

Tchuang Tse

“You get three in the morning and four in the evening,”

2.9: Three in the morning

To wear out one’s spirit-like powers contriving some view of oneness without understanding that it is all the same is called “three in the morning.” What do I mean by “three in the morning?”

A monkey keeper was handing out nuts. “You get three in the morning and four in the evening,” he said. All the monkeys were furious. “All right,” he said. “You get four in the morning and three in the evening.” The monkeys were all delighted. There was no discrepancy between the words and the reality yet contentment and anger were stirred thereby – it is just thus with assertions of “this is so.”

Therefore, the Sage brings all into harmony through assertion and denial but rests it upon the balance of heaven: this is called “walking a double path.”

Zhuangzi: The Inner Chapters. Translated by Robert Eno, version 1.0, 2010. P. 17-18

Tchuang Tse

“The butterfly dream”

2.20: The butterfly dream

Once Zhuang Zhou dreamt he was a butterfly, a butterfly flitting gaily*. He knew nothing of Zhou. Suddenly, he awoke, and all at once he was Zhou. But he didn’t know whether Zhou had dreamt he was a butterfly or a butterfly was dreaming he was Zhou. Surely there is a difference between Zhou and a butterfly – this is what we call the transformation of things!

Zhuangzi: The Inner Chapters. Translated by Robert Eno, version 1.0, 2010. P. 23.