

15. 涸轍之鮒

《莊子》

莊周家貧，故往貸粟於監河侯。監河侯曰：「諾。我將得邑金，將貸子三百金，可乎？」莊周憤然作色曰：「周昨來，有中道而呼者。周顧視車轍中，有鮒魚焉。周問之曰：『鮒魚來！子何為者邪？』對曰：『我，東海之波臣也。君豈有斗升之水而活我哉？』周曰：『諾，我且南游吳越之王，激西江之水而迎子，可乎？』鮒魚憤然作色曰：『吾失我常與，我無所處。吾得斗升之水然活耳，君乃言此，曾不如早索我於枯魚之肆！』」

A Perch in a Dry Rut

< The Zhuangzi >

Zhuang Zhou's family was poor. Once, when they were in desperate need of daily provisions, Zhuang Zhou went to see Lord Jian He to borrow grains. The Lord said, "Fine. Later in the year when I receive my annual stipend, I will let you have three hundred pieces of money. Would that be all right?"

Zhuang Zhou said indignantly, "Yesterday, when I was on my way here, I heard someone calling out for help from the middle of the road. I turned round and found a perch lying in a dry rut. 'What has happened to you, perch?' I asked. 'I am an official in the court of the king of the sea,' said the fish, 'Now I have been estranged from my ordinary living environment. Would it be possible for you to fetch a bucket of water to save my life?'"

'Fine,' I said, 'I am heading south to see the kings of Wu and Chu, and I will talk them into diverting waters from the East River to here to meet your need. Would that be all right?'"

The fish was indignant and said, 'I am in urgent need of what I rely on for my life. A small amount of water is all I want to keep me alive. If I wait for your offer of help, why don't you go and ask for me soon at the fishmonger's?'"