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Module code: SICH7019 Module title: Readings from The Compilation of Books and Writings on the Important Governing Principles	Student ID number: 1803449	Educational support needs: No
Module tutor: Dr Chen, Sufan Assignment due date: 10 Nov 2023 - 15:00		
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What Does Zhuangzi Think about Funeral Rites?

—— A Brief Exploration of the “Three Friends” Fable of the

Chapter *The Great Teacher* 大宗師

1. Introduction

Zhuang Zhou, who is commonly known as Zhuangzi or Master Zhuang, was one of the most prominent thinkers in the Warring States period of Ancient China. His most notable work is *Zhuangzi*, which bears its author’s name. In his writing, Zhuangzi discusses a lot of topics and one of the most interesting parts is on death and funeral rites. In the chapter of *The Great Teacher*, Zhuangzi uses a fable to point out matters related to death and how the individuals who were left behind should deal with the passing of their loved ones. Interestingly, Confucian and his student Zi Gong 子貢 are mentioned in that fable and the topic of rituals is briefly discussed in an interesting manner. Therefore, through the exploration of this passage, we’ll get to see what Zhuangzi thinks about funeral rites, and I’ll present that in three parts: First, we’ll briefly go through the passage; second, we’ll further discuss the two points of Zhuangzi’s stance on funeral rites that I’ve highlighted; and lastly, the conclusion.

2. Brief Introduction to the “Three Friends” Fable of the

Chapter *The Great Teacher* 大宗師

First of all, we’ll go through a brief introduction to the “Three Friends” fable. As I mentioned before, in the sixth chapter of *Zhuangzi’s Inner Chapter, The Great Teacher*, there are several fables that talk about death or funerals, and one of them is the “Three Friends” fable. In that passage, Zhuangzi introduced three frictional characters, the “Three Friends”, along with the two predecessors, Confucius and his student Zi Gong. Before we go deeper into Zhuangzi’s perspective on funeral rites, please allow me to guide you through some selected parts of the passage that we’ll discuss later:

Zi Sang Hu 子桑戶, Meng Zi Fan 孟子反 and Zi Qin Zhang 子琴張 were friends. They said to each other: “Who can associate in non-association, and cooperate in non-cooperation? Who can mount to heaven and roam through the clouds, disporting in the infinite and becoming

oblivious of existence, forever and ever without end?” The three men looked at each other and smiled, silently agreed one with another and thus became friends.¹

Who are they actually? According to Cheng Xuanying 成玄英 sub commentary,

These three people are those who wander beyond worldly conventions (fangwai zhishi 方外之士), understand the natural process, and see life and death as oneness; having these concessions, they ultimately become friends.²

So, we know that they are no ordinary people.

Shortly afterwards, Zi Sang Hu died. Before he was buried, Confucius heard of the event and sent Zi Gong to take part in the mourning. But Zi Gong found that one of the friends composed a song, and the other was playing on the lute. They sang together in unison: “Alas! Sang Hu! Alas! Sang Hu! You have returned to the real, but we still remain here as men, alas!”³

Most people are likely surprised by their actions, and the same goes for Zi Gong.

Zi Gong hurried in and said: “I venture to ask whether it is in accordance with the rites to sing in the presence of the corpse.” The two men looked at each other, laughed and said: “What does this man know about the meaning of the rites?”⁴

Out of surprise, Zi Gong went back and asked Confucius what sort of people they were because they paid no attention to their behaviours, disregarded their appearances, and even sang in the very presence of the lying corpse. Confucius replied that they are those who wander beyond worldly conventions, while Confucius, himself, wanders within. Since there was no common ground between these two ways, Confucius then reproached himself for having asked Zi Gong there to mourn.⁵ Though there is still a remaining part of this passage, we’ll not advance further as we are focusing on the part that covers Zhuangzi’s view on funeral rites.

At first glance, we might think that Zhuangzi used this fable to satirise the rites and music education that are championed by Confucian scholars, in particular the funeral and mourning rites. While most of the recent scholars agree with that notion, Lai Xisan 賴錫三 argued that challenging and reflecting on rites and music education doesn’t necessarily mean that Zhuangzi stands for the abolishment of ritual education and opposing the cultivation of

¹ Feng Yu-Lan, *Chuang-Tzu: A New Selected Translation with an Exposition of the Philosophy of Kuo Hsiang* (Berlin: Springer Berlin, Heidelberg, 2016), p. 47 with modifications.

² Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩, *Zhuangzi Jishi 莊子集釋* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2016), p. 272.

³ Feng Yu-Lan, *Chuang-Tzu: A New Selected Translation with an Exposition of the Philosophy of Kuo Hsiang*, p. 47 with modifications.

⁴ Feng Yu-Lan, *Chuang-Tzu: A New Selected Translation with an Exposition of the Philosophy of Kuo Hsiang*, p. 47 with modifications.

⁵ Feng Yu-Lan, *Chuang-Tzu: A New Selected Translation with an Exposition of the Philosophy of Kuo Hsiang*, p. 47 with modifications.

humanity.⁶ So, we need to set aside sectarian bias and objectively observe the meaning of rites suggested by Zhuangzi.

3. Zhuangzi's Perspective on Funeral Rites.

Back to the passage we have gone through, we can see that Zhuangzi used two groups of people, namely those who wander within worldly conventions, which is represented by Zi Gong, and those who wander beyond worldly conventions, which is represented by Meng Zi Fan and Zi Qin Zhang, and he did it to distinguish two ways of seeing the funeral rites.

According to the rites, there were sets of rules and rituals in funerals. Particularly for the mourners, singing and laughing was considered a serious violation. These two gentlemen, however, not only lacked sadness or sorrow, but instead, they seemed joyful and sang in front of the corpse of their friend. And when Zi Gong confronted them with the question, they responded by saying Zi Gong didn't understand the meaning of rites. This simple yet insightful response prompts us to ponder what is the significance of rites known to the two gentlemen but unknown to Zi Gong. This is also a point worth further exploration because it represents Zhuangzi's stance on funeral rites.

3.1 Rites is About Overcoming Negative Emotions

From the introduction of the passage, we know that the three gentlemen are the ones who wander beyond worldly conventions. When the passing of Zi Sang Hu, the remaining two friends showed neither tears nor sorrow. In his commentary, Guo Xiang 郭象 suggested that 'they regard life and death as equal and have forgotten joy and sorrow, so in the presence of a corpse they can sing, which is the epitome of other-worldliness.'⁷ In this case, for those who already see life and death as a unity or a natural process, their emotion will not be affected by the passing of their own or others.

On the contrary, most people may feel loss when their loved ones depart, and this is what Confucian tradition affirms and sees as the foundation of rites. Apparently, in the Classic of

⁶ Lai Xisan 賴錫三, *Dialectics between Quality and Form and the Ethical Revaluation——Zhuangzi's Critical Reflection on the True Meaning of Rites*, Journal of Hangzhou Normal University [Humanities and Social Sciences], 3 (2019), p. 6.

⁷ Richard John Lynn, *Zhuangzi: A New Translation of the Sayings of Master Zhuang as Interpreted by Guo Xiang* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2022), p. 145.

Family Reverence 孝經, Confucius points out that when filial children mourn their parents, they weep in sorrow, and they even are uncomfortable in elegant clothing, are unable to find any enjoyment in listening to music and have no appetite for fine food. More importantly, Confucius exclaimed, this is because of their feelings of grief and distress.⁸ This series of emotional reactions is considered a natural response from filial children. These emotional reactions are recognised and eventually contribute to shaping the later days' funeral rites. But another thing we need to point out is what comes after next,

After three days they break their fast in order to teach others not to harm the living on account of the dead and not to threaten life through a lack of restraint. This is the policy laid down by the sages. Mourning must not exceed three years to make it clear to the people that they must find closure.⁹

From here, we can see that Confucius uses the term 'policy laid down by the sages' on the three-day fasting limit and three-year mourning period, highlighting these restrictions to emphasise that the essence of rites is to prevent mourners from being overly sorrowful because it will cause harm to the mourners themselves.

Like others, Zhuangzi initially felt sad when his wife left, but later he was seen drumming on a tile basin and singing. Hui Shi 惠施 went over and reprimanded him because he thought Zhuangzi had already gone overboard. However, Zhuangzi replied, 'It is not so. When she first died, how could I not feel grief!' But when he pondered deeper and understood the way of life and death, he then stopped. He added, 'Now she rests in peace in the grand chamber of her tomb, so if, sobbing and blubbing, I had gone on lamenting her death, I should have thought that I had no understanding of fate; therefore, I stopped.'¹⁰ From Zhuangzi's response, we can see that he actually affirms that grief is a very natural human response when they lose their loved ones, but excessive negative emotions bring no benefit to both mourners and the deceased. Therefore, Zhuangzi uses his knowledge of life and death to stop him from being eaten away by negative emotions.

Mark Berkson stated that seeing how Zhuangzi dealt with his wife's passing, we can see that Zhuangzi regards life and death as a natural transformation process, therefore, any act of

⁸ Rosemont, Henry Jr. and Roger T. Ames, *The Chinese Classic of Family Reference* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), pp. 115-116.

⁹ Rosemont, Henry Jr. and Roger T. Ames, *The Chinese Classic of Family Reference*, p. 116.

¹⁰ Richard John Lynn, *Zhuangzi: A New Translation of the Sayings of Master Zhuang as Interpreted by Guo Xiang*, p. 333.

resisting or lamenting any transformation, based on Zhuangzi, indicates a lack of understanding.¹¹ Furthermore, this passage also hints that the way to deal with the passing of others is through acceptance with a peaceful mind.

Another fable in the chapter *The Great Master* can help explain this point.

Yan Hui asked Confucius, saying: “When Meng Sun Cai’s 孟孫才 mother died, he wept without snivelling, his heart felt no distress. During the period of mourning, he exhibited no sorrow. Although wanting in these points, yet he was considered as the best mourner in the state of Lu. Without reality, can one get the reputation? I am astonished at this.”¹²

Although Meng Sun Cai mourned his closest kin without tears, distress, and sorrow, through Confucius’ words, Zhuangzi acknowledged his action by saying ‘Meng Sun did everything and had actually progressed beyond self-conscious awareness of it!’ Guo Xiang commented this as ‘Meng Sun completely realised the principles of dealing with life and death and brought into resonance what was suitable for both beyond worldly conventions and within them.’¹³ From what we have seen so far, Zhuangzi didn’t appear to be challenging the common practice, instead, he offered a different approach, but in the same direction as rites, that is to prevent grief from affecting mourners’ well-being. And what he offers is to overcome sorrow through understanding the truth about life and death.¹⁴

3.2 Rites Requires No Validation from Others

Lai Xisan suggested that those who believed that Zhuangzi criticized rites often speak from the perspective of having rites as a standard and uniformity that govern the behaviours of others. So, once a person performing rituals fails to comply with the expected criteria, they are immediately labelled as “impolite” or opposing the ritual propriety.¹⁵ The same goes for Zi Gong, who questioned the two gentlemen because they were not acting according to the rites, which is the typical example of standardisation we are mentioning here. But this standardisation may lead to some problems. Let’s discuss it further through another fable in

¹¹ Timothy D Knepper, Lucy Bregman, Mary Gottschalk, *Death and Dying: An Exercise in Comparative Philosophy of Religion* (Cham: Springer Cham, 2019), p.24.

¹² Feng Yu-Lan, *Chuang-Tzu: A New Selected Translation with an Exposition of the Philosophy of Kuo Hsiang*, p. 48 with modifications.

¹³ Richard John Lynn, *Zhuangzi: A New Translation of the Sayings of Master Zhuang as Interpreted by Guo Xiang*, p. 149.

¹⁴ Feng Yu-Lan, *Chuang-Tzu: A New Selected Translation with an Exposition of the Philosophy of Kuo Hsiang*, p. 68.

¹⁵ Lai Xisan 賴錫三, *Dialectics between Quality and Form and the Ethical Revaluation——Zhuangzi’s Critical Reflection on the True Meaning of Rites*, p. 12.

chapter three, *The Fundamental of The Cultivation of Life*. In this fable, Zhuangzi talked about the funeral of Lao Dan 老聃, and his friend Qin Shi 秦失 went to mourn him. But at the funeral, Qin Shi only uttered three yells and went out. Out of surprise, a disciple of Lao Dan asked him, if he was the friend of his late master because it seemed improper to merely mourn in the way he did. Qin Shi replied,

‘Yes! At first, I thought the other mourners were his men; now I know they are not. When I went in to mourn, there were old persons weeping as if for the loss of their children; and young ones, as if for that of their mother. These persons assembled there uttered words, and dropped tears, which are not to be expected.’¹⁶

Using the idea of rites as emotional standards, we can observe two issues that arise from the passage: insufficient grief and excessive grief.

Lai Xisan argued that funerals were originally solemn yet unadorned moments to bid farewell to the departed among family and friends. However, public funerals with standardised rituals often tend to either exaggerate or suppress the natural and unique expressions of human emotions.¹⁷ And from what we had discussed earlier, it's clear that having a standard of mourning means that if someone doesn't weep or feel sad at a funeral, they may be seen as not following the rites. However, if someone who has a better relationship with the deceased comes to pay respect, others might anticipate more from their emotional reactions; just like what Lao Dan's student expected from Qin Shi. Although Qin Shi mourned in accordance with the common rites, by uttering three yells, Lao Dan's student seemingly asked for more given the relationship between these two. In contrast, Qin Shi thought the way Lao Dan's students mourned their teacher had already gone over the limit, given Qin Shi saw Lao Dan as the one who wanders beyond worldly conventions. So, the real problem here is that people tend to care about how others think about their ritual performances.

In most cases, people will not receive any sort of punishment for not following the mourning rites. However, since these rites have already become the norm, individuals are either conforming to the rites due to peer pressure or being seen as different if they choose not to follow. So, in addition to having rites that dictate human emotions, people tend to be more concerned about how others perceive their way of mourning. Thus, in this chapter, Zhuangzi

¹⁶ Feng Yu-Lan, *Chuang-Tzu: A New Selected Translation with an Exposition of the Philosophy of Kuo Hsiang*, p. 22 with modifications.

¹⁷ Lai Xisan 賴錫三, *Dialectics between Quality and Form and the Ethical Reevaluation——Zhuangzi's Critical Reflection on the True Meaning of Rites*, p. 12.

introduces the two gentlemen who completely disregard the opinions of others and appear to be challenging the funeral rites by singing in front of a corpse. Confucius, in this case, is portrayed by Zhuangzi as a figure who is able to bridge between within and beyond worldly conventions. When he was asked by Zi Gong, he affirmed their actions, acknowledged their transcendence, and hence apologised to Zi Gong for sending him to attend the funeral and stated, ‘How can they foolishly trouble themselves with conventionalities simply for the sake of ordinary people?’¹⁸ in the last part of his reply.

By disregarding others' perceptions, they have already let go of fame and reputation, and this is suggested by Guo Xiang as the one who truly understands the meaning of rites. In his commentary, Guo said that:

One who understands the real meaning of propriety must attend to worldly conventions only from the perspective of wandering beyond worldly conventions and by preserving the child by holding fast to the mother. Such a one is equal to his natural disposition and simply goes out and does it.¹⁹

However, for individuals like Zi Gong, who still value pride and reputation and conform to the formality of rites, Guo Xiang added,

For them, filial piety proceeds not out of commitment to sincerity, and paternal compassion proceeds not from honesty, so fathers and sons and older and younger brothers keep their true feelings hidden and deceive one another—what does this have to do with the meaning of propriety in the large sense of the word!²⁰

So, if we perform rites out of conformity or concerning other's view, then we are unable to see the true meaning of rites. Therefore, Yu Yingshi 余英時 suggested that Zhuangzi cares less about formality; what he cares about is how to express his inner “meaning of rites” appropriately.²¹

4. Conclusion

Zhuangzi, through the fable of “Three Friends” as well as other fables from his writings, seemingly introduced an alternative way to mourn death. While he appears to be challenging the conventional funeral rites by introducing singing or expressing no sorrow and grief in

¹⁸ Feng Yu-Lan, *Chuang-Tzu: A New Selected Translation with an Exposition of the Philosophy of Kuo Hsiang*, p. 47.

¹⁹ Richard John Lynn, *Zhuangzi: A New Translation of the Sayings of Master Zhuang as Interpreted by Guo Xiang*, p. 145.

²⁰ Richard John Lynn, *Zhuangzi: A New Translation of the Sayings of Master Zhuang as Interpreted by Guo Xiang*, p. 145.

²¹ Yu Yingshi 余英時, *Lun Tianren Zhiji 論天人之際* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2014), p. 20.

mourning, the reason behind his setting is something we should focus on because it allows us to reflect upon how we see funeral rites. From the exploration so far, we can summarise what Zhuangzi means by “real meaning of rites” is to be able to break free from any disturbance that can affect our equanimity. By understanding the knowledge of life and death, we can get by the excessive grief that arises from the loss of people around us, so we can break free from the harm caused by negative emotions. By disregarding other’s views, we can get by the desire for fame and reputation, so we can sincerely express our true emotions without being dictated by formality or conforming to peer pressure. In other words, Zhuangzi's insights offer us a perspective on how to cope with the loss of others, and if possible, think a step ahead to do things that benefit both ourselves and the deceased.

That’s the end of my presentation, and here is the list of the bibliographies.

That’s all for my presentation today. Thank you for listening and I would really appreciate any comments and feedback.

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- Feng Yu-Lan, *Chuang-Tzu: A New Selected Translation with an Exposition of the Philosophy of Kuo Hsiang* (Berlin: Springer Berlin, Heidelberg, 2016)
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What Does Zhuangzi Think about Funeral Rites?

—— A Brief Exploration of the “Three Friends” Fable of the

Chapter *The Great Teacher* 大宗師

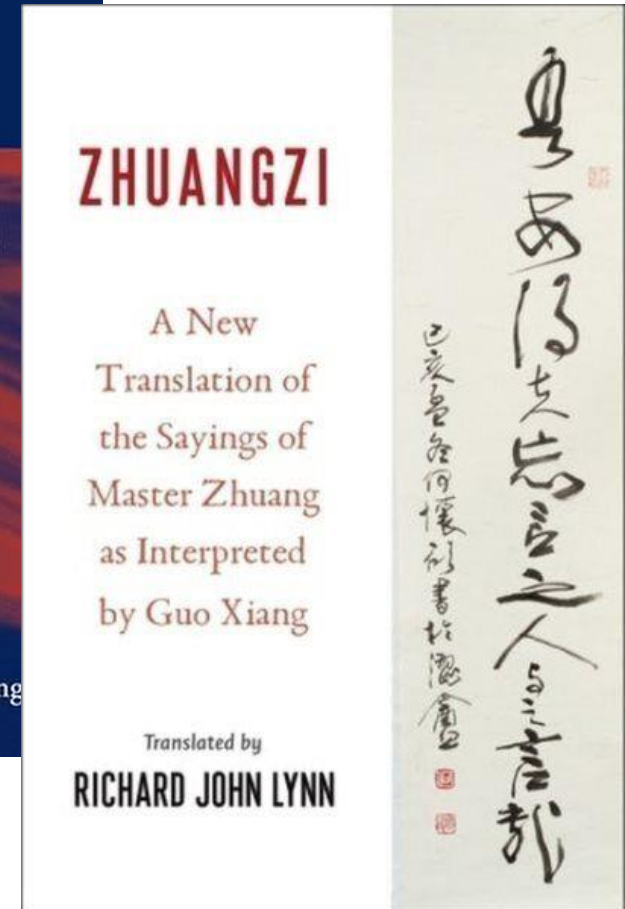
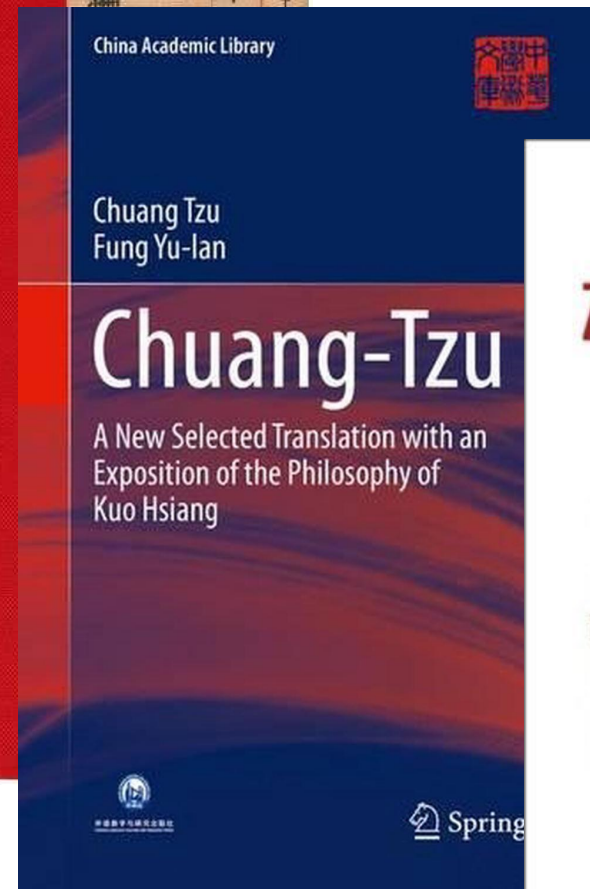
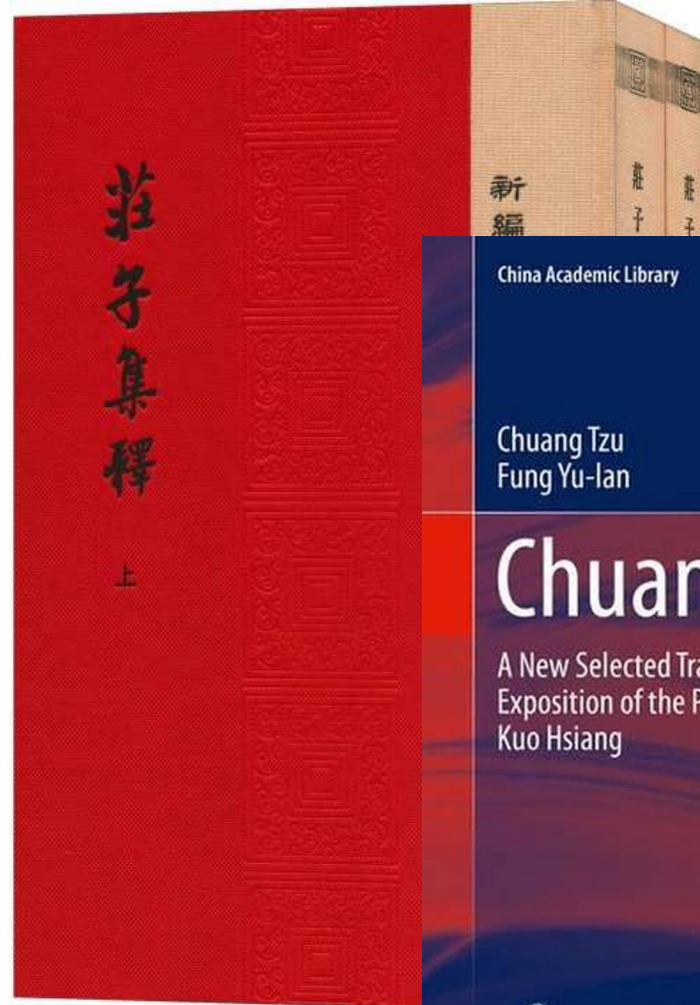
Module code: SICH7019

Module tutor: Dr Chen, Sufan

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Date: 9 November 2023





Zhuangzi
(Zhuang Zhou 莊周, c. 505–435 BCE) 2



O U T L I N E

- Brief Introduction to the “Three Friends” Fable of the Chapter *The Great Teacher*
- Zhuangzi’s Perspective on Funeral Rites
- Conclusion

2. Brief Introduction to the “Three Friends” Fable



2. Brief Introduction to the “Three Friends” Fable

Zi Sang Hu 子桑戶, Meng Zi Fan 孟子反 and Zi Qin Zhang 子琴張 were friends. They said to each other:
“Who can associate in non-association, and cooperate in non-cooperation?”

子桑戶、孟子反、子琴張三人相與友，曰：「孰能相與於無相與，相為於無相為？」

2. Brief Introduction to the “Three Friends” Fable

Who can mount to heaven and roam through the clouds, disporting in the infinite and becoming oblivious of existence, forever and ever without end?” The three men looked at each other and smiled, silently agreed one with another and thus became friends.

(Trans. Feng Yu-Lan with modifications)

孰能登天遊霧，撓挑無極，相忘以生，無所終窮？」
三人相視而笑，莫逆於心，遂相與友。

莊子

大宗師

2. Brief Introduction to the “Three Friends” Fable

Cheng Xuanying 成玄英 sub commentary:

‘These three people are those who wander beyond worldly conventions (*fangwai zhishi* 方外之士), understand the natural process, and see life and death as oneness; having these concessions, they ultimately become friends.’

此之三人，並方外之士，冥於變化，一於死生，
志行既同，故相與交友。

2. Brief Introduction to the “Three Friends” Fable

Shortly afterwards, Zi Sang Hu died. Before he was buried, Confucius heard of the event and sent Zi Gong to take part in the mourning.

莫然有聞，而子桑戶死，未葬。孔子聞之，使子貢往侍事焉。

2. Brief Introduction to the “Three Friends” Fable

But Zi Gong found that one of the friends composed a song, and the other was playing on the lute. They sang together in unison: “Alas! Sang Hu! Alas! Sang Hu! You have returned to the real, but we still remain here as men, alas!”

或編曲，或鼓琴，相和而歌曰：「嗟來桑戶乎！嗟來桑戶乎！而已反其真，而我猶為人猗！」

莊子

大宗師

2. Brief Introduction to the “Three Friends” Fable

Zi Gong hurried in and said: “I venture to ask whether it is in accordance with the rites to sing in the presence of the corpse.”

子貢趨而進曰：「敢問臨尸而歌，禮乎？」

2. Brief Introduction to the “Three Friends” Fable

The two men looked at each other, laughed and said: “What does this man know about the meaning of the rites?”

二人相視而笑，曰：「是惡知禮意！」

2. Brief Introduction to the “Three Friends” Fable

Zi Gong went back and told Confucius, asking him:
“What sort of men are those? They have no culture and consider their body as external to themselves. They sing in the presence of the corpse, without a change of countenance. I do not know what to call them. What sort of men are they?”

子貢反，以告孔子曰：「彼何人者邪？修行無有，而外其形骸，臨尸而歌，顏色不變，無以命之。彼何人者邪？」

2. Brief Introduction to the “Three Friends” Fable

“They are those who wander beyond worldly conventions”, said Confucius. “I wonder within it. There is no common ground for these two ways; I was wrong in sending you there to mourn.

(Trans. Feng Yu-Lan with modifications)

孔子曰：「彼遊方之外者也，而丘游方之內者也。
外內不相及，而丘使女往弔之，丘則陋矣。……



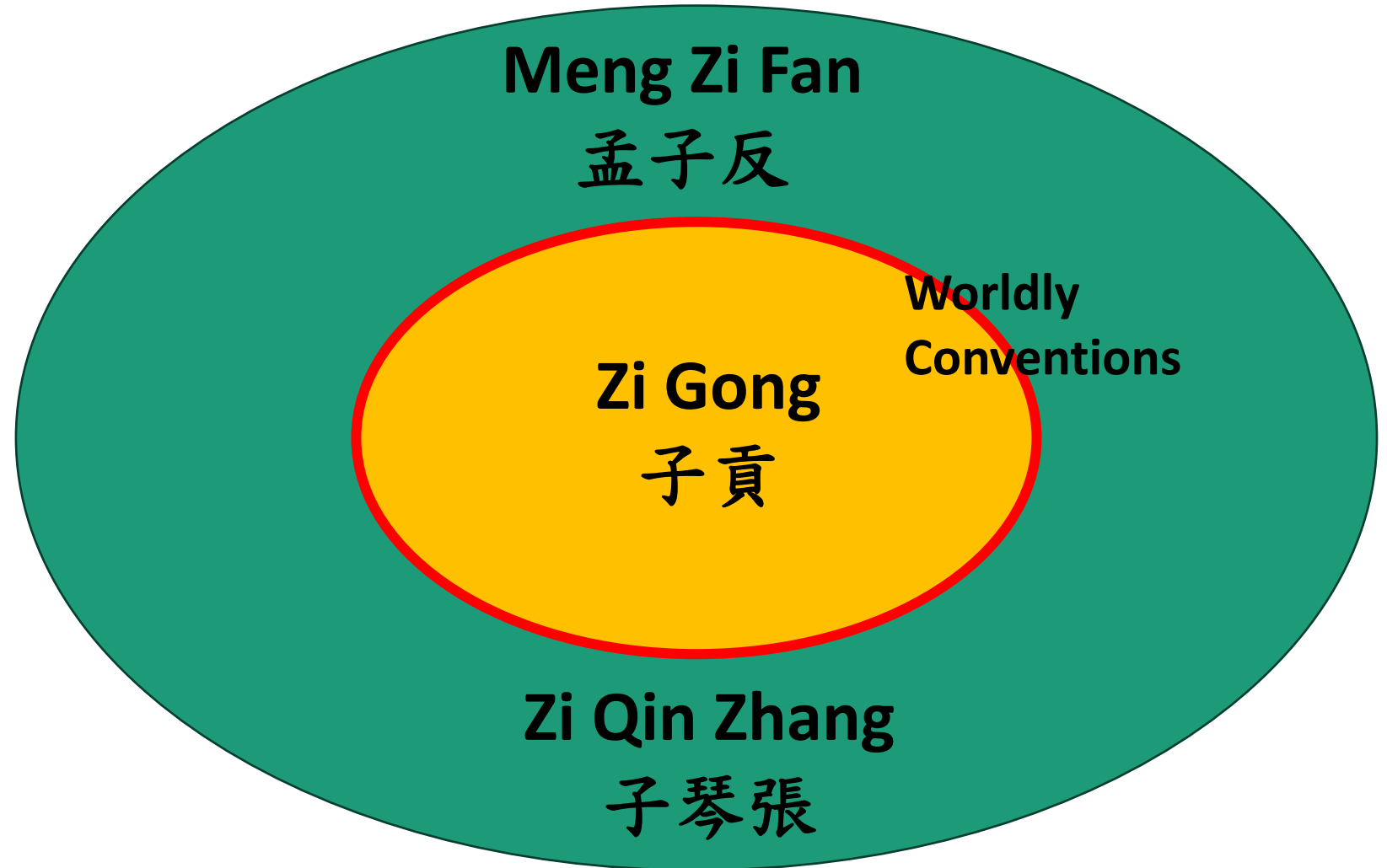
2. Brief Introduction to the “Three Friends” Fable

Lai Xisan 賴錫三：

‘Challenging and reflecting on rites and music education doesn’t mean that Zhuangzi stands for the abolishment of ritual education and opposing the cultivation of humanity.’



3. Zhuangzi's Perspective on Funeral Rites.



3. Zhuangzi's Perspective on Funeral Rites.



ZHUANGZI

A New
Translation of
the Sayings of
Master Zhuang
as Interpreted
by Guo Xiang

Translated by
RICHARD JOHN LYNN

3.1 Rites is About Overcoming Negative Emotions

Guo Xiang 郭象 commentary:

‘They regard life and death as equal and have forgotten joy and sorrow, so in the presence of a corpse they can sing, which is the epitome of other-worldliness.’

(Trans. Lynn with modifications)

齊死生，忘哀樂，臨尸能歌，方外之至也。

THE CHINESE CLASSIC OF FAMILY REVERENCE

A PHILOSOPHICAL
TRANSLATION OF
THE XIAOJING

HENRY ROSEMONT, JR.
and ROGER T. AMES

3.1 Rites is About Overcoming Negative Emotions

‘When filial children are in mourning for a parent, they weep without prolonged wailing, they participate in the funeral ceremony without attention to their personal appearance, they speak plainly without trying to be eloquent. They are uncomfortable in elegant clothing, are unable to find any enjoyment in listening to music and have no appetite for fine food. **This is because of their feelings of grief and distress.**’

孝子之喪親也，哭不偯，禮無容，
言不文，服美不安，聞樂不樂，
食旨不甘，**此哀戚之情也**。



THE CHINESE CLASSIC OF FAMILY REVERENCE

A PHILOSOPHICAL
TRANSLATION OF
THE XIAOJING

HENRY ROSEMONT, JR.
and ROGER T. AMES

3.1 Rites is About Overcoming Negative Emotions

'After three days they break their fast in order to teach others not to harm the living on account of the dead and not to threaten life through a lack of restraint. **This is the policy laid down by the sages.** Mourning must not exceed three years **to make it clear to the people that they must find closure.'**

三日而食，教民無以死傷生，
毀不滅性，**此聖人之政也。**
喪不過三年，**示民有終也。**

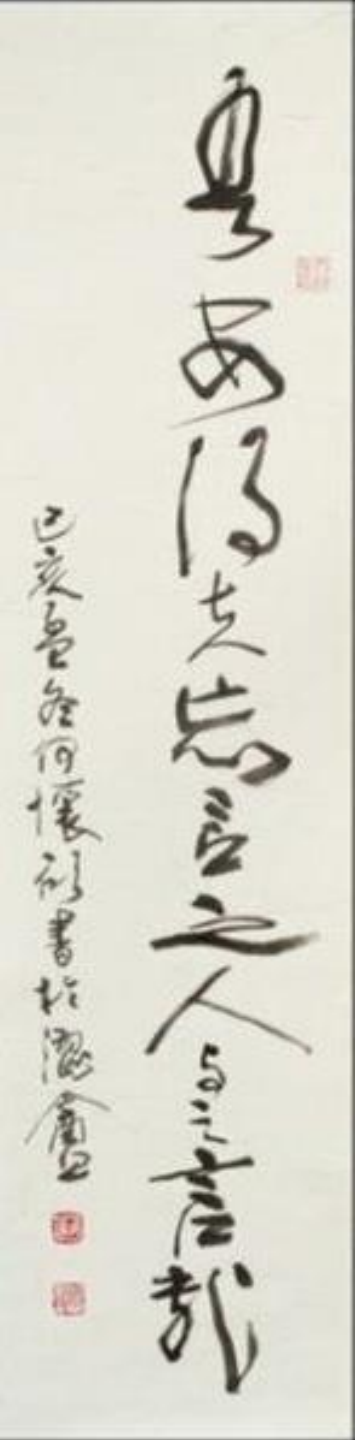


3.1 Rites is About Overcoming Negative Emotions

Zhuangzi replied, "It is not so. When she first died, how could I not feel grief!

Now she rests in peace in the grand chamber of her tomb, so if, sobbing and blubbering, I had gone on lamenting her death, I should have thought that I had no understanding of fate; therefore, I stopped."

莊子曰：「不然。是其始死也，我獨何能無慨然！……人且偃然寢於巨室，而我噉噉然隨而哭之，自以為不通乎命，故止也。」



3.1 Rites is About Overcoming Negative Emotions

Mark Berkson:

‘In the aftermath of the death, Zhuangzi employs a larger, “cosmic” perspective that sees the coming to be and passing away of his wife as manifestations of a larger, ongoing process of coming together and dissolution. Resisting or lamenting any transformation, Zhuangzi tells us, indicates a lack of understanding.’



3.1 Rites is About Overcoming Negative Emotions

Yan Hui asked Confucius, saying: “When Meng Sun Cai’s 孟孫才 mother died, he wept without snivelling, his heart felt no distress. During the period of mourning, he exhibited no sorrow. Although wanting in these points, yet he was considered as the best mourner in the state of Lu. Without reality, can one get the reputation? I am astonished at this.”

(Trans. Feng Yu-Lan with modifications)

顏回問仲尼曰：「孟孫才，其母死，哭泣無涕，中心不戚，居喪不哀。無是三者，以善處喪蓋魯國。固有無其實而得其名者乎？回壹怪之。」 23

ZHUANGZI

A New
Translation of
the Sayings of
Master Zhuang
as Interpreted
by Guo Xiang

Translated by
RICHARD JOHN LYNN

3.1 Rites is About Overcoming Negative Emotions

‘Meng Sun did everything and had actually progressed beyond self-conscious awareness of it!’

仲尼曰：「夫孟孫氏盡之矣，進於知矣。」

Guo Xiang 郭象 commentary:

‘Meng Sun completely realised the principles of dealing with life and death and brought into resonance what was suitable for both beyond worldly conventions and within them.’

盡死生之理，應內外之宜者。

(Trans. Lynn with modifications)

3.2 Rites Requires No Validation from Others

Lai Xisan:

‘Those who believed that Zhuangzi criticized rites often speak from the perspective of having rites as a standard and uniformity that govern the behaviours of others. So, once a person performing rituals fails to comply with the expected criteria, they are immediately labelled as “impolite” or opposing the ritual propriety. ’



3.2 Rites Requires No Validation from Others

The Fundamental of The Cultivation of Life

When Lao Dan 老聃 died, Qin Shi 秦失 went to mourn over him. He uttered three yells and went out.

A disciple asked him, saying, “Were you not a friend of the master?”

“Yes, I was,” replied Qin Shi.

“If so, is it proper to offer your mourning merely in the way you have done?”

老聃死，秦失弔之，三號而出。弟子曰：「非夫子之友邪？」曰：「然。」「然則弔焉若此，可乎？」



3.2 Rites Requires No Validation from Others

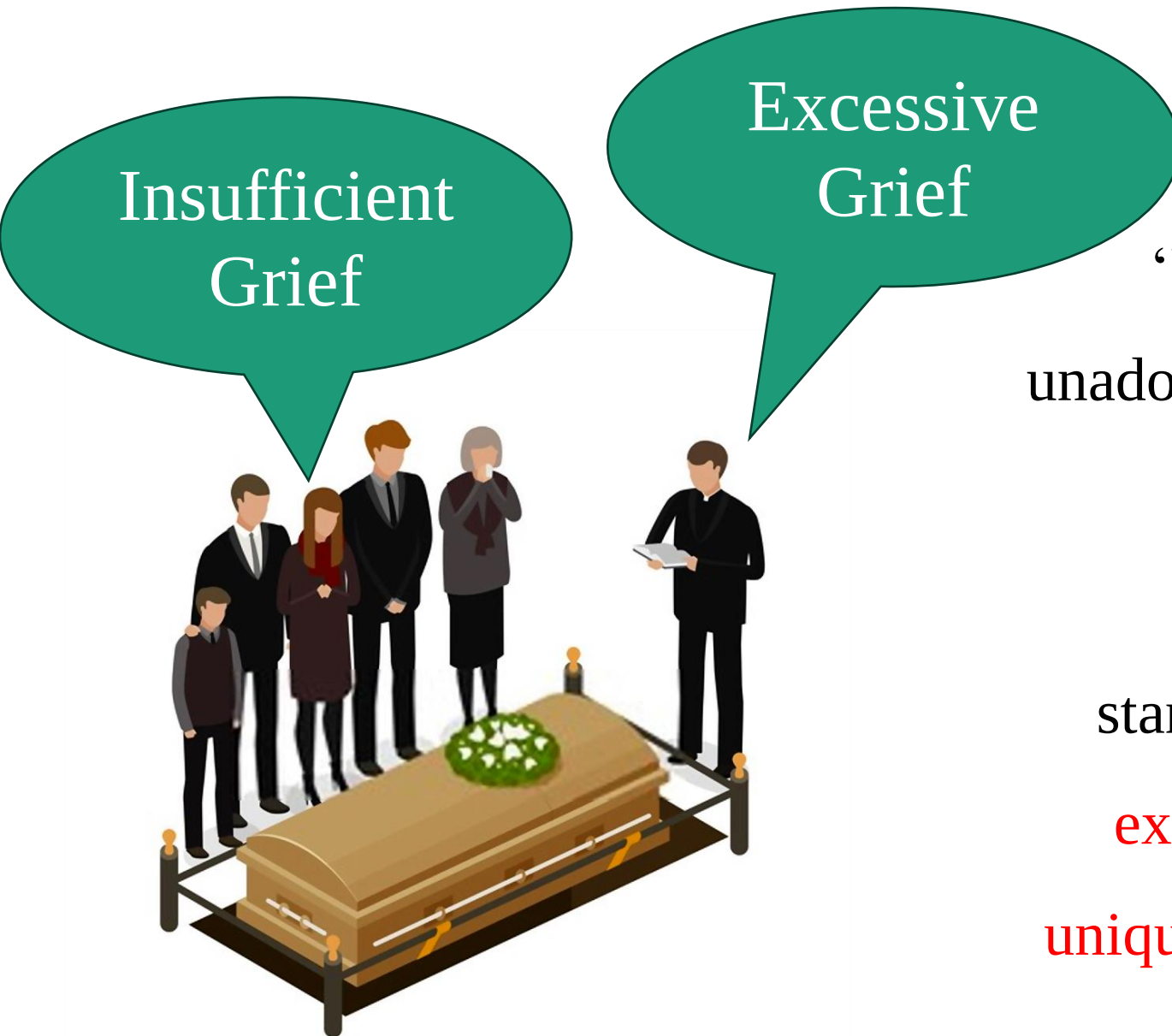
“Yes,” said Chin Shih. “At first, I thought the other mourners were his men; now I know they are not. When I went in to mourn, there were old persons weeping as if for the loss of their children; and young ones, as if for that of their mother. These persons assembled there uttered words, and dropped tears, which are not to be expected.”

(Trans. Lynn with modifications)

曰：「然。始也，吾以為其人也，而今非也。向吾入而弔焉，有老者哭之，如哭其子；少者哭之，如哭其母。彼其所以會之，必有不蘄言而言，不蘄哭而哭者。」



3.2 Rites Requires No Validation from Others



Lai Xisan:

‘Funerals were originally solemn yet unadorned moments to bid farewell to the departed among family and friends.

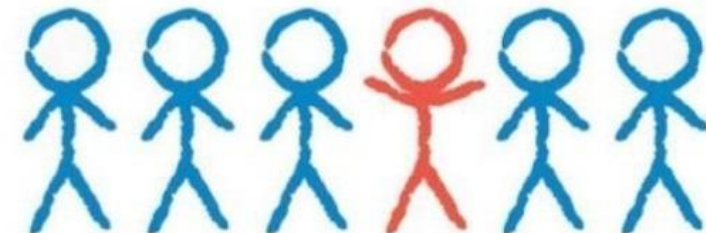
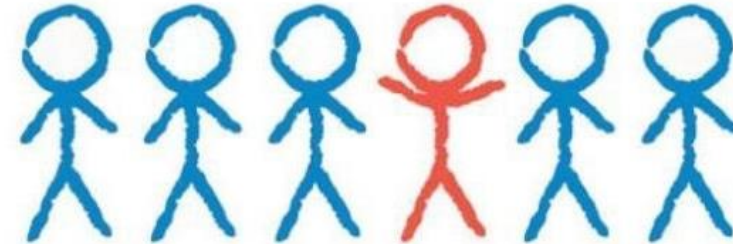
However, public funerals with standardised rituals often tend to either exaggerate or suppress the natural and unique expressions of human emotions.’

3.2 Rites Requires No Validation from Others

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Peer Pressure



3.2 Rites Requires No Validation from Others



“They are those who wander beyond worldly conventions”, said Confucius. “I wonder within it. There is no common ground for these two ways; I was wrong in sending you there to mourn. **How can they foolishly trouble themselves with conventionalities simply for the sake of ordinary people?”**



孔子曰：「彼遊方之外者也，而丘游方之內者也。外內不相及，而丘使女往弔之，丘則陋矣。……**彼又惡能憤憤然為世俗之禮，以觀眾人之耳目哉！**」

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3.2 Rites Requires No Validation from Others

Guo Xiang commentary:

‘One who understands the real meaning of propriety must attend to worldly conventions only from the perspective of wandering beyond worldly conventions and by preserving the child by holding fast to the mother. Such a one is equal to his natural disposition and simply goes out and does it.’

夫知禮意者，必遊外以經內，守母以存子，
稱情而直往也。

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Guo Xiang commentary:

‘But as for those who take pride in reputation and let themselves be led by form and appearance, for them, filial piety proceeds not out of commitment to sincerity, and paternal compassion proceeds not from honesty, so fathers and sons and older and younger brothers keep their true feelings hidden and deceive one another—what does this have to do with the meaning of propriety in the large sense of the word!’

(Trans. Lynn with modifications)

若乃矜乎名聲，牽乎形制，則孝不任誠，慈不任實，父子兄弟，懷情相欺，豈禮之大意哉！

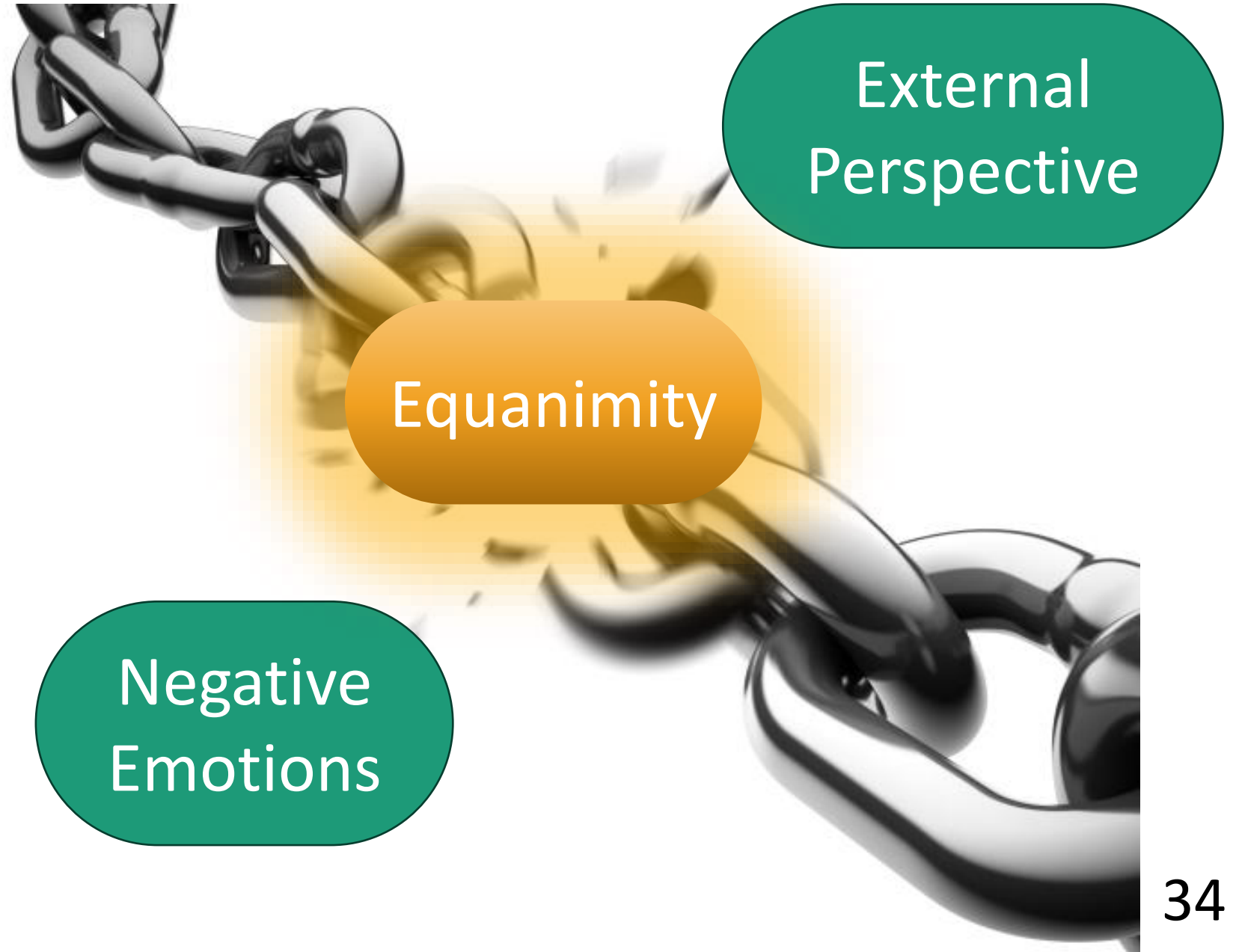
3.2 Rites Requires No Validation from Others

Yu Yingshi 余英時：

‘Zhuangzi cares less about formality; what he cares about is how to express his inner “meaning of rites” appropriately.’



4. Conclusion



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THANK YOU!

