯不爭，故無尤。

The highest efficacy is like water.

It is because water benefits everything (*wanwu*)

Yet vies to dwell in places loathed by the crowd

That it comes nearest to proper way-making.

In dwelling, it is a matter of where is the right place.

In thinking and feeling it is how deeply.

In giving it is how much like nature's bounty.

In speaking it is how credibly.

In governing it is how effectively.

In serving it is how capably.

In acting it is how timely.

It is only because there is no contentiousness in proper way-making

That it incurs no blame.

V. Chapter 24

企者不立；跨者不行；自見者不明；自是者不彰；自伐者無功；自矜者不長。其在道也，曰：餘食贅行。物或惡之，故有道者不處。

**Blowhards have no standing,
The self-promoting are not distinguished,
Show-offs do not shine,
Braggarts have nothing to show,
The self-important are here and gone.**

**As these attitudes pertain to way-making (*dao*),
They are called feeding the gluttons more than they can eat.**

**Such excess is so generally despised
That even those who find themselves without
Cannot abide it.**

VI. Chapter 63

為無為，事無事，味無味。大小多少，報怨以德。圖難於其易，為大於其細；天下難事，必作於易，天下大事，必作於細。是以聖人終不為大，故能成其大。夫輕諾必寡信，多易必多難。是以聖人猶難之，故終無難矣。

**Do things non-coercively (*wuwei*),
Be non-interfering in going about your business (*wushi*),**

And savor the flavor of the unadulterated in what you eat.

**Treat the small as great
And the few as many.**

Requite enmity with character (*de*).

**Take account of the difficult while it is still easy,
And deal with the large while it is still tiny.
The most difficult things in the world originate with the easy,
And the largest issues originate with the tiny.**

**Thus, it is because the sages never try to do great things
That they are indeed able to be great.**

**One who makes promises lightly is sure to have little credibility;
One who finds everything easy is certain to have lots of difficulties.**

**Thus, it is because even the sages pay careful attention to such things
That they are always free of difficulties.**

VII. Chapter 4

道沖而用之或不盈。淵兮似萬物之宗。挫其銳，解其紛，和其光，同其塵。湛兮似或存。吾不知誰之子，象帝之先。

Way-making being empty,

**You make use of it
But do not fill it up.**

**So abysmally deep—
It seems the predecessor of everything that is
happening (*wanwu*).**

**It blunts the sharp edges
And untangles the knots;
It softens the glare
And brings things together on the same track.**

**So cavernously deep—
It only seems to persist.**

**I do not know whose progeny it is;
It prefigures the ancestral gods.**

**No such thing as “void:” *Ddj* 4: 道沖 and 盅. The
function of the as yet indeterminant in the birthing of
the world, and our capacity to influence the evolving
process.**

VIII. Chapter 25

有物混成，先天地生。寂兮寥兮，獨立不改，周行而
不殆，可以為天下母。吾不知其名，字之曰道，強為
之名曰大。大曰逝，逝曰遠，遠曰反。故道大，天
大，地大，王亦大。域中有四大，而王居其一焉。人
法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然。

**There was some process that formed spontaneously
Emerging before the heavens and the earth.
Silent and empty,**

Standing alone as all that is, it does not suffer alteration.

(All pervading, it does not pause.)

It can be thought of as the mother of the heavens and the earth.

I do not yet know its name.

If I were to style it,

I would call it way-making.

And if forced to give it a name,

I would call it grand.

Being grand, it is called passing,

Passing, it is called distancing.

Distancing, it is called returning.

Way-making is grand,

The heavens are grand,

The earth is grand,

And the king is also grand.

Within our territories

There are four “grandees”

And the king occupies one of them.

Human beings emulate the earth,

The earth emulates the heavens,

The heavens emulate way-making,

And way-making emulates what is spontaneously so.

IX. Chapter 42

道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物。萬物負陰而抱陽，沖氣以為和。人之所惡，唯孤、寡、不穀，而王公以為稱。故物或損之而益，或益之而損。人之所教，我亦教之。強梁者不得其死，吾將以為教父。

Way-making gives rise to continuity,
 Continuity gives rise to difference,
 Difference gives rise to plurality,
 And plurality give rise to the manifold of everything that
 is happening.

Everything carries *yin* on its shoulders and *yang* in its
 arms
 And blends these vital energies together to make them
 harmonious.

There is nothing in the world dislike more
 Than the thought of being friendless, unworthy, and
 inept,
 And yet kings and dukes use just such terms to refer to
 themselves.
 For things, sometimes less is more,
 And sometimes, more is less.

Thus, as for what other people are teaching,
 I will think about what they have to say, and then teach it
 to others.

For example: “Those who are coercive and violent do
 not meet their nature end”—
 I am going to take this statement as my precept.

X. Chapter 49

聖人無常心，以百姓心為心。善者，吾善之；不善者，
 吾亦善之；德善。信者，吾信之；不信者，吾亦信之；
 德信。聖人在天下，歛歛為天下渾其心，百姓皆注其耳
 目，聖人皆孩之。

**Sages really think and feel immediately.
They take the thoughts and feelings of the common
people as their own.**

**To not only treat the able as able
But to treat the inept as able too
Is a quantum gain in ability.
To not only treat the credible as credible
But to treat those you do not trust as credible too
Is a quantum gain in credibility.**

**As for the presence of sages in the world, in their efforts
to draw things together:**

**They make of the world one muddled mind.
The common people all fix their eyes and ears on
the sages,
And the sages treat them as so many children.**

XI. Chapter 40

反者道之動；弱者道之用。天下萬物生於有，有生於無。

**“Returning” is how way-making moves,
And “weakening” is how it functions.
The events of the world arise from the determinate,
And the determinate arises from the indeterminate.**

XII. Chapter 31

夫佳兵者，不祥之器，物或惡之，故有道者不處。君子居則貴左，用兵則貴右。兵者不祥之器，非君子之器，不得已而用之，恬淡為上。勝而不美，而美之者，是樂殺人。夫樂殺人者，則不可以得志於天下矣。吉事尚左，凶事尚右。偏將軍居左，上將軍居

右，言以喪禮處之。殺人之衆，以哀悲泣之，戰勝以喪禮處之。

**Military weapons are inauspicious instruments,
And are so are generally despised
That even those who want things
Cannot abide them.**

**Rulers under normal circumstances take the left side
as the seat of honor,
But when they go to war, they honor the right.
Thus, military weapons are not the instruments of
true rulers.**

**Military weapons are inauspicious instruments,
And so when you have no choice but to use them,
It is best to do so coolly and without enthusiasm.
Do not glorify weapons,
For to do so is to delight in killing people,
And anyone who delights in killing people
Will come up short in the world.**

**It is for this reason that on auspicious occasions we
honor the left side,
While at funerals we honor the right.
Analogously, the lieutenant commander stands to
the left
And the supreme commander takes up his position
on the right.
This means that they are positioned as they would
be at a funeral.**

**When the casualties are high,
Inspect the battleground with grief and remorse;**

**When the war is won,
Treat it as you would a funeral.**

XI. Nothing is unilaterally “causal” but rather all things are interdependent and mutually accommodating, and any action is always reflexive involving oneself in the outcome. Everything that happens is emergent from a continuing process characterized as an interface between the determinant and the indeterminant, between something and nothing: 反者道之動，弱者道之用。天下[萬]之物生於有，有生於無 (Ddj 40). In 太一生水 we see that 太一 gives birth to water, but that 太一藏於水。So Ddj 42: 道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物 also works in the opposite direction.

XIII. Notion of “embracing or grasping one” — in Ddj 10: 戴營魄包一，能毋離乎？ Ddj 24: 是以聖人抱一為天下式。(cf. 聖人無心). Ddj 39. Holism, interdependence, continuity without blockage or stagnation.

XIV. On the mirror metaphor, compare Ddj 49 and the *wu*無-forms generally: 聖人恆無心，以百姓之心為心。

XV. Ddj 51: excelling in life 玄德

Zhuangzi 莊子

南海之帝為儵，北海之帝為忽，中央之帝為渾沌。儵與忽時相與遇於渾沌之地，渾沌待之甚善。儵與忽謀報渾

沌之德，曰：“人皆有七竅，以視聽食息，此獨無有，嘗試鑿之。”日鑿一竅，七日而渾沌死。

The ruler of the North Sea was “Swift,” the ruler of the South Sea was “Furious,” and the ruler of the Central Sea was “Spontaneity (*hundun*).” Swift and Furious had on several occasions encountered each other in the territory of Spontaneity, and Spontaneity had treated them with great hospitality. Swift and Furious, devising a way to repay Spontaneity’s generosity, said: “People all have seven orifices through which they see, hear, eat, and breathe. Spontaneity alone is without them.” They then attempted to bore holes in Spontaneity, each day boring one hole. On the seventh day, Spontaneity died.

昔者莊周夢為胡蝶，栩栩然胡蝶也，自喻適志與！不知周也。俄然覺，則蘧蘧然周也。不知周之夢為胡蝶與，胡蝶之夢為周與？周與胡蝶，則必有分矣。此之謂物化。

Of old Zhuang Zhou dreamed that he was a butterfly, flitting and fluttering about to his heart’s content. He did not know that he was Zhuang Zhou. Suddenly he awoke and found himself to be Zhuang Zhou. But then he wasn’t sure whether he was Zhuang Zhou dreaming he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he was Zhuang Zhou. With Zhuang Zhou and the butterfly—there has got to be a difference. This then is what is called transforming together with things.

莊子送葬，過惠子之墓，顧謂從者曰：“郢人堊慢其鼻端若蠅翼，使匠石斲之。匠石運斤成風，聽而斲之，盡堊而鼻不傷，郢人立不失容。宋元君聞之，召匠石曰：‘嘗試為寡人為之。’匠石曰：‘臣則嘗能斲之。雖然，臣之質

死久矣。’自夫子之死也，吾無以為質矣，吾無與言之矣。”

Zhuangzi was in a burial procession when he passed the tomb of Huizi. Turning around to address those following him, he said to them: "There was a man of Ying who, when finding a piece of mortar on the tip of his nose as thick as a fly's wing, would get Carpenter Rock to swipe it off with his blade. Carpenter Rock wielded his axe like the wind, and doing as he was told, would cut the bit of mortar away cleanly without injury to the nose. And the whole time the man of Ying would stand there without batting an eye.

Lord Yuan of Song heard of this, and summoning Carpenter Rock to him, said, 'Try to do this on me.'

Carpenter Rock replied, 'As for me, I once was able to swipe the mortar off with my blade, but it has been some time now since my chopping block died.'

Since Huizi died, I too have had no one as a chopping block, no one to really talk with!" (Zz 24; compare Graham [1981]:124)

無為名尸，無為謀府，無為事任，無為知主。體盡無窮，而遊無朕，盡其所受於天，而無見得，亦虛而已。至人之用心若鏡，不將不迎，應而不藏，故能勝物而不傷 *Zhuangzi* 7: (Watson p. 97)

Do not be an embodier of fame; do not be a storehouse of schemes; do not be an undertaker of projects; do not be a proprietor of wisdom. Embody to the fullest what has no end and wander where there is no trail. Hold on to all that you have received from *tian* but do not think you have gotten anything. Be empty,

that is all. Utmost Persons use their mind like a mirror—going after nothing, welcoming nothing, responding but not storing up. Therefore they can win out over things without injury to themselves.

仲尼曰：“天下有大戒二：其一，命也；其一，義也。子之愛親，命也，不可解於心；臣之事君，義也，無適而非君也，無所逃於天地之間。是之謂大戒。是以夫事其親者，不擇地而安之，孝之至也；夫事其君者，不擇事而安之，忠之盛也；自事其心者，哀樂不易施乎前，知其不可奈何而安之若命，德之至也。為人臣子者，固有所不得已，行事之情而忘其身，何暇至於悅生而惡死！
Zhuangzi 4:

Zhongni replied, In all things under heaven there are two great cautionary considerations: one is derived from the way of things; the other has to do with doing what is right. The love of a son for his parents is the way of things, and can never be undone from his heart and mind, his thinking and feeling; the minister's service to the ruler is doing what is right, and there is nowhere that he goes that the ruler is not his ruler. These obligations from which there is no escape anywhere between heaven and earth are what are called the great cautionary considerations. Therefore a son finds his contentment in serving his parents wherever it takes him; this is the utmost in family reverence. In the same way a minister finds contentment in serving his ruler whatever it is that he has to do; this is the fullness of loyalty. In serving one's own heart and mind, without the alternations of grief and joy getting in the way, to know what cannot be otherwise and to be content in it as though it is the way of things—this is the utmost of *de*. In being a minister or a son there is that in which there

is the inevitable. In acting upon the circumstances and forgetting your own person, wherein is there the leisure to think that you enjoy living and would hate to die?

古之人，其知有所至矣。惡乎至？有以為未始有物者，至矣盡矣，弗可以加矣。其次以為有物矣，

With the ancients, understanding had gotten somewhere. Where was that? Its height, its extreme, that to which no more could be added was this: some of them thought that there had never begun to be things. The next lot thought that there are things, but that there had never begun to have boundaries among them. . . . (Zz 5 with commentary Zz23; compare Graham [1981]:54 and 104 respectively)

日出東方而入於西極，萬物莫不比方。有目有趾者，待是而後成功，待晝而作。是出則存，是入則亡。萬物亦然，有待也而死，有待也而生。吾一受其成形，而不化以待盡，效物而動，日夜無隙，而不知其所終。

The sun rises in the eastern quarter only to set in the distant western reaches, and all of the myriad things take their bearings from it. Those things with eyes and feet can only get their work done by relying upon it; they come out with it and disappear with it. The myriad things are all the same—relying on something they die, and relying on something they come to life. Having once received my present form, I persist and wait for it to be used up. On the model of other things, I move day and night without a break, never knowing where it all ends. (Zz 21: compare Graham [1981]:168)

種有幾，得水則為 ，得水土之際則為蛙蟻之衣，生於陵屯則為陵烏，陵烏得鬱棲則為烏足，烏足之根為蟻螯，其葉為蝴蝶。胡蝶，胥也化而為蟲，生於灶下，其狀若脫，其名為鵲掇。鵲掇千日為鳥，其名曰乾餘骨。乾餘骨之沫為斯彌，斯彌為食醯。頤輅生乎食醯，黃輓生乎九猷，瞿芮生乎腐蠶。羊奚比乎不筍，久竹生青寧，青寧生程，程生馬，馬生人，人又反入於機。萬物皆出於機，皆入於機。

Within the seeds of things there is something that triggers them off. In water, seeds become amoeba, and at the water's edge they become a kind of seaweed. When they grow on a hillside, they become a hill-slipper grass, and when this grass is fertilized it becomes crow-foot grass. The roots of the crow-foot grass become beetle larva, and its blades become butterflies. Shortly the butterflies undergo a metamorphosis to become those insects which live under the stove and shed their skins—they are called house crickets. These house crickets after a thousand days become birds, and they are called "dried leftover bones" birds. The spittle of these birds becomes *simi* bugs which become vinegar flies. *Yilu* bugs are born from the vinegar flies, and *huangkuang* grubs are born from *jiuyou* insects. Gnats are born from fireflies, and when sheep's groom grass grows beside bamboo that has not sprouted for some time, it produces *chingning* bugs. *Chingning* bugs give birth to leopards which give birth to horses which in turn give birth to human beings. In due time, human beings revert to what triggered them off. All of the myriad things come out from what triggers them off and revert back to it. (Zz 18; compare Graham [1981]:184)

寓言十九，重言十七，卮言日出，和以天倪。寓言十九，藉外論之。親父不為其子媒。親父譽之，不若非其父者也；非吾罪也，人之罪也。與己同則應，不與己同則反，同於己為是之，異於己為非之。重言十七，所以已言也，是為耆艾。年先矣，而無經緯本末以期年耆者，是非先也。人而無以先人，無人道也；人而無人道，是之謂陳人。卮言日出，和以天倪，因以曼衍，所以窮年。不言則齊，齊與言不齊，言與齊不齊也，故曰無言。言無言，終身言，未嘗言；終身不言，未嘗不言。有自也而可，有自也而不可；有自也而然，有自也而不然。惡乎然？然於然。惡乎不然？不然於不然。惡乎可？可於可。惡乎不可？不可於不可。物固有所然，物固有所可，無物不然，無物不可。非卮言日出，和以天倪，孰得其久！

Words that have premises occupy some 90% of our speech, and weighty, repeatable sayings occupy 70% of that. “Tipping goblet” words are new every time, and achieve a productive coherence on the revolving wheel of nature.

The 90% of words that have premises appeal to something beyond themselves for justification. It is like the father who will not act as the matchmaker for his own son because the praises of someone other than the father are more persuasive than his own. The onus thus falls on someone other than oneself. People accept only what accords with their own premises, and reject what does not—they give affirmation to what accords with their premises and take exception when it is otherwise.

Canonical sayings that occupy 70% of such speech are conversation-stoppers, so they must come from our seniors. But where such persons are merely ahead of us in years but do not have the comprehensive know-how and discrimination we expect from elders, they are not

ahead at all. Indeed, a person who does not have access to our precursors has no cultural legacy, and without it, is simply called old and useless.

The “tipping goblet” words that are new every time and achieve a productive coherence on the revolving wheel of nature can be relied upon to meet the ceaseless changes in life and to realize one’s full complement of years. There is parity in not speaking. . . . Thus there is the saying: “Do not say anything.” If in speaking you do not say anything, then in a lifetime of speaking you have yet to say anything, and in a lifetime of not saying anything you have never failed to speak up.

From one perspective something is permissible, and yet from another it is not; from one perspective something is so, and yet from another it is not so. What makes something so? Declaring it so makes it so. What makes it not so? Declaring it not so makes it not so. What makes it permissible? Declaring it permissible makes something permissible. What makes it not permissible? Declaring it not permissible makes it not permissible. Everything as a matter of course has that which is so about it, and that which is permissible about it. There is nothing that is not so and that is not permissible. If it were not for “tipping goblet” words that are new every time and that achieve a productive coherence on the revolving wheel of nature, who could endure for long? (*Zhuangzi* 27; cf. Watson 303-04, Graham 106-107)