UNDERSTANDING ZHUANGZI’S ONENESS
THROUGH THE CONCEPT OF XU

MS. SHUWEN WANG
I.D. 5819486

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
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Graduate Programs of Philosophy & Religion
Graduate School of Human Sciences
ASSUMPTION UNIVERSITY OF THAILAND
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ABSTRACT

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Name: Shuwen Wang

Dissertation Title: Understanding Zhuangzi’s Oneness through the Concept of Xu

Dissertation Advisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Shang-wen Wang

This dissertation focuses on discussing what is the reality in reference to Zhuangzi’s philosophy of Oneness. It begins with the discussion of the two significant issues in our contemporary world and suggests that the cause of the issues today may be rooted in the way that people look at the reality.

In Chapter I, the dissertation first presents an introduction of the overall background, objectives, and significance of the study; as well as the research methodology employed. Secondly in Chapter II, it provides the readers with the description and exposition of Zhuangzi’s concepts of Dao, De and Oneness, together with a detailed interpretation of Zhuangzi’s Oneness in four layers. Thirdly in Chapter III, it majorly discusses two concepts of Xu and Xin which play important roles in individuals’ life in relating to the reality of Oneness. Fourthly in Chapter IV, Zhuangzi’s cultivation of Xu is explored. It presents that the cultivation of Xu is the practice which works on individuals’ Xin in order to be reconnected with the reality. The critiques of Zhuangzi’s philosophy are also discussed. Lastly in Chapter V, the retrospection and conclusion of this research are pre-
sented, and a considerable deliberation of the relevance of the study along with recom-
mendations for further research are delivered in the same chapter.

This dissertation aims to provide a detailed analysis of Zhuangzi’s philosophy of
Oneness, and how Zhuangzi’s philosophy of Oneness is possible to be applied to inter-
pret our world today. By doing these, it is the hope of the researcher to provide an alter-
native perspective of knowing what is real on both the outside world and the inner
world of ourselves. Through knowing what is real, individuals may find an alternative
way of interpreting the issues in contemporary world and a more balanced and holistic
way of living.
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Last but not least, I would like to thank my families, my previous teachers, my friends for the pure love and care which supports me throughout the whole process of writing this dissertation.

To all the people I love, to the miracle in life, my deepest gratitude!
诗 - Poem

Searching the Way in Zhuangzi

I cannot only take you as the mastery of the marvelous language

Just as I cannot capture the obscurity of your butterfly dream

On the way of searching
It is full of thorns, and roses!

Because truth and illusions are interweaving always—

Joys and angers are like the rootless mushrooms
The penumbra accompanies the shadow

Dissolution and formation, life and death come in turn
All the phenomena dizzily rise and vanish...

Were I not able to wipe away all the distinctions
Between self and non-self
I never would have apprehended the meaning beyond the words

Tossing and turning in tears

Swiftly I see you are riding the wind and soaring around
At ease you are chanting with only one word

“Oneness, Oneness”

Note: I wrote this poem at the darkest point of searching the true meaning in Zhuangzi’s philosophy. I appreciate Zhuangzi’s philosophy a lot because it does not only open my mind, but also bring me the beauty and poetry in life.
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ABOUT THE ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS
OF THE ZHUANGZI

Since the Zhuangzi is written in classical Chinese, and the writing style in the Zhuangzi is intricate, paradoxical, elliptical, exaggerated and absurd; there are various English translations of the Zhuangzi. Several phenomenal English translations are used in this research pertaining to issues of accuracy according to the Chinese original text of the Zhuangzi. The books and translators are listed as follows,

Yutang Lin (1942) *The Wisdom of China and India.*


Victor H. Mair (1994) *Introduction and Notes for a Complete Translation of the Chuang Tzu*


Chapter I:
Introduction

This dissertation begins with two significant issues in our contemporary world—the urbanization growth, and the rise of materialism and consumerism; thereby suggesting that the root of these problems may be laying in the way people are only looking at the reality in a materialistic way. The key concepts of this dissertation are briefly discussed. Following, attention turns to Zhuangzi’s philosophy which is the researcher’s belief that its philosophy is relevant to the contemporary phenomena presented above. Zhuangzi’s philosophy about the ultimate reality is the key to bring people an overall perspective of the reality which is not only the physical and material world outside of us but also the non-physical and immaterial inner world within ourselves. This dissertation concludes with an explanation of the relationships between the concepts expounded and the individual’s alternative way of seeing the reality of both the external world and inner world.

The key concepts are first discussed in the light of a quote from the Zhuangzi about the reality, “All-around, everywhere, and all-inclusive are three different names

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1 Zhuangzi ’s philosophy is from 《庄子》—the book of Zhuangzi (the Zhuangzi in short), which there are still disagreements among scholars if it was solely written by the philosopher Zhuangzi, or the school of Zhuangzi. In this research it will be discussed as Zhuangzi’s philosophy written in the Zhuangzi. Most of the discussions in this research will based on the Inner Chapters of Zhuangzi, which are the most authentic ones. See more in Section 1.7.

2 The words external and inner or internal mentioned in this dissertation are not only discussed in a physical sense. They are primarily used to distinguish between what is artificial or man-made or from outside; and what is natural, or intrinsic or from within. It is just as Mair explains “that which belongs to beings and objects by nature is intrinsic or internal; that which is imposed upon them by man is extrinsic or external”. (Mair, 1994, p.XI)
for the same reality. They all indicate Unity (一，yi).” ³ (Mair, 1994, p.218) Within the
Zhuangzi the reality is a non-discriminative unity of Oneness which is all-around, everywhere and all-inclusive. The word “all-inclusive” exposing this reality already includes not only the physical, visible and material, but also the non-physical invisible and immaterial. This is the ultimate reality which cannot be conventionally perceived by our sense organs, but it can be naturally⁴ apprehended by our Xu⁵ (虚, empty) xin⁶ (心, heart-mind). As later scholar Xu Fuguan expounds,

The empty and tranquil heart-mind (虚静之心, Xu-jing-zhi-xin)⁷ is naturally illuminating. This illumination is because of the reality that it is interrelated and interchangeable with the ten-thousand things in the universe. Thus, this illumination can elucidate the reality and essence of the ten-thousand things in the universe.⁸ (Xu, 2001, p.50, my translation)

In other words, the concepts Xu and xin are closely related and it is the way to know the reality. Whereas, for ordinary people, the heart-mind is not always in the Xu state.

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³ Original text: “周遍咸三者，异名同实，其指一也”。《庄子今注今译》，页551. The original Chinese character “一” is translated as unity here according to the context. It is preferred to using the translations as One, or Oneness which is the key concept in this research. It will be further introduced in the Section 1.1.2.

⁴ Natural or naturally mentioned in this dissertation basically mean something intrinsic, or from within which is opposite to artificial, man-made or from outside. (See more in Footnote 2) Or can be simply explained as “that everything spontaneously becomes what it is, is called natural”. (Fung, 2016, p.10) These words are also closely related to the concept Ziran (自然) which will be discussed in section 1.1.2.

⁵ Xu: It is another key concept in this research. The original Chinese is 虚, which has various translations. The translation of empty is preferred in this research, and its details discussed primarily in Chapter III of this dissertation.

⁶ Xin: The original Chinese is 心, which represents the physical heart organ. It is conventionally translated as heart, mind, and heart-mind, according to its function in Chinese culture. The translation of heart-mind is preferred in this research. And for the convenience of reading, all the different translations of xin will be modified into heart-mind. It is closely related to Oneness and Xu in the Zhuangzi, and will be fully discussed in Chapter III of this dissertation.

⁷ Xu-jing-zhi-xin (虚静之心): it is translated as the empty and tranquil heart-mind here. It will be fully discussed in Chapter III. For the convenience of reading, it is used as Xuxin and translated as empty heart-mind for short.

⁸ Original text: “虚静之心，自然而然地是明：而这种明，是发自与宇宙万物相通的本质，所以此明即能洞透到宇宙万物之本质”。《中国艺术精神》，页50.
fallen habits of heart-mind cause the rise of the discrimination and cut off people from the reality, as Slingerland expounds, “Zhuangzi’s philosophy is aimed at dispelling the ‘fallen’ habits of heart-mind” (Slingerland, 2003, p.182). And these habits also cut off people from the ultimate source of life. This ultimate source of life is the ultimate reality of Oneness which can be only apprehended and re-united when people’s “fallen habit of heart-mind” is dispelled, and back into the Xu state again.

1.1 Overview of Zhuangzi’s Philosophy

1.1.1 Zhuangzi, the Person

Zhuang Zhou (庄周), commonly called as Zhuangzi (庄子), or master Zhuang, lived around 4th century BC in the Warring States Period (475–221 B.C.) of China. He is considered as the greatest disciple of Laozi (老子) —the founder of Chinese philosophical Daoism, and the greatest exponent of Daoism. He inherited the philosophy from Laozi, and helped shape the development of Daoist thought. There were little records about Zhuangzi’s life time and most of the stories about him, which are half historical and half legendary, are found in the book of Zhuangzi. Those stories are generally in three types, “we find him mocking logic, or scoring office and wealth, or ecstatically contemplating death as part of the universal process of nature.” (Graham, 2001, p.3) These are also the most distinctive features in Zhuangzi’s philosophy which makes Zhuangzi’s philosophy so unique.


Zhuangzi: It is also spelled as Chuangtzu due to different romanization systems.

Laozi: His personal name Li Er (李耳), and lived around 5th century B.C. Laozi is also spelled as Laotzu due to different romanization systems.

The book of Zhuangzi consists of 33 chapters and is divided into three parts: Inner Chapters (1-7), Outer Chapters (8-22), and Miscellaneous Chapters (23-33). Most scholars agree that the Inner Chapters were attributed by the philosopher Zhuangzi himself.
1.1.2 Key Concepts in Zhuangzi’s Philosophy

Key concepts in Laozi’s Philosophy

Understanding of Zhuangzi’s philosophy needs knowledge of some core ideas of Laozi. In the book *Daodejing*, Laozi explains his philosophy based on *Dao* (道), which is the primordial natural source of all existence, the root of all beings. He writes his philosophy “because he sees the world around him mired in corruption, far from the true Way (Dao), and proposes a soteriological method by which the individual and then the rest of humanity can be brought back into harmony with the universe.” (Slingerland, 2003, p.77) He calls it as a turn back (fan, 返) and return home (gui, 归) to the Dao—our primordial Mother, origin or root. With these core ideas, two primary concepts are brought up in his philosophy, which are *Ziran* (自然), and *Wuwei* (无为). *Ziran* is conventionally translated in English as nature or natural, so-of-itself or “Spontaneity” (Graham, 1989, p.190); and in Chinese, it has two meanings. The first is Nature—as the physical natural environment, the natural habitat of us. The other is so-of-itself, which “refers to the way a thing is when it follows its own internal Essence”, (Slingerland, 2003, p.35) or we could say so-of-itself is the way of nature. Expressed another way, the way of nature—*Ziran*, is the property Dao. Hence, *Ziran* or Nature is frequently used to stand for Dao, since Dao “is not only ‘in’ or ‘at’ the world, it is man’s natural habitat, just as water is the natural habitat of fish.” (Allan, 1997, p. 78) *Ziran* or Nature is both denoting the natural habitat—the physical nature, and the so-of-itself, the way of nature—Dao. Whereas, *Wuwei* literally means non-action, inaction or doing nothing, and it is also translated as “effortless action” (Slingerland, 2003). Thus it

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13 Dao: It is also spelled as Tao (道), usually translated as the Way or the Path. In this research Dao will be used, and for the convenience of reading, all the different translations of this character will be modified into Dao.

actually denotes "not a basic form of action, but the mental state of the performer—the spiritual state that obtains at the very moment of action." (Pang, 1994, pp.15)

Comparing this to the book *Zhuangzi, Daodejing* is more like a book with poetic, profound and philosophical proverbs, which tries to describe the rules about the cosmos. Whereas, the *Zhuangzi*, which was established on Laozi’s Ziran and Wuwei, is the one which greatly developed Laozi’s thoughts and progressed them as philosophical and systematic. As Lin wrote “Zhuangzi is therefore important as the first one who fully developed the Daoistic thesis of the rhythm of life, contained in the epigrams of Laozi.” (Lin, 1942, p.626)

**Key Concepts in Zhuangzi’s Philosophy**

Following Laozi’s philosophy, Zhuangzi’s philosophy still stresses on Ziran, but the researcher agrees with Graham’s (1989) and Slingerland’s (2003) translation that in most contexts Ziran better translate as Spontaneity. Zhuangzi’s Ziran as Spontaneity indicates an individual’s genuine aptitude in the sense of strongly opposing to artifice, rather than a metaphysical principle of so-of-itself as Laozi stresses, according to the intention and end of its philosophy which will be discussed in the following section. Whereas, in Zhuangzi’s philosophy, the concept Wuwei is also developed into multiple metaphorical terms, which could be best represented by the concept of Xu (虛). Xu literally means an empty, vacuous container which has a simultaneous but passive

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15 As Li Zehou claims “Zhuangzi places a great emphasis on ‘nature’ (Ziran), in two senses. The first is naturalness, or the refusal to serve man-made artifice. The second is the natural environment and landscape. These two meanings can easily be united if one considers how beautiful nature is without the addition of any human artifice.” (Li, 2010, p.94)

16 Slingerland summarizes these terms used as Wuwei into the ‘at ease’ family and the ‘Emptiness’ family which includes terms such as at ease/ at rest (安, an), still (静, jing), at rest (息, xi; 舍, she; 休, xiu), wandering/ rambling (逍遥, xiaoyao; 彷徨, panghuang), playing/ wandering (游, you), empty/ tenuous (虚, Xu), etc. See Slingerland (2003), pp.29-36. It will be discussed further in Chapter III centering on the concept of Xu.
response to the external. Xu is commonly translated as empty or tenuous; and as Slingerland states, Xu or Wuwei is “a spiritual goal, this ideal—understood by Zhuangzi as a transformation or transcendence of everyday conscious human activity.” (Slingerland, 2003, p.175)

With these two inherited concepts of Spontaneity and Xu, Zhuangzi’s philosophy develops further, which synthesizes Spontaneity and Xu into one primary concept of its philosophy — Oneness (一, Yi).\textsuperscript{17} Oneness is a state of being one with Dao, the natural integrity of Dao, or a state of non-discrimination. Zhuangzi’s philosophy emphasizes the ultimate reality is One and the whole—Oneness is also the “the reality of individual entities” (Schwartz, 1985, p.222) within the world of plurality. Individuals can be naturally One with Dao by losing the habit of making rigid distinctions,\textsuperscript{18} and this is the way of staying in reality. For individuals, staying in reality means one is in a natural Xu state. In other words one is also in a spontaneous flow with the whole. It is as Graham states, “To be on the unformulable path is to merge into the unnameable whole, so that what we are trying to pin down by the name Dao is revealed as nothing less than the universe flowing from its ultimate source (not just the course of its flow, which would be to draw a distinction).” (Graham, 1989, p.188) Thus, Oneness denotes not only the reality for individuals but also a “spiritual freedom” (Ching, 1997, p.177) or “spiritual achievement” (Mair, 1994, p.xi1v) which free themselves from social conventions, conceptions and most importantly the limitations and conditions of their

\textsuperscript{17} The Chinese Yi is conventionally translated both as One and Oneness. They basically mean the same while with slightly different emphasis. Both of them will be exposed in Chapter II: see the detailed exposition of One in Section 2.2, Chapter II; and see the detailed exposition of Oneness in Section 2.4, Chapter II.

\textsuperscript{18} The rigid distinctions in this dissertation signifies certain conceptions within “unalterably fixed pattern” (Mair, 1994, p.xx) and “enforces uniformity (not equality)” (Mari, 1994, p.xi) which generated by one’s thought or some ossified teachings.
own heart-mind. It is a freedom which “can only be discovered in nature itself, in the Dao.” (Ching, 1997, p.177)

1.1.3 Historical Context of Zhuangzi’s Philosophy

As introduced in the previous section, the book Zhuangzi was originally composed in the Warring States Period. In that period of time, the united West Zhou (西周, Xizhou) Dynasty (1046 — 771B.C.) collapsed, many smaller states were founded and they continually struggled for supremacy. Thousands of innocent commoners died because of the wars, and there were no guarantees for life. People were living within great fear of death. However in spite of the political disruption, social chaos and time of desperation for common people, it was the most spectacular intellectual era in the whole of Chinese history:

Political disunity and rapid social and technological change …had undermined the religion, moral code and political institutions of the declining Zhou dynasty, and thrown open the question “What is the Way?”—the way that the empire should be ordered and individuals should conduct their lives. (Graham, 2001, p.4)

Hundreds of philosophical schools arose at this time aiming at unifying both of the states and the thoughts. Philosophers of different schools were debating on various issues widely relating to the society, human nature, life and death, etc. Each of them were trying to convince the ruler and the people that their theory or knowledge was absolutely right and true. But the more the scholars debated, the more they were confined by their own viewpoints.

The debate between the Confucians and Mohists was the typical example in that period. As Confucians stress to restore the moral and cultural heritage of the Zhou
dynasty, its philosophy was conservative. Based on ren (仁, benevolence)\(^{19}\) and yi (义, righteousness),\(^{20}\) what Confucians mostly concerned were the issues of morally right and wrong, good and bad. Besides this, they emphasized much of a fixed social relationships and social hierarchy. Whereas, Modi (墨翟)\(^{21}\) the founder of Mohism, a rationalist, was the first opponent of Confucianism. He objected the moral standards and claimed that everything should be measured in terms of social utility. He advocated universal love as the base of his philosophy and criticizes Confucian ren and yi due to a differentiated or discriminated love which based on social relationships and hierarchy.\(^{22}\)

The debate between Confucians and Monists only confirmed to Zhuangzi that the arguments with language were futile, and different propositions from different stand-points can never reach an agreement, which encouraged him to become a relativist and put a holistic vision to look at opposite things. For Zhuangzi, the moralist arguments are a kind of man-made standards which was interpreted differently from Dao, but not genuinely natural from Dao. This motivated him to become an uncompromising naturalist and majorly concern about the “naturalization of humans” (Li, 2010, p.78), which addresses fighting against artificiality and advocating the state of non-differentiation or naturally being one with nature and with Dao.

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19 Ren: It has been translated variously as benevolence, humanness, perfect virtue, goodness, human-heartedness, love, altruism, etc. Chan explains, “It means a particular virtue, benevolence, and also the general virtue, the basis of all goodness.” (Chan, 1963, p.788)

20 Yi: It has been translated as righteousness or duty. Chan explains that Confucius’s “primary concern was a good society based on good government and harmonious human relations. To this end he advocated a good government that rules by virtue and moral example rather than by punishment or force. His criterion for goodness was righteousness as opposed to profit. For the family, he particularly stressed filial piety and for society in general, proper conduct or li (propriety, rites).” (Chan, 1963, p.15)

21 Modi lived around 47 – 381 B.C.

22 See more about Confucianism and Mohism in Mair (1994) pp.xix—xi.
Another philosopher which influenced Zhuangzi’s philosophy is Yangzhu (杨朱), whose philosophy was also quite prevalent in that time. His major propositions were from the intention of protecting individuals themselves from the danger of political conflicts, and “Yangzhu holds that man must nourish his Heaven-endowed nature by keeping it intact and striving for happiness.” (Mair, 1994, p.xi) Most scholars would regard him as an individualist, and hedonist; a school that “argued for the pursuit of private tranquility rather than public service” (Yearley, 1996, p.153), whereas his opponents criticize him as an egoist. Influenced by Yangzhu, Zhuangzi’s philosophy cares much more about individuals compared to Confucianism and Mohism, but brings it further into a deeper and holistic dimension.

1.1.4 The Intention and End of Zhuangzi’s Philosophy

Therefore, it was this historical context and the intellectual currents that motivated the most profound and unique philosophy in Chinese history. Confronted with these social phenomena, the intention and end of Zhuangzi’s philosophy is located on individuals, and tries to liberate people from all the conditions like social conventions, conceptions and personal thoughts. These conditions are “the limitations of one's own mind — from one's self-interested tendencies and prejudices.” (Ching, 1997, p.177) In Zhuangzi’s philosophy, it hopes and helps people to know the overall reality which is a spiritual reality. Thus, it is not only a liberation of physical body in the mundane world, but a spiritual liberation and building a realm of spiritual freedom. This is the reason that Zhuangzi’s philosophy is strongly against artificiality, because “artificiality forcibly attempts to change things according to its own conceptions and enforces uniformity (not equality). This is the purpose of all morals, laws, institutions, and governments, namely,

23 Yangzhu lived around 440 – 360 B. C.

to promote sameness and to eradicate difference.” (Mair, 1994, pp. xl-xl) Instead, in Zhuangzi’s philosophy, it addresses on Xuxin—an intuitive, natural and effortless way of returning to one’s own intrinsic inner nature which is One with Dao. This is the spiritual Spontaneity or Oneness —the highest level an individual can reach, scholars interpret it variously as “absolute happiness” (Fung, 1948, p.109), “spiritual achievements” (Mair, 1994, p.xxvii), “greatest beauty” (Xu, 2001, p.35), “sudden enlightenment” (Slingerland, 2003, p. 213), “spiritual freedom” (Ching, 1997, p.177), or “spiritual transformation” (Allinson, 1989, p.6), etc. No matter what term scholars use, in Zhuangzi’s philosophy it is an individual spiritual state of Oneness and it is a natural way of staying in real.

1.1.5 The Main Features of Zhuangzi’s Philosophy

Even though Zhuangzi’s philosophy is inherited from Laozi, and is influenced by his contemporaries, it developed uniquely and has its own distinctive features.

Generally speaking, Zhuangzi’s philosophy is a more “practical metaphysics” compared to Laozi’s philosophy; even though Mou states that “broadly speaking, all the eastern metaphysics are practical metaphysics”25 (Mou, 2003, p.113, my translation) This is because although both Laozi and Zhuangzi are talking about the same subject matter—Dao, they take different perspectives on it. Laozi takes the ‘higher’ perspective of Dao — the un-manifested primordial natural source of all existence — to explain the whole process of Dao. In this sense, Laozi’s philosophy is more about cosmology. Whereas, Zhuangzi takes the ‘lower’ perspective of the individuals — the fully mani-

25 Original text: “因此广义地说，东方的形而上学都是实践的形而上学 (practical metaphysics)”; 《中国哲学十九讲》页113. According to Mou, the Chinese metaphysics encompasses the metaphysics—the speculative and theoretical knowledge, which is the longitude aspect; and the practice—the accumulation of practice within time, which is the latitude aspect. Only with these both the longitude aspect and the latitude aspect, one could really understand the metaphysics. See more about practical metaphysics in Mou (2003) pp. 109-124.
fested phenomena — to explain the Dao as Oneness and how individuals could be One with Dao. For individuals, to understand Zhuangzi’s ultimate reality of Dao as Oneness requires not only theoretical knowledge, but also a long term practice (both physically and spiritually) to ‘awaken’ the individuals’ genuine aptitude to apprehend it. In this sense, Zhuangzi’s philosophy is a more practical metaphysics, which means that only with practice could one really understand the metaphysics. Therefore, comparing to Laozi’s philosophy, Zhuangzi’s philosophy has the following features. First, Zhuangzi’s philosophy mainly focuses on individuals; second, Zhuangzi’s philosophy emphasizes change, which denotes the dynamic reality of Dao:

Unlike Laozi’s philosophy, which majorly features the objectively existing metaphysical or universal rules; Zhuangzi’s philosophy mainly focuses on individuals. In the Zhuangzi, the metaphysical meaning of Dao gradually declines and contracts inwardly, and finally becomes concrete on one’s inner spiritual state. This is what Mair concluded: “Master Zhuang emphasized Spontaneity. Most philosophers of ancient China addressed their ideas to a political or intellectual elite, but Master Zhuang focused on those who were striving for spiritual achievements.” (Mair, 1994, p.xxvii)

Unlike Laozi’s philosophy, which aims at finding out a constant and unchanging principle of the universe, Zhuangzi’s philosophy focuses on inconstancy or change — due to his care about the individuals living in the dramatical changes of his time. Zhuangzi’s philosophy advocates such that individuals should jump into the flux of changes and be spontaneous with it. This is the way of achieving the greatest freedom.

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26 The concepts of “the un-manifested”, “the fully manifested”, and “the cycle of Dao” will be further discussed in Section 2.2.3.3.

27 The relationship between “knowledge” and “practice” is closely related to the concept of practical metaphysics. All of them will be detailed discussed in Section 4.2.

both physically and spiritually. As Chan says Zhuangzi “seems to transcend the mundane world, yet he is always in the very depth of daily life.” (Chan, 1963, p. 177)

Another distinctive feature that should not be neglected is Zhuangzi’s philosophy is strongly opposed to artificiality:

Unlike Confucianism and Mohism who were trapped in language and struggling with rigid distinctions of moral standards, Zhuangzi’s philosophy strongly rejects artificiality, or any man-made standards; it deems language restricts individuals and block them from flowing and integrating themselves with One.

1.2 Background, Significance and Scope of Study

From 16th-17th century onwards, with the rapid progresses of science and technology, and the unlimited expansion of worldwide economy, many aspects of human life — almost all aspects, as society, culture, way of thinking, and way of living, etc — have undergone dramatical changes. At this point in human history we have enjoyed the biggest amount of material resources, and the greatest convenience. Not only that: we have the most advanced modern hospitals in history enhancing our health care and fighting against the major diseases, and we even have the most complete insurance system to insure our sense of security. It seems that we are in a utopian fantasy which human beings have been dreaming of for centuries. But as a proverb says, no pains no gains; has anyone ever questioned: what did we pay for it? Looking back on history of modernization we will find that we indeed have paid a great price for it. We have gone through the big separation between man and nature, the loss of our inner nature, and then we stepped into an age of complacency and egoism. With these high prices we come into an era of extreme materialism and consumerism. Many worldwide social
issues have come up in turn, which the researcher thinks, is the time for us to understand what it is that was really lost from the path of extreme materialism and consumerism.

This dissertation posits that with overemphasizing the certainty of science, and economy which affect all material aspects, including the overwhelming integration into modern digital technologies, man lost the awareness of the true reality that man and nature, body and mind, material and immaterial are One. This could be one of the principal reasons for the major issues of our contemporary world, for it is assumed that without a holistic sense of balance and unity, man could easily feel alienated, and tend to desperately grasp material things which had caused a severe unbalance and disunity. The researcher thinks that by advocating Zhuangzi’s philosophy of Oneness as the ultimate reality, it is hoped to help bridge the man and nature, body and mind, material and immaterial together and provide general people a sense of balance and unity in their daily life.

1.2.1 Urbanization Growth— Big Separation between Man and Nature

According to the report released by the United Nations Population Fund, UNFPA, “The world is undergoing the largest wave of urban growth in history. More than half of the world’s population now lives in towns and cities, and by 2030 this number will swell to about 5 billion.” 29 (UNFPA, 2017) With such a large population residing in artificial cities, man separates themselves—at least physically from nature, and becomes disconnected with nature. They do not rise and sleep according to the rhythm of nature. Instead, they develop their own man-made lifestyle. They no longer live within nature. Instead they put the miniaturized nature specimen into botanical gardens for occasional

visits. Or, they put themselves into cages to have a closer touch with the nature and wild animals. However, no matter how close the touch is, the undeniable reality is man and nature are no longer a whole, and man unavoidably becomes an outsider of nature. However, as we commonly described that nature is like the mother of every living beings on earth, nature is the source of life and it is the way of life. Therefore, living outside of nature not only means physically disconnected with nature, but also means that man lives outside of the way of life. In other words, man has lost the natural source and natural way of life.

### 1.2.2 Material Focused Way of Life—the Loss of Man’s Inner Nature

By living outside of nature, instead of following the way of nature, man gradually starts to create their own man-made lifestyle within the man-made cities. As man has disconnected with the way of nature—the natural source of life, man’s inner nature or inner source—the way of every individual’s living starts to wither. Man starts to take only what they can sense as real which makes them become more materially focused. They have forgotten that they are both material and immaterial being, and are only aware of themselves as this bodily beings living in the man-made cities. Man has gradually forgotten not only the outside physical nature, their natural habitat, but their own inner nature—which gives their own purpose in life.

The increase of global business and trade even makes the situation worse. As artificial concepts and values create their own benefits. They advocate and input these concepts and values in common people’s mind and convince people to believe that the more material possessions they have, the more ‘fuel’ they have acquired which can keep their body running well, and the better life they will have. Hence, the big question of the ancient times—“To be, or not to be” (Shakespeare, 2006, p.114) is replaced by another
issue ‘To acquire or to acquire more’. As Richard M. Ryan described in the foreword of *The High Price of Materialism*:

Each one of us, can so readily be converted to the religions of consumerism and materialism... vast numbers of us have been seduced into believing that having more wealth and material possessions is essential to the good life... Similarly, we have adopted a world view in which the worth and success of others is judged not by their apparent wisdom, kindness, or community contributions, but in terms of whether they possess the right clothes, the right car, and more generally, the right “stuff”. (Kasser, 2002, p.x)

Apparently, our pursuit of a good life is simply converted to a pursuit of more and more material possessions. Are these identical? It may be another connected philosophical discussion which this research would not go any further. But one undeniable point is it is not balanced. The body and mind, the material and immaterial, are unbalanced. With the lost of spirituality, human beings finally become a machine and step into a way of materialism.

**1.2.3 The Age of Complacency and Egoism**

In order to acquire material things, human beings started to do things according to his own will, not according to nature or his inner nature. The concept of ‘I’ becomes unprecedentedly powerful. ‘I’—the ego is the keyword of our age. And this is the reason Puett and Gross-Loh say our age is an age of complacency:

Will historian look back on this era as one of prosperity, equality, freedom, and happiness? Or will they instead define the early twenty-first century as an age of complacency: a time when people were unhappy and unfulfilled; when they witnessed growing crises but failed to respond, feeling there to be no viable alternative? (Puett & Gross-Loh, 2016, p.25)

In the age of complacency, with the loss of nature and our inner nature, human beings become overconfident of ourselves, and egoism starts to become extremely prevalent. According to the survey released on the website of Business Insider, “Millennials think
the biggest issue facing the world today is climate change.” 30 (Williams-Grut, 2017) The issue of climate change and destruction of natural resources is considered as the most pertinent issue with the ratio of 45%. (Williams-Grut, 2017)

We become self-centered and egoistic. Only we, our human beings are the most important, other species in this planet are in existence only for our use and resource. Taking a look at what result egoism leads us to: “Every year, 13 millions hectares of forest disappear. One mammal in 4, one bird in 8, one amphibian in 3 are threatened with extinction. Species are dying out at a rhythm 1,000 times faster than the natural rate. The average temperature of the last 15 years have been the highest ever recorded...” 31 (Arthus- Bertrand, 2009) Human beings are so complacent that they seemly become the conqueror of the earth, which apparently leads to a closer destroying of both the earth and human beings themselves.

To summarize above, the separation between man and nature, the loss of our inner nature, and the problem of complacency and egoism—exhibit two major phenomena, one is the fall of nature and inner nature of man; the other is the rise of materialism and artificiality.

The Fall of Nature and Inner Nature of Man

In our contemporary world, the physical nature, which is the material aspect of nature, becomes only the natural resources for us to use and survive. Man no longer follows the way of nature — the immaterial aspect of nature, and it is replaced by the man-made life style in man-made cities. Moreover, man as well becomes only the material


being and has lost their inner nature which is the immaterial aspect. Through this way, man has completely lost their purpose of life. It seems life is only for survival, for keeping the material body running. — Is survival the purpose of our lives? It is as ridiculous as saying the purpose of writing this dissertation is just to write, other than to do some research or trying to analyze some problems and make some contribution to it. However this is the situation in our contemporary world, with the separation from nature, and the loss of inner nature, man has lost their purpose in life. Man is living for only survival.

The Rise of Materialism and Artificiality:

With the fall of nature and inner nature, the natural way of life is fading away, and the man-made way of life rises. Man-made cities, concepts, values and distinctions are all claiming they are right and true. These become the great conditions of man and mislead man to only take the material aspects which they can sense as real. The immaterial aspect was lost, the world today becomes severely unbalanced.

Both of them have proved that another dimension, which is Oneness, the opposite of mainstream view, should not be overlooked. It is time to look from an alternative perspective, the philosophy of Oneness. Within Oneness, things arise and vanish naturally. Man does not have to make rigid distinctions or forcefully do things according to their own conceptions. Instead, the alternative way is to let go and be with the flow, and most important is being one with the natural way. It is the belief of this research that such alternative can be found in the philosophy of Zhuangzi, which may save us from the disconnected and unbalanced life and bring us back with purpose and merge into the holistic picture of Oneness.

Thus, this dissertation aims: firstly to provide an interpretation of Zhuangzi’s philosophy of Oneness, key concepts and principles. Secondly, to provide how
Zhuangzi’s philosophy of Oneness is possible to be applied to interpret our world today. By doing these, it is the hope of the researcher to provide an alternative perspective for people to look at the world and themselves, and find a suitable way for them to live a more balanced and holistic life. Based on these above, the researcher would like to do a further study on the topic of Understanding Zhuangzi’s philosophy of Oneness through the concept of Xu.

1.3 Thesis Statement

This dissertation is rooted in the researcher’s belief that Zhuangzi’s philosophy of Oneness is relevant to our contemporary world even though it was formulated over two thousand and three hundred years ago. The concept of Oneness is the key, not simply as it is a central concept in Zhuangzi’s philosophy, but also as it is diametrically opposed to our prevailing limited and static view of reality which leads to the dichotomy and conflicts between man and nature, our physical body and inner world. Whereas Zhuangzi’s philosophy of Oneness will bring us an overall perspective of the reality, which is a non-discriminated and well-balanced reality between outwardly and inwardly, material and immaterial. Keeping the heart-mind in the empty Xu state, is the natural way of achieving Oneness, and it will finally lead us to a harmonious unity or integrity which is spontaneously staying One with the non-discriminated whole. Simply put, by exploring Zhuangzi’s philosophy of Oneness, and discussing and interpreting how it can be applied to our life and times, especially in terms of the issues and problems in contemporary world and individuals, it is hoped to offer a different perspective for people to see the reality and search for an alternative way of living. It is also hoped this alternative way of living can help free people from the rigid distinctions, the tensions of conflicts, the sense of alienation both outwardly and inwardly and give
people a sense of balance, harmony, integrity, and unity, which is what Zhuangzi’s philosophy advocating about, Oneness.

**1.4 Objectives of Dissertation**

This research study seeks to attain the following objectives:

a. To provide a detailed analysis of Zhuangzi’s Oneness as the ultimate reality and how it relates to the concept of Xu and xin.

b. To discuss the arguments of both the proponents and opponents of Zhuangzi’s concepts of Oneness and Xu.

c. To explain how Zhuangzi’s concepts of Oneness and Xu apply to the contemporary world and make the argument that with the Xuxin people can be free from the outside conditions and see the reality which is a non-discriminated whole—Oneness.

**1.5 Significance of the Research**

In exploring and analyzing Zhuangzi’s philosophy of Oneness through the concept of Xu, this dissertation hopes to familiarize modern people with another perspective of living, which is utterly opposite to the dominating perspective of living. The significance of this research also lies in that it provides an alternative way for people to consider or choose in terms of confronting so many problems and issues in contemporary world.
1.6 Limitation of the Research

The limitations of the research are as follows:

a. This is a focused research on Zhuangzi’s philosophy of Oneness. The other authors cited are for the purpose of an in-depth study.

b. Since the research perspective is philosophical, while the approach of the applicability is discussed, it only plays a secondary role in this dissertation.

c. The book Zhuangzi is the main source for this dissertation. The study is mainly based on the Inner Chapters (1-7); the Outer Chapters (8-22) and the Miscellaneous Chapters (23-33) will be used if needed.

1.7 Research Methodology

In this research several methodologies are used, text reading, analysis and interpretation. Since the book Zhuangzi was written in ancient Chinese, etymological work is also needed in the research. This research study requires both primary and secondary sources, including books and journal articles in English and Chinese languages. Reference books and journal articles are available at the library of Assumption University and some universities in mainland China, Taiwan and online. Many reference books have also been purchased in USA, mainland China and Taiwan.

The primary source used for this research is a book called Modern Annotation and Translation of Zhuangzi (《庄子今注今译》). It is translated and compiled by Chen Guying, an influential contemporary scholar of the Zhuangzi. This book includes three parts, the Zhuangzi, the annotations of the Zhuangzi from the famous scholars in history, and the translation of the Zhuangzi from classical Chinese (also know as ‘Literary Chinese’, a written form of old Chinese not used by native speakers of modern Chinese)
into modern Chinese. The *Zhuangzi* consists of 33 chapters and is divided into three parts: *the Inner Chapters (1-7), the Outer Chapters (8-22), and the Miscellaneous Chapters (23-33)*. The majority of scholars agree that the Inner Chapters were attributed by Zhuangzi himself. Hence this research will discuss Zhuangzi’s philosophy majorly based on *the Inner Chapters of Zhuangzi*, and will refer to other chapters when necessary. Since the *Zhuangzi* is written in classical Chinese, it can be very difficult to understand as there are many literary references and allusions. Compounding these challenges, the writing style in the *Zhuangzi* is intricate, paradoxical, elliptical, exaggerated and absurd, just as Lin commented “he is frivolous when he is profound and profound when he is frivolous.” (Lin, 1942, p.627) The annotations and translation from classical Chinese into modern Chinese are necessary references for obtaining an accurate comprehension of Zhuangzi’s philosophy.

Several English books are selected pertaining to issues with translating. The English translations of the *Zhuangzi* from a Chinese scholar Lin Yutang, and an English scholar A. C. Graham, Burton Watson are used as major source of references. Other English translations from, Victor H. Mair, Fung Yulan, James Legge are used when necessary. The original texts in Chinese are also provided in the footnotes for the readers referencing Chinese.

### 1.8 Definitions of Terms

**Cultivation (工夫):**

It is also interpreted as self-cultivation. It means taking the inner spirituality of oneself as the object for practicing and processing to achieve a certain purpose, like achieving the underlying source of life.
Dao (道):

Literally means the Way. It is the ultimate reality, the source of all existence, the root and source of all things. It is dependent on nothing else, and based in itself, rooted in itself. It is the reason and also the result of its own existence. Dao has no beginning or end, it is beyond time and space. It is a never-ending cycle of flux.

De (德):

De is Dao within things. The classical definition is to attain or be able to, which can be understood as a latent power. It is the materialization and particularization of Dao. It has a tendency of being in accordance with Dao.

Human Nature (人性):

It is also translated as human inner nature, or human inborn nature. It includes human’s inborn desires, abilities, and the perceptions and feelings of desires and abilities. Human nature is the materialization of De. The intrinsic human nature is De, which is the essence and purpose of human.

Nature (自然):

It conventionally means the physical nature in the phenomenal world. It also means the natural way of a thing as it is—literally so-of-itself, which can be explained in terms of its essence.
Oneness (一):

Oneness is identical to Dao, with more emphasis on the integrated, non-discriminated state, which is a natural state of being One with Dao.

Xu (虚):

It is an empty, open and passively receptive state like an empty container, which denotes a profound and deep continuum in which there is no obstruction. It is the first phase of the manifestation of Dao, and the last phase of returning to un-manifested state of Dao. When related to individuals, it is a description of a spiritual state of heart-mind, and it means absolute peacefulness and purity of heart-mind and freedom from worry and selfish desires and not to be disturbed by incoming impressions or to allow what is already in the heart-mind to disturb what is coming into the heart-mind.

Heart-mind (心):

It is both the physical heart organ and the central faculty of cognition and emotion. And it is the locus of Xu. It can be either Xu or stuffed and obstructed. Once the heart-mind is stuffed and obstructed, one is separated with Dao. Whereas, when the heart-mind is in a Xu state, one naturally is One with Dao.
Chapter II:

Description and Exposition of Zhuangzi’s Dao and Oneness

—The Ultimate Reality

2.1 Introduction

As a philosophical theme, “what is the ultimate reality” has long been discussed; as early as the time of Plato and Aristotle in the West, and Laozi, Zhuangzi in China. However, distinctively different from the explicit explanation of the reality in the West, the reality is always referred to the ultimate source called Dao in Chinese philosophy—especially in Daoism, which is exposed in an enigmatic and perplexing way.

In this chapter, the conception of Dao will be first introduced in a generic sense within Chinese culture. Whereas the major focus will be on Zhuangzi’s exposition on Dao, and how it is related to every individuals—which according to Zhuangzi’s philosophy is the inner reality of individuals. Then Zhuangzi’s kernel conception of Oneness will be brought out, and detailed layers of the conception of Oneness will be explored afterwards, which will help to pinpoint that the Oneness of Dao is the ultimate reality in Zhuangzi’s philosophy.

The main aim of this chapter is to argue that Zhuangzi’s reality is of great difference from the reality individuals conventionally understand. This is a reality transcends all the rigid distinctions, and everything is One of this reality. With the inner reality of De—individuals are naturally One with Dao, the ultimate reality.
2.2 On Zhuangzi’s Dao—The Ultimate Reality

2.2.1 The Terminology of Dao in Chinese Culture

Although Zhuangzi’s philosophy is based on Dao, there were many other schools discussing this concept. Dao is a notoriously difficult concept in Chinese philosophy because it is used both in generic senses in common people’s daily life and in specific philosophical senses. Whereas philosophically, Dao is widely discussed by almost all the ancient Chinese schools within a question “what is the Way (Dao)” in order to guide the empire or individuals. The term dao is commonly translated as way, path, or sometimes extended to mean principle, teaching, system or Reality, etc. The original meaning, according to Shuowenjiezi, is “the road people walk. It is called Dao when the road is clear or without obstruction.” (Handian, 2017)

The Chinese character that expresses the concept of dao is ‘道’, which is composed of two parts, the ‘丳’ and the ‘首’. The 丳 part stands for feet, and here signifies to travel. The 首, literally means one’s head, here is used to stand for one person. Tang Junyi claims that the head signifies using one’s head to instruct oneself to travel. It is palpable that the term dao is not only a ‘road for walking’, but also signifies a process, movement or method of attaining an object with self-instruction. Hence Karyn Lai explained,

Dao refers not only to the objective but also to the ways to achieve the objective… The translation of Dao into the English term “way” is also helpful in understanding the aspect of activity. “Way” may refer to a particular method, as in “This is the way to do it”, or it may refer to the path one needs to take, as in

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“The way to get there”… Both these applications of “way” are consistent with its use in the ancient Chinese philosophical context. (Lai, 2008, p.94)

If dao is comprehended and referred to a teaching or a doctrine, it will be easier to understand the reason in which each of the philosophical schools during this age discussed dao. Most of the philosophical schools are advocating their particular ways of rectifying the social and political problems of that time, as in the case of Confucius advocating the way of virtues, and Mozi advocating the way of universal love. In this sense, we could say that there are many daos—ways; as many as the teachings from different philosophical schools. Therefore, the term dao carries two meanings, one is the way as the objective—such as a physical way; the other is the process or approach of getting there.

2.2.2 Zhuangzi’s Dao—Cannot Be Defined

Having distinguished these two meanings, what is Dao in the Zhuangzi and Daoism? The response in the Zhuangzi is,

For Dao has its inner reality and its evidences. It is devoid of action and of form. It may be transmitted, but cannot be received; It may be obtained, but cannot be seen. It is based in itself, rooted in itself. Before heaven and earth were, Dao existed by itself from all time. It gave the spirits and rulers their spiritual powers, and gave Heaven and Earth their birth. To Dao, the zenith is not high, nor the nadir low; no point in time is long ago, nor by the lapse of ages has it grown old. (Lin, 1942, p.659)

This response seems not to answer the question. We only know that within the Zhuangzi, Dao has no action, no image, but it is real. It is dependent on nothing else, and “based in itself, rooted in itself”. It is the reason and also the result of its own

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35 Original text: “夫道有情有信，无为无形；可传而不可受，可得而不可见；自本自根，未有天地，自古以固存；神鬼神帝，生天生地；在太极之先而不为高，在六极之下而不为深，先天地生而不为久，长于上古而不为老”；《庄子今注今译》, 页177-178.
existence.\textsuperscript{36} Dao has no beginning or end, since Dao “existed by itself from all time”. Or in other words, Dao is atemporally beyond time. Only when Dao gives birth to Heaven and Earth, time and space start. Dao is the origin of everything. This is very similar to what Laozi has talked about in the \textit{Daodejing}. The first sentence in \textit{Daodejing}, Laozi states, “The Dao that can be told of is not the Absolute Dao; The names that can be given are not Absolute Names. The nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth; the named is Mother of all things.” \textsuperscript{37} (Lin, 1958, p.206) From these a clearer meaning to what the \textit{Daodejing} and the \textit{Zhuangzi} are expressed, which is the unchanging metaphysical principle and the ground of the universe. Using the term Dao to signify the unchanging metaphysical principle and the ground of the universe reveals their attitude toward the ultimate reality: Dao is limitless, and it cannot be adequately defined by our limited words. In this sense, the term Dao actually is like a placeholder denoting the limitless ultimate reality which cannot be told, rather than a limited and changeable name to define it. Hence, Chen Xia states: “It (Dao) is spiritual, and it is the highest reality that it is only dependent on itself and transcends all material entities. It precedes everything, and it is the source and condition of all things.” \textsuperscript{38} (Chen, 2006, p. 57, my translation)

\textsuperscript{36} Here Zhuangzi’s philosophy is appealing to a concept of dependence that seems very different from concepts that often figure in contemporary discussions of causal and non-causal dependence, which generally assume that relations of dependence are irreflexive, in the sense that nothing depends upon itself. For the case of non-causal dependence see, e.g. Schaffer On What Grounds What, p. 364 in Chalmers, Manley & Wasserman (2009); for the case of casual dependence see, e.g. Lewis (1973), Causation, in The Journal of Philosophy, pp. 556-567.

\textsuperscript{37} Original text: “道可道，非常道。名可名，非常名。无，名天地之始；有，名万物之母”；《老子今注今译》,页56.

\textsuperscript{38} Original text: “它是精神性的本体，是超越物质实体而独立自存的最高实在。它先于万物，是万物的本源和条件”; <试论先秦道家的“道物无际”观>, 页57.
2.2.3 Zhuangzi’s Descriptions of Dao

2.2.3.1 The Allegory of Heaven Music

As Dao itself has no image and is limitless, within the *Zhuangzi*, the allegory of musics is used to describe Dao and its relations to the myriad things,

“Well, then,” enquired Ziyou, “since the music of Earth consists of hollows and apertures, and the music of man of pipes and flutes, of what consists the music of Heaven?” “The effect of the wind upon these various apertures,” replied Ziqi, “is not uniform, but the sounds are produced according to their individual capacities. Who is it that agitates their breasts?” (Lin, 1942, p.634)

The music of Heaven has no shape, no sound. It cannot be perceived by one's perceptions. It is the wind itself. The wind is as natural as it is and itself has never had any sound, but it generates sound through different tubes, hollows or pipes. The wind is the metaphor of Dao. Dao cannot be named just like the wind itself cannot be heard, the different sounds through different pipes are just the different layers of manifestation and embodiment of the wind. Dao gives birth to the myriad things which can be perceived by perceptions, just like the wind gives birth to different sounds which can be heard. Dao is the cause of the myriad things and the root and purpose of things. Dao is the primordial natural force which enables everything to be. As Dao gives birth to everything, it lies within everything. That is why when asked where is Dao, the response within the *Zhuangzi* even said Dao is even in the excrement.

2.2.3.2 Dao as One—the Cycle and the Reverse

From this allegory we may learn that just as the wind can manifest as sounds, Dao also has its own way of manifesting, or processing. In Chapter II of the *Zhuangzi*, it describes the process and layers of the manifestation of Dao,

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39 Original text: “子游曰：‘地籁则众窍是已，人籁则比竹是已，敢问天籁。’子綦曰：’夫吹万不同，而使其自己也。咸其自取，怒者其谁邪？’”；《庄子今注今译》，页35. In this translation, the term “自取” was not literally translated. Whereas Graham translated it as “self-choosing” (自取, Zi-qu) which will be mentioned in Section 2.4. (Graham, 2001, p.49)
There is “beginning”, there is “not yet having begun having a beginning”. There is “there not yet having begun to be that ‘not yet having begun having a beginning’”. —There is “something”, there is “nothing”. There is ‘not yet having begun being without something’. There is “there not yet having begun to be that ‘not yet having begun being without something’”.40 (Graham, 2001, p.55)

There are logically three phases of the manifestation and embodiment of Dao: first, “there not yet having begun to be that ‘not yet having begun a beginning’”; second, “not yet having begun having a beginning”; third, “beginning”. These are exactly what Laozi describes the layers of manifestation of Dao in a simpler way, “Out of Dao, one is born; out of one, two; out of two, three; out of three, the created universe—or the ten-thousand myriad things literally.” 41 (Lin, 1958, p.206)

Hence, the first phase of “there not yet having begun to be that ‘not yet having begun a beginning’” is the completely un-manifested state of Dao, which “There is ‘there not yet having begun to be that “not yet having begun being without something”’”. It means that there is absolutely nothing, no time and space, no something and nothing as counterparts, and even no Nothingness without counterpart.

In the second phase, Dao starts to manifest as the “not yet having begun being without something”—the Nothingness without counterpart, but still there is no time yet, as it says “not yet having begun having a beginning”—This is what Laozi called “Out of Dao, one is born”. Dao manifests as an absolute Nothingness or Emptiness whole, which within the Zhuangzi, it states as “not yet begun to be things”.42 (Graham, 2001, p.54)

40 Original text: “有始也者，有未始有始也者，有未始有夫未始有始也者：有有也者，有无也者，有未始有无也者，有未始有夫未始有无也者”，《庄子今注今译》，页72.
41 Original text: “道生一，一生二，二生三，三生万物”; 《老子今注今译》，页200.
42 Original text: “未始有物”; 《庄子今注今译》，页67.
In the third phase of “there is ‘beginning’”, there is time. And with time “There is ‘something’, there is ‘nothing’”, here something and nothing can be understood as existence and non-existence as counterparts. But even though there are counterparts, as within the *Zhuangzi*, it denotes “there were things but there had not yet begun to be borders”. \(^{43}\) (Graham, 2001, p.54) Things exist in an undifferentiated state without any form or shape. This is the two “out of one” as Laozi says, and even with two counterparts, they are still within the one and without any borders.

After these three phases, the fourth phase is things beginning to have borders. As within the *Zhuangzi*, this fourth phase is explained, “there were borders to them but there had not yet begun to be ‘That’s it, that’s not’.” \(^{44}\) (Graham, 2001, p.54) This is what Dao fully manifests, and it is the phenomenal world we are experiencing. However, the phenomenal world is a world with borders of things but they are the natural distinctions in the phenomenal world, not the rigid distinctions affected by the man-made judgments.

The four phases above are how Dao manifests, and also it is the way of Dao’s expression, embodiment and materialization.

However, it is not only embodying and materializing, there is a reverse from the manifested ‘ten-thousand myriad things’ back to un-manifested Dao. As Laozi states, “The myriad things take shape and rise to activity, but I watch them fall back to their repose. Like vegetation that luxuriantly grows. But returns to the root from which it springs.” \(^{45}\) (Lin, 1958, p. 110) As for within the *Zhuangzi*, ‘One’ is used to denote Dao.

\(^{43}\) Original text: “有物矣，而未始有封也”; 《庄子今注今译》, 页67.

\(^{44}\) Original text: “有封焉，而未始有是非也”; 《庄子今注今译》, 页67.

\(^{45}\) Original text: “万物并作，吾以观复。夫物芸芸各复归其根”; 《老子今注今译》, 页113.
“Their dividing is formation, their formation is dissolution; all things whether forming or dissolving in reverting interchange and are deemed to be One.” 46 (Graham, 2001, p. 53) Every existing thing is all within this process of cycle, from formation or creation to dissolution or destruction, from immaterial to material and back to immaterial. It arises and it vanishes, never stops, and goes back to their origin, Dao.

This is the process of Dao and it is deemed to be One in the Zhuangzi as cited above. Here the ‘One’ is not a number, as Shang elaborated,

For Zhuangzi, “One” is not a number that initiates numbering, nor a single entity which excludes or opposes many; instead, One is, first of all, general designation which is parallel to words such as “Tianxia” (天下, the world), “Tiandi” 47 (天地, Heaven and Earth), “Yuzhou” (宇宙, universe) and “wanwu” (万物, ten-thousand things), designating the togetherness, the inclusiveness, the integration, or sum total of all things. (Shang, 2002, p.243)

Obviously the “Tianxia”, “Tiandi”, and “Yuzhou” here already indicate a kind of metaphysical principle; whereas “wanwu” represent the “sum total of all things”. Therefore, the term One here means not only that Dao is the primordial natural force of ten-thousand things, but also includes the togetherness, sum total of all things and the whole cycle of un-manifestation and manifestation. Within the cycle of One, it is always moving, changing and never is static. Everything is within the whole and the whole is within everything; and the whole encompasses something and nothing, space and time, and even the Nothingness before something and nothing, and the beginning which is before the beginning. Everything is of Dao. In other words, Dao is the cycle, and the cycle is the whole. Hence, Dao and One are identical and inseparable.

46 Original text: “其分也，成也；其成也，毁也。凡物无成与毁，复通为一”; 《庄子今注今译》, 页62.

47 In Zhuangzi’s philosoph, “Heaven and Earth” (天地, Tiandi) or “Heaven” (天, Tian) can signify Nature, and are also used to denote Dao. This will further explained in the section 2.2.3.
However, even though One is “designating the togetherness... or sum total of all things” as cited above, Dao or One does not negate the boundaries among things. As Chen claims, “There are boundaries among things, but there is no boundary, demarcation, or interstice between Dao and things.” 48 (Chen, 2006, p.58) Dao is like the whole of the sun and the light. The sun is like the ultimate and un-manifested Dao and the beam of the light is like a manifested aspect of the sun. We cannot know Dao, just like we can never see the sun. However, we can know Dao through the manifested things, just like we see the sun through the light of the sun. We cannot divide the sun and light, since they are within the whole. Therefore, in the Zhuangzi a lot of images are used as light to signify Dao, like “open things up to the light of Heaven” (照之于天, zhao-zhi-yu-Tian)49 (Graham, 2001 p.52), “using the Light” (莫若以明, mo-ruo-yi-ming)50 (Lin, 1942, p.636), “There is brightness in an empty room” (虚室生白, Xu-shi-sheng-bai)51 (Lin, 1942, p.648), etc.

2.2.3.3 Dao as One—the Spiritual Reality

If we go further in discussing the Dao, we can understand how the Dao as One is intrinsic in the way of nature too, in the sense that each and everything pursues its own potential inner nature naturally, because it is one with nature and its nature: “It (Dao) is ... the way in which all things pursue their course.” (Chan, 1963, p.136) Imagine a flute without wind going through, there is no music. Even an object with the same shape

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49 Original text: “照之于天”；《庄子今注今译》，页55.

50 Original text: “莫若以明”；《庄子今注今译》，页51.

as a flute, it is not a flute any more. In other words, Dao is the essence of everything, and Dao and the things are One.

As Dao is the essence of everything and is One with everything, it cannot be material. It is immaterial, and it is spiritual. Hence, Liu Xiaogan summarizes the two meanings of Dao in Zhuangzi’s philosophy,

Zhuangzi’s philosophy is that there are two notions of Dao: one is that Dao is the source and ground of the universe, invented by Laozi and shared by most Daoist thinkers; the other is this spiritual vision of the ultimate reality of the universe, an idea created by Zhuangzi and uniquely developed by him...These two senses of Dao... sharing the following features: absolute uniqueness and Oneness, spontaneity, infinitude, transcendence, non-temporality, non-discrimination, and non-response. (Liu, 2015, p.196)

Therefore in the Zhuangzi, Dao is both the metaphysical objective or topic as the ultimate reality we are talking about, and it is One— the ontological process, or the way of everything within the never-ending cycle. Thus, Dao as One is the ultimate reality of the universe. And this reality is a spiritual reality with material manifestation in it.

2.3 On Zhuangzi's De—Our Inner Reality

As explained in Chapter I, Zhuangzi’s philosophy focuses more on the individuals, and when the ultimate reality is discussed, it stresses on each individual’s relation to Dao—the ultimate reality. And this reality lies in the nature and manifests in nature. Since it is the nature that gives everything their own way, their own way is their own inner nature—the thing of itself. Or in other words, the inner nature of the physical thing. The inner nature in Chinese is called xing (性). In the Inner Chapters of Zhuangzi,
the term xing is not mentioned.\textsuperscript{52} But instead, the book discusses many times the term De (德). According to Xu, “since Laozi and Zhuangzi regard Dao as the origin of the universe, man is naturally originated from Dao. Dao is the innate essence of man. Hence, taking the perspective of individuals, Dao within man is called De and later called inner nature.” \textsuperscript{53} (Xu, 2001, p.30, my translation)

Here the discussion may find De as the way of understanding the inner nature and its relation to Dao, so it is necessary to have a detailed analysis on the term De.

\textbf{2.3.1 The Terminology of De in Chinese Culture}

The Chinese character for De is ‘德’. It is conventionally translated as character, power and virtue in Daoism, and morality or ethics in other philosophical schools or in daily life. According to Shuowen, “De means to ascend”.\textsuperscript{54} It is composed of two parts, the ‘\textdegree’ and the ‘惠’. The \textdegree indicates “traveling or walking” and the original meaning is to “climb and ascend”.\textsuperscript{55} And the other part惠 is originated from ‘惠’, which is composed of ‘直’ and ‘心’. 直 means “straight, vertical or frank”; \textsuperscript{56} and 心 means “heart, mind or center”.\textsuperscript{57} According to Shouwen, 惠 carries both the meanings of 直 and 心.

\textsuperscript{52} Xing is conventionally translated as nature, inborn nature, innate nature or inner nature. Inner nature is used in this research to distinguish from the physical nature. The author agrees what Xiao explains “the reason why inner nature of man is not mentioned in the Inner Chapters of Zhuangzi is that the theme of the Inner Chapters is to get rid of the subjectivity values and pursue of forgetting both the self and things so that ten-thousand things can transform and return to One flow.” (Xiao, 2014, p.100)

\textsuperscript{53} Original text: “他们只把道当做创造宇宙的基本动力;人是道所创造,所以道便成为人的根源性的本质;克就人自身说,他们先称之为‘德’,后称之为‘性’”; 《中国艺术精神》, 页30.


and basically means “It is obtained from within, and develops it out to let others obtain.” From this 德 even has another meaning as ‘get, or obtain’.

From above we can get an overall view of its meanings:

De relates to traveling or walking; and also relates to a straight (直) mind (心). This is very similar to the meaning of Dao, which the 亅 part stands for travel and the 首 part stands for one’s self-instruction.

De also means to get, obtain, or receive. It is something obtained from within, and will be developed outwardly when letting others to obtain. This is also related to Dao in Daoism, which will be discussed further in the following section.

Besides all the meanings above, the most important meaning is to elevate, as explained directly by Shuowen.

However, as time went by, the concept of De gradually developed as ‘morality and ethics’ which is used both in daily life and in many Chinese philosophical schools. Whereas in Daoism, the meaning of De is not in the dimension of morality or ethics, it still keeps the original meaning of elevating and even shows the relations between Dao and De. De in Daoism is still an ontological concept rather than a moral concept.

2.3.2 On Zhuangzi’s De—Our Inner Reality

In the Zhuangzi, De is explained as follows:

In the grand beginning, there was only nonbeing. But no being and no names. Out of it arose the one; There was one, but still no form. From the one, things could be born, receiving what is called their De.59 (Mair, 1994, p.108)


59 Original text: “泰初有无，无有无名。一之所起，有一而未形。物得以生谓之德”; 《庄子今注今译》, 页302.
Apparently here again the cycle of Dao is described: “there was only nonbeing”. It is in the same sense as discussed in Section 2.2.3, namely that of “not ye having begun having a beginning”. Then Dao continues to embody as one, but has “still no form” or to use Legge’s perhaps superior translation, “the non-bodily-shape one” (Legge, 1891, p.83). From this non-bodily-shape one, the ‘bodily-shape’ things could be produced. It is a process of manifestation from immaterial to material, from Dao to the myriad things. By the same token, we can say that things are produced when receiving this no-

bodily-shape one, De, in the following sense: De here carries a meaning of receiving, which clearly interpreted by Xu as “things are born when receiving from Dao”. (Xu, 2014, p.336, my translation) In other words, De is the ‘non-bodily-shape one’ receiving from the transcendent Dao, laying within things and gives things life. De is explained further as “Thus, without Dao, form would not be born. Without De, life would not be manifest. To preserve the bodily form and finish out one’s life, to establish De and manifest the Dao”. (Mair, 1994, pp.104-105) In this sense, De is what things receive from Dao. It is the inner reality of things, and it is also the way of things and the way of naturally manifesting of Dao. In other words, De is like the blueprint of things which determines what they are, or who we are. It gives things purpose of life. It is like the seed of an apple tree, whose purpose of life is to grow to be an apple tree in accordance with the right place and right season. This is its De— the inner reality of the apple seed, and it is also the way of it’s being.

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60 Original text: “未始有物”; 《庄子今注今译》, 页67.
61 Original text: “所谓物得以生，即是物得道以生”; 《中国人性论史》, 页336.
62 Original text: “故形非道不生，生非德不明。存形穷生，立德明道”; 《庄子今注今译》, 页293.
Hence we can simply say that De is Dao within everything, and De is representing Dao and is the character of Dao.—That is the reason Lin (1942) and Legge (1891) translated De as the character of Dao. And we can also say De is the innate essence of things, and the innate essence of things is of Dao. That is what Xu states “De is the Dao within things”.\(^\text{63}\) (Xu, 2014, p.336, my translation) They are just like the sun and the lights. De is one piece of light illuminating in things or our bodies. As explained above that Dao is the ultimate spiritual reality, we can say that De is the spirit within things. In other words, the inner reality of things is a spiritual reality too.

As analyzed above, Dao is like a never ending cycle, always dynamic. Since De is one piece of light within things and it is of Dao, it is also dynamic. It is the dynamic expressing and embodying process of Dao as explained in section 2.2. Moreover it is also the dynamic reverse from myriad things back to the origin, Dao. “Through cultivation of (inner) nature, it returns to De, and when De reaches its pinnacle, it is the same as at the beginning.”\(^\text{64}\) (Mair, 1994, p.109) This is the reverse, and it is to elevate back to Dao. It indicates De has a tendency of elevating from the manifested myriad physical things to the un-manifested, immaterial Dao.

Therefore, from above we can summarize Zhuangzi’s De as follows:

De is what myriad things receive or obtain from Dao, it is Dao within things. As it is the non-bodily-shape one, it is immaterial or spiritual. It is the inner reality of things. It determines the individual things as it is, which also gives them purpose and the way of being.

\(^{63}\) Original text: “此内在于物中的道，庄子即称为德”; 《中国人性论史》，页336.

\(^{64}\) Original text: “性修反德，德至同于初”; 《庄子今注今译》，页302.
De, like Dao carries the meaning of traveling or walking, is never static. It has a tendency of both expressing and elevating within the cycle of Dao, which means the manifesting of Dao and the reverse back to Dao. In this sense, we could say that De is both the way of Dao and the way to Dao.

As De is the manifestation and particularization of Dao which is inherent in things and give them their own way of life or being, it can be understood as a latent power or potency which enables things to live with their own different ways. Whereas, when speaking of De in human, we can use virtue. However the virtue here is completely different from the man-made concept in ethics or morality. The virtue here is like the brightness which is naturally received from the sun. As the sun is by itself bright, the beam of light is by itself bright. It actually can be interpreted as: De is the true power within human which received from Dao, and it is virtue in terms of Dao when De is fully manifested as letting others to obtain.

Another point worth mentioning is the inner nature as in “Through cultivation of (inner) nature” as cited above. Since the inner nature can return to De, it actually is De. We could say De and the inner nature are of Dao, but manifested in different levels. De and the inner nature are just like the one beam of light with the relatively brighter piece and darker piece. Expressed another way, De is the intrinsic inner nature of individuals. Or strictly expresses, De is a deeper spiritual and immaterial aspect of the inner nature, whereas the inner nature is more physical and material aspect of De. Therefore, De is the key of understanding the intrinsic inner nature of things and their own ways of back to the ultimate reality—Dao.
2.3.3 Dao and De are One—De is Naturally One with Dao

As stated above, De is Dao endowed in the individual things. Within different things, De manifests and particularizes Dao in different ways. As Lai declaims that “Dao is common to all, ...De is then the individualizing factor, the embodiment of definite principles which give things their determinate features or characters.” (Lai, 2008, p.85) That is to say, Dao is not an absolutely empty space nor is it the sum of all myriad manifested things. De’s being one with Dao does not negate the individuality. It actually is a variety of individualities within the whole. It is just like Wang elaborates, “The myriad things take shelter in heaven and earth. They all gather together to form up the entirety of nature that is then synthesized with humankind into Oneness.” (Wang, 2007, p.240) Or better understood that, “Dao is the conditioning context that in part shapes individuals and events. De is that distinctiveness, integrity or excellence of each individual thing that can be realized only in the context of the whole, the ideal Dao.” (Lai, 2008, p.86)

Taking the natural environment as an example, we may find everything has their own way of living in nature, like the plants sprout in spring, grow in summer, and bear fruit in autumn. Dao is like the environment, and De is like the different ways of living within the nature. Different plants may sprout and grow in different seasons, because their own De is different. Within the environment, De enables things to live distinctively. But they all manifest in accordance with the whole, the environment—Dao, and they can only manifest when their own De is in accordance with the environment. For instance, a seed’s De is to sprout, but it can only sprout in spring which means it should be in accordance with the environment. However on the other hand, through the different ways of living, the environment manifests itself as a whole,
as One. Thus Dao and De is One, and De is naturally One with Dao just like trees naturally follow the seasons to grow. Or we may say that De itself has a characteristic of being harmonious or in accordance with Dao.

Same as in human beings, to make it even clearer, the term harmony (和, he) is used in the Zhuangzi to describe the characteristic of De. According to Shuowen, the term he denotes harmonious music, and it also means to harmoniously follow, echo, or response to, especially songs. In the Zhuangzi, De and harmony are explained as follows, “It is from the cultivation of such harmony that De results.” (Lin, 1942, p. 655) Here the researcher does not agree with Lin’s translation of “cultivation”, because De is not an active action to cultivate. De is inner reality and a naturally latent power as it is, like what has been analyzed above in this section. This original sentence actually means: “the quality of De is a perfect and pure harmony” as Chen annotated. (Chen, 2015, p. 157, my translation) The “perfect and pure harmony” signifies the harmony between the inner reality—De and the ultimate reality—Dao, as “In Zhuangzi’s view, reality itself, once it is engaged in motion is harmony.” (Maliavin, 2008, p. 107)

Whereas, it is further declaimed in the Zhuangzi that “Therefor they—the distinctions and preferences of mundane world—must not be allowed to disturb the natural harmony, nor enter into the soul’s domain.” (Lin, 1942, p.655) Apparently, within the Zhuangzi the outside man-made distinctions and preferences of mundane world are regarded as the factors which will disturb the natural harmony. Only when all

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66 Original text: “德者，成和之修也”; 《庄子今注今译》, 页154.


68 Original text: “故不足以滑和，不可入于灵府”; 《庄子今注今译》, 页154.
the disturbance of artificialities like the rigid distinctions or preferences cannot enter into “the soul’s domain”; De is in the “natural harmony” with Dao. And this ultimate natural harmony with Dao, is Oneness. Just as described in the *Zhuangzi*,

The clear understanding of the De of Heaven and Earth is called the “great root” and “great ancestor”. It is that whereby one is in harmony with Heaven. Evenly adjusting all under Heaven with it, one may be in harmony with men. Being in harmony with men is called “human joy”. Being in harmony with heaven is called “Heavenly joy”. ⁶⁹ (Mair, 1994, p.120)

The “Heavenly joy” is “in harmony with Heaven”, which Heaven here indicates “the Great Root” or “The Great Origin” — Dao. ⁷⁰ This is the ultimate harmony of merging different things within the dynamic One, and this is the state asked in Chapter I of the *Zhuangzi*:

As for one who is charioted upon the eternal fitness of Heaven and Earth, driving before him the changing elements as his team to roam through the realms of the Infinite, upon what, then would such a one have need to depend? Thus it is said, “The Perfect man ignores self; the Divine man ignores achievement; the true Sage ignores reputation.” ⁷¹ (Lin, 1942, p.631)

These comments do not imply that there are no distinct individuals. But a Perfect man’s De is fully manifested by ignoring all the distinctions like the reputation, achievement, and self.—These are all artificial, and they will cause the disharmony between Dao and De. They are the separation of Dao. Hence Gross and Shapiro exposes “De manifests itself because the sage is in harmony with great knowledge—the understanding of Dao, or Union with Dao.” (Gross & Shapiro, 1993, p.16)

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⁶⁹ Original text: “夫明白于天地之德者，此之谓大本大宗，与天和者也。故均调天下，与人和者也。与人和者位之人乐。与天和者谓之天乐”；《庄子今注今译》，页331.

⁷⁰ Heaven is purposely used here to signify Dao which is contrasted to *human* (人, ren). “This distinction between *Tian* (Heaven) and ren (human) often parallels a distinction between natural and artificial. Another term that might be linked to nature is Dao…Attaining Dao and harmonizing with Tian seem to be the same process.” (Perkins, 2005, p.330)

⁷¹ Original text: “若夫乘天地之正，而御六气之辩，以游无穷者，彼且恶乎待哉！故曰：至人无己，神人无功，圣人无名”；《庄子今注今译》，页16.
In other words, the Sage’s merging with the One, is like one musical instrument playing in a symphony, which is both fully expressing its own music and also harmonious with others. Every individual music instrument contributes to the symphony without losing its own identity. But at the same time, every individual music instrument has to follow the conductor’s movements; otherwise it will in fact undermine the performance of the symphony. As the symphony is like Dao, the individual music instrument is like individuals’ De. When De is fully manifested, it is ultimately harmonious with Dao. And Dao and De are naturally One. This is why Xu explains that “the ultimate harmony is the descending of Oneness from the metaphysical level.”  

(Xu, 2001, p.40, my translation)Express in another way, when it is in harmony, De will naturally manifest and naturally be One with Dao.

To summarize this section, everything in nature has its own inner nature. The intrinsic inner nature of things is De, which is the inner reality of things. Although things manifest in distinctive ways due to different De, their inner reality is naturally in accordance with the ultimate reality—Dao. In this sense, the ultimate reality and the inner reality are naturally One.

### 2.4 Exposition on Zhuangzi’s Oneness

As we already learned that One is Dao. What is the Oneness? Simply speaking, Oneness means everything is of Dao, and Oneness is one’s return or being one with Dao. But we may notice that this does not mean that Zhuangzi’s philosophy is about ethics and teaching people what they should do. On the contrary, Zhuangzi’s philosophy is strongly against any outside voices which is artificial or man-made distinctions and

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72 Original text: “所谓的一，若把它从形上的意义落实下来，则是和的极致”；《中国艺术精神》，页40.
standards. Here what is described in the *Zhuangzi* about Oneness is just our inner reality which is a spiritual reality. Being One with Dao, is the return, which is exactly the reversal part of the cycle of Dao. It is the natural course of things within One, and it is also the inner reality within things.

### 2.4.1 The Concepts of Oneness (一, Yi) and Solitary (独, Du)

The Chinese character of One or Oneness is *Yi* (一). The *Yi* in the *Zhuangzi* has both the meaning as One and the quality of being One—Oneness. In the *Inner Chapters of Zhuangzi* alone, the Yi, One or Oneness, is mentioned more than twenty times. Especially in Chapter II, which is the most important chapter, it even appears more than the term Dao. As analyzed in Section 2.2, we already learned that One is Dao and they are identical and inseparable. Why is the concept of Oneness so emphasized as the crucial concept in Zhuangzi’s philosophy? Here below is one important paragraph which links Dao and One together:

> Therefore when a “That’s it” which deems picks out a stalk from a pillar, a hag from beautiful Xishi, things however peculiar or incongruous, the Dao interchanges them and deems them One. Their dividing is formation, their formation is dissolution; all things whether forming or dissolving in reverting interchange and are deemed to be One.  

(Graham, 2001, p.53)

We can find the concept of One or Oneness is actually stating the reality that the whole cycle of Dao from the un-manifested state to the manifested state and then back to the un-manifested state. However more than this, it also shows a close relationship with ‘I’ or other myriad things which are the manifestations of Dao in the phenomenal world, as follows: “Heaven and earth were born together with me, and the myriad things and I...”

73 Original text: “故为是举茍与糅，厉与西施，恢诡谲怪，道通为一。其分也，成也；其成也，毁也。凡物无成与毁，复通为一”；《庄子今注今译》，页62. Lin’s translation is “Therefore take, for instance, a twig and a pillar, or the ugly person and the great beauty, and all the strange and monstrous transformations. These are all leveled together by Dao. Division is the same as creation; creation is the same as destruction. There is no such thing as creation or destruction, for these conditions are again leveled together into One.” (Lin, 1942, p.637) Both of these two translations will be used when needed.
are One.” (Graham, 2001, p.56) Simply speaking, that everything is of Dao, is Oneness. Or since Zhuangzi’s philosophy gives a prominent attention to individuals (see Section 1.1.4), Oneness is a concept which takes the perspective of individuals to stress one’s return or being one with Dao, just as Graham writes: “What is new in Zhuangzi is that he sees man as coinciding with Dao by ceasing to draw distinctions. To be on the unformulable path is to merge into the unnamable whole…” (Graham, 2001, p. 188)

In this sense, another term Solitary (独, Du) is developed in the Zhuangzi when illustrating a true man’s spiritual state which carries similar meaning as Oneness: “The Heaven within him which he perfects in solitude.” (Graham, 2001, p.82) “Then he had the clear vision of the morning, and after that, was able to see the Solitary (One)” (Lin, 1942, p.661) As we could see, Lin (1942) already regards the Solitary as One to describe the true man’s state in his translation. As Solitary has a meaning of aloneness or lacking a companion, it is described as the “Axis of Dao” in the Zhuangzi: “Where neither It nor Other finds its opposite is called ‘the Axis of Dao’.” (Graham, 2001, p. 53) This is suggesting that the true man is dependent on nothing outside of himself. Hence, Solitary stands for the true man’s state of being One with Dao, which ‘based in itself, rooted in itself’. He is like the music of man in the allegory Heaven music, his own existence is like the sound of the pipe or flute, which is ‘self-choosing’ (自取, Zi-qu) from within, from Dao, not from outside or dependent on others. This state of Solitariness / Solitude—the state of being dependent on nothing outside of himself—is the exact meaning of what Zhuangzi’s philosophy is trying to convey by using the

74 Original text: “天地与我并生，而万物与我为一”; 《庄子今注今译》，页72.
75 Original text: “独成其天”; 《庄子今注今译》，页160.
76 Original text: “朝彻而后能见独”; 《庄子今注今译》，页181.
77 Original text: “彼是莫得其偶，谓之‘道枢’”; 《庄子今注今译》，页55.
concept on Oneness. As Xu states, “Zhuangzi’s philosophy highly concerns about the concept of Solitary… In Zhuangzi’s philosophy, Solitary is denoting the spiritual state of one being One with Dao.” 78 (Xu, 2014, p.356, my translation)

2.4.2 Different Layers of the Concept of Oneness

Although as explained above, Oneness basically denotes one’s spiritual state of being One with Dao. With this spiritual state, one already transcends all the differences in the phenomenal world. Hence, Oneness generally encompasses the following four layers: opposite judgments are One; all things in the phenomenal world are One; individuality and entirety are One; the past, present and future are One.

2.4.2.1 Opposite Judgements are One

In the Zhuangzi, opposite judgements are One is clearly declaimed in the phrase of ‘Dao-tong-wei-Yi’ (道通为一). 79 It is a description of Dao which transcends all the distinctive phenomena and cannot be interpreted by common knowledge. It is explained as “Therefore take, for instance, a twig and a pillar, or the ugly person and the great beauty, and all the strange and monstrous transformations. These are all leveled together by Dao.” 80 (Lin, 1942, p.637) Apparently, twig/small and pillar/big, the ugly person and the great beauty, and all the strange and monstrous transformations are all contrastive oppositions which are so distinctive in our common knowledge. However in the Zhuangzi they are “all leveled together by Dao”, or “Dao interchanges them and deems them One” as translated by Graham (2011). Why these so distinctive and contrastive

78 Original text “《庄子》一书，最重视‘独’的概念…而庄子则指的是人见道以后的精神境界”；《中国人性论史》，页356.

79 This phrase is translated as “These are all leveled together by Dao” (Lin, 1942, p.637) or “the Dao interchanges them and deems them One” (Graham, 2001, p.53). See the original text and the two translations of this paragraph in Footnote 73.

80 Original text: “故为是举莛与楹，厉与西施，恢诡谲怪，道通为一”；《庄子今注今译》，页62.
oppositions can be deemed as One? Are they really indifferent and non-distinctive from each other at the very beginning of their existence?

To explore these questions, we have to first answer what is small and big, or ugly and beautiful? We may answer that small is something which is not big; ugly is something which is not beautiful. And vice versa. They are the concepts interdependent with each other from the beginning of their manifestations, neither of them can be understood without the other counterpart. This is what Laozi states “When the people of the Earth all know beauty as beauty, there arises (the recognition of) ugliness. When the people of the Earth all know the good as good, there arises (the recognition of) evil.”

(Lin, 1958, p.56) If people do not define beauty as beauty, they do not know how to judge what is ugliness. However, once people define beauty, category arises. Others which are out of this category are naturally recognized as ugliness. Therefore we could say that there are no beauty and ugliness, small and big or any opposites when not manifested, once manifesting they must be coexisting and interdependent. In other words, they are not only interdependent with each other, but also come from same source. They are two sides within the same thing.

Furthermore, those oppositions are not only coexisting and interdependent, but also not absolutely contrastive and not with rigid distinctions. “Nothing in the world is bigger than the tip of an autumn hair, and Mountain Tai is small; no one lives longer than a doomed child, and Pengzu died young.” (Graham, 2001, p.56) It is clearly

81 Original text: “天下皆知美之为美，斯恶矣；皆知善之为善，斯不善已”；《老子今注今译》，页63.

82 Original text: “夫天下莫大于秋毫之末，而太山为小；莫寿乎殇子，而彭祖为夭”；《庄子今注今译》，页72. Lin’s translation is “There is nothing under the canopy of heaven greater than the tip of a bird’s down in autumn, while the Tai mountain is small. Neither is there any longer life than that of a child cut off in infancy, while Pengzu himself died young.” (Lin, 1942, p.638)
stated that small and big, old and young are comparative, not absolute. “The tip of an autumn hair” is not absolutely small, and “Tai Mountain” is not absolutely big. Everything can be small when compared with a big thing, and it also can be big when compared with a small thing. Hence, we could say that everything can be both small and big. It depends on what it is compared with. They are not absolute and can be mutually transformational, since both small and big exist in one thing and are the same in essence. Thus the fact is that “all evaluations in terms of size or longevity or anything else are mere conventions with no solid reality to them.” (Kohn, 2011, p.22)

Therefore, all these contrastive opposites or judgments are coexisting in the same thing, and can be mutually transformational. They are One.

2.4.2.2 All Things in the Phenomenal World are One

As in Chapter II of the Zhuangzi, “Heaven and earth were born together with me, and the myriad things and I are One.” (Graham, 2001, p.56) In this phenomenal world, although things look so different and distinctive as between an autumn hair and Mountain Tai or between the myriad things and I, all of them can actually be put into two categories, ‘I’ (我, wo)—the self or subjectivity, and ‘things’ (物, wu)—the non-self or objectivity. “Heaven and earth were born together with me”, means all the

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83 Original text: “天地与我并生，而万物与我为一”; 《庄子今注今译》, 页72.

84 The concept of self is first mentioned in Chapter II of the Zhuangzi, as in the sentence of “I lost myself” (吾丧我, Wu-sang-wo). It will be discussed in the next chapter.

85 Similar concepts raised in Zhuangzi’s philosophy are “this” (是, shi) and “that” (彼, bi) as in Chapter II of The Inner Chapters: “There is nothing which is not this; there is nothing which is not that”. (Lin, 1942, p.636) Original text: “物无非彼，物无非是”; 《庄子今注今译》, 页55. These two concepts also reflect the same perspectives as what the researcher is discussing —the self perspective and the non-self perspective. The elaboration of Lai is similar to the researcher’s but with different wording as “Zhuangzi uses the indexical term ‘that’ (bi) to denote what is external to the self. From an individual’s perspective, which is the ‘this’-perspective (shi), everything else is ‘that’. But, of course, no one individual is universally or permanently a ‘this’ or a ‘that’ or an ‘I’ or a ‘you’. My ‘this’ is your ‘that’, and vice versa.” (Lai, 2008, p.151)
existences, the self and non-self, came into being at the same time. It is because all the existences even including time are something, and both something and nothing as counterparts are from the phase of Nothingness, which is ‘not yet having begun having a beginning’ and ‘not yet begun to be things’. They came into being at the same time from the same phase of Nothingness, as One. Hence, heaven and earth—the non-self and I—the self are One.

Moreover, we have learned that the self and non-self, are all different manifestations of Dao. They are different in this phenomenal world, because they have different De within them. As De is the inner reality of things, it gives things their own ways as they are. And as all the different De are endowed from Dao, in this sense they are actually the same. This is why it is claimed in the Zhuangzi that “From the point of view of differentiation of things, we distinguish between the liver and the gall, between the Chu State and Yue State. From the point of view of their sameness, all things are One.” However, here the sameness does not mean a unity. It means “the sameness or commonness of difference rather than uniformity.” which is a variety of distinctiveness or individualities within the whole, as explained in Section 2.3.2. Therefore, from the perspective of Dao, or in other words, from the perspective of the ultimate source of everything, all things are One. They are One from the beginning of their existences.

Whereas, even though ‘the myriad things and I are One’ is claiming that self and non-self are One, it should not be noted that “The overall purpose of ‘One’ here does not mean dividing every existence with borders and then simply add all existences

86 These are first cited in Section 2.2.3.2, see the original text in Footnote 40 and Footnote 42.

87 Original text: “自其异者视之，肝胆楚越也；自其同者视之，万物皆一也”；《庄子今注今译》，页143.
together and converge into One.” 88 (Wang, 2009, p. 33, my translation). They are One, because there is Solitary with no counterparts or opposites. This is what Xu states “the things—the non-self start to appear because of the counterpart of self.” 89 (Xu, 2014, p. 358, my translation). When the self is lost, its counterpart—non-self naturally does not exist any more. Both of the counterparts are just the opposites within One.

Therefore, from both their source of existence and their existence as counterparts, self and non-self are One.

2.4.2.3 Individuality and Entirety are One

As self and non-self are One, there is no absolute individuality any more. All the seemingly distinctive things are merged into the entirety, the whole. It is as Xu states, “What outside of us is the Heaven (Dao), and what inside of us is De. Thus, there is no outside and inside in reality.” 90 (Xu, 2001, p.61, my translation) In the allegory of Heaven music, the master Ziqi explained “the music of Earth consists of hollows and apertures, and the music of man of pipes and flutes”. (Lin, 1942, p.634) The music of Earth and man came into being only after their self-choosing of the wind—“the sounds are produced according to their individual capacities.” (Lin, 1942, p.634) What they have self-chosen is their own De, which is from the wind as the metaphor of Dao. But when asked what is the music of Heaven, Ziqi only answered as “who is it that agitates their breasts?”(Lin, 1942, p.634) Because as explained before, the music of Heaven is actually the wind which has no sound, and sounds of Earth and man are its

88 Original text: “一”所揭示的的整体理，并不意味着将天地万物划分界限之后，再将它们拼凑相加而成一大仓库”; <庄子“一”之哲理析论>, 页33.

89 Original text: “物因已而显”，《中国人性论史》; 页358.

90 Original text: “外在者为天，内在者为德，实际是无内无外的”；《中国艺术精神》,页61.
manifestations. In this sense, the music of Heaven lays within the music of Earth and man, which as Xu claims,

“The music of Heaven is within the music of earth and man; and the unlimited is within the limited as hollows, and apertures and the pipe and flutes. Therefore, the pipes and flutes, and hollows and apertures are all Dao… In the Zhuangzi, every music of man, music of Earth, or every living being can reach the state that ‘the Heaven within him which he perfects in Solitude’.” 91 (Xu, 2001, p.65, my translation)

Simply put, the individuality is entirety, they are One. Each limited individual pipe can expand or transform to the unlimited and entirety. And vice versa, “The absolute and unlimited Dao which can eliminate all the distinctions and counterparts can only manifest in the comparatively limited.” 92 (Meng, 1995, p.57, my translation)

Furthermore, it shows that the seemly transcendent Dao cannot be real without laying in the concrete physical and material individual things, just as the body of Heaven music is the physical hollows and flutes. Same as the physical nature is the body of Dao—the primordial natural principle so-of-itself. Hence, not only the individuality and entirety are One; but also the immaterial and material, the physical and spiritual are One. The Oneness of Dao is both transcendent and immanent.

2.4.2.4 Past, Present and Future are One

As already discussed before, in the Zhuangzi Dao is like a cycle of formation and dissolution—“Their dividing is formation, their formation is dissolution; all things whether forming or dissolving in reverting interchange and are deemed to be One.” When we try to cognize these formation and dissolution, we tend to cognize them with a continuity of time in this phenomenal world. But what Zhuangzi’s philosophy tries to

91 Original text: “天籁即在人籁地中之，无限即在众窍之有限之中；正因如此，所以比竹、众窍，皆是‘道’…庄子是在每一人籁，每一地籁，每一有生之类，皆看出其独自成其天”，《中国艺术精神》, 页65.

92 Original text: “能消除一切差别和对立的绝对无限的道，只有在相对中才能体现出来”；《中国心性论》, 页57.
claim here is in a metaphysical realm, which is beyond time and space. In Zhuangzi’s philosophy, Dao is a “constant flux and incessant transformation”. (Chan, 1963, p.177) That is why it writes, “Life arises from death, and vice versa… When this and that are both without their correlates, that is the very ‘Axis of Dao’. And when that Axis passes through the centre at which all Infinities converge.” 93 (Lin, 1942, p.636) Again, life and death, or formation and dissolution seems closely relating to the past, present or future. But in reality, this time concept of past, present and future are just within the process of the circle of Dao. It is the self that makes these differences as past, present and future. If we take the perspective of Dao, which means sitting at the centre—the Axis of Dao, they are just within One and the Infinity. Or express it another way, we can say that there is no past, no future, only the present constant flux and incessant transformation of Dao.

In Zhuangzi’s philosophy there are many descriptions about the true man who takes past, present and future as One—the constant present:

The true men of old…failing they had no cause for regret; succeeding, no cause for self-satisfaction…

The true men of old did not know what it was to love life or to hate death. They did not rejoice in birth, nor strive to put off dissolution… They did not forget whence it was they had sprung, neither did they seek to inquire their return thither. Cheerfully they accepted life, waiting patiently for their restoration (the end). This is what is called not to lead the heart-mind (xin) astray from Dao, and not to supplement the natural by human means. Such a one may be called a true man…

Their joys and sorrows are in direct touch with the four seasons, in harmony with all creation, and none know the limit thereof. 94 (Lin, 1942, pp.657-658)

93 Original text: “方生方死，方死方生…彼是莫得其偶，谓之‘道枢’。枢始得其环中,以应无穷”；《庄子今注今译》，页55.

94 Original text: “古之真人…若然者，过而弗悔，当而不自得也。““古之真人，不知说生，不知恶死。…不患其所始，不求其所终,受而喜之，悟而复之。是之谓不以心损道，不以人助天，是之谓真人。” “喜怒通四时，与物有宜而莫知其极”，《庄子今注今译》，页166.
These are the highest state of Oneness. The “failing” or “succeeding”, “life” or “death”, “birth” or “dissolution”, they are all about time, about the past and future. The true men neither attach to the past, nor the future, because the past and future are no difference. These ideas (of past, present and future) only lie in one’s memory or expectation, which are not real. True men do not bother to attach themselves to the past or strive for the unknown future, which are all illusions. True men only live spontaneously in One with what is real—present.

That is what Zhuangzi describes “Their joys and sorrows are in direct touch with the four seasons.” Since they merge themselves with the four season—the cycle of time, they are already in great Spontaneity that “everything spontaneously just is what it is and does what it does.” (Fung, 2016, p.xi). In other words, they are in harmony with all creation, which is the utmost harmony as discussed in Section 2.3.3. Hence they are One with Dao, and “none know the limit thereof.”

Therefore, all of the four layers of Oneness prove that all the distinctions which we take as common sense in daily life — between the opposite judgments, every different things in the phenomenal world, individuality and entirety, and the past, present and future—are not real and absolute. They are all interchangeable within One. The only reality is Oneness of Dao. We may also find that ‘self’ plays a prominent role in all the distinctions as the judgments, different things, different individualities and different time concepts, which blocks us to know the reality as Oneness.

2.5 Summary of this Chapter

Zhuangzi’s philosophy focuses on exposing the ultimate reality. The ultimate reality is Dao, and it is One and the whole. It is One of a dynamically changing and
reversing process. Every being and non-being, manifested and un-manifested, material and immaterial are constantly changing within this whole, but Dao itself never changes. As Dao is One and the whole, it is a whole of a well balance and unity in all dimensions as manifested and un-manifested, above and below, outwardly and inwardly, material and immaterial, physical and spiritual.

De is the inner reality of man. Since De is endowed from Dao, man is naturally of Dao. Whereas, every individual has different purposes in life according to their different De endowed from Dao. This purpose is the way of every individuals’ living and being, and it is the way man connected with the whole both outwardly and inwardly, physically and spiritually. Once one remains being one with our own inner reality—De, one is just naturally being one with the whole, the source, the ultimate reality. Hence, one is staying in real and is naturally nurtured by the ultimate source.

Oneness is a concept which takes the perspective of individuals to stress one’s return or being one with Dao. It is a non-discrimination state, and it encompasses the following four layers: opposite judgments are One; all things in the phenomenal world are One; individuality and entirety are One; past, present and future are One. Taking reality as Oneness starts with ceasing to listen and follow the voices from outside, but looking inwardly and being One with one’s own inner reality, De. It provides us a holistic perspective to look at both the outside world and the inner world of ourselves. It helps individuals not to be distracted and confined by the limited perspective of reality.

As the ultimate reality is Dao as Oneness, it is necessary to examine the possibility of people to really understand the reality and how people are confined in the limited perspective of reality and separate themselves with the true reality. These require more exploration on the concept of self—the entity of looking at the reality, which is detailed
and discussed in Zhuangzi’s philosophy within the two concepts Xu and xin. The next chapter will examine the concepts of Xu and xin in details.
Chapter III:

The Concept of Xu in Zhuangzi’s Philosophy

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we saw that the ultimate reality is Dao as Oneness. Oneness is a non-differentiated and non-discriminated state. Individuals and things are naturally One with the Dao without absolute distinctions. Whereas when it comes to individuals, two questions rise as: is it possible for individuals to really know the reality, and how are the individuals confined in the limited perspective of reality and separate themselves with the ultimate reality. Hence, further discussions on individuals are needed, which involves various topics as subjectivity, individuality, self, body and mind, etc. In Zhuangzi’s philosophy, all of the topics above are discussed within the two concepts of Xu and xin.

In this chapter, further attempts will be made on examining the two concepts of Xu and xin. The concept of Xu will be first explored in section 3.2. There are majorly three distinct roles that the concept of Xu plays in Zhuangzi’s philosophy, Xu metaphorically has been used as the state of a hollow, Xu as the state related to Dao, and Xu as both the action and the state related to xin. The concept of xin—the locus of Xu, will be discussed in the following section 3.3. It will be discussed respectively in two dimensions as chengxin\(^95\) and Xuxin\(^96\) according to Zhuangzi’s philosophical system.

The main aim of this chapter is to argue that Xu and xin play important roles in individuals’ life in relating to the reality. Chengxin is the reason individuals are separat-

\(^95\) Chengxin is an opposite state of Xuxin, this concept will be detailed examined in Section 3.2.2.1.

\(^96\) Xuxin: it is “Xu-jing-zhi-xin” for short as Xu (2001) calls. See Footnote 7.
3.2 On the Concept of Xu

3.2.1 The Terminology of Xu in Chinese Culture

The Chinese term Xu (虚), can be variously translated as hollow, empty, blank, void, weak, deficient, tenuous, vacuous, etc. According to The Chinese Character Origin Dictionary, the original meaning is “a cave where the ancients resided.” ⁹⁷ (Gu, 2003, p. 632, my translation) And gradually the meaning developed as empty, deficiently weak, and tenuous. It is obvious that the term Xu was initially used as a noun to describe something like a cave or hollow, which is empty inside or has a capacity to contain things, like a container. On this basis, it was developed as an adjective to describe the state of emptiness, blank, or deficiency. This is the reason why this term has various translations as hollow, empty, blank, void, weak, deficient, tenuous, vacuous or sometimes even an empty container.

However, this term was only used as a general word until Laozi used it in his Daodejing as a philosophical term and made it a philosophical concept in Daoism. After Laozi, this concept is also used majorly within the Zhuangzi. As discussed in Chapter I, since the ultimate reality is the dynamic Oneness of Dao manifesting as great Spontaneity of every individual, the concept of Xu shows the possibility of individuals’ Spontaneity. We can find that in the Inner Chapters of Zhuangzi, there are thirteen occurrences of Xu in total. And there are thirty occurrences of Xu in the Outer Chapters, and seventeen occurrences in the Miscellaneous Chapters which argues that

⁹⁷ Original text: “本以当为古人穴居的废窑包”; 《汉字源流字典》, 页632.
Zhuangzi’s philosophy indeed developed Xu as a central concept in Zhuangzi’s philosophical system. After the Daodejing and the Zhuangzi, Xu became a unique approach and state of Oneness of Dao in Daoism, as the Encyclopedia Britannica explains:

Xu, Wade-Giles romanization hsu (Chinese: “emptiness,” or “purity”), in Chinese Daoism, a state of equilibrium through which one becomes receptive to and attuned with the transforming experience of which one is a part. It is characterized by an unself-conscious sense of continuity with one’s immediate context. This transforming experience is called Dao.\(^{98}\) (Stefon, 2017)

From the explanation above, it is clear that the term Xu is related to both Dao and “unself-consciousness”. The following section provides a detailed exposition of the diverse roles that the concept of Xu plays in Zhuangzi’s philosophy

### 3.2.2 Three Roles of Xu in Zhuangzi’s Philosophy

Based on both of the original meaning and Laozi’s philosophical meaning of Xu, Zhuangzi’s own concept of Xu is developed, which plays three different roles in its philosophical system as follows, Xu metaphorically used as the state of a hollow, Xu as the state related to Dao, and Xu as both the state and action related to xin.

#### 3.2.2.1 Xu Metaphorically Used as the State of a Hollow

The first kind, Xu is metaphorically used based on the original meaning of the image of an empty cave. It can be found in Chapter II of the Zhuangzi, “When the gale has passed, all the hollows empty.” \(^{99}\) (Graham, 2001, p.49) When the second time Xu appears with the original meaning of an empty cave, Graham already interprets it as “emptiness” (Graham, 2001, p.50). Whereas Lin’s translation still keeps the original meaning of it, “Joy and anger, sorrow and happiness, worries and regrets, indecision

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\(^{99}\) Original text: “厉风则众窍为虚”；《庄子今注今译》，页34-35.
and fears, come upon us by turns, with ever changing mood, like music from the hollows, or like mushrooms from damp.” ¹⁰⁰ (Lin, 1942, p.634)

Here we see that Xu was translated as empty hollow which wind can pass through or music comes from. It is just like what is mentioned in the allegory of Heaven music. Only if the flutes and apertures are empty inside, can the wind go through, which can make the music. It is similar to what Laozi used in “How the universe is like a bellows! Empty, yet it gives a supply that never fails.” ¹⁰¹ (Lin, 1958, p.70) Here the term Xu was translated as empty—the state of a bellows, which shares the same meaning with Zhuangzi’s hollow. From above we get an image that Xu is an empty state of a hollow, or a bellows.

The meaning of emptiness, or the image of hollow or flute in this term is repeated in the Zhuangzi, and it develops with another similar term Tong (通) as introduced to describe this state. Tong literally means “open, (pass) through or unimpeded.” ¹⁰² (Handian, 2017) In Chapter V of the Zhuangzi, it writes, “To maintain our store in peace and joy, and let none of it be lost through the senses though the channels to them are cleared…” (Graham, 2001, p.80) ¹⁰³ The term Tong was translated as the channels, which Lin (1942) paraphrased as “in harmony with the world”. We can find it is very similar to the meaning of Xu, an empty hollow. This state is “in harmony with the world” as Lin (1942) paraphrased, because it is open and unimpeded, and everything

¹⁰⁰ Original text: “喜怒哀乐，悲怒变易，世故变化，亦出虚，蒸成菌”，《庄子今注今译》, 页42. Graham’s translation is “Pleasure in things and anger against them, sadness and joy, forethought and regret, change and immobility, idle influences that initiate our gestures—music coming out of emptiness, vapor condensing into mushrooms.” (Graham, 2001, p.50)

¹⁰¹ Original text “天地之间，其犹橐龠乎，虚而不屈，动而愈出。多言数穷，不如守中”；《老子今注今译》，页74-74.


¹⁰³ The original text is “使之和豫通而不失于”，《庄子今注今译》，页154. Lin’s translation is “One should live so that one is at ease and in harmony with the world”. (Lin, 1942, p.655)
can pass through it. Another good example appears in Chapter VI, when describing a
state of a true man, it is stated,

Since he is like this, his heart-mind forgets; his face is calm; his forehead is
broad. He is chilly like autumn, balmy like spring, and his joy and anger prevail
through the four seasons. He goes along with what is right for things, and no one
knows his limit. \(^{104}\) (Watson, 2013, p.43)

The term Tong is translated as “prevail through” by Waston (2013), “evenly through” by
Graham (2011) or “in directly touch with” by Lin (1942). Here it indicates that the true
man is the one who is free in xin—the heart-mind, and he himself is like an empty,
unimpeded hollow and is spontaneously responsive to the four seasons. It is exactly the
same meaning of Xu as hollow.

Hence it is obvious to conclude that the first meaning of Xu/Tong is based on the
image of an empty hollow, and it is a figurative description of state which is internally
empty but passively and spontaneously receptive to the external, like an empty hollow.

### 3.2.2.2 Xu as the State Related to Dao

In the *Zhuangzi* the most important paragraph relating Xu, Dao and xin together,
is in Xinzhai (心齋)—the fasting of the heart-mind, \(^{105}\) in Chapter IV,

“May I ask what the fasting of the heart-mind is?” Confucius said, “Make your
will one! Don’t listen with your ears, listen with your heart-mind. No, don’t

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104 Original text: “於是者，其心志，其容寂，其颡頪。凄然似秋，暖然似春，喜怒通四时，与物有
宜而莫知其极”；《庄子今注今译》，页166. Graham’s translation is “Such men as that had
unremembering heart-minds, calm faces, clear brows. They were cool like autumn, warm like
spring; they were pleased or angry evenly through the four seasons, did what fitted in with
other things, and no one knew their high point.” (Graham, 2011, p.85) Lin’s translation is
“Such men are free in mind and calm in demeanour, with high foreheads. Sometimes
disconsolate like autumn, and sometimes warm like spring, their joys and sorrows are in direct
touch with the four seasons, in harmony with all creation, and none know the limit
thereof.” (Lin, 1942, p. 658)

105 The original text is 心齋 (Xinzhai), 心 (xin) literally means heart-mind. And 齋 (zhai) is
translated as fasting. According to Kohn, it means “to purify oneself in preparation for a
ritual…Fasting is also a common metaphor for meditation, then seen as a mental diet of
concentration on one object or detached observation (mindfulness).” (Kohn, 2011, p106) Both
of them will be further discussed in section 3.3.
listen with your heart-mind, but listen with your spirit (Qi). Listening stops with the ears, the heart-mind stops with recognition, but spirit (Qi) is empty and waits for all things. Dao gathers in emptiness alone. Emptiness is the fasting of the heart-mind.”  

Here Xu is translated as empty or emptiness, and it says “spirit (Qi) is empty and waits for all things. Dao gathers in emptiness alone.” It denotes clearly that Xu is an empty state of both waiting for all things and Dao’s gathering. It is an interchanging state of things and the un-manifested state of Dao. And it emphasizes the state of Xu—the emptiness, is the only condition which Dao can gather or abide. It is suggesting similar meaning as “Look into that closed room, the empty chamber where brightness is born!” (Watson, 2013, p.26) The brightness is a metaphor of Dao. No light can come into a room which is impeded or full. Why does Dao—the brightness only gather in the empty room? It is later explained in the Outer Chapters of the Zhuangzi.

In the Great Beginning, there was Nonbeing; there was no being, no name. Out of it arose one; there was one, but it had no form. Things got hold of it and it came to life, and it was called De. Before things had forms, they had their allotments; these were of many kinds but not cut off from one another, and they were called fates. Out of the flow and flux, things were born, and as they grew, they developed distinctive shapes; these were called forms. The forms and bodies held within them spirits, each with its own characteristics and limitations, and this was called the inborn nature. If the (inborn) nature is trained, you may return to De, and De at its highest peak is identical with the Beginning. Being identical, you will be empty; being empty, you will be Great. (Watson, 2013, pp.88-89)

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107 The original text is 气 (Qi), which will be discussed in the following Section 3.2.2.3.

108 Lin’s translation is “In such open receptivity only can Dao abide”. (Lin, 1942, pp.647-648) Xu is translated as “open receptivity”.


110 Original text: “始有无，无有无名。一之所起，有一而未形。物得以生谓之德；未形者有分，且然无间谓之命。留动而生物，物成生理谓之形；形体保神，各有仪则谓之性；性修反德，德至同于初。同乃虚，虚乃大”；《庄子今注今译》，页302
Here Xu is translated as empty. Again, it actually describes the cycle of Dao, from un-manifestation to manifestation and then reverse to un-manifestation as already explained in Section 2.2.3 in Chapter II: “The Great beginning” is the first phase — the completely un-manifested state of Dao. “There was Nonbeing” is the second phase of Nothingness without any counterparts, as it says “there was no being, no name”. It is exactly the meaning of “not yet having begun being without something” in Chapter II of the Zhuangzi. From the second phase of Nothingness, the non-bodily shaped one — ‘the one had no form’, comes into being. This is the third phase of “there is ‘something', there is ‘nothing’ ” as existence and non-existence as counterparts, but “There were things but not yet borders”. It is the one had no form, and it is the “flow and flux” which things were born out of. Then, in the fourth phase, things “had their allotments” and had forms. Those are the things come into being in the phenomenal world with the “the forms and bodies held within them spirits”. The spirits here are actually their own De. And when things “with its own characteristics and limitations”, it is called the inborn nature (inner nature)\(^{111}\) in the Zhuangzi.

Then the following is the reverse: “If the (inborn) nature is trained, you may return to De, and De at its highest peak is identical with the Beginning. Being identical, you will be empty; being empty, you will be Great.” The inner nature and De is the fourth phase in the phenomenal world. When the fourth phase of De reaches to the highest peak, it is actually the third phase which the one had no forms. It is explained as the state of tong (同, identical) in the Zhuangzi — in the original text which is translated as “identical” \(^{112}\)—which means the inner nature and De within the body and form, the

\(^{111}\) Original text is 性, xing. It is also translated as inner nature in the Chapter II. See Footnote 52. Inner nature will be used in the rest of the dissertation to keep the consistency of the term.

\(^{112}\) It means De is identical to Dao. The ‘identical’ here does not mean absolutely the same. Its meaning is similar to ‘harmony’ as discussed in Section 2.3.3.
allotments from the one, are identical to the one flow and flux. It is back to the third phase of one. And as in the Zhuangzi it is explained that being identical is empty—the Xu state, which is the second phase. And being Xu, it is the first phase which is also stated as Great. The Great here stands for the un-manifested state of Dao, which includes the potentiality of everything. As in Daodejing, it states “I do not know its name, and address it as Dao. If forced to give it a name, I shall call it ‘Great’.” 113 (Lin, 1958, p.143)

It is clear that Xu is the second phase of the cycle of Dao, which is both the first state of manifestation of Dao as Nothingness or Nonbeing and the last state of reverse to the un-manifestation of Dao as ‘being identical’ or Emptiness. Simply put, it is the linking state of manifestation of things and the un-manifestation of Dao. This is the reason that it is argued in Zhuangzi’s philosophy: “spirit (Qi) is empty and waits for all things. Dao gathers in emptiness alone.” It also reflects Zhuangzi’s concept of Oneness that Dao and things are One. They are interchangeable through the state of Xu.

As discussed above, the term Tong is also related to Dao in two layers which keeps the same meaning with Xu: ‘These are All Leveled together by Dao’ which can be literally translated as Dao-through-as-One (道通为一, Dao-tong-wei-Yi). And ‘These Conditions are again Leveled together into One’, which literally is (these conditions are) Again-through-as-One (复通为一, fu-tong-wei-Yi). The term Tong here is translated vividly as ‘interchange’ by Graham (2011). No matter how many various and different forms manifest as ten thousand things, no matter how different and contrary the judgements are, they are all interchangeable in the cycle of Dao, because they all come from Dao, and will return to Dao as well. In this sense, it is easy to understand “Dao

113 Original text: “吾不知其名，强字之曰‘道’，强为之名曰‘大’”; 《老子今注今译》,页143.
gathers in emptiness alone” — Xu, the emptiness is actually the state of a cleared channel for Dao to manifest and return. Or expressed in another way, Xu is like the state of a cleared channel for things being One with Dao.

As presented above, Xu is the first state of Dao’s manifestation as Nothingness or Emptiness, and additionally Xu is also the last state of the reverse to the un-manifested state of Dao. One point should be noted that within this Nothingness or Emptiness of Xu, since there is no anything, there is no movements. There is only stillness (静, jing) which is contrary to the movements as “Out of the flow and flux, things were born.”

Hence, the stillness is one major characteristic of Xu. That is the reason that Xu and jing — emptiness and stillness are always put together in the Outer Chapters, asserting that “Emptiness, stillness, limpidity, silence, inaction — these are the level of Heaven and earth, the substance of Dao and its De…Emptiness, stillness, limpidity, silence, inaction are the root of the ten thousand things.” (Watson, 2013, pp. 98-99) As Meng clearly points out, “Ziran is the attribution of Dao. And the features of Ziran are ‘Emptiness, stillness, limpidity, silence, inaction’.” (Meng, 1995, p.58, my translation)

In short, Xu is an intermediate state of interchanging and circulating without obstruction which is both the stillness of the un-manifested and the primordial natural force of Dao; and the pre-activeness of the manifesting things in phenomenal world. Hence, Xu is the key of Oneness.

114 It is also translated as tranquility. This stillness is not an absolute static state. As the ‘non-bodily shaped one’ comes from it, it is better understood as a pre-active state.

115 Original text is “留动生物”; 《庄子今注今译》, 页302.

116 Original text: “夫虚静恬淡寂漠无为者，天地之本而道德之至也...万物之本也”; 《庄子今注今译》, 页328.

117 Original text: “自然是道的属性。自然就是虚静恬淡寂寞无为”; 《中国心性论》, 页58.
3.2.2.3 Xu as Both the Action and the State Related to Xin

Xu as the Passive Action on Xin

As Zhuangzi’s philosophy is more located on individuals, it cares more about individuals’ return or being One with Dao. Hence, Zhuangzi’s concept of Xu is also related to xin, the heart-mind, which is carefully discussed in the heart-mind fasting as mentioned in Section 3.2.2.2—“Emptiness is the fasting of heart-mind”.

_Fasting_ (齋, zhai) in Chinese means “to purify oneself in preparation for a ritual…” Fasting is also a common metaphor for meditation, then seen as a mental diet of concentration on one object or detached observation (mindfulness).” (Kohn, 2011, p. 106) Or more vividly as Slingerland explains fasting as “Zhuangzi feels we must ‘starve’ the heart-mind that we have been given… in order to create a clearing of tenuousness (Xu) in which Dao will gather.” (Slingerland, 2003, p. 184) Apparently, fasting here means to keep Xu, the emptiness. And Xu here is an action functioning on the heart-mind, which can be simply understood as to purify the heart-mind and make it empty. However, what needs to be fasted or purified from the heart-mind? The response in the _Zhuangzi_ is,

Then, said Yan Hui, the reason I could not use this method (fasting the heart-mind) was because of consciousness of a self. If I could apply this method, the assumption of a self would have gone. Is this what you mean by the receptive state? Exactly so, replied the Master…(Lin, 1942, p. 648)  

Clearly explained, what is fasted in the heart-mind is the “assumption of a self”. Only if the “assumption of a self would have gone”, could one reach the empty, and receptive state, Xu. According to Zhuangzi’s philosophy, it is the self, that makes the heart-mind stuffed and not empty. It is similar to the situation when one is performing in a concert.

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118 Orignial text: “颜回曰：‘回之未得使, 实自回也; 得使之也, 未始有回也, 可谓虚乎?’ 夫子曰,‘尽矣!’” , 《庄子今注今译》, 页116.
The excessive self-consciousness will distract him/her from the music itself by questions like ‘how does my hair look?’ or ‘Am I making a fool of myself?’. Only if he/she forget the self, could he/she be really spontaneous with the music.

Whereas, how does Xu, a passive state of emptiness become an action of fasting? Is this action contrary to the previous meaning of Xu which is a passively receptive state? In the fasting of heart-mind, the action of listening is used as a symbol to elaborate the action of Xu. This action, listening, actually here stands for the action from the senses, and it is indeed indicating a passive action without any active effort—comparing to other sense actions. The Xu as an action is exactly like the passive action of listening, which is an action of non-action. It is an action of passively letting things in, or letting things through naturally and spontaneously. Explained later in the paragraph it is “If the channels inward through eyes and ears are cleared…” 119 (Graham, 2011, p.69) The key here is the term Tong in the original text, which translated as “cleared channels”. Again it can be concluded that Xu is a passive action to purify the assumption of self in the heart-mind, which will keep the heart-mind cleared without any obstruction. It is exactly like the action of listening, which is just passively letting things in and being spontaneous with the externals.

**Xu as the Individual’s Spiritual State of Oneness between Xin and Dao**

Since it is clear that Xu is an action of non-action—a passive action of letting things in, the next question must be discussed is what can get through the heart-mind? The explanation is ‘Qi is the empty and waits for all things.’ In other words, fasting of the heart-mind or keeping the heart-mind empty—Xu, means to open the heart-mind to Qi, which is called ‘listen with the Qi.’

119 Original text: “徇耳目而内通”，《庄子今注今译》，页116. Lin’s translation is more paraphrasing as “Let your ears and eyes communicate within…” (Lin, 1942, p.648)
In order to understand this, it is better to discuss the concept of \( Qi \) first. Qi here is often translated as spirit, which the researcher cannot agree with. Qi means the breath, air, steam, vapor in general. And it is another unique concept in Chinese philosophy, which is better translated as ‘vital force’ by Chan as it “denotes the psychophysiological power associated with blood and breath.” (Chan, 1963, p.784) In Zhuangzi’s philosophy the entire world including heaven and earth is but one vital force—Qi. It is the non-bodily shape One, and the flow-and-flux mentioned in Section 3.2.2.2. Hence, it says in Chapter VI of the Zhuangzi: “Even now they have joined with the Creator as men to wander in the single breath (Qi) of heaven and earth.” (Watson, 2013, p.50) Qi is the primal state of the material world, and human beings are also transformed from this state. And Qi is elaborated further in that every life and death or existence and nonexistence are actually the results of the gathering or scattering of the Qi:

Man’s life is a coming-together of Qi. If it comes together, there is life; if it scatters, there is death. And if life and death are companions to each other, then what is there for us to be anxious about? The ten thousand things are really One. We look on some as beautiful because they are rare or unearthly; we look on others as ugly because they are foul and rotten. But the foul and rotten may turn into the rare and unearthly, and the rare and unearthly may turn into the foul and rotten. So it is said, You have only to comprehend the one Qi that is the world. The sage never ceases to value Oneness. (Watson, 2013, p.177)

As it is stated, every existing thing ‘had their allotments’ is from the vital force Qi, and everything is just part of the continuous flow of Qi. “All life comes from Qi…When Qi is vibrating and flowing, the ten thousand myriad things get into life.” (Meng, 1995, p.58) It is the beginning of material manifestation of Dao, the basis of life, and it only

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120 Original text: “方且与造物者为人，而游乎天地之一气”，《庄子今注今译》，页190.

121 Original text: “人之生，气之聚也；聚则为生，散则为死。若死生之徒，吾又何患！故万物一也，是其所美者为神奇，其所恶者为臭腐；臭腐复化为神奇，神奇复化为臭腐。故曰，‘遁天下一气耳。圣人故贵一’”，《庄子今注今译》，页536.

122 Original text: “一切生命来源于气…一气振荡，万物自生”，《中国心性论》，页58.
can flow within the empty state without any obstruction. And the flowing of Qi is the material manifestation of the most essential function of Dao. As it is already discussed that the ultimate reality in Zhuangzi’s philosophy is the ever-changing cycle of Dao, then ‘listening with Qi’—keeping the heart-mind in the empty Xu state means to let Qi in and flow without obstruction. It is the only way for individuals connected with the whole, which will be the way of keeping Oneness.

This is as Graham explained,

Qi, the breath and other energizing fluids which alternate between activity as the Yang and passivity as the Yin (as in breathing out and in) ...When the purified fluid has become perfectly tenuous the heart-mind will be emptied of conceptual knowledge, the channels of the senses will be cleared, and he will simply perceive and respond. (Graham, 2011, p.69)

The “conceptual knowledge” and “senses” mentioned above are what is called 'ears' and ‘recognitions’ in the fasting of heart-mind, which it claims ‘Don’t listen with your ears… don’t listen with your heart-mind’. It explains that “Listening stops with the ears” because “the ears can get no deeper than the surface of words” as Slingerland exposes (Slingerland, 2003, p.184). But not only that, also because the ears stands for our senses. If we rely on our senses to perceive, we will be confined by the sense perceptions in the phenomenal world. Furthermore, it says that “the heart-mind stops with recognition”. The recognition here stands for the “symbols or ideas” which functioned by the heart-mind and we are still confined by the “artificial distinctions” (Watson, 2013, p.25). In these two circumstances, the heart-mind is always confined or distracted by the externals. “The heart-mind was drawn to leave its original position by the external things. Hence the heart-mind is always galloping to chase the

123 Original text is “心止于符”; 《庄子今注今译》, 页115. The character 符 (fu) is translated as “recognition” by Watson (2013), or “symbols or ideas” by Fung: “The function of the ear ends with hearing; that of the heart-mind, with symbols or ideas. But the spirit is an emptiness ready to receive all things. Dao abides in the emptiness; the emptiness is the fast of heart-mind.” (Fung, 2016, p.27)
external things and make distinctions and judgments, which causes the heart-mind lose its own nature.”

Whereas, listening with the Qi is actually a ‘perfectly tenuous’ state of heart-mind as Graham (2011) says. In this state, the heart-mind is empty, still and free from the chattering conceptual knowledge and sensory perceptions which means the assumption of self is naturally lost as well. The heart-mind actually is as what Kohn explains, “Qi… is fluid and open—empty of emotional reactions and preconceptions.” (Kohn, 2011, p. 106) The heart-mind is like a cleared channel which will be passively receptive to the externals naturally spontaneously. The fasting of the heart-mind is to get rid of the assumption of self and it becomes still in its original position which “activates Qi the subtle flowing force that connects all existence, over and above sensory perception.” (Kohn, 2011, p.xv) When the channel is cleared, the seemingly physically never-changing human being naturally and spontaneously become receptive to the external and the whole through the Xu state of heart-mind. Thus, human being is spontaneously in the flux process, the ever-changing cycle of Dao. In other words, “one is receptive to the promptings of the impersonal Qi.” (Norden, 2007, p.232) This is the highest spiritual state of individual—naturally being One with the whole without extra effort, as what Chan summarizes,

As a description of a state of mind, it means absolute peacefulness and purity of mind and freedom from worry and selfish desires and not to be disturbed by incoming impressions or to allow what is already in the mind to disturb what is coming into the mind. (Chan, 1963, p.788)

Therefore, we could learn that when Xu is related to individuals heart-mind, it is actually both a passive action on heart-mind and a spiritual state of Oneness between heart-

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124 Original text: “但由于外物所引而离开了心原来的位置，逐外物去奔驰，惹是招非，反而掩盖了它的本性”；《中国人性论史》，页349.
mind and Dao. Therefore, Wang states, “For Zhuangzi…the heart-mind is empty, free from anything at all: it is the foundation of transcendence, of going beyond the world of form, and of becoming One with Dao.” (Wang, 2014, p.189) In other words, Xu is a state of the heart-mind which reflects individuals’ spontaneous spiritual state of One-ness.

3.3 On the Concept of Xin (Heart-mind)—the Locus of Xu

As Xu is both the figurative state of xin—heart-mind, and the action functioning on the heart-mind which would lead the individual to achieve the state of Oneness, it is of great significance to explore the concept of xin in Zhuangzi’s philosophy.

3.3.1 The Terminology of Xin in Chinese Culture

The Chinese character for xin is 心, the original meaning is the organ inside the bodies of man and animals which controls the blood circulation. However it is not only regarded as a physical organ. Even in classic Chinese, this term carries more meanings than only a physical organ. First, it is mainly rendered as the center of emotions and feelings. As summarized by Wang, “there were some occurrences in the Book of Odes (诗经, Shijing) that xin is already used to express various states of emotions and sentiments.” (Wang, 2014, p.9, my translation) In this sense, the xin can be translated as heart. Whereas on other occasions, xin is also a center of thinking. In the book Mozi, Mozi says that the son of Heaven “make use of others'...
minds to help one's own thought.” 128 (CTP, 2018) Here xin is translated as “mind” since it is related to thoughts and is regarded as the center of thinking. And later in the Mencius, Mencius claims that “To the mind belongs the office of thinking. By thinking, it gets the right view of things; by neglecting to think, it fails to do this.” 129 (CTP, 2018) Again, xin is translated as mind here, which clearly shows that xin has a function of thinking. Therefore in Chinese culture, especially in Chinese philosophy, the term xin denotes both the physical organ and the faculty of emotion and thinking. This is the reason that xin is variously translated as heart, mind, or heart-mind. As it not only stands for a physical organ, we should be noted that the heart-mind is amorphous when compared to the spatial concept of the physical body which occupying a specific location. It is just like Meng claims,

Chinese philosophy believes that xin is not a static mirror, but a process of infinitely creative activity. Xin is active, not static, including various activities such as emotions, intentions, ideas, desires, feelings, perceptions, and thinking. It is the activities and effects of xin that reflect its own existence. 130 (Meng, 1995, p. 59, my translation)

The translation of heart-mind is preferred in this research because it clearly states the two major functions of xin according to Chinese culture. But one point should be noted that, the translation of heart-mind does not indicate any dichotomy between the heart—which represents emotion, desire, affection, or sentiments—and the mind—which represent idea, intention, reasoning, or cognition—as the opposed functions in Western cul-


130 Original text: “中国哲学认为，心不是一面静止的镜子，而是具有无限创造力的活动过程。心是活动的，不是死静的，其中有情感、意志、意念、欲望、感觉、知觉、思维等种种多样的活动，正是心灵的活动与作用体现了心灵的存在”；<心灵的开放和开放的心灵>，页59.
The heart-mind in Chinese culture is an amorphous and dynamic whole merging these two functions together, just as explained in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy that,

Unlike Western definitions, the Chinese metaphorical understanding of this notion not only denotes this organ as the center of emotions, but also as the center of perception, understanding, intuition and even rational thought. As ancient Chinese believed that the heart was the center of human cognition, the notion of *xin* is most commonly translated as “heart-mind” in philosophical discourses. This understanding was determined by the absence of the contrast between cognitive (representative ideas, reasoning, beliefs) and affective (sensation, feelings, desires, emotions) states.\(^{132}\) (Rošker, 2018)

However, the heart-mind is of great importance not only because it is the faculty of emotion and thinking, but also because it is a key part of the Daoist explanation of how humans can become connected to the universe—i.e. how they can achieve the state of Xu. As Meng argues that

It is widely believed in Chinese philosophy that the heart-mind is the absolute subject that dominates everything, and is all-inclusive, omnipresent. It is not an ‘isolated subject’ or ‘relative subject’ that is opposed to the natural world, but is an absolute subject that connects with the natural world and merges into One with it. In other words, the heart-mind of man and the Dao of Heaven and Earth are connected.\(^{133}\) (Meng, 1995, p. 57, my translation)

### 3.3.2 The Two Dimensions of Xin in Zhuangzi’s Philosophy

The heart-mind in Zhuangzi’s philosophy reflects the meanings of the heart-mind in its time. And as the faculty of feeling and thinking, the heart-mind becomes an impor-

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\(^{131}\) In Western culture there is a dichotomy between heart and mind, as Wierzbicka summarizes, in the history of semantic change mind “shed its spiritual connotations, lost its links with values and emotions, and became a concept focused on the intellect, more or less to the exclusion of any other aspects of a person’s ‘inner’ life”. (Wierzbicka, 1989, p.49)


\(^{133}\) Original text “中国哲学普遍认为心灵是主宰一切的，无所不包无所不在的绝对主体……它不是与自然界相对立的‘孤立主体’或‘相对主体’，而是同自然界相互打通，连成一片的绝对主体……推而论之，人之心与天地之道也是相通的”；＜心灵的开放和开放的心灵＞，页57.
tant philosophical concept starting from Zhuangzi and Mencius. In the *Zhuangzi*, heart-mind is mentioned over one hundred times.

For most cases, Zhuangzi’s philosophy holds an incredulous and vigilant attitude towards the heart-mind, “because the functions of ‘knowledge’ are from the thinking of the heart-mind. Moreover the two functions of ‘knowledge’ are: it will disturb individuals themselves, which is not in accordance with Dao of nurturing life; and it will disturb the society which is the cause of chaos.” 134 (Xu, 2014, p. 347, my translation) The researcher finds Xu’s (2014) interpretation that “one function of knowledge is disturbing individuals themselves”, is dubious because in Chapter II, it is emphasized that it is the ‘assumption of self’ disturbs individuals. This point will be discussed further in Section 3.3.2.1. But the incredulous and vigilant attitude towards the heart-mind in Zhuangzi’s philosophy is indeed closely related to the thinking function of heart-mind and the knowledge.

However, there is also a positive attitude toward the heart-mind in Zhuangzi’s philosophy, which indicating that Zhuangzi’s philosophy agrees the heart-mind is the key of human to be connected with the universe.

It is these two contrastive attitudes of heart-mind making this concept very confusing and difficult to understand. The following are some examples in both cases. I fear your heart-mind is stuffy inside.135 (Lin, 1942, p. 633) Here Lin translated this kind of heart-mind vividly, but in other paragraphs Graham’s translation is more accurate as below,

134 Original text: “知”的作用，是从心出来的。而知的作用，一则扰乱自已，不合养生之道；一则扰乱社会，为大乱之源”；《中国人性论史》，页347.

135 Original text: “则夫子犹有蓬之心也夫”；《庄子今注今译》，页28. Graham’s translation is “isn’t it that you still have a heart where the shoots grow up tangled?” (Graham, 2011, p. 47)
Now if you go by the completed heart-mind and take it as your authority, who is without such an authority? (Graham, 2001, p. 50)

How would you succeed in making a new man of him? It’s still taking the heart-mind as one’s authority. (Graham, 2001, p. 68)

From above, the heart-mind is described as stuffy heart-mind (有蓬之心, you-peng-zhi-xin), completed heart-mind (成心, chengxin) or the heart-mind as one’s authority (师心, shixin). All these phrases are in the same category which can be represented as Chengxin. Chengxin is related to body, thinking, knowledge, and causes the sorrow. It may even damage Dao, as it is expressed in the Zhuangzi later, “It is this that is called ‘not allowing the thinking of the heart-mind to damage Dao, not using what is of man to do the work of Heaven’. Such a one we call the True Man.” (Graham, 2001, p.85)

This is the type of heart-mind is always opposed in Zhuangzi’s philosophy.

Whereas the other type of heart-mind in the Zhuangzi is as follows:

Dao gathers in emptiness alone. Emptiness is the fasting of the heart-mind. (Watson, 2013, P.25)

The ten thousand things are insufficient to distract his heart-mind—that is the reason he is still... And if water in stillness possesses such clarity, how much more must pure spirit. The sage’s heart-mind in stillness is the mirror of Heaven and earth, the glass of the ten thousand things. (Watson, 2013, p. 98)

For this type, the heart-mind is where Dao gathers, and it is also the mirror of heaven and earth. It describes heart-mind as the “Reservoir of Heaven” (天府, Tianfu) (Watson,
2013, p.14) or the “storehouse of spirit” (灵府, Lingfu). (Watson, 2013, p.39) All these phrases are in the same category which can be represented as Xuxin. Xuxin shows the evidence that in Zhuangzi’s philosophy it also holds the opinion that the heart-mind is the key of human to connect with Dao, which is in accordance with the meaning of heart-mind analyzed in last section.

In the following sections, xin will be discussed according to the two different types of heart-mind. The chengxin — the fixed heart-mind, which is used for representing the negative type of heart-mind, will be discussed first; and Xuxin — the Xu state of heart-mind, which stands for the positive type will be explained to show the relationship among Xu, man and Dao.

3.3.2.1 The Chengxin—The Fixed Heart-mind

The Chinese character of chengxin is ‘成心’, ‘心’ is the heart-mind as explained. ‘成’ literally means something accomplished, formed, completed, fixed or established. (Handian, 2018) It is a heart-mind that “something is already established in one’s heart-mind prior to ‘judgments’ about rightness and wrongness.” (Chong, 2011, p.428) In the Zhuangzi, chengxin is first used as in “Now if you go by the completed heart-mind and take it as your authority, who is without such an authority?”, which Graham translated as completed heart-mind. (Graham, 2001, p.50) In Lin’s translation, it is paraphrased as prejudices: “Now if we are to be guided by our prejudices, who shall be without a guide?” (Lin, 1942, p.635) Whereas in this research it is preferred to use Wang’s translation as “the fixed heart-mind”. (Wang, 2014, p. 189) It is because the reality is like a flux cycle of Dao, according to Zhuangzi’s philosophy, the completed,

141 Retrieved from http://www.zdic.net/z/1a/js/6210.htm on 18.05.2018.
closed and non-spontaneously open state of heart-mind is better translated as fixed heart-mind, which shows the contrast to the reality.

However, why is the heart-mind completed? Why could the fixed and completed heart-mind be understood as prejudices? According to Zhuangzi’s philosophy, it is because the thinking function of the heart-mind makes itself aware of self. As Schwartz argues,

The human heart-mind… has the fatal capacity to arrogate to itself the attributes of a fully closed off, fully individualized entity, ‘the fully completed or individualized heart’ (chengxin), which by a kind of self-encapsulation is able to establish a self-being of its own cut off from the flow of Dao. (Schwartz, 1985, p.229)

Express it another way, it is this “self-being” that obstructs the heart-mind and causes the “self-encapsulation” from the flowing of Dao. The self-being is what is called the assumption of self already discussed in Section 3.2.2.3. The chengxin—fixed heart-mind is a state of heart-mind with the assumption of self, which separates the heart-mind from the flow of Dao. It also means the assumption of self is the key to understand the fixed heart-mind and the problems which the fixed heart-mind brings to individuals.

Whereas the self is only an assumption which is not real according to Zhuangzi’s philosophy. That is why it is claimed as ‘no-self’ (无已, wu-ji) in Chapter I of the Zhuangzi and ‘I-lost-myself’\(^\text{142}\) (吾丧我, Wu-sang-wo) in Chapter II of the Zhuangzi.

\(^{142}\) It is from a story in Chapter II: “Ziqi of Nanguo sat leaning on a low table. Gazing up to heaven, he sighted and looked as though he had lost his mind. Yancheng Ziyou who was standing by him exclaimed, ‘What are you thinking about that your body should become thus like dead wood, your heart-mind like burnt-out cinders? Surely the man now leaning on the table is not he who was here just now.’ ‘My friend,’ replied Ziqi, ‘your question is apposite. Today I have lost my self: Do you understand?…” ’ (Lin, 1942, p.633) Original text: "南郭子綦隐机而坐，仰天而嘘，若丧其所与。颜成子游立侍乎前，曰：‘子居乎? 形固可使如槁木，而心固可使如死灰乎? 今之隐机者，非昔之隐机者也?’ 子綦曰：‘偃，不亦善乎而问之也！今者吾丧我，汝知之乎?’", 《庄子今注今译》，页34.
The “There is no more Hui” in fasting of heart-mind and the “smash up my limbs and body, drive out perception and intellect” in sit-and-forget (坐忘, zuowang) are explaining the same meaning as no-self and I-lost-myself. Hence, what is the self?

Where does the self come from? As Xu explained,  

The so-called self for common people, is actually denoting the accumulation of desires and knowledges. The “smashing up my limbs and body”, and “casting off form” in Zhuangzi’s philosophy denote to get rid of the desires from the physical body. The “driving out perception and intellect” and “doing away with understanding” denote to get rid of the conventional knowledge process. If both of them are gotten rid of at the same time, it is the so-called Xu, and stillness. And it is the “sit-and-forget”, and “I-lost-myself”. (Xu, 2001, p. 43, my translation)

From this explanation above we could figure Zhuangzi’s self is only an identity or belief generated from the heart-mind identifying the accumulation of desires and knowledges to the individual as who he/she is. It is a self-awareness coming from desires and knowledges. Or we could say that Zhuangzi’s self has two layers, the physical (bodily) self—the self-awareness of the body—which has desires; and the cognitive self—the self-awareness from thinking and knowledge.

143 It is after Confucius’ explanation of fasting of heart-mind, Yan Hui said, “Before I heard this, I was certain that I was Hui. But now that I have heard it, there is no more Hui. Can this be called emptiness?” (Watson, 2013, p.25) The original text is “顔回曰：‘箒之未始得使，實自同也；得使之也，未始有同也，可謂虛乎？’”；《庄子今注今译》，页116.

144 It is from what Yan Hui told Confucius: Yan Hui said, “I smash up my limbs and body, drive out perception and intellect, cast off form, do away with understanding, and make myself identical with the Great Thoroughfare. This is what I mean by sitting down and forgetting everything.” (Watson, 2013, p.53) And the original text is: “顔回曰：”吾肢體，黝聰明，離形去知，同于大通，此謂坐忘“；《庄子今注今译》，页202.


146 Shen (2011) discussed similar concepts “physical self” (形我, xingwo), and “thinking self” (思我, siwo), which are similar to the physical self and cognitive self discussed here. See more Shen (2011, pp. 232-266).
The physical self is comparatively easy to comprehend. Every individual exists in this world with a physical body. The existence of this physical body is apparently different from other bodies or other things, which makes us to take this entity—the physical body as real, and as the evidence of the distinction which is basically two categories as self and non-self as mentioned in Section 2.4.2. In other words, with this awareness of the physical self, there are borders and distinctions according to the standpoint of self. There are this and that, internal and external. Once the heart-mind believes there is distinctions as self and non-self, it generates desires to grasp and possess things for the self. As pointed out in Zhuangzi’s philosophy,

For once coming into this material shape, it runs its course until it is exhausted. To be harassed by the wear and tear of life, and to be driven along without possibility of arresting one’s course,—is not this pitiful indeed? To labor without ceasing all life, and then, without living to enjoy the fruit, worn out with labor, to depart, one knows not thither,—is not this a just cause for grief? (Lin, 1942, p. 635)

The body becomes the slave of this self. Not only this, they are also living in the fear of losing. Their lives become miserable, and start to wither; and the heart-mind also is close to death according to Zhuangzi’s philosophy:

For whether the soul is locked in sleep or whether in waking hours the body moves, we are striving and struggling with the immediate circumstances…Then, as under autumn and winter’s blight, comes gradual decay, and submerged in its own occupations, it keeps on running its course, never to return. Finally, worn out and imprisoned, it is choked up like an old drain, and the failing heart-mind shall not see the light again. Joy and anger, sorrow and happiness, worries and regrets, indecision and fears, come upon us by turns, with ever-changing moods,

147 See Footnote 2.

148 Original text: “—受其成形、不亡以待尽。与物相刃相靡，其行尽如驰而莫之能止，不亦悲乎！终身役役而不见其成功，荼然疲役而不知其所归，可不哀邪！人谓之不死，奚益！其形化，其心与之然，可不谓大哀乎？人之生也，固若是芒乎？”,《庄子今注今译》, 页46-47.
like music from hollows, or like mushrooms from damp. Day and night they alternate within us, but we cannot tell whence they spring.149 (Lin, 1942, p. 634)

These are the phenomena we could even see in common life. Every individual has different emotions alternate within the heart-mind, because of the awareness of self. —Basically the emotion of fear, which is the fear of not having—a desire of gaining, and the fear of losing.

With the distinctions, when individuals interact with the external world, they get to know the world by the heart-mind as the thinking entity and the heart-mind forms cognitive knowledges from it. These cognitive knowledges are distinctively defined among things, which also enhance the self-awareness that the self is prominent and contrasted with the others—non-self. This is what we call the cognitive self — the image we get from both the conventional knowledge and our ability of analytical thinking. The cognitive self especially denotes that the image of self is enhanced by the cognitive knowledge from thinking. Comparatively, the cognitive self is what Zhuangzi’s philosophy pays much more attention to, because the cognitive knowledge is not the highest level of knowledge and it is the declining of Dao. As claimed in the Zhuangzi,

The knowledge of the men of old had a limit. What was the limit? It extended back to a period when matter did not exist. That was the extreme point to which their knowledge reached. The second period was that of matter, but of matter unconditioned (undefined). The third epoch saw matter conditioned (defined), but judgements of true and false were still unknown. When these appeared, Dao began to decline. And with the decline of Dao, individual bias (subjectivity) arose.150 (Lin, 1942, p. 637)

149 Original text: “其其也魂交，其觉也形开。与接为构，日以心斗…其杀如秋冬，以言其日消也；其溺之所为也，不可使复之也：其厌也如终，以言其老逝也；近死之心，莫使复阳也。喜怒哀乐，虑叹变彗，姚佚启态—乐出虚，蒸成菌。日夜相代乎前而莫知其所萌”；《庄子今注今译》，页42.

150 Original text: “古之人，其知有所至矣。恶乎至？有以为未始有物者，至矣，尽矣，不可以加矣！其次以为有物矣，而未始有封也。其次以为有封焉，而未始有是非也。是非之彰也，道之所以亏也。道之所以亏，爱之所以成”；《庄子今注今译》，页67.
The cognitive knowledge is only to know “the matter conditioned (defined)”. As one starts to define things, there is no end since defining leads to distinctions and separations. In other words, this kind of knowledge is limitless. Hence, limitless knowledges make the cognitive self extend in an endless pursuit and the heart-mind is always disturbed and will never rest and be in peace. According to Zhuangzi’s philosophy this is really fatal for individuals life, as it declaims in the beginning Chapter III. The Preservation of Life: “Human life is limited, but knowledge is limitless. To drive the limited in pursuit of the limitless is fatal; and to presume that one really knows is fatal indeed!”

(Lin, 1942, p.643)

Furthermore, as there is a self, the particular perspective or standpoint is already set. Thus, the knowledges are not overall knowledge but the fragmentary conventional and analytical knowledge. These knowledges are not absolute, they are always relative to something else or they have their counterparts. That is why it says in the Zhuangzi ‘who is without such authority?’ The authority is denoting the assumption of self generated in the heart-mind. With this authority of self, one only sees part of the reality which is always relative and paradoxical depending on the perspective one is taking. Those knowledges are only comparatively right and real, and they are actually discriminations and prejudices as Lin (1942) paraphrases the term chengxin.

With the standpoint of self and the prejudice, individual starts to make judgments, evaluations, values and the preferences —the ‘individual bias (subjectivity)’— come in turn as well. In Zhuangzi’s philosophy these judgments are named as affirmation (是, shi) and denials (非, fei), as Lin interprets, “Shi and fei mean general moral judgments and mental distinctions: ‘right’ and ‘wrong’, ‘true’ and ‘false’, ‘is’ and ‘is not’,

151 Original text: “吾生也有涯，而知也无涯；以有涯随无涯，殆已。已而为知者，殆而已矣”；《庄子今注今译》, 页93.
‘affirmative’ and ‘negative’, also ‘to justify’ and ‘condemn’, to ‘affirm’ and ‘deny’.” (Lin, 1942, p.636) Therefore, it is meaningless to only bring us confusion and trouble in life.

Dao is obscured by our inadequate understanding, and words are obscured by flowery expressions. Hence the affirmations and denials of the Confucian and Mohism schools, each denying what the other affirms and affirming what the other denies. Each denying what the other affirms and affirming what the other denies bring us only into confusion.152 (Lin, 1942, p.636)

And not only the confusion and argumentation, the bias and preferences from the judgments even cause emotions which will harm individuals’ lives:

“Right and wrong (approval and disapproval),” answered Zhuangzi, “are what I mean by passions. By a man without passion I mean one who does not permit likes and dislikes to disturb his internal economy, but rather falls in line with nature and does not try to improve upon (the materials of) living”.153 (Lin, 1942, p. 656)

Therefore, we may understand better that because of this cognitive self, there is a specific standpoint, which cannot avoid making distinctions and judgments. These endless distinctions and judgments makes the heart-mind extend in an endless pursuit. Thus not only the pursuit of knowledge will do harm on individuals life, but also the judgement from knowledge will harm as well.

Whereas, it does not mean that Zhuangzi’s philosophy completely negates the rationality and thinking function of the heart-mind. It is always the cognitive self that causing the problem, as Graham denotes: “It is alright to make fluid distinctions varying with circumstances, it is when we make rigid distinctions misleading us into judging

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152 Original text: “道隐于小成，言隐于荣华。故有儒墨之是非，以是其所非而非其所是。欲是其所非而非其所是”；《庄子今注今译》，页51.

153 The original text of “Right and wrong (approval and disapproval)” are shi and fei which has been explained in the previous paragraph. And the “passion” here is the emotion this research is using which representing the same character of 情 (qing). Original text: “庄子曰：是非吾所谓情也。吾所谓无情者，言人之不以好恶内伤其身，常因自然而益生也”，《庄子今注今译》，页162.
that something is permanently what it is temporarily convenient to name it that thinking goes wrong.” (Graham, 2011, p.189)

Another point to mention, the researcher thinks besides the physical self and cognitive self, there is actually another layer of self which Xu (2001) and Shen (2011) did not mention. The researcher names it the behavioral self which is hidden in both physical self and cognitive self. The behavioral self is that people identify themselves as their emotions and the collections of their behaviors which generate from their emotions. As discussed above, when people have an awareness of physical self or cognitive self, distinctions and a standpoint raise. Judgments and preferences come in turn, which will lead to emotions as it says in the *Zhuangzi* “Right and wrong are what I mean by passions (emotions)” as cited in last paragraph. People get attached to these emotions as described,

Joy and anger, sorrow and happiness, worries and regrets, indecision and fears, come upon us by turns, with ever-changing moods…But for these emotions I should not be. Yet but for me, there would be no one to feel them. (Lin, 1942, pp.634-635)

Or as Watson translates, “Without them (the emotions), we would not exist; without us, they would have nothing to take hold of.” (Watson, 2013, p.8) It means people take these emotions as the evidences of their own existence and even completely identify themselves as the emotions. In other words, the concept of self comes into being be-

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154 In common people’s daily life, they usually do things with a certain kind of mood or emotion, so emotions and the behaviors always appear together and technically cannot be divided. For example, people tend to dance when feeling happy and tend to cry when feeling sorrow. This is the reason the behavioral self is used in this research for this type of self which encompass both the emotions and peoples behaviors as well. For the convenience of discussion, the term ‘emotion’ will be used in the following discussion to stand for both the emotions and the behaviors based on the emotions.

155 Original text: “喜怒哀乐，怨诽谤讥…非彼无我，非我无所取。是亦近矣，而不知其所以为遣”；《庄子今注今译》, 页42-46. “Joy, anger, grief, delight, worry, regret, fickleness, inflexibility, modesty, willfulness, candor, insolence… Without them, we would not exist; without us, they would have nothing to take hold of.” (Watson, 2013, p.8)
cause of the emotions—`with these emotions there is a self` as Wu (2003) explains. However the emotions are just like the waves in the sea, and the movements of waves will make people’s heart-mind alway stay in the consistent drastic ups and downs. Simply put, when people get attached to the behavioral self, meaning they identify themselves as their emotions and behaviors, their heart-mind will be driven crazy, and will never be in peace. And these emotions become the “burden for individual’s life.”  

(Chen, 2009, p.53)

To sum up, the chengxin—fixed heart-mind is the heart-mind with an obstruction of self—the physical self, the cognitive self and the behavioral self. And the heart-mind with an obstruction of self is exact the opposite individual’s state of Xu. However, the chengxin is quite deceptive, as Shen points out,

On the surface, the chengxin seems a rationality with universal values. Within a certain range, it is effective. Whereas, the chengxin only shows the limitations when it is compared to Dao, and it is actually merely prejudices. The relationship between chengxin and Dao is similar to the relative truth and absolute truth.  

(Shen, 2001, p.322, my translation)

It is this chengxin which makes the duality between the self and non-self, this and that, distinctions, judgments, values, preferences, and emotions. This is the reason why Zhuangzi’s philosophy takes a vigilant attitude to the heart-mind. It is the self generation from the thinking and emotional function of the heart-mind that always drags the heart-mind into endless chasing of endless distinctions, judgments and preferences. Whereas to stress again, what stated above does not mean Zhuangzi’s philosophy is negating individual’s physical body, the thinking or emotions. The problem is the fixed heart-mind with an assumption of self. It is the self that leads into a limited perspective.
which confine individuals. It is the self always tending to pursuit endlessly from external to enhance a fixed image of the self. Hence, it the self that restricts the more genuine flow of life, which means the self draws the individuals far away from the ultimate reality—the ever-changing cycle of Dao. Individuals are trapped in an absolute static and rigidly distinctive realm of duality and lose the unlimited and dynamically changing picture of Oneness. Therefore it is the self, or the fixed heart-mind which is the source of all the sufferings and the cause of their demise. The fixed heart-mind is the reason individuals are not One with the ultimate reality—Dao.

### 3.3.2.2 The Xuxin—the Xu State of Heart-mind

However in most cases, Zhuangzi’s philosophy holds an incredulous and vigilant attitude towards the heart-mind, it does not completely negate the heart-mind. On the contrary, much emphasis is put on heart-mind as what is expressed in serving the heart-mind: “And to serve your own heart-mind so that sadness or joy does not sway or move it; to understand what you can do nothing about and to be content with it as with fate—this is the perfection of De.” \(^{158}\) (Watson, 2013, p.27) The heart-mind which can be swayed and moved by sadness or joy is the fixed heart-mind which has been discussed in Section 3.3.2.1. The fixed heart-mind is neither empty nor still, which Zhuangzi’s philosophy deems as “the death of heart-mind” \(^{159}\) (Watson, 2013, p.168) and there is no grief greater than that. Whereas, when one serves his/her own heart-mind, the heart-mind will start to reveal its own intrinsic nature which is empty— the Xu state according to Zhuangzi’s philosophy:

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\(^{158}\) Original text: “自事其心者，哀乐不易施乎前，知其不可奈何而安之若命，德之至也”；《庄子今注今译》, 页121.

\(^{159}\) “There is no grief greater than the death of the mind—beside it, the death of the body is a minor matter” . (Watson, 2013, p.168) Original text: “夫哀莫大於心死，而人死亦次之”，《庄子今注今译》, 页514.
Hold on to all that you have received from Heaven, but do not think you have gotten anything. Be empty, that is all. The Perfect Man uses his heart-mind like a mirror—going after nothing, welcoming nothing, responding but not storing. Therefore he can win out over things and not hurt himself.  

The Xuxin is the empty heart-mind without the assumption of self stuck in it. As it says above, being empty—Xu also means there is not any self making you “think that you have gotten anything”, even though you have received something, which is De from Heaven—Dao. Hence being empty—Xu, is just like using the heart-mind like a mirror. What the mirror does is being spontaneously responsive rather than holding anything, as described in the Zhuangzi; “going after nothing, welcoming nothing, responding but not storing.” It is an immediate reflection to things. As Xu explains, “This ‘going after nothing, welcoming nothing’ reveals a state of intuitive consciousness.”  

Moreover, this intuitive consciousness also reveals there is no preference or judgments stuck in the heart-mind, as it describes “responding but not storing”. And “going after nothing, welcoming nothing” also indicates there is no boundaries between subject (self) and object (non-self). If it is the opposite as going after something, welcoming something, then there are still boundaries. Once there are boundaries, there are standpoints or directions. As Mou says,

When the heart-mind is attached to a certain direction, the state of heart-mind is filled with possessions in this specific direction. The heart-mind is not empty any more...Oneness is the pure One. And within the pure One there is no

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160 Original text: “尽其所受乎天而无见得，亦虚而已！至人之用心若镜，不将不逆，应而不藏，故能胜物而不伤”；《庄子今注今译》，页222.

161 Original text: “不将不逆，这恰是说明知觉直观的情景”；《中国艺术精神》，页49.
complicated and chaotic conflicts and contraries which disassemble life into pieces.\textsuperscript{162} (Mou, 2003, pp. 94-95, my translation)

Therefore, the Xu state of heart-mind is a kind of intuitive consciousness which does not require any analytical thinking. Moreover it is a state of “the pure One”, which is beyond all the boundaries. In Chapter V of the \textit{Inner Chapters}, this state is explained as one who unifies the knowledge of what he knows,

\begin{quote}
Men do not mirror themselves in running water—they mirror themselves in still water. Only what is still can still the stillness of other things… How much more, then, is possible for a man who governs Heaven and earth, stores up the ten thousand things, lets the six parts of his body be only a dwelling, makes ornaments of his ears and eyes, unifies the knowledge of what he knows, and in his heart-mind never tastes death.\textsuperscript{163} (Watson, 2013, p.35)
\end{quote}

The still water is another metaphor used for the Xuxin, the empty heart-mind in Zhuangzi’s philosophy. Here the still water is used in Zhuangzi’s philosophy to emphasize that the major characteristic of Xu is stillness as it already mentioned in Section 3.2.2.2. The running water is like the chattering fixed heart-mind which is always disturbed by the externals, it can never reflect. Instead, the still water is the Xuxin, empty and still, which according to Zhuangzi’s philosophy, “only what still can still the stillness of other things”, and with this Xuxin, the empty heart-mind one can unify all the knowledge of what he/she knows. And only in this way, “his heart-mind never tastes death”.

Furthermore, in the \textit{Outer Chapters} of Zhuangzi, it says the Emperors, Sages or True man, rest their heart-mind in the state of Xu:

\begin{quote}
Original text: “人心静者在一定之方向上，则心境清宁即为此一方向硬塞满之占有，就不虚了……二就是纯一无杂。没有乌七八糟的冲突矛盾纷杂，把生命支解得七零八散就是一”；《中国哲学十九讲》，页94-95.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Original text: “人莫急于流水而急于止水。唯止能止众止……。勇敢一人，雄入于九军，将求名而能自要者而犹若是，而况官天地，府万物，直寓六骸，象耳目，一知之所知而心未尝死者乎！”; 《庄子今注今译》，页143.
\end{quote}
Therefore the Emperor, the King, the Sage rest in them. Resting, they may be empty; empty, they may be full; and fullness is completion. Empty, they may be still; still, they may move; moving, they may acquire. Still, they may rest in inaction; resting in inaction, they may demand success from those who are charged with activities. Resting in inaction, they may be merry; being merry, they may shun the place of care and anxiety, and the years of their life will be long. Emptiness, stillness, limpidity, silence, inaction are the root of the ten thousand things. (Watson, 2013, pp.98-99)

When they are resting in this empty state, the heart-mind is still from distractions of ears and recognitions mentioned in the fasting of heart-mind in Section 3.2.2.2. But they are not only still, they are still and “begin to move; moving, they attain”. It looks so contradictory that they are still and they begin to move. Whereas ‘still’ here again does not mean a static state. As Mou explains,

Stillness means (the heart-mind is) not floating. Along with the tangling gallop of life, man is always manipulated by his thoughts and is in a continuous state of floating. Only when these manifolds are eliminated, it is the stillness... The stillness is not the stillness as the relative motion and rest in physics. It is the absolute state of heart-mind, which is a determined state. And it is a spiritual state in the upper level, which can help the heart-mind transcend from the reality at any time. (Mou, 2003, p.94, my translation)

The stillness is actually describing the state that the heart-mind both knowing things and transcending from things which means never is disturbed by things. Again the heart-mind is passive here, which Zhuangzi’s philosophy identifies this emptiness and stillness of heart-mind as inaction or Wuwei. It means the assumption of self in the fixed heart-mind could never manipulate the heart-mind to take actions anymore. The assumption of physical self is lost, as described in the Zhuangzi: “But in his case,

Original text: “故帝王圣人休焉。休则虚，虚则实，实则伦矣，虚则静，静则动，动则得矣。静则无为，无为则任事者责矣。无为则无事，无事则忧患不能处，年寿长矣。夫虚静恬淡寂漠无为者，万物之本也”；《庄子今注今译》，页328.

Original text: “静就是不浮动，人随着生命的纷驰，顺着意念的造作，天天在浮动之中，把这些化掉就静下来了…静不是物理学中相对的运动和静止的静，而是绝对的心境，即定，是随时将心灵从现实中超拔出来，浮在上层的一种境界，是精神的”；《中国哲学十九讲》，页94.

The concept of Wuwei has already been discussed in Chapter I. See more in Footnote 16.
though something may startle his body, it won’t injure his heart-mind; though something may alarm the house (his spirit lives in), his emotions will suffer no death.”

(Watson, 2013, p.51) The cognitive self and behavioral self are lost too, as “Therefore his liking was one, and his not liking was one. His being one was one, and his not being one was one.”

(Watson, 2013, p.44) There is no judgments, and preferences any more, so such men are called as True man: “In being one, he was acting as a companion of Heaven.”

(Watson, 2013, p.44) Hence, the True man is the one with Xuxin which is an individual’s spiritual state of being One with Dao.

As the heart-mind keeps empty and still, it is called as “Reservoir of Heaven”, “If he can understand this, he may be called the Reservoir of Heaven. Pour into it and it is never full, dip from it and it never runs dry, and yet it does not know where the supply comes from. This is called the Shaded Light.”

(Watson, 2013, p.14) Here the Xuxin is not only the physical organ or the entity of thinking and feeling any more. It is the open channel for individuals to be connected to their source, hence “pour into it and it is never full, dip from it and it never runs dry.” Fang thinks this heart-mind is the absolute heart-mind, which is also a kind of “intersubjective heart-mind”. (Fang, 2012, p.243) This heart-mind transcends all distinctions and dualities, and encompasses everything within it without any rigid distinctions. “And if water in stillness possesses such clarity, how much more must pure spirit.”

(Watson, 2013, p.98) The pure spirit naturally re-

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167 Original text: “且彼有駭形而无損心，有旦宅而无情死”; 《庄子今注今译》,页195.

168 Original text: “故其好之也一，其弗好之也一。其一也一，其不一也一”; 《庄子今注今译》,页167.

169 Original text: “其一与天为徒”; 《庄子今注今译》,页167.

170 Original text: “若有能知，此之谓天府。注焉而不满，酌焉而不竭，而不知其所由来，此之谓葆光”；《庄子今注今译》,页75.

171 Original text: “水静犹明，而况精神”; 《庄子今注今译》,页328.
veals in this state, which is one’s De. It is called as clarity, or sometimes the ‘Shade Light’ in the *Zhuangzi*. It is actually the Dao shining within individuals. The inner reality of man become naturally harmonious with the ultimate reality Dao. That way, the individual always stays real inwardly with De and outwardly with Dao.

However, the stillness of heart-mind is very important, but it does not mean it is a state we should be purposely pursuing. As emphasized in Zhuangzi’s philosophy, the sage is still not because he takes stillness to be good and therefore is still. The ten thousand things are insufficient to distract his heart-mind—that is the reason he is still. Water that is still gives back a clear image of beard and eyebrows; reposing in the water level, it offers a measure to the great carpenter. And if water in stillness possesses such clarity, how much more must pure spirit. The sage’s heart-mind in stillness is the mirror of Heaven and earth, the glass of the ten thousand things.172 (Watson, 2013, p.98)

It is still because “the ten thousand things are insufficient to distract his heart-mind.” And if we imagine the heart-mind as a channel of interacting to things, the stillness is the emptiness of this channel. This empty channel is passively and spontaneously receptive to the external myriad things, but it is not disturbed by them. The empty and still heart-mind can reflect the external ‘heaven and earth’, ‘the myriad things’ directly and simultaneously. In this state, there is actually no internal and external, there are One. In this empty and still state what the heart-mind manifests is called ‘Clarity’ (明, Ming), 'Light', or ‘Illumination’ —which are always moving and changing. This is what Zhuangzi’s philosophy means; “they are still; still, they begin to move”. — Again it shows the cycle of Dao.

Therefore, the Xu state of the heart-mind is exactly what has been explained in previous Section 3.2.2, it is the last phase of returning to the un-manifested Dao. When

172 Original text: “圣人之静也，非曰静也善，故静也；万物无足以挠心者，故静也。水静则明烛须眉，平中准，大匠取法焉。水静犹明，而况精神！圣人之心静乎！天地之鉴也；万物之镜也”；《庄子今注今译》,页328.
the heart-mind is empty and cleared, which is Xu, it is like “In the empty room the brightness grows. The blessed, the auspicious, stills the stilled.” 173 (Graham, 2011, p. 69) From this point, all the distinctions are One, the individual and Dao are One; the limited and unlimited are One. Xu is both an action and a state which individuals can “go along with the universal thoroughfare.” 174 (Graham, 2011, p.92)

3.4 Summary of this Chapter

Xu can be simply explained as emptiness. The basic feature of Xu is a state of internally empty but passively and spontaneously receptive to external like an empty hollow. Xu in Zhuangzi’s philosophy is used to denote both a state and an action.

Xu is a descriptive metaphysical state related to Dao. It is both the first state of Dao’s manifestation as Nothingness and the last state of the reverse of the un-manifested state of Dao. In other words, Xu is the intermediate state of interchanging and circulating without obstruction in the cycle of Dao. It means Xu is both the stillness of the un-manifested and the primordial natural force of Dao, and the pre-activeness of the manifesting things in the phenomenal world. Whereas, Xu is also the highest spiritual state of the individuals. It is the clear channel of individuals’ reverse to Dao. When the individual is in Xu state, the vital force—Qi is naturally vibrating and flowing. Hence the seemly physically solid human being naturally and spontaneously become receptive to the external and the whole. Express it another way, the human being is spontaneously in the flux process, the ever-changing cycle of Dao. Thus, the individuals’ Xu state is the spiritual state of Oneness. Xu is also a passive action on the heart-mind. Xu can be understood as an action of purifying the heart-mind and making it empty “with a stated

174 Original text: “同于大通”; 《庄子今注今译》,页201.
goal that resembles spirit possession” (Ching, 1997, p.178), which is the spiritual state of Oneness.

Xin, the heart-mind is the locus of Xu. When it comes to individuals, Xu and xin cannot be discussed separately, since Xu is both the figurative state of heart-mind and the action functioning on the heart-mind. Hence the heart-mind could be the key for individuals to be connected with Dao, and the heart-mind could also be the reason or problem for individuals to be alienated from Dao. Chengxin— the fixed heart-mind is the problem, and it is the heart-mind with an assumption of self. This assumption of self confines the individuals in a limited perspective which causes endless distinctions, desires, knowledges, judgements and emotions. These are the sources of conflicts and sufferings, and individuals are no longer One with the whole. Whereas, “when the heart-mind is neither mislead by (cognitive) knowledge nor disturbed by the desires, the heart-mind could be empty and still” (Xu, 2014, p.358, my translation), the heart-mind starts to reveal its own intrinsic nature—Xu. The Xuxin, the empty heart-mind is like a clear mirror reflecting things directly and spontaneously, and there is no rigid distinctions between individuals and the external things. The Xuxin transcends all the distinctions and boundaries, as Xu argues.

The state of heart-mind now is the De of the internalization of Dao; it is also the inner nature that is revealed in the physical body, and it is also Dao that heaven and earth and ten thousand things originated from. And the individual now is a person completely One with Dao. (Xu, 2014, p. 358, my translation)

175 Original text: “心不被物诱向知的方面而歧出，更不被物欲所扰动，而能保持心的虚静” ; 《中国人性论史》, 页358.

176 Here “the state of heart-mind now” is denoting what Xu has discussed before “when the heart-mind is not mislead by (cognitive) knowledge and it is not disturbed by the desires, the heart-mind could be empty and still” (Xu, 2014, p.358). It is actually the state of Xuxin, the empty heart-mind.

177 Original text: “此时之心，即是道之内在化之德，即是德在形中所透出的性，亦即是创造天地万物的道，而人即为与道合体之人” ; 《中国人性论史》, 页358.
In other words, with the Xuxin, the individual’s inner nature is as pure as his/her De. And his/her De is in greatest harmony with Dao, which means his/her inner reality and the ultimate reality are One. Therefore the individual is naturally in the highest spiritual state of Oneness.

However, as most people are already alienated from Dao and are confined in the realm of rigid distinctions, conflicts and judgements, how could individuals cast off the control of the fixed heart-mind and the self, and keep their heart-mind continuously in Xu state? The next chapter will focus on Xu in the sense of an action and explore in details about the cultivation of Xu— the approach to reach Oneness.
Chapter IV:

The Cultivation of Xu Toward Oneness and Its Critiques

4.1 Introduction

Even though Zhuangzi’s philosophy is mainly an ontology discussing about the reality of Dao as Oneness, our individuals are a part of this Oneness. The Xuxin, the empty heart-mind is a state we are naturally connected with the whole, since De—the inner reality of us reveals in the Xuxin and is harmonious with Dao. However, this does not hint that for common people they do not need any effort to reach this state of Oneness, since chengxin—the fixed heart-mind is always the problem alienating individuals from Dao. This is the reason that a discussion of Zhuangzi’s cultivation of Xu—the approach to reach Oneness, is needed.

In this chapter, Zhuangzi’s cultivation of Xu will be discussed in details. The discussion will begin with the introduction of the concept of cultivation in Chinese culture. The conventional misunderstanding of Daoist cultivation will be presented as well. Zhuangzi’s cultivation will be explored in the following aspects. The features of Zhuangzi’s cultivation will be first exposed as a passive and indirect approach and a cultivation hidden in the descriptions of individuals’ spiritual state. With the exposition of the features, the cultivation stages and the skillfulness accumulation will be explored in turn. Last but not least, the problem of Zhuangzi’s philosophy will be discussed in this chapter.

The main aim of this chapter is to argue that the cultivation of Xu is the practice which works on individuals heart-mind in order to cast off the fixed heart-mind and be reconnected with Dao. Whereas this approach is a passive approach. If Zhuangzi’s cul-
tivation is not fully comprehended, it could mislead people into pessimistic attitude toward daily life practice or even the way of looking at the reality.

4.2 The Necessity of Discussing on Cultivation

4.2.1 The Feature of Chinese Philosophy

As discussed before, Zhuangzi’s philosophy is mainly an ontology discussing about the reality of Oneness. Whereas we would never really understand its philosophy and Oneness if only studying the abstract theories. Thus in order to understand Zhuangzi’s theory of Oneness, we have to do more research on its practice which is also a part of its theory. Whereas practice or cultivation theories may not be categorized into ontology if we take a perspective from the western tradition. But practice or cultivation theories are never excluded in Chinese philosophy, and it is a distinctive feature of the overall Chinese philosophy, which is called “practical metaphysics” by Mou. (Mou, 2003, p.113) This feature of Chinese philosophy will be briefly introduced in the following paragraph which the researcher believes will help to exploring Zhuangzi’s cultivation.

All of the three major strains of Chinese philosophy—Confucianism, Daoism and Buhhdism, as Mou (1997) elaborates, are emphasizing on subjectivity and the heart-mind.178 Compared to Western philosophy which is more emphasizing on objectivity or knowledge, Chinese philosophy is more on subjectivity. Or in other words Chinese philosophy is more about life philosophy. We may find even the concept of knowledge in the context of Chinese philosophy is not an objective concept, but a subjective concept which also encompasses an individual’s practice.

178 See Mou (1997), pp.4-5.
Almost all the Chinese philosophies aim at being a Sage, a True man, or a Buddha, as Mou argues, “The practice of becoming a Sage, or a Buddha, and the learning of becoming a Sage, or a Buddha are actually One. It is a philosophy which centers on life and develops its teaching, wisdom, learning and practice all on this basis.” 179 (Mou, 1997, pp.5-6, my translation) Additionally, the heart-mind is the key of both the knowledge and the practice, as Wang claims, “The subjectivity of practice is the heart-mind, and the source of diseases and problems is also the heart-mind.” 180 (Wang, 2004, p. 384, my translation). It is the reason that since Zhuangzi and Mencius, the heart-mind becomes the most prominent topic in Chinese philosophy. Only through the study and practice on the heart-mind, the subjectivity of life can be revealed, and the myriad thing between Heaven and Earth can be explained too. Without discussing on practices, the essence of Chinese philosophy will never be revealed.

4.2.2 The Concept of Cultivation in Chinese Culture

In Chinese culture and philosophy, the practice is conventionally called as Gongfu (功夫). Gongfu is interpreted as cultivation or self-cultivation. Generally it has two meanings as time, and skill. 181 (Handian, 2018) It can be simply understood as a kind of ability or skill one obtains after putting a certain amount of time and effort.

As Chinese philosophy is more a practical metaphysics, the cultivation is considered as an important way of acquiring true knowledge. Based on the understanding of major features of Chinese philosophy as subjectivity and heart-mind, Xu gives his definition of Gongfu—cultivation in Chinese philosophy,

179 Original text: “成圣成佛的实践与成圣成佛的学问是合一的...它是以‘生命’为中心，由此展开他们的教训、智慧、学问与修行”; 《中国哲学的特质》,页5-6.

180 Original text: “修养工夫的主体在心，而病痛源头也在心”; 《中国哲学论集》,页384.

Cultivation is taking the inner spirituality of oneself as the object for practicing and processing to achieve a certain purpose. In the theory of human nature, it aims at achieving the underlying source of life or morality. The cultivation in the human nature theory is a kind of conduct requires no handwork. It requires a process of criticizing, purifying, and eliminating one’s own physiological effects, and thus one is pushed forward into his or her inner layers of life to discover, grasp and expand his or her own source of life or morality... It requires our congestive rationality to penetrate into the process of the cultivation.  

(Xu, 2014, pp.420-421, my translation)

From the discussion above, we may have learned that the cultivation—the practical aspect in Chinese philosophy is related in two aspects:

First, cultivation is aiming at becoming a Sage, a True man, or a Buddha, which actually means to expand or transcend the limited life into the unlimited. Second, the cultivation is majorly processed on the heart-mind. As already discussed in Chapter III, the major problem of heart-mind is the assumption of self. Hence, the focus of cultivation is on self. It is a process of eliminating the self, purifying the heart-mind and returning the heart-mind to the original and the inner source of life. In this sense, the second aspect actually encompasses the first aspect, because once one returns to the original source of life, it is the state of a Sage, a True man, or a Buddha, and the limited life already transcends into the unlimited.

4.2.3 The Misunderstanding of Daoist Cultivation

Whereas, even though cultivation is one of the most distinctive features of Chinese philosophy, most people are still holding a misunderstanding that only Confucianism talks about cultivation, and there is no cultivation in Daoism and Zhuangzi’s philosophy. In fact this is not true. People have this misunderstanding

\[182\] Original text: “以自身为对象，尤其是以自身内在的精神为对象，为了达到某种目的。在人性论，则是为了达到潜伏着的生命根源、道德根源的呈现——而加内在的精神以处理、操演的，这才可谓之工夫。人性的工夫，可以说是人首先对自己生理作用加以批评、澄法、摆脱，因而向生命内层迫进，以发现、把握、扩充自己的生命根源、道德根源的，不用手作的工作...必需是我们的认知理性，透进到这种工夫的过程”; 《中国人性论史》,页420-421.
mainly because in Daoism the cultivation is discussed in an indirect way, as Mou states, “In Daoist philosophy, the practical aspect manifests in the words like liberation, unrestraint, non-action, and etc. The philosophical wisdom is revealed through these words, and it encompasses a practical ontology.” 183 (Mou, 2003, p.93, my translation) All of these words above as liberation, unrestraint, and non-action are appeared to be un-implementable and un-ascertained. Especially the word non-action seems to be even negative if simply understood as doing nothing. Liu’s argument is a good example of misunderstanding in Zhuangzi’s cultivation.

Zhuangzi’s so-called non-action, is taking an approach of being obedient to the naturally given situations. (命, Ming) 184 The major purpose is to keep the heart-mind not distracted and not pursuing anything…The feature of Zhuangzi’s non-action theory is that one absolutely does nothing, be unintentional and obedient to the naturally given situations.185 (Liu, 2010, p.150, my translation)

Since Liu does not decode Daoist indirect way of expounding cultivation, he misunderstands Wuwei—non-action only as “absolutely doing nothing”, which completely neglects the spiritual aspect of Zhuangzi’s cultivation. With this misunderstanding Liu (2010) thinks that Zhuangzi’s philosophy takes a pessimistic and evasive way towards life since individuals are not strong enough to confront and fight against the domination and governing of “the naturally given situations”, which is even a bigger misunderstanding of Zhuangzi’s philosophy. This is also the reason that Daoism is always labeled as Nihilism or Agnosticism.

183 Original text: “用道家的话讲，实践的所表现的就是解脱、洒脱、无为这类的字眼，是这种智慧全部透出来以后，可以有一个实践的存有论”; 《中国哲学十九讲》, 页93.

184 The term “Ming” is another philosophical topic in Zhuangzi’s philosophy, which will not be discussed further in this research. It can be understood as fate or destiny, Liu translates it as “the naturally given situations”. (Liu, 2015, p.197)

185 Original text: “庄子所谓无为，其形式是安然顺命，其实质是不动心，无所求…庄子无为论的特点是绝对无为，无心而顺命”; 《庄子哲学及其演变》, 页150.
Whereas, it has to be admitted that the indirect and passive way of cultivation does hinder people from understanding and initiating Daoist cultivation. This fact again shows the necessity of exploration on the cultivation, otherwise we would never get a better understanding of its philosophy as Mou emphasizes.

All of the Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism emphasize on cultivation. The Chinese ancients’ way of acquiring knowledge is not like the speculative and theoretical way which Westerners are employing. They commence on the latitude line of cultivation with time, and then present some ideas and concepts thereout. Whereas the descendants start with an objective understanding of the presented ideas and concepts, and usually forget the latitude line. Hence, the whole system is swaying without a solid base and generating many irrelevant misunderstandings.186 (Mou, 2003, p.111, my translation)

4.3 The Cultivation of Xu in Zhuangzi’s Philosophy

As discussed in Section 1.1.2, the Xu in Zhuangzi’s philosophy actually carries the same meaning of Wuwei—non-action. Or in other words, Daoist cultivation in Daoism can be summarized as a cultivation of Xu or Wuwei. Whereas, when it comes to the cultivation of Xu in Zhuangzi’s philosophy, there is another feature that: the cultivation of Xu is both a description of the spiritual state of the True Man, and the action to reach this spiritual state. In Zhuangzi’s philosophy, it mentions other types of cultivation and uses the words such as ‘forget’ (忘, wang) and ‘put outside’ (外, wai) to represent. Since all these types of cultivation are aimed at being Xu, or put it another way, they are just lower levels of the cultivation of Xu, we can still use the cultivation of Xu to stand for the whole cultivation theory of Zhuangzi’s philosophy.

186 Original text: “中国儒释道三教都很重工夫、古人的学问不像西方人用思辨的speculative、知解theoretical的方式，而是由工夫时间的纬上着手，由此呈现出一些观念。后人就先对所呈现出的观念做客观的了解，反而常把纬忘了，于是整个系统就飘荡无着而衍生许多不相干的误解。因此当了解了经之后，还应该转回来把握住其在工夫时间上的根据—即纬—才行”；《中国哲学十九讲》，页111.
In Chapter III, it is already discussed that Xu is the intermediate state of interchanging and circulating without obstruction which is both the stillness of the unmanifested and the primordial natural force of Dao; and the pre-activeness of the manifesting things in phenomenal world. At the same time, it is the highest and spiritual state of individual’s heart-mind. Thus, Zhuangzi’s cultivation of Xu still carries the basic features of cultivation as summarized above, which is located at every individual, and aimed at returning to Dao or being One with Dao—Oneness. The people who reach the state of Oneness are called True Man in Zhuangzi’s philosophy, which are also described as “acting as a companion of Heaven” (Watson, 2013, p.44), or “He came and went alone with the pure spirit of Heaven and earth.” (Watson, 2013, p.296)

Hence, as Li claims that “then Zhuangzi’s concern is with the ‘naturalization of humans.’… The latter (Zhuangzi) argues that to become truly human one must shed sociality, allowing one’s naturalness to remain unpolluted and to expand to achieve unity with the universe.” (Li, 2010, pp.78-79) Based on this aim, even though there is no systematical explaining of cultivation theories in the Zhuangzi, there are still many places and stories talking about cultivation.

The most typical cultivations are the story of Song Rongzi, ‘sit-and-forget' (坐忘, zuowang), 'Peace-in-strife' (撄宁, yingning), the story of Cook Ding and ‘fasting-of-heart-mind' (心齋, xinzhai). In the following discussions on the cultivation of Xu, the discussions will be majorly focused on these typical stories mentioned above, and will also use other stories in the Zhuangzi to support when necessary.

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188 Original text: “独与天地精神往来而不敖倪于万物”; 《庄子今注今译》,页847.
4.3.1 The Features of Zhuangzi’s Cultivation

From the stories of cultivation presented above, there are two major features of Zhuangzi’s cultivation which are worth to be discussed: first, it is a passive and indirect approach of cultivation; second, it is an indirect exposition — a cultivation hidden in the description of spiritual state.

4.3.1.1 A Passive Approach of Cultivation

The passive approach of cultivation is the most distinctive feature of Zhuangzi’s cultivation. As discussed above, this feature easily misleads people to regard Zhuangzi’s philosophy as not given discussions about cultivation or it employs a negative and pessimistic approach of cultivation. The story of Song Rongzi mentioned in Chapter I of the Zhuangzi is a typical example of the passive approach of cultivation.

Therefore a man who has wisdom enough to fill one office effectively, good conduct enough to impress one community, virtue enough to please one ruler, or talent enough to be called into service in one state, has the same kind of self-pride as these little creatures. Song Rongzi would certainly burst out laughing at such a man. The whole world could praise Song Rongzi and it wouldn’t make him exert himself; the whole world could condemn him and it wouldn’t make him mope. He drew a clear line between the internal and the external and recognized the boundaries of true glory and disgrace. But that was all. As far as the world went, he didn’t fret and worry, but there was still ground he left unturned.

Liezi could ride the wind and go soaring around with cool and breezy skill, but after fifteen days he came back to earth. As far as the search for good fortune went, he didn’t fret and worry. He escaped the trouble of walking, but he still had to depend on something to get around. If he had only mounted on the truth of Heaven and Earth, ridden the changes of the six breaths, and thus wandered through the boundless, then what would he have had to depend on?
Therefore I say, the Perfect Man has no self; the Holy Man has no merit; the Sage has no fame.” (Watson, 2013, p.3)

In this story, we could find that Song Rongzi has a different attitude toward success, fame and virtue than the attitude common people have. He laughed at what common people take as important, because for him things as success, fame and virtue are not absolutely real. According to Zhuangzi’s philosophy, Song Rongzi’s attitude shows that he is at his beginning of cultivation, which is having the consciousness of cultivating himself. This consciousness of cultivation is actually the turning point which may lead Song Rongzi to employ a completely opposite approach.

The Turning Point— the Consciousness of Cultivation

Whereas, where does the consciousness of cultivation come from? Apparently if one wants to cultivate himself/herself, it means that one already has the consciousness of cultivation. This consciousness of cultivation is actually originated from how he/she looks at the reality. Only if one realizes the reality and ideas of what he/she perceived from the conventional phenomenal world is not absolute true, then is he/she maybe motivated to pursue the true reality. This according to Zhuangzi’s philosophy is the turning point for individual, and it is also one’s spiritual awakening. And this is the purpose of Zhuangzi’s philosophy of Oneness—to deconstruct the ossified ideas of reality in people’s mind, which may lead people to understand the true reality of Oneness. The descriptions of “a man who has wisdom enough to fill one office effectively, good conduct

189 Original text: “故夫知效一官，行比一乡，德合一君而徵一国者，其自视也亦若此矣。而宋荣子犹然笑之。且举世而誉之而不加劝，举世而非之而不加沮，定乎内外之分，辩乎荣辱之境，斯已焉。彼其于世，未数数然也。虽然，犹有未树也。夫列子御风而行，泠然善也，旬有五日而后反。彼于致福者，未数数然也。此虽免乎行，犹有所待者也。若夫乘天地之正，而御六气之辩，以游无穷者，彼且恶乎待哉！故曰：至人无己，神人无功，圣人无名。至人无己，神人无功，圣人无名”；《庄子今注今译》，页15-16.

190 This turning point is similar to Plato’s allegory of the Cave, “Just as one might have to turn the whole body round in order that the eye should see light instead of darkness, so the entire should must be turned away from this changing world…” (Plato, Republic, 518 c-d)
enough to impress one community, virtue enough to please one ruler, or talent enough to be called into service in one state” seem very high accomplished in a conventional sense, but according to Zhuangzi’s philosophy, they are still at the bottom level of their life situation.—They have not even stepped into the range of cultivation yet, because the ‘wisdom’, ‘good conduct’, ‘virtue’ and ‘talent’ mentioned here are all man-made contrivances and superfluous burdens to life, and not related to life itself.

Song Rongzi is different from them, because “he drew a clear line between the internal and the external and recognized the boundaries of true glory and disgrace”. As Hanshan (2019) explains the internal is the De rooted in self, and the external is the praise and condemn dependent on outside. Song Rongzi’s laughter indicates that he already sees the absurdity of the man-made contrivances and superfluous burdens to life, and he is already aware of the clear line of what is true and what is not. In this sense, Song Rongzi has this consciousness which means he has reached the turning point, and he is about to change—to start the cultivation.

From an Active Approach to a Passive Approach

As stated above, this consciousness is the turning point, because it turns the individual into a completely opposite direction of looking at the reality, which generates two opposite ways of cultivation. The two opposite directions of cultivation can simply be expressed by what Laozi mentioned as “Those who seek learning gain every day, those who seek Dao lose every day.” (Pine, 2009, p.96) To gain only stays at the level of learning, but not the level of Dao. Whereas people like Song Rongzi who has already


192 Original text: “为学日益, 为道日损”; 《老子今注今译》,页215.
realized the difference between “gain” and “lose”, they have the possibility or intention of seeking Dao. Naturally the direction of their cultivation turns from directly and actively doing something in order to gain more and more into losing the contrivances and superfluous burdens to life such as fame, success, and ideas. Therefore, as Mou states, “Most people like going forward, no one likes going backward. But it is Daoism that encourage us to go backward, because going backward is an actual practical cultivation, and it is not pessimistic at all”. (Mou, 2003, p.425, my translation) Only the cultivation of stepping backward is a cultivation on the core of life—the inner spirituality of life.

Two Phases of the Passive Approach

Thus in this passive approach of cultivation, there are generally two phases, which can be summarized as the cultivation of forgetting and the cultivation of Xu. The cultivation of forgetting is the entry level, which is passive but still requires actions like ‘forgetting’, ‘putting outside’, ‘doing away with’, and ‘listening’. Typical example is in the story of Song Rongzi, he laughs at things as success, fame and virtue. Another one is in the story of sit-and-forget, when Yanhui says he forgets benevolence and righteousness, sites and music. These above are all cultivating of forgetting about the man-made contrivances and superfluous burdens to life, and helping one to go back to life itself. It is the first phase of cultivation.

However the cultivation of forgetting is not enough, because in this cultivation there is still a consciousness of doing cultivation. It means there is still a self who generates this consciousness. As discussed in Chapter III, this self is just an assumption which manipulates the heart-mind and keeps the heart-mind not empty nor Xu. Thus,
one is still not One with Dao, and the aim of cultivation is still has not been reached yet. However, after the first phase of cultivation of forgetting—when all the man-made additional contrivances are all eliminated—the assumption of self, which generates the awareness of true reality Dao and the consciousness of cultivation in the first place, now becomes the obstacle of one’s returning to Dao. Like Song Rongzi, described as “The whole world could praise Song Rongzi and it wouldn’t make him exert himself; the whole world could condemn him and it wouldn’t make him mope”, he still has “a clear line between the internal and the external”. And this is why it says in the Zhuangzi “there was still ground he left unturned.” As Hanshan (2019) explains, the “unturned” is because he only forgets fames, but has not forgotten himself yet. Hence, the one who draws the clear line shows he still has the assumption of self. Because of the assumption of the self, all the endeavor of cultivation is still man-made by the self, which could never reach the naturally state of Spontaneity and Oneness.

Therefore, in order to be One with Dao, further cultivation is needed to work on the assumption of the self and the consciousness of cultivation. Only when the consciousness of cultivation is eliminated, could the person be One with Dao. Hence the cultivation needed now enters into a higher level. It is the cultivation of Xu—the second phase which is based on the cultivation of forgetting, and it steps backward even further. It does not require any actions, and it is the cultivation of no cultivation. And this is the cultivation finally working on the assumption of self which is called ‘the Perfect Man has no self’.

Another prominent feature of Zhuangzi’s cultivation is that it is hidden in the descriptions of individuals’ spiritual state. Express it in another way, there is no direct active explaining of cultivation in Zhuangzi’s philosophy. Instead within the *Zhuangzi*, it uses the individuals’ spiritual states to stand for the stages of cultivation. When we look through the cultivation stories, we find that there are many descriptions of one’s spiritual state, like “the Perfect Man has no self” \(^{195}\) (Watson, 2013, p.3); “I can sit down and forget everything” \(^{196}\) (Watson, 2013, p.52); and “for nine days more, and after he was able to put life outside of himself” \(^{197}\) (Watson, 2013, p.46) and “he was able to achieve the brightness of dawn”. \(^ {198}\) (Watson, 2013, p.47) These are not direct actions and there is no explanation of the cultivation. This is also a reason many people misunderstand Zhuangzi’s philosophy, and think that it does not talk about cultivation. But in fact, this is the uniqueness of Zhuangzi’s cultivation which is also in accord with its philosophy of Oneness.

As discussed in Section 2.4.2, everything has both its material aspect and immaterial aspects. Same as human being, every one is a unity of both his/her physical body and spiritual state. Even though in Zhuangzi’s philosophy the True Man or Perfect Man, have already reached the highest level of heart-mind, they are still at the same time occupying a material body as a physical being, common to all people. It requires the accumulation and sedimentation of actual cultivation on both the body and the heart-mind

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195 Original text: “至人无己”, 《庄子今注今译》, 页16.
197 Original text: “九日而后能外生”, 《庄子今注今译》, 页180.
198 Original text: “而后能朝彻”, 《庄子今注今译》, 页181.
from the common people’s state to elevate to the state of a True Man. Therefore, we could learn that the cultivation in Zhuangzi’s philosophy is the action and process to reach the state, and the state is the object and result of the cultivation. Cultivation and state are two aspects within one, and they are inseparable in Zhuangzi’s philosophy.

In this sense, the same wordings are usually used in Zhuangzi’s philosophy to express both meanings of the cultivation and state. The story of sit and forget is a good example,

Yan Hui said, “I’m improving!” Confucius said, “What do you mean by that?” “I’ve forgotten benevolence and righteousness!” “That’s good. But you still haven’t got it.” Another day, the two met again, and Yan Hui said, “I’m improving!” “What do you mean by that?” “I’ve forgotten rites and music!” “That’s good. But you still haven’t got it.” Another day, the two met again, and Yan Hui said, “I’m improving!” “What do you mean by that?” “I can sit down and forget everything!” Confucius looked very startled and said, “What do you mean, sit down and forget everything?” Yan Hui said, “I smash up my limbs and body, drive out perception and intellect, cast off form, do away with understanding, and make myself identical with the Great Thoroughfare. This is what I mean by sitting down and forgetting everything.” Confucius said, “If you’re identical with it, you must have no more likes! If you’ve been transformed, you must have no more constancy! So you really are a worthy man after all! With your permission, I’d like to become your follower”. 199 (Watson, 2013, pp. 52-53)

In this story, the word ‘forget’ is the key word standing for both meanings of the cultivation and state: “I’ve forgotten benevolence and righteousness!” “I’ve forgotten rites and music!” “I can sit down and forget everything!”. Those three stages of forgetting can be understood as a verb, meaning to forget benevolence and righteousness; rites and music; and everything. It is a dynamic cultivating action.

However, it can also be understood as an adjective describing the state of forgetting. As

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199 Original text: “颜回曰：‘回益矣。’ 仲尼曰：‘何谓也？’ 曰：‘回忘仁义矣。’ 曰：‘可矣，犹未也。’ 他日复见，曰：‘回益矣。’ 曰：‘何谓也？’ 曰：‘回忘礼乐矣！’ 曰：‘可矣，犹未也。’ 他日复见，曰：‘回益矣！’ 曰：‘何谓也？’ 曰：‘回坐忘矣。’ 仲尼蹴然曰：‘何谓坐忘？’ 颜回曰：‘堕肢体，黜聪明，离形去知，同于大通，此谓坐忘。’ 仲尼曰：‘同则无好也，化则无常也。而果其贤乎！丘也请从而后也’’; 《庄子今注今译》，页201-202.
Chen explains, “the word forget, denotes a peaceful and comfortable state of heart-mind” (Chen, 2015, p.202, my translation) This is a comparatively static state of forgetting, which describes one’s state of heart-mind, is not attached and distracted by any external things. This forgetting state is the ideal and highest state of human life according to Zhuangzi’s philosophy, as Li elaborates,

> It is not natural animal sensuosity, nor a priori outcome, nor a divine gift. Rather, it is a noumenal sedimentation, a metaphysical realm that at once resides within human experience and transcends it. It is a pure consciousness, a creative intuition attained only through the “fasting of the heart-mind” and “sitting and forgetting”. (Li, 2010, p. 84)

Thus, Zhuangzi’s philosophy does emphasize the sedimentation of cultivation, and its cultivation is purposely hidden accordingly in the descriptions of the spiritual states. The spiritual states of the True Man and Perfect Man are both the sedimentation of actual cultivation and the presentation of the result of the cultivation. If we ignore the dynamic process of the accumulation and sedimentation of cultivation, or mistake the comparatively static spiritual state of an individual as its cultivation, we would never really understand Zhuangzi’s philosophy. As Wuyi states,

> Many scholars in the past have failed to distinguish between the spiritual state and the cultivation, and they often mistake the spiritual state as the actual cultivation. This misunderstanding makes neither their descriptions of spiritual state nor their exposition of cultivation convincing and implementable. (Wu, 1983, p.51, my translation)

On the other hand, the researcher also believes that to expound the cultivation hidden in the description of the spiritual state is the best way to remind people that this cultivation is taking a passive approach.

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201 Original text: “历代很多学者未能分解境界和工夫的不同，往往以境界为工夫。使他们描写的工夫，和境界一样不落实，毫无着力”; 《逍遥的庄子》,页51.
Furthermore, as explained previously, one feature of Chinese philosophy is the subjectivity; so is this within Zhuangzi’s philosophy. Thus in Zhuangzi’s philosophy, how the reality is revealed to individual is dependent on how individuals comprehend it. In other words, the revealing of the metaphysical reality is dependent on the individual’s subjective spiritual level, which means it requires the subjectivity of the individual and the cultivation of individual. —This is the reason that Zhuangzi’s philosophy emphasizes “There must first be a True Man before there can be true knowledge.” 202 (Watson, 2013, p.42) The more that an individual elevates his/her spiritual state, the more the ultimate reality will unfold to him/her. Just like Yang Rubin explains,

The term spiritual state has become an important philosophical term originated from Buddhism. According to the Buddhist theory of epistemology, there is no absolute objective world. Everything in the world is inseparable from our consciousness, and it is even constructed by our consciousness. Therefore, different states of existence have different consciousness, so there is a different world... The key of understanding Zhuangzi’s Dao is similar to this. It is also to be gradually revealed by the deepening of the practitioner's consciousness. 203 (Yang, 1991, p. 42, my translation)

Therefore, with the accumulation and sedimentation of actual cultivation one will gradually reach higher spiritual level. Simultaneously, with the elevating of spiritual level, the reality one could perceive is different; 204 which will naturally lead to more sedimentation of cultivation.

202 Original text: “有真人而后有真知”；《庄子今注今译》, 页166.

203 Original text:“境界”成为重要的哲学术语起自佛教。依佛教知识论的观点，并没有绝对客观的世界，凡是在某种意义底下，都离不开我们的意识，而且还是由我们的意识建构而成的。因此，不同存在状态即有不同的意识，因此即有不同的世界…庄子所说的道，其理解的锁钥与此相似。它也是要因循实践者意识的深化，才能逐渐展现出来的”; 《庄周风范》, 页42.

204 This process is similar to the process of self-cultivation in Zen Buddhism which is depicted as before cultivation, mountains are mountains, waters are waters; while during cultivation mountains are not mountains and waters are not waters; and after realization mountains and waters are truly mountains and waters again. It is as Nagatomo (2015) exposes, “In the meditational process of discovery then, Zen moves from an ordinary, commonsensical standpoint to an extraordinary standpoint and with this transformation returns to the everyday ‘life-world’.” Retrieved from https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/japanese-zen/ on 03, 03, 2019.
Here above are the two major features of Zhuangzi’s cultivation. With the better understanding of the two features of Zhuangzi’s cultivation, we could be able to figure out the different levels of Zhuangzi’s cultivation interweaving in both the vertical and horizontal dimensions in its cultivation. Typical example is the story of Song Rongzi.

In the story of Song Rongzi, the different levels of cultivation are as following:

Level 0, the common people which are before the turning point, have both the assumption of self and are dependent on the externals.

Level 1, Song Rongzi has a clear line between internal and external, which means he is not dependent on the externals any more. But since there is still internal and external, Song Rongzi still has the assumption of self.

Level 2, that 'Liezi could ride the wind', shows Liezi already forgets himself, but he is still dependent on the wind.

Level 3, only 'the Perfect Man', 'the Holy Man' and 'the Sage' is the one who really has eliminated the assumption of the self, and is dependent on nothing.

One point worth to be mentioned here is the Perfect Man, the Holy Man and the Sage are not three different men. As Watson explains they are “Not three different categories but three names for the same thing.” (Watson, 2013, p.3) And Du explains it even further,

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205 The terms of ‘vertical and horizontal dimensions’ are borrowed from Mou (2003), see further details in pp. 109-124. In this research, Zhuangzi’s cultivation will be discussed based on these two dimensions in Section 4.2.2.2 and Section 4.2.2.3.

206 It is a story Zhuangzi borrows from the Book of Liezi: “My heart-mind concentrated and my body relaxed, bones and flesh fused completely, I did not notice what my body leaned against and my feet trod, I drifted with the wind East or West, like a leaf from a tree or a dry husk, and never knew whether it was the wind that rode me or I that rode the wind.” (Graham, 1990, p. 37)

The four names (the True Man, the Perfect Man, the Sage and the Holy Man) actually all refer to the person who is in the highest spiritual state. But when discussing from the perspective of cultivation, ‘the True Man’ and ‘the Perfect Man’ will be used; when discussing from the perspective of political operation, ‘the Sage’ will be used; When discussing the person who has left the mundane life and can transform freely, ‘the Holy Man’ will be used. All in all, it is the different names of the person who Zhuangzi said is in the highest spiritual state.\(^\text{207}\) (Du, 2013, p.15, my translation)

Zhuangzi’s philosophy employs this way to represent three different aspects within one person. The researcher believes that this is purposely done in Zhuangzi’s philosophy to indicate the process of cultivation in both the vertical elevation— forgetting the self; and the horizontal expansion of perceiving different reality— which has no merit and no fame.

Furthermore, from the vertical elevation and the horizontal expansion of cultivation, we may learn that,

On the one hand for the vertical elevation, the cultivation starts from the individual’s state of having the assumption of self to having no self and finally reaches being One with Dao.

On the other hand for the horizontal expansion, the cultivation starts from the dependent-on-external (有待, youdai) state to the independent-on-external (无待, wudai) state.\(^\text{208}\) Also, the cultivation starts from the accumulation and sedimentation within each level of the vertical elevation, which helps to expand one’s comprehension of different levels of reality.

\(^\text{207}\) Original text: “四个名称其实同指最高境界者，不过从工夫修养的角度说时，多会以‘真人、至人’称之；从政治操作的角度说时，多会以‘圣人’说之；从远离人间的出神入化的角度说时，则多以‘神人’说之。总而言之，都是庄子说最高境界之人物的不同称谓”；《庄周梦蝶: 庄子哲学》,页15.

\(^\text{208}\) These two expression appear from the description of Liezi. See in the story of Song Rongzi cited in the beginning of Section 4.2.2.
These two dimensions of cultivation always interweave and interact mutually, and both of them are necessary and important in the process of one’s cultivation. Thus, in the following sections, the two dimensions will be discussed to help us grasp a whole and detailed picture of Zhuangzi’s cultivation.

4.3.2 The Cultivation Stages in a Vertical Dimension

Zhuangzi’s philosophy is majorly based on a vertical dimension. The vertical here means the theory is mainly about the ultimate source of metaphysics which already transcends the objective knowledge realm and the phenomenal world. In other words, the vertical dimension shows a mutually linking-up and interchanging relationship between the un-manifested Dao fully manifests as ten-thousand myriad things and the ten-thousand myriad things return to the un-manifested Dao. It is just as Mou states, “The basic and central concepts of Daoism are also dealing with the final and ultimate. From this sense, Daoist system is in a vertical system.”209 (Mou, 2003, p.421, my translation) Now that Zhuangzi’s cultivation of Xu is aiming at the vertical dimension of becoming ‘a companion of Heaven’, or being One with Dao, the cultivation must have its own practicing sequence from lower stages to higher stages. The most clearest stages represented in Zhuangzi are the story of sit-and-forget as already cited in section 4.3.1.2 and the story of Peace-in-strife. In the story of Peace-in-strife, the Woman Crookback was explaining how to learn Dao,

“So I began explaining and kept at him for three days, and after that he was able to put the world outside himself. When he had put the world outside himself, I kept at him for seven days more, and after that he was able to put things outside himself. When he had put things outside himself, I kept at him for nine days more, and after that he was able to put life outside himself. After he had put life outside himself, he was able to achieve the brightness of dawn, and when he had achieved the brightness of dawn, he could see his own aloneness. After he had

209 Original text: “道家的基本观念与中心问题所趋向之感，亦是终极，究竟之所在。从这点看来，道家亦属于系统系统”，《中国哲学十九讲》，页421.
managed to see his own aloneness, he could do away with past and present, and after he had done away with past and present, he was able to enter where there is no life and no death. That which kills life does not die; that which gives life to life does not live. This is the kind of thing it is: there’s nothing it doesn’t send off, nothing it doesn’t welcome, nothing it doesn’t destroy, nothing it doesn’t complete. Its name is Peace-in-Strife. After the strife, it attains completion.” 210  
(Watson, 2013, pp.46-47)

In the story of sit-and-forget, Yan Hui stated the three vertical stages of cultivation: “I’ve forgotten benevolence and righteousness”, “I’ve forgotten rites and music”, “I can sit down and forget everything”. In the story of Peace-in-strife, there are also vertical stages accordingly to the story of sit-and-forget: “he was able to put the world outside himself”, “he was able to put things outside of himself”, “he was able to put life outside himself”. In the following discussion, it will majorly discussing the stages based on the story of sit-and-forget, and will use the stages in Peace-in-strife to support when necessary.

In the story of sit-and-forget, from the context we could learn that forgetting benevolence and righteousness is the first state; and forgetting rites and music is the second state. These are the first two lower stages, since Confucius said that “you still haven’t got it”. However, sit-and-forget is the highest stage even supported by Confucius saying that “I’d like to become your follower”.

We may ask why forgetting the benevolence211 and righteousness212 is the first and lowest stage of cultivation. Benevolence and righteousness are the core concepts in Confucianism, but because they are over-emphasized by Confucianism, these concepts

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210 Original text: “吾犹守而告之，参日而后能外天下；已外天下矣，吾又守之，七日而后能外物；已外物矣，吾又守之，九日而后能外生；已外生矣，而后能朝彻；朝彻而后能见独；见独而后能无古今；无古今而后能入于不死不生。杀生者不死，生生者不生。其为物无不将也，无不迎也，无不毁也，无不成也。其名为撄宁。撄宁者，撄而后者也”；《庄子今注今译》，页180-181.

211 See Footnote 19.

212 See Footnote 20.
become strong and rigid social values, and regulations, which generate all the rigid and even ossified opposite judgments as good or bad, right or wrong. Oppositions are tension, and they will forcefully lead people to go into one certain direction. As discussed in Section 3.3.2.1, they are the cognitive knowledge acquired from the external society. The cognitive self comes from it because people are too attached and cling to this cognitive knowledge. Hence, instead of naturally following their own inner reality De, individuals are put into a tension of following these external rigid and static social values and regulations. This is just like what Laozi says “When the Great Dao disappears, we meet kindness and justice.”\(^{213}\) (Pine, 2009, p.36). When people are disconnected with their own De, they lose their source and purpose in life. They could only follow the external man-made morality of the benevolence and righteousness as their life direction.

However, according to Zhuangzi’s philosophy this social morality of benevolence and righteousness are the ‘Heaven punishment’,\(^{214}\) because these are the external unnecessary things added to life, which actually become the fetters to life. Hence the first stage of cultivation should start with forgetting the external unnecessary social values and regulations which fetter people’s mind and consciousness, and setting life free from the man-made boundaries. This is the preliminary stage; this stage is the cultivation of eliminating the cognitive self, which comes from the external cognitive knowledges.

\(^{213}\) Original text: “大道废，有仁义”; 《老子今注今译》,页122. The kindness and justice are another translation of benevolence and righteousness.

\(^{214}\) Original text: “天刑”. It comes from a story in Chapter V of Zhuangzi: “No-Toes told the story to Lao Dan. ‘Confucius certainly hasn’t reached the stage of a Perfect Man, has he? What does he mean coming around so obsequiously to study with you? He is after the sham illusion of fame and reputation and doesn’t know that the Perfect Man looks on these as so many handcuffs and fetters!’ Lao Dan said, ‘Why don’t you just make him see that life and death are the same story, that acceptable and unacceptable are on a single string? Wouldn’t it be good to free him from his handcuffs and fetters?’ No-Toes said, ‘When Heaven has punished him, how can you set him free?’ ” (Watson, 2013, p.37) Original text: “无趾语老聃曰：‘孔丘之于至人，其未至邪？彼何宾宾以学子为？彼且以简以谴诡怪之名闻，不知至人之以是为己桎梏邪？’老聃曰：‘胡不直使彼以死生为一条，以可不可为一贯者，解其桎梏，其可乎？’无趾曰：‘天刑之，安可解！’”; 《庄子今注今译》,页151.
The second stage is forgetting the rites and musics. The original Chinese character of rites is 礼 (li), which carries the meanings of rite, ceremony, courtesy, and social custom. Chan explains, that “Li originally means a religious sacrifice but has come to mean ceremony, ritual, decorum, rules of propriety, good form, good custom, etc”. (Chan, 1963, p.790) And music is a kind of harmonious sound expressing joyful feelings and emotions. Both rites and musics are emphasized in Confucianism and both of them are about a certain social behavioral pattern generated from the morality of benevolence and righteousness which distinguish the good-and-bad oppositions in one’s mind. In other words, they are the behavioral and emotional manifestation of one’s values. It is the behavioral self discussed in Section 3.3.2.1.

Therefore, the second stage is a cultivation of eliminating this behavioral self in society. Compared to the cognitive self, this behavioral self has more control to life, and it is more difficult to forget. Firstly, the benevolence and righteousness are only values or concepts added by the external, while the rites and music are the actual behaviors and emotions from those values or concepts. Since it is dealing with the behaviors and emotions, compared to the abstract concepts of benevolence and righteousness added from the external, the second stage of forgetting is one step closer and further into life itself. Forgetting the benevolence and righteousness is still to forget some abstract concepts which is from outside, but forgetting the rites and music is to forget some solid behavioral and emotional patterns which are already inside of us and are a part of our daily life. Secondly, benevolence and righteousness will only lead to conceptual counterparts, whereas the rites and music are actually defining the self by doing proper behaviors or expressing certain emotions. The second stage is actually one step further dealing with the relationship between the counterparts of self and others, the non-self in

society. Hence forgetting the rites and music is forgetting the distinctions between self and others. It is just like Du argues,

The first step is eliminating the seriousness of the concepts; the second step is eliminating the seriousness of the behaviors. Only if the rites and music along with the benevolence and righteousness are both forgotten, could we shake off the insistency toward the consciousness which is standardized by social personalities.\(^{216}\) (Du, 2013, p.192, my translation)

These first two stages above are very similar to the first two stages in the story of Peace-in-strife as “he was able to put the world outside himself” and “he was able to put things outside himself”. As Chen explained, putting outside means forgetting.\(^{217}\) (Chen, 2015, p.182, my translation) The world here in the first stage stands for the social values, moralities and conventions, which are the easiest things to be forgotten like what Song Rongzi has done. The things in the second stage are the counterpart of self, and it actually deals with a similar problem in what forgetting the rites and music does.

Hence we could summarize that those first two stages both in sit-and-forget and Peace-in-strife, are still the cultivation in the social realm, they are only dealing with the cognitive self and behavioral self which were added by the external society.

Whereas when the influence from the external society is put outside— the assumption of physical self becomes the most difficult one to forget, since it is easy for people to identify themselves with the physical body and mistake the physical body as an evidence of the existence of self. The third stage of “putting life outside of himself” in Peace-in-strife carries the same meaning as “smash up my limbs and body, cast off form” in sit-and-forget. It is the last layer added into life. It deals with what Du calls

\(^{216}\) Original text: “观念的严肃是第一步的化除，行为的严肃是第二步的化除，礼乐随着仁义，两皆相忘，我们才算抖落一切社会人格为标准的意识坚持”；《庄周梦蝶: 庄子哲学》, p.192.

\(^{217}\) Original text: “‘外’，‘犹遗，忘’；《庄子今注今译》, p.182.
“the naturalized identity of self-existence.” \(^{218}\) (Du, 2013, p.176) It is a strong consciousness and attachment that I exist as a natural being with this physical body which is clearly distinct from others. Hence, the third stage is even to forget the subjectivity which generates all the rigid distinctions as benevolence and righteousness; rites and music; even internal and external, I and others, etc. It is the ultimate cultivation of forgetting. It is a stage of shaking off all the unnecessary accessories to life—from both outside and inside, and both physically and psychologically.

After these stages, one is no longer confined and stuck by the limited and static perspective of reality. This is the state of ‘I lost myself’. In this state one no longer has the assumption of self and is finally back to the pure and intrinsic life state which his/her own inner reality— naturally starts to unfold. At this point, the cultivation is no longer in the empirical realm anymore, it is purely spiritual. One has stepped into the second type of cultivation—the cultivation of Xu, which one has even lost the consciousness of cultivation. In this cultivation of Xu, there are no more clearly distinctive stages, but there are some subtle differences from the lower level to the higher. In the sit-and-forget, it is only described as “make myself identical with the Great Thoroughfare”; whereas in the Peace-in-strife, there are more detailed descriptions, which can be roughly summarized as the 'brightness of dawn', 'see the Solitary' \(^{219}\), 'do away with past and present', and 'Peace-in-strife'.

As discussed above, after the third stage of putting life outside of himself or sit-and-forget, the assumption of self is completely eliminated. Hence the self and non-self—other things are One, and outside and inside are One. The heart-mind is no longer

\(^{218}\) Original text: “自我存在的自然人身分”; 《庄周梦蝶:庄子哲学》, 页176.

\(^{219}\) It is Lin’s translation (Lin, 1942, p.666), which is preferred to Watson’s translation as “see his own Aloneness”. (Watson, 2013, p.47)
disturbed by all the chaotic distinctions and emotions generated from the assumption of
self. The person finally gets a clear vision, which is called as the brightness of dawn in
Zhuangzi’s philosophy. It is a kind of heart-mind ability of intuitive comprehension
which is already beyond the intellectual ability. It broadens the spiritual apprehension of
the heart-mind and let the cycle of Dao flowing smoothly through the heart-mind. This
is what has been explained in the sit-and-forget: “If you’ve been transformed, you must
have no more constancy!” 220 (Watson, 2013, p.53)

After the person gets the intuitive comprehensive ability of brightness of dawn,
he/she elevates to another state of seeing the Solitary. As annotated by Chen, “See the
Solitary means to intuitively understand Dao which has no counterparts” 221 (Chen,
2015, p. 182, my translation), it shows that he/she is already One with Dao. “It is the
spiritual state of a person after seeing Dao.” 222 (Xu, 2014, p.356, my translation) With
seeing the Solitary, one ‘could do away with past and present’, and ‘was able to enter
where there is no life and death’. The past and present represent time limitations, and
life and death represent the space limitations. Since one already sees the Solitary, there
is no distinction of past and present, life and death. However, it does not mean that there
is no past and present or life and death in the empirical realm. It means there is no point
to make the distinction between them, just like what is mentioned in the Outer Chap-
ters, “There is no end to the weighing of things, no stop to time, no constancy to the di-
vision of lots, no fixed rule to beginning and end.” 223 (Watson, 2013, p.128) Because
“the weighing of things” is only dwelling in the level of things—the empirical level;

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221 Original text: “见独：指洞见独立无待的道”；《庄子今注今译》,页182.
222 Original text: “庄子则指的是人见道以后的精神境界”；《中国人性论史》,页356.
223 Original text: “夫物，量无穷，时无止，分无常，终始无故”；《庄子今注今译》,页404.
when one already sees the Solitary it means he/she is in the level of Dao. Past and present, life and death are all just a certain part within the ever-changing cycle of Dao. In this sense, one transcends time and space. The spiritual state what he/she presents is exactly what the cycle of Dao is presenting.

The Peace-in-strife is the last stage of the cultivation of Xu. Zhang explains that, “the 'send off', ‘welcome', 'destroy' and ‘complete' are the content of 'strife'; the 'brightness of dawn', 'see the Solitary', 'do away with past and present' and 'no life and death' are the content of 'Peace'." 224 (Zhang, 1994, p. xx, my translation) It is a very paradoxical state. In this state, things comes and goes, destroys and completes, but the heart-mind will never be attached or disturbed to any of these state. This is what Cheng annotates as “It is always movements within the quietness, and there is tranquility even though always disturbed.”225 (Cheng, 2018, my translation) Therefore, it is a description of a person who is situated in a chaos of interchanging of things and the world, but still has a non-attaching and tranquil state of his/her heart-mind. This is the exact state of Xu and the highest level of cultivation which already reaches Oneness.

4.3.3 The Cultivation of Skillfulness Accumulation in a Horizontal Dimension

Usually when we talk about the horizontal dimension, most probably we will relate it to knowledge, like Mou states, “Knowledge is in the horizontal dimension, since there are subject and object. For example scientific knowledge is a kind of cognitive recognition formed by cognitive faculty which is in a horizontal dimension.” 226 (Mou,
2003, p.111, my translation) However, here when we talk about the horizontal dimension in Zhuangzi’s philosophy, it is not a horizontal dimension of cognitive recognition. The horizontal discussed here has two meanings.

First, it is a process of unfolding a reality of the Dao and ten-thousand myriad things as One, which is reached through the cultivation of Xu. Mou (2003) explains it as the presentation of Dao, heart-mind and things as the whole One, which is based on the latitude line of cultivation.227

Second, it is a skillfulness accumulation within each single vertical stage of cultivation. Only with enough accumulation of skillfulness, could the cultivation improve well enough to elevate into a higher stage. Furthermore, the skillfulness accumulation is specially emphasized in Zhuangzi’s cultivation also because it sees all things are within One, so as man. Man is a unity of his body, heart-mind and spirit. Hence, the cultivation is majorly a spiritual cultivation process on the heart-mind, but it would start cultivating with the physical body.

With this understanding of this horizontal dimension and skillfulness accumulation, we could really understand how possible that one could finally reach Oneness through the cultivation of Xu. The cultivation of skillfulness accumulation in a horizontal dimension is best presented in the story of Cook Ding and the fasting of heart-mind,

Cook Ding laid down his knife and replied, “What I care about is Dao, which goes beyond skill. When I first began cutting up oxen, all I could see was the ox itself. After three years I no longer saw the whole ox. And now—now I go at it by spirit and don’t look with my eyes. Perception and understanding have come to a stop, and spirit moves where it wants. I go along with the natural makeup,

strike in the big hollows, guide the knife through the big openings, and follow things as they are.”  

“May I ask what the fasting of the heart-mind is?” Confucius said, “Make your will one! Don’t listen with your ears, listen with your heart-mind. No, don’t listen with your heart-mind, but listen with your spirit (Qi). Listening stops with the ears, the heart-mind stops with recognition, but spirit (Qi) is empty and waits for all things. Dao gathers in emptiness alone. Emptiness is the fasting of the heart-mind.”

These two stories above both has three stages accordingly as: “all I could see was the ox itself” and “listen with your ears”; “I no longer saw the whole ox” and “listen with your heart-mind”; “now I go at it by spirit and don’t look with my eyes” and “listen with your spirit”. The following paragraphs will focus on analyzing how the cultivation helps the horizontal expansion of reality.

Apparently it is said that the first stage is “all I could see was the ox itself”, it was the beginning of Cook Ding’s learning of cutting up oxen. At that point, he could see the ox itself, which implies the cultivation started with his physical body and senses. Since he was using his senses to see the ox, there was clear distinction between him and the ox which is an ordinary perception for common people. This is exactly what it means by “listen with ears”.

But after three years cultivation, as he said “I no longer saw the whole ox”— the distinction between Cook Ding and the ox disappeared. It means the distinction between I—self and things—non-self is first eliminated. At this point he was not using his senses to guide him to cut up oxen, which shows he was no longer relying on his senses to perceive the reality. What he was relying on for cutting is the skills and experience—the

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228 原丁释刀对曰: “臣之所好者道也，进乎技矣。始臣之解牛之时，所见无非全牛者；三年之后，未尝见全牛也：方今之时，臣以神遇而不以目视，官知止而神欲行。依乎天理，批大郤，导大窾，因其固然”; 《庄子今注今译》,页95-96.

cognitive knowledge he had got. Put it another way, even though the distinction between I and things was eliminated, Cook Ding still had a self, and was using his heart-mind and cognitive knowledge to work on oxen. It is the stage of “listen with your heart-mind”.

The last stage which is the highest stage of cultivation in this story, he could “go at it by spirit and don’t look with my eyes. Perception and understanding have come to a stop, and spirit moves where it wants”. It shows all the distinctions between I and things, the skill or the physical body and the heart-mind are eliminated. He is not distracted by senses and his heart-mind is not thinking and analyzing any more. The self which blocks the heart-mind disappears, instead the spirit is working by itself which corresponding with the flow of Dao. It is exactly the stage of “listen with Qi”, as Du claims “I cannot find the self in this state. I am just a performer of the natural Qi. And what is going through me is the function of ‘Dao gathers in emptiness alone’, and the consciousness of self no longer exists.” (Du, 2013, p.106, my translation) Since the senses and heart-mind stop, there is no distraction and distortion of the reality any more. The reality one can perceive is that everything is flowing as Qi without any rigid distinction and without any obstruction any more. And this reality presented now is what Mou (2003) calls the “the presentation of Dao, heart-mind and things as the whole One” as mentioned above.

Therefore we could see the cultivation of skillfulness accumulation in a horizontal dimension has both the accumulation of time and skill from physical body to heart-mind to spirit, and the expansion of perception of the reality. This is the reason Xu declaims

“The Cook Ding’s elevation from skill to Dao is not a metaphor, it is real presentation with solid content…It is the situation that Dao actualized in one’s life.” 231 (Xu, 2001, p. 32) At this moment, one’s inner reality De and the external reality Dao become One, and all things merge into One. Hence, the subjectivity and objectivity are both existing and existing as One. In other words, this state is both completely subjective and completely objective. This is the ultimate reality which Zhuangzi’s philosophy declaims and it is the Oneness that one’s cultivation of Xu finally could reach.

4.4 The Critiques on Zhuangzi’s Philosophy

4.4.1 Over-emphasis on Dao— the Ultimate Reality

Xunzi232 (荀子, 310—235 BC) was a Chinese Confucian philosopher, and he was conventionally regarded as the third representative of Confucianism (after Confucius and Mencius). He was also living in the same times as Zhuangzi, but a little younger than Zhuangzi. He was the first philosopher pointing out the limitation of Zhuangzi’s philosophy, and criticizes that “Zhuangzi’s philosophy was prejudiced towards Heaven, and did not know man.” 233 (Xunzi, 1928, p.264, my translation) As explained in Chapter II, the Heaven in Zhuangzi’s philosophy actually is Dao.234 Hence, what Xunzi points out are actually two important points which brings Zhuangzi’s philosophy into a dilemma: first over-emphasis on Dao, and second its less-emphasis on man.

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231 Original text: “庖丁的技而进乎道，不是比拟性的说法，而是具有真实内容的说法...是道在人生中实现的情景”; 《中国艺术精神》，页32.

232 Xunzi, also known as Xun Kuang (荀况), he was the first Chinese philosopher who declaims that human nature is born to be evil.


234 See more in Footnote 70.
4.4.1.1 Over-emphasis on Dao

As what have been discussed, Zhuangzi’s philosophy of Oneness is about the ultimate reality and one’s return to the state of being One with Dao. Hence in most of its chapters, it explains the reality with taking the perspective of Dao, which could see things as equal and One without rigid distinctions. But since it always emphasizes the perspective of Dao—the whole, Zhuangzi’s philosophy ignores that for most common people they are still confined in the phenomenal world with very limited perspective to look at the reality. It is very difficult for the common people to comprehend the reality Zhuangzi’s philosophy declaims. This becomes the biggest obstacle for people to follow its philosophy of Oneness in the first place.

Even though Zhuangzi’s philosophy of Oneness is difficult for common people to follow in the first place, the researcher does not fully agree with the critique here. Zhuangzi’s major concern is individuals, and the major problem of individuals is they are confined by the limited perspective of knowing the reality. Since Dao is the ultimate reality, emphasizing on Dao is to turn the individuals into the right direction to look at the reality, which is very similar to Plato’s cave as mentioned in Section 4.3.1.1. It is the first step of knowing the reality, and it is a step of deconstructing the static conditions already set in individuals’ mind. Hence, the emphasis of Dao is necessary because it is like a compass which could lead individuals to the right path.

4.4.1.2 Less-emphasis on Man

We should note that what Xunzi denotes about man is different from Zhuangzi’s man. When Xunzi is talking about man, it is based on its human nature theory that man is born to be evil. As Allen exposes for Xunzi, “the selfish desires with which one is born are human nature”. (Allen, 1997, p.119) What Xunzi says about ‘Zhuangzi’s philosophy does not know man’, means Zhuangzi’s philosophy does not pay much
attention to man’s selfish desires within their inner nature. It is indeed the most challenging obstacle for most people to overcome which even makes misunderstandings in that Zhuangzi’s philosophy of Oneness is completely against society and material life. Whereas according to Zhuangzi’s philosophy, the intrinsic inner nature of man is the De, which is pure and spiritual and in accordance with Dao. Man is born to be naturally One with Dao, and the ideal state of man is companion of Heaven which means man is spiritual. An Yunzhen points out that “Zhuangzi’s philosophy uses ‘Dao-interchange-them-and-deem-them-One’ to unify ‘Heaven’s Way’ and ‘man's way’.”

Even though Zhuangzi’s philosophy does not negate man also exist as a physical being with desires in the society and the phenomenal world, but its aims is still that man being One with Heaven, which is a pure spiritual state. In The Inner Chapter IV, In the World of Man, even though the devious and intractable problems in society and government are described, the way Zhuangzi’s philosophy suggests for people is “being useless, unemployable, so that the government leaves you alone” as Graham summarized. (Graham, 2001, p.66) The major focus of Zhuangzi’s philosophy is still on spirituality, since once one gets to this state he would know the society and material life is not that necessary for life itself. However again, for the common people who has not even started cultivation, it seems very pessimistic.

Those reasons above bring more criticisms, as a modern Chinese philosopher Meng criticized later, “As Zhuangzi’s philosophy takes human nature as opposed to material social civilization, material gains, and knowledge, all material progresses are

235 Original text: “庄子用”道通为一”统一‘天道’与’人道’”；《西方庄学研究》,页64.
regarded as an enslavement and constrain of human nature, which obviously will lead people going backward.”²³⁶ (Meng, 1995, p.70, my translation)

The researcher would say that Meng has misunderstood Zhuangzi’s philosophy in the first place. Zhuangzi’s philosophy never takes human nature as opposed to material social civilization, material gains, and knowledge. What Zhuangzi’s philosophy is opposed to is that individuals only take those things as absolutely real and get attached to them. Because when individuals get attached them, they will fall into the endless pursuit of these material possessions. In that way, individual will lose their intrinsic nature and separate the natural connection with Dao.

All in all, the researcher believes that Zhuangzi’s philosophy of Oneness is its most significant feature and phenomenal contribution. Nonetheless, since it over emphasizes on Dao—the ultimate reality which is difficult for common people to understand, it leads to many misunderstandings of its philosophy as mentioned in Section 4.2.3. The many misunderstandings are also the reason Zhuangzi’s philosophy is difficult for common people to follow.

4.4.2 Lack of Practical Guidance on Cultivation

As discussed in this Chapter, Zhuangzi’s philosophy of Oneness does have its own cultivation. But because it takes a passive approach and describes it in an indirect way, the cultivation is still lacking practical guidance for common people to follow step by step. As for the cultivation of forgetting, Zhuangzi’s philosophy does give guidance like practice certain kind of skill, i.e. the skill that Cook Ding practice. But when it comes to the cultivation of Xu, which is already in a spiritual state like 'brightness of dawn', 'see the Solitary', and 'Peace-in-strife', it is beyond words and it is more like a meditation.

²³⁶ Original text: “(庄子)由于把个人和物质文明、功利、知识对立起来，把一切物质进步看作是对人性的奴役和束缚，这样就不得不走回头路”; 《中国心性论》, 页70.
which Qi will naturally function by itself. It is of great importance for one to cultivate
and finally reach Oneness, but Zhuangzi’s philosophy does not give many expositions
in this type.

This bears the criticism from Wang Yangming, a Neo-confucian philosopher in
Ming dynasty. When Wang Yangming explains about daily cultivation, he says that “If,
however, at this time he merely remains quiet in a vacuum, like dry wood and dead
ashes, it is also useless.” 237 (Chan, 1963, p.35) He did not mention Zhuangzi’s name in
his criticism, but apparently the concept like vacuum (虚, Xu) is from Zhuangzi’s
cultivation of Xu. 238 And the expression of “dry wood and dead ashes” is also from the
story of I-lost-myself in Chapter II of the Zhuangzi. In the story of I-lost-myself, Ziqi
has already eliminated the assumption of self, and is ready for the next step, cultivation
of Xu. But there is no more elaboration or actual practical guidance for cultivation of
Xu any more.

Therefore in this sense, the researcher fully agrees with Wang Yangming’s
criticism that only being like dry wood and dead ashes is useless, because people do not
know what to do next for further cultivation. This becomes the weak point of
Zhuangzi’s philosophy.

Nevertheless, later on the religious Daoism developed the cultivation theory and
established a practical cultivation system with especial focus on the cultivation of Xu.239
This is a big supplement which provides actual practical guidance for individual to real-
ize Zhuangzi’s philosophy of Oneness.

in.ncu.edu.tw/phg/confucian/docs/resource/05_3/2.htm on 22. 02.2019.

238 See An (2012, p. 68).

239 The cultivation of Xu is called the internal alchemy cultivation in religious Daoism, which
will be introduced in Section 5.2.1.
4.5 Summary of this Chapter

The cultivation of Xu is a process of eliminating all the artifice and man-made illusions in life, and returning back to life itself and one’s inner reality. And it is a process of learning how to calm and purify one’s heart-mind to not ‘to do’ things, and finally let the Dao naturally and spontaneously to do it. It is like what Du asserts,

The highest stage of cultivation in the fasting of the heart-mind is the state of Xu. On the surface, it is a comparatively non-performing pattern. Whereas within this non-performing pattern there is actually a more fundamental process is functioning…With this more fundamental function one could enter the deepest and ultimate state of being, which could connect Heaven and Earth, go along with the self-generating process of Dao and his/her own heart-mind without hinderance.240 (Du, 2013, p.107, my translation)

Basically this cultivation of Xu is simultaneously working with both the vertical and horizontal dimensions. The vertical dimension is majorly a process of eliminating the assumption of self, from the cognitive self, behavioral self to physical self. The process of elevation in the Xu state after the self is already lost is also very important. Through the process of cultivation, the heart-mind changes from disturbed state into a tranquil and still state, and it is also opened from a limited fixed heart-mind to an unlimited empty and still heart-mind. It is also a process which body, heart-mind and one’s spirit De gradually becomes One. This is what Zhuangzi’s philosophy calls the Reservoir of Heaven when the spirit De reveals within the Xu state, it is like “Pour into it and it is never full, dip from it and it never runs dry, and yet it does not know where the supply comes from.” 241 (Watson, 2013, p.14)

240 Original text: “心斋工夫的最终境界就是一个虚的境界，从表面上说就是进入一种相对上不表现的模式，在不表现中却进行着更为本质性的操作…在更本质性的操作中进入存在的最深之处，从而缩合天地，掌握造化，称心而行”；《庄周梦蝶: 庄子哲学》,页107.

241 Original text: “注焉而不满，酌焉而不竭，而不知其所由来”；《庄子今注今译》,页75.
The horizontal dimension is a process more about how one perceives the reality within the cultivation. When the heart-mind is elevated in a higher level, the reality the heart-mind could perceive is elevated as well. Once one cultivates himself/herself enough to stay real with his/her inner reality—De, the ten-thousand myriad things stay real within their only inner reality—De because his/her heart-mind is reflecting directly without any distortion. Since both his/her De and the ten-thousand myriad things’ De are from Dao, there is no distinction and counterparts in this state. In other words, if one stays real, what one could perceive are real. It is “the presentation of Dao, heart-mind and things as the whole One.”

Therefore, through the cultivation of Xu, the heart-mind is expanded from the limited fixed heart-mind to the unlimited empty heart-mind, which is in accordance with the Xu state in the cycle of Dao. This is the way for individual to return to Oneness and being one with Dao—the ultimate reality.
Chapter V:

Conclusion and Recommendation for Further Research

5.1 Retrospection and Conclusion of the Research

Every action is based on a view point. A view point is based on how we look at the reality. The true reality is what never changes. Zhuangzi’s philosophy is talking about this reality of Dao as Oneness. Dao is One as a whole. Within this whole, every being and non-being, manifestation and un-manifestation, material and immaterial are all in a constant process of changing. But Dao — as the whole, the One— never changes. Zhuangzi’s philosophy focuses on Dao as Oneness because the ultimate reality is a whole of a well balance and unity in all dimensions as manifested and un-manifested, above and below, outwardly and inwardly, material and immaterial.

However, the phenomenal world or the nature is always changing, so it is not absolutely real. It is only one part of the ultimate reality—the manifested part within the never ending cycle of Dao. In other words, the phenomenal world or the nature is the manifestation of Dao with a physical body. Dao manifests itself in the nature with the way of nature. The physical nature is always changing but the way of nature stays the same. Since the way of nature and the physical nature always works together, they are inseparable. In other words, the physical nature and the non-physical way of nature are One— the material and the immaterial are One. If we take the nature as the body of Dao, we could say that the nature is One with both the spiritual and the material.

Looking at the things and human beings living in the nature, we could find the same answer that everything including human beings are both spiritual and material. Everything living in the nature gets their inner nature from the nature which is their way
of living. As examined in Chapter II, the intrinsic inner nature is actually De—the inner
reality, which is in accordance with Dao—the ultimate reality. As Dao and De are One,
things and man are naturally One with Dao. They are also a unity of both the physical
and the spiritual, outside and inside.

In other words, man is both a physical and spiritual being. De gives every indi-
vidual different ways of living, which is their purpose of life and the way for them to
connect with the whole outwardly and inwardly, physically and spiritually. Once one
remains being One with his/her own inner reality—De, one is just naturally being One
with the whole.

This is what Zhuangzi’s philosophy meant by Dao as Oneness. The philosophy of
Dao as Oneness clearly points out that our reality is all connected as a whole and with
no rigid and absolute distinctions. Staying real means naturally staying One with our
own inner reality—De. Thus we are just naturally being One with the whole, the source,
the ultimate. We are naturally nurtured by the ultimate source, well-balanced with the
physical and the spiritual, and will never feel alienated and unbalanced. The concept of
Oneness is both a description of the non-differentiated and non-discriminated ultimate
reality and a spiritual state of a true man who already transcends all the distinctions as
follows, the opposite judgements, all the things in the phenomenal world, the individu-
ality and entirety, and the different time concepts.

The problem of today’s world and men is rooted in the way of looking at the reali-
ty. Living outside of the nature and losing the inner nature make men disconnected with
their inner reality and the whole. Men only take the material, physical aspect which they
can sense as real and true. In this way, the immaterial, spiritual aspect is lost. Men are
confined with the phenomenal world full of static distinctions and separations. The
sense of balance and unity and the holist view of looking at the reality are lost as well. Men are trapped in illusions.

Men are trapped in illusions because of chengxin—the fixed heart-mind according to Zhuangzi’s philosophy. As discussed in Chapter III, the fixed heart-mind is the heart-mind which has an assumption of self in it. This assumption of self is the integration and interaction of the three selves as the physical self, the cognitive self and the behavioral self. When the concept of self is formed, the heart-mind starts to hold a certain standpoint to do things and to make distinctions according to the standpoint as self or non-self. Furthermore, the self even clings to the distinctions, which makes the distinctions as ossified doctrines, values or judgments to follow. In this way, the self is self-centered and gradually taking control of the individuals. In order to enhance the image of self, the self continuously pushes individuals to actively do things as obtaining more material possessions, pursuing more cognitive knowledge, making more rigid distinctions and judgments which will satisfy the sense of the self-existence. Individuals become the slave of the self in the endless pursuit from the external. And individuals are confined by the limited perspective from the standpoint of self, and get attached to it. In other words, individuals only take the limited and static perspective to look at the reality as the self enhances.

Whereas the reality from the limited and static perspective cannot be absolutely true, since the self is not absolutely real. The self is only a belief, image or identity. The self is like the label of the individual. For example, in the daily life one person can play many different roles as husband, son, father, etc. These roles are only the labels of the person, but not the person. But sometimes people get too attached to these labels and may take the labels as the person. Same as the self, individuals identify themselves as
the labels—the self (the physical, cognitive, behavioral self), and then get stuck in the realm of endless distinctions, separations and conflicts. Thus, the true inner reality of the individuals never could reveal itself.

However, Xuxin—the empty heart-mind is the opposite state of the fixed heart-mind. As discussed in Chapter III, Xu can be a state related to Dao. It is the intermediate state of interchanging and circulating without obstruction in the cycle of Dao. The Xu state is both still and pre-active. It is both the first state of Dao’s manifestation as Nothingness and the last state of the reverse of the un-manifestation state of Dao. Xu can also denote a spiritual state of the individuals. In this sense, Xu and heart-mind cannot be discussed separately since heart-mind is the locus of Xu, and Xu is the intrinsic state of heart-mind. The Xu state is the individuals’ spiritual state of heart-mind without the assumption of self. In this Xu state, the heart-mind is passively and spontaneously receptive to the external. There is no self to command and control the person which Zhuangzi’s philosophy argues that it will harm the heart-mind and the life. The Xuxin is like a clear mirror which reflects things immediately without any distortion. It is functioning like an intuitive consciousness which means the heart-mind is not disturbed by the endless distinctions, cognitive knowledges, judgments and preferences any more. In other words, the Xuxin transcends all the distinctions and boundaries. But not only this, with the transcendence of all the distinctions, the spiritual inner reality De starts to reveal and connect to Dao, as Liu argues,

This transcendent state has two sides: with regard to the mundane world, the person is totally detached, the heart-mind embraces absolutely quietness, emptiness, and nothingness; but with regard to the internal spiritual world, the person has entered an infinite, bright, pure, and indifferent kingdom, where one experiences absolute freedom, autonomy, and emancipation. (Liu, 2015, p. 206)
At this point, the Xuxin actually can be understood as the “embodied heart-mind” (Slingerland, 2003, p.8), which means the ultimate reality—Dao, the inner reality De, and even the physical body of the person are all connected and become One through the Xuxin, the empty heart-mind. Therefore we could say that, man is a unity of the material and immaterial, the physical and the spiritual within the ultimate reality of Oneness.

As discussed above, the heart-mind is the key. For the individuals the fixed heart-mind is the origination of all problems, conflicts, sufferings; whereas the empty heart-mind is the way back to the state of Oneness. This is the reason that Zhuangzi’s cultivation is a cultivation processed on the fixed heart-mind and aims at returning back to the Xu state of heart-mind, which is the approach for individuals to reach Oneness.

Whereas, Zhuangzi’s cultivation of Xu, different from most cultivations, employs a passive approach for practice and an indirect way of elaborating it. Basically it means, Zhuangzi’s philosophy adopts a hidden way of explaining the cultivation and guide people to step backwards and backwards, or to lose and lose. This is because what people will lose during the cultivation is the conditions and artifice added by the assumption of self. But these conditions and artifice are only fetters and burdens to individuals. They have nothing to do with either the ultimate reality or individuals’ life itself. Zhuangzi’s cultivation of Xu cares about the most fundamental function of life or individuals’ ultimate state of being which is spontaneously in accordance with Dao.

This cultivation of Xu is simultaneously working within both the vertical and horizontal dimensions. The vertical dimension is majorly a process of eliminating the assumption of self, from the cognitive self, behavioral self to physical self, along with the

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242 The original context is: “It (Wuwei) represents the highest degree of objectivity, for it is only in Wuwei that one's embodied heart-mind conforms to the something larger than the individual—the will of Heaven or the order represented by Dao”. (Slingerland, 2003, p.8)
process of elevating in the Xu state. It is also a process which body, heart-mind and one’s inner reality—De gradually becomes One. The horizontal dimension is a process of accumulation of cultivation and it is more about how one perceive the reality within every cultivation stage. Once one cultivates himself/herself enough to stay real with his/her inner reality—De, the ten-thousand myriad things are staying real within their only inner reality—De because his/her heart-mind is reflecting directly without any distortion. Simply put, if one stays real inwardly, what one could perceive outwardly are real.

To conclude, it matters how we look at reality. As emphasized in Zhuangzi’s philosophy “He who knows what it is that Heaven does, and knows what it is that man does, has reached the peak.” 243 (Watson, p.42) The man who has reached the peak is the True Man in his highest spiritual state, and who knows what is the natural Heaven Way—the reality, and the man-made way—the illusions. The heart-mind is the linking locus with the ultimate spiritual reality—Dao and the physical body in the phenomenal world. If individuals’ heart-mind are confined by the assumption of self, individuals are confined by the man-made way—the limited and endless distinctions, conflicts. And they will get a sense of alienation too. If individuals’s heart-mind are in Xu state, they will naturally go along with the flow of Dao. The cultivation of Xu is the way of cutting off the man-made and going back to the natural flow. The cultivation works on eliminating the self in the fixed heart-mind, and it starts from the physical realm towards the spiritual realm. With the cultivation of Xu which interweaves both in the vertical dimension and horizontal dimension, the contrast between self and all other things in the phenomenal world blurs, melts and disappears; and the sense of opposite judgments disappears too. The individuals gradually transcend from the sense of difference between individuality and entirety, and even transcend from the differences of the time concepts.

243 Original text: “知天之所为，知人之所为者，至矣”; 《庄子今注今译》, 页165.
Therefore, the reality the individuals are apprehending now is both completely subjective and completely objective, since the individuals are One with the whole and there is no distinctions any more. Therefore the individuality is the entirety, and this is the ultimate reality of Oneness which Zhuangzi’s philosophy states is all-around, everywhere, and all-inclusive.

5.2 Recommendations and Relevance for Further Research

For further research, it is recommended to incorporate a thorough reading of the Outer Chapters, and the Miscellaneous Chapters of Zhuangzi, which present plenty of allegories and are regarded as further interpretations of the Inner Chapters of Zhuangzi.

It is also advisable to do further research on cultivation. As discussed in Section 4.2, Chinese philosophy is a sort of practical metaphysics or practical ontology, the study of philosophy does not merely mean studying the abstract knowledge or theories. The study of philosophy emphasizes more on practices and cultivations, as Fung states,

The study of philosophy is not simply an attempt to acquire this kind of knowledge, but it also an attempt to develop this kind of character. Philosophy is not simply something to be known, but is also something to be experienced. It is not simply a sort of intellectual game, but something far more serious. (Fung, 1948, p.10)

The study of Zhuangzi’s philosophy is the same, the discussions, interpretations and explorations on Zhuangzi’s cultivation are highly focused. The disciples and successors of Zhuangzi’s philosophy use the cultivation as an access to experience, understand and finally reach the state of Oneness. Whereas, there are two major streams derived from Zhuangzi’s philosophy, even though they all follow Zhuangzi’s philosophy, and pay much attention to keep the heart-mind in Xu state in order to reach the state of Oneness.
The one is the internal alchemy cultivation for spiritual transformation in the religious realm; the other is the artistic practice for spiritual emancipation in secular world.

5.2.1 The Internal Alchemy Cultivation for Spiritual Transformation in the Religious Realm

Zhuangzi’s philosophy of Oneness has greatly influenced the later religious Daoism, especially in the Daoist practice of internal alchemy cultivation. The cultivation is summarized as a system of cultivating the bodily essence (精, Jing) into Qi, cultivating the Qi into Spirit (神, Shen), cultivating the Spirit back into Xu, and cultivating Xu back into Dao.244 This is exactly the reverse part of the cycle of Dao in Zhuangzi’s philosophy which has been discussed in Section 2.2.3.2. The religious Daoism interprets it more solid and concrete in terms of human beings’ body, heart-mind and Qi cultivation, as Kohn,

The body is understood to consist of Qi or cosmic vital energy, the material aspect of Dao. Everyone gets a certain type and amount of Qi at birth and uses it during life. By cultivating and enhancing Qi—through breath control, healing exercises, sexual hygiene, diets, and meditations—one cannot only remain healthy but live longer and open oneself to the pervasion of Dao. (Kohn, 2009, p.51)

Even though Zhuangzi’s cultivation is much ambiguous in the exposition, the later Daoist practitioners still get inspired from Zhuangzi’s philosophy and have developed many practical Daoist techniques such as fasting the heart-mind (also known as method of listening to one’s breath), sitting in oblivion (sit-and-forget).245 Apparently these techniques are directly originated from Zhuangzi’s philosophy, and the focuses are still

244 Original text: “炼转化气，炼气化神，炼神还虚，炼虚合道”. The Spirit (神, Shen) here is Zhuangzi’s De. As discussed in Section 2.3.3, “that Dao is the ultimate spiritual reality, we can say that De is the spirit within things.”

keeping the Xuxin and return to Oneness. These religious Daoist cultivation greatly complement deficiency of Zhuangzi’s philosophy.

5.2.2 The Artistic Practice for Spiritual Emancipation in the Secular World

The other stream happens in the secular world among the Chinese traditional literati. The effect of Zhuangzi’s philosophy of Oneness majorly reflects in the Chinese literati’s landscape painting and poetry\(^{246}\) (Britannica, 2019), with the artistic practice for their spiritual emancipation. In ancient China, most literati were working in the government with an ideal pursuit of helping the people and solving the social problems. Whereas the social circumstance is usually not as ideal as what they want. In their daily life, most of the literati are under the long-term oppression from authoritarian politics, and also they have to face many greedy material and fame pursuers in the government. Zhuangzi’s life philosophy of Oneness expands their vision of seeing the reality. And the Fasting of Heart-mind in Zhuangzi’s philosophy is developed into an artistic practice like landscape painting for them to cultivate the heart-mind. This is as Xu states, “Dao for Zhuangzi, when implemented into individuals’ life, it is the ultimate spirit of art. And the heart-mind which is well—cultivated from the fasting of heart-mind is exactly the vehicle of the spirit of art.”\(^{247}\) (Xu, 2001, p.2, my translation)

In other words, through the artistic practice, they keep their heart-mind Xuxin and are not disturbed by the secular world so that their spiritual state could be elevated. And the artistic works they created also could present their worldview of Oneness, as mentioned by Fung,


\(^{247}\) Original text: “庄子之所谓道，落实于人生之上，乃是崇高的艺术精神；而他由心斋的工夫所把握的心，实际乃是艺术精神的主体”, 《中国艺术精神》,页2.
The Daoist had no formal treaties on art, but their admiration of the free movement of the spirit and their idealization of nature gave profound inspiration to the great artists of China. This being the case, it is no wonder that most of the great artists of China took nature as their subject. Most of the masterpieces of Chinese painting are paintings of landscapes, animals and flowers, trees and bamboos. In a landscape painting, at the foot of a mountain or the bank of a stream, one always finds a man sitting, appreciating the beauty of nature and contemplating the Dao or Way that transcends both nature and man. (Fung, 1948, p.23)

Therefore, with the interweaved influence from their artistic practice and the presentation of their worldview in their artistic works, they could transcend themselves from the society, to recover from the fatigue of life, to maintain spiritual purity, and gain spiritual emancipation. And this forms the unique life ontology of Chinese traditional literati.
References

Primary Source:


Secondary Source:

Chinese


English


