

12. 莊子喪妻

《莊子·至樂》

莊子妻死，惠子吊之，莊子則方箕踞鼓盆而歌。惠子曰：「與人居，長子老身，死不哭亦足矣，又鼓盆而歌，不亦甚乎！」莊子曰：「不然。是其始死也，我獨何能無概然！察其始而本無生；非徒無生也，而本無形；非徒無形也，而本無氣。雜乎芒芴之間，變而有氣，氣變而有形，形變而有生。今又變而之死。是相與為春秋冬夏四時行也。人且偃然寢於巨室，而我嗷嗷然隨而哭之，自以為不通乎命，故止也。」

Master Zhuang on Death

< The Zhuangzi >

Master Zhuang's wife died. Master Hui went over to offer his condolences and found Master Zhuang sitting nonchalantly and singing happily and beating on a basin to keep time. Master Hui said, "Your wife lived with you all her life, bore your children, grew old with you and died. That you don't mourn over her death is perhaps understandable, but haven't you gone too far when you seem to take obvious delight in singing and drumming right after she died?"

Master Zhuang said, "You misjudged me. After she died, I could not but felt so sad. Yet we know, in the distant past, there was no life whatsoever. Not only was there no life, there was not any tangible thing; not only was there not any tangible thing, there was no *qi*, or air. In the vast void of space, air first came into being. From air came tangible things. From tangible things came life. When life reaches its end, it goes back to where it started: death. The cycle goes on forever and ever in the way the seasons change. She is now resting in peace in a vast chamber. If I disturb her by my noisy wailings, I'll be a person who knows nothing about the nature of life. This is why I stopped mourning."