

## “ANNIHILATION OF THE HEART”: THE IDEAL OF NON-PERCEPTION IN THE *LIEZI*

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**Abstract.** *The early Chinese text Liezi 列子 claims that you have to modify your perceptive faculties in order to unify your full shen 神 (“spirit”) and become a zhi ren 至人 – an “utmost human”, able to get in touch with the primordial cosmic forces, and endowed with special skills and properties. The idea that the proper adjustment of your perception leads to this state is deeply rooted within the Liezi’s view on the evolution of the cosmic and social order. In fact, the work describes the gradual modification of the perceptive process in a way that it is possible to juxtapose it with the cosmogony expounded in its first chapter. The aim of this paper is thus to analyse these processes, clarify how they are related to each other and explore what it ultimately means to become an “utmost human”. In the end it becomes clear that only the complete obliteration of perception, including the xin 心 (“heart”) as its main actor, makes the “utmost human” able to become one with the primordial forces and gain their powers.*

**Keywords:** heart, perception, consciousness, cosmogony, Daoism

### Introduction

The *Liezi* 列子<sup>1</sup> is a work packed with marvellous stories about beings that seem to be regular humans, but are capable of performing awe-inspiring or even miraculous deeds. Some display unimagined levels of

skill, while others are able to play with, or even control, the forces of nature. But what they all have in common is that they perceive their actions, surroundings and themselves in a rather peculiar manner. In fact, the less aware they are of what they do, where they are and who they are, or the less conscious and self-conscious they are, the more mysterious their respective set of skills appears.<sup>2</sup>

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\* The paper was written as contribution to the final of the Young Scholar Award of the Inaugural Biennial Conference of the European Association for Chinese Philosophy (EACP) at Vilnius University (June 2016) while the author was employed as research assistant at LMU Munich. The e-mail address refers to the current affiliation of the author, the Hong Kong Baptist University.

<sup>1</sup> The authenticity and authorship of the *Liezi* is still controversial. Yet, according to A.C. Graham’s textual analysis, the work’s larger part was still written by a single author of the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century, who also edited the sources used (see Graham 1961). I therefore treat the *Liezi* as a homogenous work in its own right and, admitting the fact that its author is unknown, as if this scripture communicates with its audience directly.

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<sup>2</sup> For the lack of universally applicable and accepted definitions of “perception”, “cognition”, and “consciousness”, I am forced to use the following working definitions:

- “perception” is the process of receiving sensory impressions and converting them into sensations;
- “cognition” is the process of editing these sensations in order to accumulate experiences and knowledge;
- “consciousness” is the ability to *actively* know, or a state of being aware of the results of the own cognitive process.

The work's description of perception and cognition as obstacles on the path to higher levels of existence is not entirely unique. More visible than other early works, however, the *Liezi* interweaves its notion of becoming a superior being by gradually deconstructing these processes with its cosmogonic conceptions.<sup>3</sup> More precisely, the path towards skills unachievable by ordinary humans requires a person to become one with the primordial cosmos, and thus shut down their own (self-) consciousness, rather than seeing oneself as human individual or even a member of a society.

In the following I draw a rough sketch of this path and explain why only the complete obliteration of perception/cognition, and in particular the “heart” (*xin* 心) as the main actor within these processes, enables a person to gain access to the primordial cosmos and the forces associated with this state.<sup>4</sup> For this task, I first focus attention on the fourth passage in the *Yellow Emperor* (*Huangdi* 黃帝) chapter as this is the central hub all related issues revolve around.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The *Zhuangzi* 莊子, for example, also discusses the benefits of increasing unawareness (see e.g. Jochim 1998, Fraser 2008, Yearley 1996 and 2010), but offers no elaborate cosmogony this topic could be connected with.

<sup>4</sup> In this context I have to mention Philip J. Ivanhoe's article *The Theme of Unselfconsciousness in the Liezi*, which inspired parts of this paper. But whereas Ivanhoe sees no clear justification for the move from what he calls “*everyday sense*” of unselfconsciousness to a more dramatic one, that here is identified with the state of the “utmost human”, this paper is meant to explain exactly this process.

<sup>5</sup> This passage occurs in almost identical form in the *Zhuangzi* (*Zhuangzi* 19/49/31-50/8). While the format of this paper does not allow for an extensive comparison of both works, this circumstance serves a minor issue – namely to indicate that the *Liezi*, even though it often borrowed from other works, placed these passages in a different framework of ideas and thereby created an own unique worldview.

## Setting the Framework – Liezi 列子 and Guan Yin 關尹 (*Liezi* 2/7/23-2/8/3)<sup>6</sup>

In this dialogue the main character of the book, Liezi, asks Guan Yin 關尹<sup>7</sup> precisely the main question of this article: How does one surpass the limits of an ordinary person and attain the status of a *zhi ren* 至人, an “utmost human”? Guan Yin's explanation is as follows:

In general, whatever has outer appearance, stature, voice and colour is a thing. How could a thing and another distance themselves from each other? Which would be sufficient to achieve precedence?

凡有貌像聲色者，皆物也。物與物何以相遠也？夫奚足以至乎先？

Despite the countless possibilities to translate *mao* 貌, *xiang* 像, *sheng* 聲 and *se* 色, in their basic meanings they all share the same characteristic: they are perceivable – either visible or audible.<sup>8</sup> According to Guan Yin it is those characteristics that define “things”, but thereby also create a conflict. As soon as a “thing” is defined, it has the tendency to distinguish and distance itself from other “things”,

[...] but if they are mere colour and nothing more, then the things happen to be created in the unshaped and come to stop where nothing is changed. If [people] understand and fully exhaust this, then how could things [still] serve as standard for them? [They will ...]

<sup>6</sup> Citations in this style refer to the *JCS Ancient Chinese Text Concordance Series*. The individual volumes are listed under the series' principal editor Lau D.C.

<sup>7</sup> A discussion about the background of these two characters and their particular significance in relation to this article follows below (see pp. 19-21).

<sup>8</sup> Early Chinese texts often use the eyes and ears – or their respective faculties of seeing and hearing – to symbolize the entire perceptive system (see Geaney 2002: 50-83).

float around where the ten thousand things end and begin, unify their innate character, nurture their *Qi*, retain their *De*, and thereby penetrate to the place where the things are created. If people are like this, then their heavenly nature is preserved and whole and their *shen* is without cracks – so how could things enter by themselves?

是色而已[，]則物之造乎不形，而止乎無所化。夫得是而窮之者，焉得為正焉？[...] 游乎萬物之所終始。壹其性，養其氣，含其德，以通乎物之所造。夫若是者，其天守全，其神無郤，物奚自入焉？

An “utmost human” has to regard “things” in a specific way. Rather than differentiating them according to their perceptible qualities, they have to be treated as if they have never been separated. This indicates that one has to change the way any human would normally perceive and react to their environment.

As discussed below, the “unshaped” and the place where “nothing is changed” symbolize forces or principles, that predate the actual cosmos. Realizing that all the “things” both begin and end with these principles enables the “utmost human” to float in exactly that realm. An essential prerequisite is that *shen* remains intact so that no “thing” can enter by itself.

To clarify this point, Guan Yin uses the example of a drunk who fell off a cart “without dying” (*bu si* 不死). He states that the only reason for this is that

[...] his *shen* was complete. He rode [on the cart] without knowing about it and he fell without knowing about it. Death, birth, fright and dread have not entered his breast. Therefore he encounters the things without being scared.

其神全也。乘亦弗知也，墜亦弗知也。死生驚懼不入乎其胸，是故遇物而不懼。

Although Guan Yin afterwards indicates that a drunken stupor not yet describes what a “sage” (*sheng ren* 聖人) is aiming for, this is a suitable analogy of how a loss of (self-) consciousness offers certain benefits. The anecdote also indicates that the “things” that, in an ideal case, should not be able to “enter [the person or *shen*] by themselves” are in fact thoughts and emotions, and thus the very results of the cognitive process.

The next step in order to analyse this passage is therefore to have a closer look at the *Liezi*’s notion of perception and cognition as well as the meaning of *shen* within this context. Afterwards I will contrast the results with the cosmogonic ideas embedded in this work to demonstrate how these two topics are related to each other.

### Abolishing the “Offices” (*guan* 官) and Accessing the “Spirit” (*shen* 神)

The *Liezi*’s ideal of perception and cognition, and the important role the “heart” plays within these processes, only becomes clear when it is set in contrast to the prevalent model that depicts sensory organs as “offices” (*guan* 官),<sup>9</sup> and the Confucian ideal of this model in particular. Therefore I first draw a short draft of this model, for which I rely on Xunzi’s 荀子 elaborations (313-238 BCE).

Within Xunzi’s framework the “offices” are responsible for the perceptive process. They “connect” (*jie* 接) with “things”

<sup>9</sup> The amount and composition of organs ranked among the “offices” varies considerably and the term is often used in contexts unrelated to perception *per se* (see Enzinger 2006: 6-8, 19-58).

I therefore use direct translation of the term, even if the context would allow to designate them as sensory organs.

(*wu* 物), distinguish them and choose between sensations specific “things” could inspire. These sensations are received by the “heart” (*xin* 心). The “heart” is also depicted as “ruler” (*jun* 君) and occupies a dual position, as it is incorporated in the perceptive as well as the cognitive process. It also perceives “things” – in this case the sensations already distinguished by the “offices” – and responds by applying one of the emotional states it has been endowed with at birth (*Xunzi* 17/80/9-10). Moreover, it is responsible for accumulating knowledge in response to the sensory input received. Most remarkably, *Xunzi* states that new experiences can only be accepted as knowledge, after the “heart”/“ruler” orders the “office” of the mouth to translate them into language (*Xunzi* 22/108/12-109/3, see also Enzinger 2006: 56-58).

As already evident from the hierarchical nomenclature, this idea of a highly bureaucratized perceptive and cognitive system is a metaphor for an ideal government based on the Confucian tradition. The fact that new experience has to be communicated before it is regarded as knowledge implies that it has to be ratified by the public. In other words: if an experience does not comply with the Confucian doctrine, it does not count as knowledge. Rather unsurprisingly, *Xunzi*’s idea of keeping the “offices” balanced and ordered involves the cultivation of the “heart”/“ruler” by means of “music” (*yue* 樂) and “rites” (*li* 禮) – two further metaphors for social norms and a strictly hierarchical structure of society (see Graham 1989: 255-261). But even though the image of the “offices” might have been used to promote a certain socio-political agenda, it nonetheless provides us with insights into

early Chinese conceptions of the perceptual process.

The *Techniques of the Heart I* (*Xin shu shang* 心術上) chapter of the *Guanzi* 管子, for example, repeatedly uses a similar model of these processes, but it also offers an alternative picture of the role of *shen* 神 (“spirit”) within this context.

In contrast to *Xunzi*’s model, the *Guanzi* claims that the “heart”/“ruler” has to govern by “non-action” (*wu wei* 無為). Only if the “ruler” does not interfere in the perceptive process and does not get tangled up in emotions, *shen* will permanently stay within the body. The *Guanzi* compares this *shen* to an “honourable person” (*gui ren* 貴人), who likewise will not stay if the lodging is not cleaned (*Guanzi* 13.1/95/25-97/27). The identification of the “heart” with *shen*’s “lodging” and therefore its capability to gain “divine insight” (*shen ming* 神明)<sup>10</sup> appears to be common among early Chinese thinkers. *Xunzi*, for instance, states:

The heart is the ruler of the shape and the host of divine insight.

心者、形之君也，而神明之主也 (*Xunzi* 21/104/10-11)

The nature of the *shen* summoned, on the other hand, has changed over time. Whereas it is not entirely clear whether the *Guanzi* talks about actual “spirits” that may reside within the body, later texts make a clearer distinction between a “primordial

<sup>10</sup> Hermann-Josef Röllicke suggested that this idea is a remnant of the so called *bin* 賓 (“honourable guest”) ritual during the Shang era (trad.: 1766-1122 BCE) (see Röllicke 1995: 228-232). In this ritual a sacrificial banquet was held to invite actual “spirits” in the hope to gain their favour and possible insights that go beyond human knowledge (see Puett 2002: 44-50). I therefore translated the insight addressed here as “divine insight”.

*shen*” and a *shen* given to any human at birth. Harold D. Roth pointed out that the latter (*jing shen* 精神; namely “vital essence and spirit” – Roth translates this *jing shen* as “Numen as Vital Essence” or “Numinous Essence”) is “the manifestation of the transcendent *shen* [“primordial *shen*”]<sup>11</sup> within the physiological system [...], that through which it performs its tasks of directing and coordinating perception and cognition” (Roth 1990: 24-25). Unfortunately this distinction is only obvious in theory, since *shen* 神 and *jing shen* 精神 are often used synonymously (see Roth 1990: 24; Porkert 1965: 204). Nonetheless, be it the “primordial *shen*” or the “human *shen*” as its manifested form a person wants to access, it has to happen through ordering the “offices” and the “heart” in a certain way.

Remarkably in some places also the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 takes the prevalence of the model of “offices” and their connection with *shen* for granted. This is, inter alia, evident in the story about cook Ding, who is able to carve oxen so artfully that it left his lord in awe. When the lord asks him how he achieved this level of skill, the cook replies:

At the time, when I first cut up oxen, what I saw was nothing but oxen. Three years later I never saw complete oxen. And right now, I do not look at [them] with my eyes, but meet [them] with *shen*. The offices know to halt, so *shen* desires to act.

始臣之解牛之時，所見无非牛者。三年之後，未嘗見全牛也。方今之時，臣以神遇而不以目視，官知止而神欲行。(Zhuangzi 3/8/4-5)

<sup>11</sup> I prefer the term “primordial” over “transcendent” as the aim of this article is to describe the *Liezi*’s instruction how to become one with the primordial cosmos and the forces it is associated with.

In his commentary to this passage Cheng Xuanying 成玄英 (fl. 650) identifies the sensory organs with the “offices”:

“Offices” is the term for the ruling supervisory authorities. [Further explained this] means that the eyes rule over the appearances, the ears rule over the sounds, and so forth. Since he met oxen with his *shen* and did not use his eyes to look at them, all of the ruling supervisory authorities – like the eyeballs, et cetera – were stopped and abolished. He followed what the heart desired and acted adapting to the patterns. This is what is meant by “being adept in nourishing life”.

官者，主司之謂也；謂目主於色耳司於聲之類是也。既而神遇，不用目視，故眼等主司，悉皆停廢，從心所欲，順理而行，善養生者，其義亦然。(Cited from: Guo 2012: 126)

The *Zhuangzi* also uses the concept of the “offices”, because it describes common sense perception. For the *Zhuangzi*, however, the “offices” have to stop in order to let *shen* act and thus enable a person to achieve the awe-inspiring level of skill demonstrated by the cook.

A term more commonly associated with the *Zhuangzi*’s image of the sense organs is that of the “orifices” (*qiao* 竅). In their entirety they are often depicted as “seven orifices” (*qi qiao* 七竅). The *Guanzi* subsumed them as “nine orifices” (*jiu qiong* 九竅), but still assigned “offices” to them. In the view of the *Zhuangzi* and the *Liezi*, however, these “offices” need to stop their work. They need to be abolished for the “orifices” to be just holes again. Comparing just these two terms already demonstrates the significant differences in the understanding of how the perception *should* work. An “office” plays an active role. It chooses a possible sensation, creates and submits “records” (*bo* 簿), and executes the orders of its supervisor



after he evaluated these “records” (*Xunzi* 22/108/12-109/3). An “orifice” on the other hand is passive. Every “thing” might flow through it – unfiltered, undifferentiated and in any direction.

And yet, in both instances the “seven orifices” are mentioned in the *Liezi*, they merely act as indicator for someone belonging to the human race.<sup>12</sup> Most strikingly, in one of these passages they are used to confirm that legendary tyrants and usurpers possess the same features as any other person. The only difference is that they had the “hearts of beasts” (*qin shou zhi xin* 禽獸之心; *Liezi* 2/14/18-19). In other words: having “orifices” instead of “offices” does not yet qualify a person as being superior in any regard. If a person wants to surpass these negative examples there is still something left that needs to be taken into account. The faculties of seeing, hearing, etc., have only shifted from the “offices” directly to the “heart”, that still acts as the “ruler” within the perceptual system. If the “heart” is not “tamed”, and thus behaving like a “beast”, there is nothing that could stop the whole person to turn into a “villain” of historical dimension.

## The “Heart”, Enemy of the State

The *Liezi* offers several descriptions of how the “heart” has to be tamed in a manner that not only prevents the person to

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<sup>12</sup> “Orifices” (*qiao* 竅) as description for bodily cavities are only used twice in the *Liezi*. However, in several instances similar terms are used in connection with perceptive or cognitive processes [e.g.: *kong* 孔 (‘hole’); *Liezi* 4/23/17]. The character *guan* 官 (‘office’), on the other hand appears five times, but never in the context of sensory perception. I thereby suspect that the *Liezi* already distanced itself from this model of perception.

become a “beast”, but also leads towards the path of an “utmost human”. The most striking example recounts Liezi’s time of apprenticeship and his struggles to be acknowledged by his teacher (*Liezi* 2/7/9-21, 4/22/18-23/1):

After three years, the heart [no longer] dared to think of right and wrong and the mouth [no longer] dared to speak of benefit and harm – only then I received a quick glance from the master, but nothing more.

After five years, the heart once again dared to think of right and wrong and the mouth once again dared to speak of benefit and harm – only then the master’s face brightened up and he smiled.

After seven years, I followed the heart in what it thought, so that right and wrong existed even less and I followed the mouth in what it talked, so that benefit and harm existed even less – only then, the master pulled me over to sit side by side on the mat.

三年之後，心不敢念是非，口不敢言利害，始得夫子一眄而已。五年之後，心度念是非，口度言利害，夫子始一解顏而笑。七年之後，從心之所念，度无是非；從口之所言，度无利害，夫子始一引吾並席而坐 (*Liezi* 2/7/13-16)

The constant pairing of the “heart’s” thinking and the mouth’s talking in this passage is strongly reminiscent of the cognitive process laid out by Xunzi. Only after people confirm their experiences by reconciling them with the moral standards of society, they can be regarded as knowledge.

Liezi initially still followed this model and the thinking in *shi fei* 是非 (“right and wrong” or “is and is not”) distinctions connected with it. After three years Liezi did not differentiate, only because he did not “dare to”. This implies that the urge to think is still existent, but that he had to actively suppress it. Liezi’s struggle appears to be worse than

simply accepting the thoughts, because his teacher only gave him a “smile” after he started to think and speak again. Seven years into his apprenticeship, however, the first decisive change happened: Liezi “followed his heart” (*cong xin* 從心) and suddenly his master allowed him to sit on equal grounds.

According to the *Liezi shiwen* 列子釋文 *cong* should be read as *zong* 縱 (see Yang 2011: 46). *Zong* might also be translated as “to give free reign to”, with either negative or positive connotations. “To follow”, as a more neutral translation, is more appropriate for someone who does not think in “right and wrong”. Yet, both characters in question also signify spatial movements, namely “to follow” and “vertical”. Liezi thus began to follow his thoughts in a vertical direction. He was in the slipstream of his thoughts and could not discern right and wrong, because there was no external position he could take to analyse his situation. He was not in control of his own doings, but guided by whatever floats into his “heart”. The perceptive and cognitive processes were still intact, but he lost his self-consciousness.

Several examples in the *Liezi* demonstrate that people can reach similar conditions through unselfconscious concentration, but apparently this kind of state might also be caused by external factors or illnesses: The drunk who fell from the cart achieved it by drinking himself into a stupor and in another story Huazi 華子 is depicted as someone living an enviable life because he is “sick with obliviousness” (*bing wang* 病忘).

This latter anecdote might best describe the condition Liezi achieved after seven years. Huazi is completely unaware of his surroundings. His cognitive process still

works up to a certain point, but he is unable to accumulate knowledge, because he forgets everything he experienced. Yet, his perceptive and vital processes are still intact, and so are his human needs. When he is being starved, he demands food; when he is placed into the dark, he demands light, and so forth. Although he himself later strives to return to this state, in that no single thought or feeling “confused [his] heart” (*luan wu xin* 亂吾心), the situation is unbearable for his family. They therefore task a Confucian scholar to “heal” Huazi from his obliviousness. The Confucian, who is explicitly said to come from Kongzi’s 孔子 (551-479 BCE) home state Lu 魯, “changes his heart and converts his thinking” (*hua qi xin, bian qi lu* 化其心，變其慮), and after seven days Huazi is “healed” from his “sickness”. Far from being happy about this, however, he chases the Confucian and his family away because he is now forced to have thoughts and feelings again (*Liezi* 3/19/17-27).

Huazi’s story is a paradigmatic example of how the *Liezi* blames Confucian education for society’s alienation from nature. Fan Zhixu 范致虛 († 1129) further emphasizes this attitude in his commentary. He explains that already the names of the protagonist and his hometown imply that what is being called “sickness” is nothing more than a return to his “infancy” (*yinghai zhi shi* 嬰孩之時). Thus according to Fan, Huazi goes back to a time when he was not yet affected by the artificial and superficial culture created by Confucian moralists. (For a detailed analysis of Fan’s commentary, see the annotated translation in Appendix I, 22-27).

The return to “infancy” is an allusion to another passage of the *Liezi*. There “in-

fancy” as the “utmost of harmony” (*he zhi zhi* 和之至) is primarily contrasted with youth, the time when

desires and worries fill [the person] and arise, and where the things attack [this person].

欲慮充起；物所攻焉 (*Liezi* 1/3/11-12)

The first step towards the *Liezi*'s ideal is therefore to rid oneself of all the norms and thinking patterns that have been implanted by the Confucian society. If one turns around the personal evolution and goes back to a state in that one did not yet differentiate the “things”, it is possible to live a life in harmony with Heaven and Earth.

However, the story of *Liezi*'s apprenticeship does not end just yet. There was another step necessary for *Liezi* to be able to ride the wind. According to Graham's translation, *Liezi*, after nine years, “thought without restraint whatever came into his mind” (Graham 1990: 81; the original quote is *heng xin zhi suo nian* 橫心之所念). But analogous to the term *cong xin* discussed above, *heng xin* also implies a spatial movement: *heng* 橫 can also be read as “to cross” (e.g. a river) and “horizontal”. Initially *Liezi* followed the “heart's thinking” vertically, but then he crosses the “river of thoughts” horizontally. After *Liezi* has done so he is depicted as being unable to differentiate between his Self and others, his Self and his surroundings. But exactly because of this un-Self-consciousness, he is able to ride the wind, as he no longer knows whether the wind rides him or he rides the wind. In this state his “orifices” are completely identical,

his “heart froze and his shape was cast away; his bones and flesh were completely fused.

心凝形釋，骨肉都融 (*Liezi* 2/7/16-19)

Zhang Zhan 張湛 (fl. 370) describes this sight even more drastically:

His six internal organs and seven holes, his four limbs and hundred joints were sitting there, like a lumpy corpse, and form a single thing.

四肢百節，塊然尸居，同為一物 (Cited from: Yang 2011, 48)

We can plausibly interpret this one of two ways. As discussed above, *cong* 從 could also be read as *zong* 縱. Apart from the meanings already given, the character also stands for a “warp”. In weaving this term defines the vertical thread, which is drawn through the “weft”, the horizontal thread, to produce textiles. It is thus synonymous to *jing* 經. This is the term used in the abovementioned anecdote about the cook Ding to describe the movement of his knife while cutting up the oxen (*Zhuangzi* 3/8/6). *Heng* 橫 can also stand for *wei* 緯, the “weft” this thread is drawn through. *Liezi*, in contrast to Ding, might thus create the whole textile, instead of only single threads without connection between them. Since this action takes place in “heart” and mouth – which probably represents the entirety of “orifices” – it can be said that he gained complete access to the possibilities of the perceptual and cognitive systems. Or maybe it is better to say that he gained a completely new possibility to access the outer world by completely interweaving the “things” that flow through his body with his own Self: “Inside and outside became exhausted!” (*nei wai jin yi* 內外進矣). Everything in the material world, including *Liezi*, became one – *Liezi* therefore lost his own Self in his un-consciousness.

Yet, having a second look at the story of cook Ding, there is another aspect to be



mentioned. In response to Ding's expression, that he is "abiding the heavenly patterns" (*yi hu tian li* 依乎天理) while he lets his *shen* take control of cutting the oxen, Guo Xiang 郭象 († 312) emphasizes that "he does not cut horizontally" (*bu heng zai ye* 不橫截也; Cited from: Guo 2012: 126). Cheng Xuanying goes even further in his comment:

Abiding the prevailing patterns, that are-so-of-Heaven, he eventually does not harm oxen by cutting horizontally.

依天然之勝理，終不橫截以傷牛。(ibid.)

The "vertical" direction of action in combination with Ding's "abiding the patterns of Heaven" symbolizes Ding's harmonious alignment of himself as human being (*ren* 人) with Heaven (*tian* 天) and Earth (*di* 地). The cook's story is a major example for the concept of "nurturing life" (*yang sheng* 養生) and it appears that only the alignment with the cosmic order in a "vertical" direction enables a person to adhere to this concept. "Horizontally" cutting through this order, or – described by using yet another meaning of *heng* – "not abiding the patterns (*li* 理)", on the other hand, would be harmful. These "vertical" and "horizontal" movements take place in the "heart". Figuratively speaking, Liezi is crossing the character *xin* 心 ("heart") out of the work, and with it the cosmic order as well.

The destructive aspect of the action that brings Liezi one step further than the cook or Huazi is even more drastically described in the commentaries to the latter anecdote. Li Yuanzhuo's 李元卓 (?)<sup>13</sup>, for example,

<sup>13</sup> Other than Li is mentioned to have held the post of "Instructor of the Imperial College" (*taixue jiaoshou* 太學教授) during the Southern Song, nothing is known about this author.

notes that Huazi's "obliviousness" (*wang* 忘) is not the "obliviousness" that enables a person to reach the primordial cosmos (see also Fan Zhixu's commentary, Appendix I, 26-27). His "obliviousness" is only comparable to that of the drunk who fell from a cart without hurting himself (DZ 1263: fasc. 1001, 19a).<sup>14</sup> What exactly Li understands by the more esteemed kind of "obliviousness" is described with a simple explanation of the character itself:

The heart is originally without "heart-ness". "Heart-ness" only emerges in reaction to the things. For this reason [the character for] "obliviousness" consists of the parts "heart" and "perish".

心本無心。因物則心，故心亡為忘。(DZ 1263: fasc. 1001, 21a)

Li plays with the possibility to use the character *xin* 心 as both noun ("heart") and nominal adjective ("heart-ness") to signify that the "heart" only executes its function in the perceptive and cognitive processes – thus possessing the adjective qualities of the term "heart" – after it allows itself to be influenced by "things". In its original state it is but an anonymous organ that uses up space within the human body, without functioning in a manner the term "heart" would imply. Real "obliviousness" is therefore not comparable with mere forgetfulness.

The immediate results of both interpretations, be it the constructive weaving or the destructive crisscrossing, are the same. Liezi gets rid of the "heart-ness", loses his Self, and becomes One with the cosmos, either through building up a web that spans through everything existent, or

<sup>14</sup> Citations in this style refer to scriptures from the *Zhengtong daoze* 正統道藏 ["DZ"].

The punctuation in these citations was added by the author.

by completely destroying the whole order altogether. Still, the question remains why the *Liezi* propagates the complete loss of the Self and is not content with a carefree life based on forgetfulness or the skillfulness the cook gains through unselfconscious concentration. The answer to this question lies within the first chapter of the work.

### Outlining the *Liezi*'s Cosmogony

In its first chapter the *Liezi* offers several detailed descriptions of various aspects and stages of the cosmogonic and evolutionary processes. Yet, for this article I set the focus on only two passages. The first claims that in the beginning, before the cosmos was created, only primordial forces or principles were in effect. After the emergence of the “highest creativity” (*tai yi* 太易),<sup>15</sup> each of the principles initiated the existence of certain potentialities,<sup>16</sup> that culminates in the phase of “simplicity” (*yi* 易). In this state the “ten thousand things” (*wan wu* 萬物) are still fluidly blended together and not yet separated, what is why this phase is also described as “muddy waves” (*hun lun* 渾淪).<sup>17</sup> Afterwards the “simplicity” trans-

forms to “One” (*yi* 一), the “One” transforms to “Seven” (*qi* 七), and the “Seven” to “Nine” (*jiu* 九). All of these numbers are associated with the *Yang* 陽 force and thus share its creative and expansive potency (see Michael 2011: 123). Accordingly, this process is to an extent comparable to the modern concept of a Big Bang, followed by an ever expanding universe. However, “Nine” is seen as the endpoint of this expansion and further transformation means a return to the “One”. This “One” then initiates the “transformation of the shapes” (*xing bian* 形變), Heaven and Earth are born and the person emerges from the unification of the *Qi* 氣, that gushes out of them (*Liezi* 1/1/14-19).

The second passage concerns the path of life any person continues after their emergence. In infancy the “*Qi* is concentrated and the intention is unified” (*qi zhuan zhi yi* 氣專志一). That is why it is regarded as the phase of “utmost harmony” (*he zhi zhi* 和之至). The “things do not harm the person” (*wu bu shang yan* 物不傷焉) yet. They are only able to do so in youth, when the “desires and worries fill [the person] and arise” (*yu lu chong qi*; 欲慮充起). These desires and worries gradually fade with age, as the body begins to become weaker, before death finally enables the person to rest and “return to one’s zenith” (*fan qi ji yi* 反其極矣) (*Liezi* 1/3/11-14).

The last sentence could very well indicate that *Liezi* only has to wait for his death if he wants to become one with the primordial cosmos. There are indeed some passages that confirm this possibility, but they are only shortly discussed below, because the protagonist’s path to become an “utmost human” guides in the opposite direction. In order to ride the wind, he turns his evolution

<sup>15</sup> Translated more literally *tai yi* 太易 might also read “highest simplicity” or “highest change”. I chose a looser translation to prevent any confusion with similar terms, which are to follow. “Creativity” seemed a proper interpretation, since *tai yi* in this passage is the highest, purest principle or potentiality, from that any other potentialities and forces derive.

<sup>16</sup> *Qi* 氣, “shapes” (*xing* 形) and “substance” (*zhi* 質) are said to have their beginning here. The next step, however, is the “muddy waves”, in which everything is indistinguishable mixed together in a whole. Therefore, imagining these as potentialities is more suitable. Only after separating from the “muddy waves”, they realize their potential (see also Michael 2011: 116).

<sup>17</sup> The “muddy waves” (*hun lun* 渾淪) are, of course, an allusion to *hun dun* 渾沌, who prominently features in the *Zhuangzi* (7/21/23-25). For a detailed discussion of the numerous conceptions this term is associated with see Girardot 2008.

around. In the beginning Liezi still adhered to a system of thinking in dualistic patterns and therefore had desires and worries confusing his “heart”. He was probably in his youth or middle age and had undergone a regular Confucian education. After Liezi abolished the “offices” and started to follow his “heart” without differentiating the “things” anymore, he arrived at the starting point of his infancy. He still perceived and reacted to his environment, but was no longer distracted by his own thoughts or feelings. His actions were in complete alignment with the newly created Heaven and Earth. Nonetheless Heaven, Earth, the Self, and the ten thousand things still existed. Even though Liezi was unaware of it, he was still bound by the “heavenly patterns” and dependent on the “things” flowing through his body. He had no possibility to influence them. To gain access to the primordial forces, he had to go back to a point before Heaven and Earth were created. He had to horizontally cross, and thus terminate, the tripartite alignment.

Staying within this picture, it is possible to say that after eliminating the horizontal and vertical planes, only one single point is left. In this point Liezi, Heaven, Earth, and the ten thousand things are one single entity (see Appendix II). Liezi needed nine years until he could cross both planes. This might symbolize a reversion of the “ninefold transformations” that took place before Heaven and Earth were created. Having abolished all spatiality, Liezi thus arrived at the “One” that is directly connected to the “muddy waves”. (Using the aforementioned metaphor of “weaving a web”, there would also be only one single

unity left. Since everything is “One”, spatiality could at least not be measured.) This is the point where only indistinguishable primordial forces and potentialities are at work, but also where the “transformation of shapes” begins. Returning to the dialogue between Guan Yin and Liezi mentioned at the beginning of this article, Liezi knocks on the door of the “unshaped”, where “nothing is changed”. Liezi might have become the “utmost human”, who “floats around where the ten thousand things end and begin” as Guan Yin stated. *Wu suo hua* 無所化 could also be translated as “where nothing can be changed anymore”. Taking into account that *hua* 化 (“change”) in the *Liezi* is often used as complementary force to *sheng* 生 (“life”, “birth”), and often symbolizes “death”<sup>18</sup>, this is a place where the “things” reached their last metamorphosis – they cannot “change” again into another entity; they cannot die.

## Conclusion

For the conclusion, I briefly return to the starting point of this article. More precisely, I want to direct attention towards the choice of the protagonists of this dialogue. Surely, Liezi is the main protagonist of this work and Guan Yin, being the famous guardian

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<sup>18</sup> This is, inter alia, evident in the *Liezi*'s quasi-theory of evolution in the first chapter. Here the work describes how plants, animals and humans “change” (*hua* 化) into another shape. Germs turn into plants, which turn into insects, which then turn into plants and animals again until at some stage the human is born, who turns into germs again (*Liezi* 1/2/8-3/1). This evolutionary circle is not to be seen as the manifestation of the *Liezi*'s faith in reincarnation: each of these “changes” begets new life, but the being that “changes” clearly dies as an individual (see Jones 2011 for a more detailed discussion).

of the pass, who is said to have persuaded Laozi 老子 to write down his work, a highly respected figure in his own right. But given the context of this passage, I suggest that they have mainly been chosen because of their names.<sup>19</sup>

As seen above, the “heart” is defined as the seat of “human *shen*”, the manifestation of “primordial *shen*”. Access to this “primordial *shen*” and thus to the primordial principles just mentioned, can only happen through the human portion of it. Prerequisite, however, is to maintain the completeness of this “human *shen*”. A person can achieve this by setting out the functions of the “heart” within the perceptive and cognitive processes. Otherwise “things” would float into the “heart” and stir up emotions, which disturb *shen*. On the other hand, not letting emotions come into the “heart” and not adhering to “things” offers certain benefits (see Appendix, 28-30).

Liezi, who plays the part of the disciple in this passage, is also known as Lie Yukou 列禦寇. The character *yu* 禦 is sometimes replaced by its homophones *yu* 圉 or *yu* 御. Yet they all share the same meaning “to repel” or “to defend”, whereas *kou* 寇 stands for “to plunder” or “invader”. Thus Liezi is someone who repels invaders. The term *yukou* 禦寇 was often used to designate the minister of justice (see van Ess 2009: 16), but in this case I suggest that it signifies

that Liezi has to repel an invasion of his “heart” – an invasion lead by “things”.<sup>20</sup> This active move suggests that the Liezi of this anecdote is comparable to the Liezi after three years of apprenticeship, whose “heart does not dare to think”. He knows that he should not let the “things” into his “heart”, but he has to actively fight them off.

Guan Yin 關尹, on the other hand, literally means “overseer of the gate”. He is the massive bouncer in front of the “heart” disco, who decides what comes in and what stays out. He can choose on his own whatever enters his “heart” and “things” cannot “enter him by themselves”. He might therefore fit his own description of the “utmost human”.

If Guan Yin and the Liezi, who already learned to ride the wind, should indeed have reached the state of “utmost humans”, then it appears that these two are able to decide on their own when they want to shut down their “heart” and gain the properties of the primordial forces. Likewise they should be able to open their “heart” again and return to the human world. However, it might be the case that the return is not their own choice, but inevitable. Liezi became famous for riding the wind, but the passage in the *Zhuangzi* to that this idea can be traced back also states:

After fifteen days he returned again. [...] Even though he was released from moving [the normal way], he still had something he was depending on.

旬有五日而後反。[...]此雖免乎行，猶有所待者也。(Zhuangzi 1/1/31-1/2/1)

<sup>19</sup> Guan Yin is later often referred to as “Overseer of the gate Yin Xi” (*guan ling yin xi* 關令尹喜), what would make Yin Xi his personal name. This goes back to Sima Qian’s 司馬遷 (145-86 BCE) recount of his meeting with Laozi. In earlier texts, however, he is never mentioned to hold an actual office, but is depicted as typical representative of “Daoist” scholarship, who goes by the name of Guan Yin (see Kohn 1997: 84-89).

<sup>20</sup> Fan Zhixu similarly used the character *kou* 寇 in his description of Huazi, whose *Yin* 陰 and *Yang* 陽 could not be “plundered”, because of his forgetfulness (see Appendix I, 25).

The *Zhuangzi* almost mocks Liezi, because he is still dependent on something. The most obvious thing he is dependent on surely is the wind. But by explicitly stating that Liezi returned after fifteen days, the *Zhuangzi* indicates he is also dependent on time. Liezi is able to manipulate the forces of nature, but only temporarily. He eliminated his “heart-ness” and thereby got rid of spatiality in order to return to the state of “One”. However, as seen above, starting from the “One” there seems to be an endless circle of recreation. “One” becomes “Seven”, “Nine” and “One” again, and finally Heaven and Earth reappear – and with it Liezi. He only touched upon the doors of the “muddy waves”, and therefore temporarily gained access to the primordial forces. But he never became one with the primordial cosmos. To achieve this, Liezi has to *permanently* lose his Self. He does not have to annihilate his “heart-ness”, but his complete “heart”, so that “heart-ness” has no way of coming into action again. “Things”, including the Self, space and time all have to cease existing. Liezi has to die as human in order to be immortal within the primordial cosmos. This unavoidability of death is stated quite clearly within the *Liezi*:

Shapes inevitably come to an end. Do Heaven and Earth come to an end? They come to an end together with the Self. [...] What comes to an end cannot not come to an end, just as that what is born cannot not have been born.

形，必終者也；天地終乎？與我偕終。[...]終者不得不終，亦如生者之不得不生。(Liezi 1/3/4; see also Appendix II)

And another passage goes:

If the human *shen* leaves the form, each returns to its truth. This is why they are called

“ghosts”. “Ghost” means “returnee” – they return to their true home.

精神離形，各歸其真；故謂之鬼。鬼、歸也，歸其真宅。(Liezi 1/3/7-9)

The “play on characters” with the two homophones *gui* 鬼 (“ghost”) and *gui* 歸 (“to return”) as well as the possibility to read *zhai* 宅 as both, “home” and “graveyard”, are subtle hints to a simple message: Only in death the human manifestation of *shen* can return to its “true home”, the primordial force it came from.

## Appendix I

### *Fan Zhixu's Commentary to the Anecdote about Huazi (Liezi 3/19/17-27)*

*Song* [i.e. “housing” signifies] a place, where fire dwells and shines.<sup>21</sup> *Yang* [i.e. “light” signifies] what causes the innate character to move floating on the surface. *Li* [i.e. “being inside” signifies that] he dwells but is not profound.<sup>22</sup> *Hua* [i.e. “blossoming” signifies that] he unfolds and separates himself from the root.<sup>23</sup> *Zi* [i.e. “child” signifies] the return to his infancy. *Zhong nian* [i.e. “being middle aged” signifies

<sup>21</sup> A reference to a *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 entry, in which sighting of a comet is discussed. The state Song 宋 is one of the places that were predicted to go up in flames, when this comet reappears (*Chunqiu Zuozhuan* B10.17.5/367/7-16).

<sup>22</sup> *fu* 浮 (“floating on the water surface”) paired with the comment that Huazi is “not profound” (*fei ao* 非奧) probably represents superficiality rather than for the actual movement.

<sup>23</sup> *hua* 華 (“to blossom”) also stands for Chinese culture as such. *fu* 敷 (“to unfold”) could also be read as its homophone *fu* 肤 (“skin”), another metaphor for something “superficial.” The sentence could therefore also be rendered: “culture signifies his superficiality and separation from the root”.



that] his involvement in human artificiality is already deep.<sup>24</sup> *Bing wang* [i.e. “falling sick with obliviousness” signifies that] he returned to his innate character.<sup>25</sup>

宋者，火所次而明；陽者，性常浮而動；里，則處而非奧；華，則敷而離根；子，則又其嬰孩之時也；中年，則涉人偽之已深；病忘，則還性。

Calling the temporary return of Heaven a sickness, illustrates the sickness of mundane desires. But it is not the case that the person is lost and without the possibility to return: When in antiquity people talked about *reaching the Dao*, they inevitably attached value to *forgetting the heart*. Does the sickness of this child of Song mean that he almost forgot his heart and grasped the truth of the *Dao*?

[If he had grasped] the truth, then he would have reached the *One*!

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<sup>24</sup> *ren wei* 人偽 (“human” and “forged” – or: “what is artificially created by humans”) is the opposite of *zi ran* 自然 (“by-itself-so-being” – often translated as “natural” or “nature”).

<sup>25</sup> The paragraph discusses how cultural education leads humans to distance themselves from their origins. The *Yang* 陽 force, marking outward expansion and in this case cultural evolution, is described in a negative light. It invokes humans to become superficial and might even provoke a catastrophe, as can be deduced from the reference to “fire” and the comet, that will come down on the state Song.

Huazi, however, follows the contracting *Yin* 陰 force. He returned to his infancy and therefore comes closer to his roots, namely his birth and thus his also his mother. Most probably this is an allusion to a statement the *Liezi* quoted from the *Dao de jing* 道德經:

The spirit of the valley does not die – she is called *dark femininity*. The gate of the *dark femininity* – it is called root of Heaven and Earth.

谷神不死，是謂玄牝。玄牝之門，是謂天地根 (*Laozi* 6A/2/19; *Liezi* 1/1/9)

Huazi thus came close to the origins of the cosmos. He is knocking on the gate, which would give him entry to the realm beyond creation.

天之暫復而謂之病，見世欲之病。非迷而不復者也；古之語致道者，必貴乎忘心。宋子之病，其幾乎忘心而得道之真者耶？

真則致一矣！

Forgetting in the evening, whatever he took in the morning means *forgetting the morning*. Forgetting in the morning, whatever he gave in the evening means *forgetting the evening*. Forgetting to proceed when he is on a journey means *forgetting the journey*. Forgetting to sit down when he is at home means *forgetting the home*. Today not being aware of what was before means *forgetting today*. Later not being aware of what was today means *forgetting the later*.<sup>26</sup>

朝取而夕忘，忘於朝也；夕與而朝忘，忘於夕也；在途則忘行，忘於途也；在室則忘坐，忘於室也；今不識先，忘於今也；後不識今，忘於後也。

Initially, he forgot what he took and gave – this means he forgot things. Subsequently he forgot to proceed and sit down – this means he forgot places. Eventually he forgot what was later and before – this means he forgot time.<sup>27</sup>

始，則忘取與；是忘物也。中，則忘行坐；是忘所也。終，則忘後先；是忘時也。

Moreover, how could it be possible to declare this a sickness? Since it is already

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<sup>26</sup> Instead of translating the preposition *yu* 於 as accusative marker, it could also be translated locative or temporal (e.g.: “forgetting in the morning”, “forgetting at home”, etc.). In any case it has to be noted that the use of this preposition before the object indicates, that it is not a *direct* forgetting. Huazi’s perceptive and cognitive system is still in operation to some degree. He needs some time to forget what came into his “heart” – even though this timespan might be too short to be aware of it.

<sup>27</sup> Note that Huazi only *forgot* “things”, “places” (therefore space) and “time”.

called sickness, then there inevitable exists someone, who suffers from it. But if he daily forgets, then who exactly should this person be, that suffers from it?

且獨奈何而以此為病耶？既已謂之病，必有受之者；其日忘，則受之者，又其誰也？

Not knowing that he had never been sick, the whole household considered him in pain. [This situation] did not end, so they called on a soothsayer to make him a prediction. The prediction did not end it, so they further called on a magician to perform an exorcism on him. The rituals did not end it, so they called on a healer to treat him. All three of them had nothing they could apply their arts on.

不知其未嘗病，乃闔室毒之；毒之不己，乃謁史而卜之；卜之弗已，又謁巫而禱之；禱之弗已，又謁醫而攻之；三者，無所用其術。

The Confucian from Lu thereafter followed their steps and introduced himself as someone who would be able to heal him. Lu is the [birth-] place of literature and things.<sup>28</sup> Confucianism is the art of humaneness and appropriate conduct. By this the great completeness was broken apart!<sup>29</sup>

魯之儒，又躡其後，而自媒能治焉。魯者，文物之地；儒者，仁義之術；大全自此析矣！

<sup>28</sup> *wen* 文 and *wu* 物 together could also stand for “cultural things” or “cultural inheritance”. *Wen* as “literature” is a metaphor for education, or culture itself. The “things” might be a direct reference to those “things”, that are said to attack the person, if he perceives them. At any rate, the home state of Confucius is depicted as the place, from that all danger for one’s “heart” emerged.

<sup>29</sup> As discussed above, the “completeness” of “heart” and *shen* is disturbed by dualistic thinking patterns that are the result of Confucian education. The comment that the “great completeness” was broken apart probably not only refers to Huazi, but mankind in general.

However – he is by himself without doubt and therefore fortune and misfortune are not what could be known about. What could possibly be observed in a prediction? He is by himself without misconduct. Therefore spirits and ghosts are not what could be inferred. What could prayers possibly exorcise? He is by himself without ill. Therefore *Yin* and *Yang* are not what could be plundered. What could medicine possibly cure?

然，彼自無疑，則非吉凶之所能知；卦兆奚占？彼自無愆，則非鬼神之所能測；祈請奚禱？彼自無疾，則非陰陽之所能寇；藥石奚攻？

He desired to mend his forgetfulness, so he tried to change his heart and tried to convert his thinking. As if he really had an illness!

欲愈其忘，試化其心，試變其慮；庶幾其有疹乎！

After this, he stripped him of his clothes and let him know about coldness. He starved him and let him know about hunger. He set him into darkness and let him know about light. His heart was not united therefore became a partner of the things!<sup>30</sup> [Huazi]

<sup>30</sup> Emperor Huizong of the Song Dynasty 宋徽宗 (1082-1135; r. 1100-1126) uses a variant of the expression “becoming a partner of the things” (*wei wu yu* 為物偶) in his commentary to the anecdote about the drunk who fell from a cart:

When the *Dao* as thing reaches the *non-shaping* it does not take another thing as partner. When it comes to halt in the place, where change does not appear, it stands alone and does not become what the things roll over.

道之為物，造乎不形，而不與物為偶；止乎無所化，則獨立而不為物所運。（DZ 732: fasc. 462, 4.24a).

If the “heart” wants to be like the primordial forces, it cannot let itself be influenced by any “thing”.

was cold and he knew to demand clothing. He was starving and knew to demand food. He was in darkness and knew to demand light. Thus can be seen that the heart was no longer alone, but had obtained a counterpart!<sup>31</sup>

於是，露之使知寒；飢之使知飢；幽之使知明；心非一而為物偶矣！其寒而知求衣；飢而知求食；幽而知求明；見非獨而心有對矣！

After drilling into him for seven days, the seven orifices of *Hundun* are open. Eliminating [the state of *Hundun*] one morning, the ten thousand conditions of the mundane world altogether rose up [in him]. That he dismissed his wife and children in great anger demonstrates that he [then] had those close to his Self, and that he reproached them deeply. That he chased the Confucian with a dagger-axe in his hand demonstrates that he [then] had someone putting demands to his Self, and that he hated him intensely.

鑿之七日，混沌之七竅遂開。除之一朝，世間之萬態俱起。大怒而黜其妻子，以其有親於我而責之深也。操戈而逐儒生，以其有求於我而憾之切也。

Existing and perishing, obtaining and losing, being sad and being joyful, liking and hating – the past is scattered in ignorance; the present is an endless chase. Forgetting for just one moment – how could this be achieved again?

存亡、得失、哀樂、好惡；向也，各各不知；今也，營營不已。須臾之忘，安可得哉？

<sup>31</sup> Evidently the function of Huazi's "heart" was not completely suspended in the first place. He still reacts to "things", what means that his perception and cognition are still intact. This is the reason for the Confucian to consider it possible to bring Huazi back into society.

That Zi Gong asking Kongzi, wondered about it, demonstrates nothing more than that he drowned in the disputes of scholarship. That Kongzi, turning around, spoke to Yanhui and let him make notes about it, demonstrates nothing more than that he reached the subtleties of *seated obliviousness*.<sup>32</sup>

子貢問於孔子而怪之，以其溺於博學之辯而已。孔子顧謂顏回而記之，以其造於坐忘之妙而已。

Therefore it is obvious that Huazi's forgetfulness is certainly not true forgetfulness! His sickness was merely forgetting because of dullness. When he gained his consciousness he became furious in agitation. The reason for this is nothing more than that he was not yet able of *twofold forgetting* and changing himself in the *Dao*.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> An allusion to a *Zhuangzi* passage, where Yan Hui 顏回 tells Kongzi 孔子 that he first had to "forget" (*wang* 忘) "humaneness" (*ren* 仁), "appropriate conduct" (*yi* 義), "rites" (*li* 禮) and "music" (*yue* 樂) – and therefore all of the Confucian conceptions of an ideal society – before he was able to perform "seated obliviousness" (*zuowang* 坐忘; *Zhuangzi* 6/19/17-22). Later this term is frequently used in scriptures associated with "Inner Alchemy" (*nei dan* 內丹; e.g. the *Zuowang lun* 坐忘論) and describes meditation techniques.

<sup>33</sup> The meaning of "twofold forgetting" (*liang wang* 兩忘) in this context is best illustrated by Cheng Xuan-nying:

If one preserves *shen* without loss, then *shen* and essence are frozen and still. Subsequently the shape will be identical to withered wood and the heart resembles dead ashes. Things and the Self are both forgotten, the embodied Self and *shen* are one.

守神而不喪，則精神凝靜，既而形同枯木，心若死灰，物我兩忘，身神為一 (cited from Guo (2012) S. 546)

"Twofold forgetting" means to forget both, oneself and the "things". Apparently Huazi only forgot one of them and was not able to fully "preserve *shen*". Most strikingly, however, the description of someone who "forgot both" is reminiscent to the depiction of Liezi after he "annihilated" his "heart" and became able to ride the wind.

然則，華子之忘猶非誠忘者耶！其病，則冥然而忘。及其悟，則喞然而怒。未能兩忘而化於道故耳。(DZ 732: fasc. 463, 8.10b-12a).

## Appendix II

### *Fan Zhixu's Commentary to the Dialogue between Liezi and Guan Yin (Liezi 2/7/23-8/3)*

If one explores the beginning of the shapes, [it becomes clear] that Heaven and Earth are born together with the Self. Before the initial plurality, the ten thousand things and the Self were *One*. Which thing could then be called *cart*? Which thing could be called *human*? Which thing could be called *falling*? Which thing could be called *harm*?

探形之始，天地與我並生。原數之先，萬物與我為一；奚物而謂之車，奚物而謂之人，奚物而謂之墜，奚物而謂之傷？

As soon as the Heaven is open and the person fabricates a frame out of that what connects with him, he will hold onto the things and takes them for something existing.<sup>34</sup> Consequently that what is seen has indeed become a cart! Recognizing the Self as reality, then that what he knows about

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The whole concept is probably based on the Buddhist doctrine of the “twofold being without Self” (*nairātmya-dvaya*), which includes “being without a Self of a person” (*pudgala-nairātmya*) and “being without a Self of entities” (*dharmā-nairātmya*).

<sup>34</sup> *jie* 接 (“to connect”) is often used to depict the first contact of an “office” with the “things” (e.g., *Xunzi* 17/80/9-10). Here the contact is probably made by the “heart” itself. The character *gou* 構 (“structure” or “frame”) implicates that something was artificially created as well as that, what has been created sets limits that have not been there before. In this case one’s perception is limited by what one perceives.

is indeed falling! If knowledge and seeing are established, and riding and falling are distinguished from each other, then how could there be no harm?

一旦開天而人與接為構，則執物以為有；所見者，誠車矣！認我以為實，所知者誠墜矣！知見立而乘墜分，詎能無傷乎？

The completeness of the drunk [came] through alcohol. His knowledge vanished because of the alcohol and his sight darkened because of the alcohol. He rode without knowing that a cart existed, and he fell without knowing that the earth existed.<sup>35</sup> Death, birth, fright and dread have not entered his breast. This is because he is disobedient to the things and does not absorb them.<sup>36</sup>

彼醉者，之全於酒；知以之泯，見以之冥；乘不知有車，墜不知有地；死生驚懼不入乎其胸；是故忤物而不懼。

However, to temporarily entrust his completeness to alcohol can only last for that instant and no longer! How much more could it be if the completeness of the innate character would not yet have begun to distance itself?

而暫寄其全於酒者，猶且然爾！況性之全，未始離者乎？

Everything beneath Heaven is just one cart! Entrusting oneself to it and riding

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<sup>35</sup> Li Yuanzhuo carries this thought on:

His embodied Self does not know that a contact exists. Being in contact, he does not know that harm exists. Being frozen, there is nothing, what would be separated in him.

身不知有觸，觸不知有傷；凝然無所分焉。(DZ 1263: fasc. 1001, 14b)

<sup>36</sup> *wu* 忤 could also be read “to crisscross”, what would fit into the metaphor of “crossing out the heart”.

on top of it, if one opens oneself up to the chasing of knowledge and perceptions on the inside and follows the confusion of illusion and change [on the outside]<sup>37</sup> – once it falls over on the ground of all the various illusions, not only the bones and joints will get hurt!<sup>38</sup>

天下一車爾！託而乘其上者，內開智見之營營、逐幻化之擾擾；一將傾覆於諸妄之地，匪直骨節之傷也。

If the sage conceals himself in Heaven, and therefore nothing is able to harm him,

<sup>37</sup> “on the outside” (*wai* 外) is added according to Li Yuanzhuo (see: DZ 1263: fasc. 1001, 14b).

<sup>38</sup> Li Yuanzhuo adds another step between:

Once falling over on the ground of all the various illusions, it does not immediately hurt the bones and joints, but the entrance for panic and worries [is created]. As soon as he opens his Heaven, the ten thousand conditions will enter altogether. If the awaking [person] sees the cart turning over, how could he receive no harm?

將傾覆於諸妄之地，非直骨節之傷，驚懼之入也。一開其天，萬態俱入；猶醒者之視車覆，且得無傷乎？(DZ 1263: fasc. 1001, 14b)

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this then is something that in the past was called *preserving the completeness and being without cracks*.

聖人藏於天，故莫之能傷，則向之所謂守全而無卻者是也。

Although it is like this, calling it *Heaven* is because it is contrasted with *human*. But if the innate character is unified, then the innate character does not exist – how could there possibly be a Heaven? Calling it *concealing*, it is contrasted with *opening*. But if the Heaven is unified then Heaven does not exist – how could there possibly be a concealing? Here the investigation reached a point, language categorically cannot discuss anymore.

雖然，謂之天者，以其對人；一性無性，況有天乎？謂其藏者，以其對開；一天無天，況有藏乎？審造於是，固有言之所不能論者。(DZ 732: fasc. 462, 4.25a-25b).

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## „ŠIRDIES SUNAIKINIMAS“: NE-SUVOKIMO IDEALAS LIEZI TEKSTE

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**Santrauka.** Senovės kinų tekste *Liezi* 列子 teigiama, jog žmogus turi modifikuoti savo suvokimo gebėjimus, kad suvienytų visą savo *shen* 神 („sielą“) ir taptų *zhi ren* 至人 („tobulų žmogumi“), galinčiu užmegzti ryšį su pirmaprādėmis kosminėmis jėgomis ir įgyti ypatingų galių ir savybių. Mintis, kad tinkamas suvokimo suderinimas veda į šį būvį, yra giliai išsaknijusi *Liezi* požiūryje į kosminės ir visuomeninės tvarkos evoliuciją. Čia aprašomas laipsniškas suvokimo proceso modifikavimas, leidžiantis jį sugretinti su pirmame skyriuje išdėstyta kosmogonija. Taigi, straipsnio tikslas yra išanalizuoti šiuos procesus, paaiškinti, kaip jie susiję tarpusavyje, ir iširti, ką reiškia tapti „tobulų žmogumi“. Galiausiai paaiškėja, kad tik visiška suvokimo, įskaitant pagrindinio veikiančiojo – *xin* 心 („širdies“), užmarštis leidžia „tobulam žmogui“ tapti vienu su pirmaprādėmis jėgomis ir įgyti jų galią.

**Pagrindiniai žodžiai:** širdis, suvokimas, sąmonė, kosmogonija, daoizmas

*Įteikta 2016 m. rugsėjo 9 d.*