



**The pre-postmodern
grab bag**



**English
podcast transcript**

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About the book Zhuangzi

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FM: Hello and welcome to Wisdom Talks, a podcast produced by METIS, the internet portal for intercultural wisdom literature and wisdom practices. You can find us at www.metis.ethz.ch.

This episode is dedicated to Zhuangzi. My name is Frederike Maas, and I am pleased to welcome Kai Marchal to discuss this topic. Kai Marchal is Professor of Philosophy at the National Chengchi University in Taipei. Welcome, Mr. Marchal.

KM: Good afternoon Ms. Maas.

FM: Dear Mr. Marchal, stylistically, the book of Zhuangzi is exceedingly diverse. Can you give us an overview of the types of texts that can be found in this book?

KM: Yes, so the Book of Zhuangzi is a real grab bag. A kaleidoscope, a hypertext long before postmodernism existed. And to this day, this text can release tremendous spiritual and philosophical energies. The style itself is very famous in East Asia and to some extent in Europe and North America in translation, and if you ask East Asian readers, they would probably directly point out the playfulness of the text. A humorous kaleidoscope, a magical imagery of stories, of parables, of proverbs, of myths but also of treatises. There are...with this I have already mentioned some genres and some styles. Richard Wilhelm translates a

statement that was once made about Zhuangzi's style, the famous historian Sima Qian once wrote it like this in Chinese: "Cian guang yan zi ci yi shi zhi" (其言汪洋自恣以適己), which Richard Wilhelm translates as: "Thus he feasted on his sparkling, flowing style in proud self-sufficiency," that sounds a bit antiquated, but this word: 'guang yang' (汪洋) is quite wonderful in Chinese, as it refers first of all to an infinitely large expanse of water and then also to the splendor above the water and so this sparkling, flowing, is perhaps not the best translation, but yes, it's about this flowing, about the water, and the style flows and rushes, so to speak, in all directions and Zhuangzi possesses, also masters all pitches, so irony, lyricism or sobriety, pedantry, but also surreal fantastic moments, he can express everything, and I would also like to add the word 'Kafkaesque', if it weren't an anachronism. So the text is a very densely woven tapestry, right at the beginning there's a myth, so to speak, the first type of text, the myth of the fish Kun who transforms into the bird Peng and many of our listeners will know that this fish Kun stands for the underworld, the bird Peng for the heavenly spheres, and that's where the central motif comes out, so to speak, the transformation, 'hua' in Chinese. The cosmic cycle, so the fish Kun, six months downwards, towards the underworld, and then the bird Peng upwards, towards the heavenly spheres, also six months. So, there we have 12 months, one year, and that's sort of the symbol for the cosmic cycle. And after that, there's a dynamic camera movement, it cuts very quickly and suddenly goes from this very large bird back to the tiniest thing there is, at least in the Chinese imagination, a mustard seed. A mustard seed that floats on a puddle, and with that we have, so to speak, exemplarily one of these very fast movements that are typical for the style of Zhuangzi. And many of the listeners will probably first remember the dialogues, if they have ever read the Zhuangzi, these dialogues are incredibly fun for the readers, even today, there's always Hui Shi, the friend and sparring partner of Zhuangzi, they argue about very crazy things, very crazy questions, and then there's this cook Ding, who talks to the prince about the care of life, and then there are parables, also quite famous the butterfly dream, then there are commentaries, that's a bit absurd of course, such a clever text, such a moving lyrical text, and suddenly such pedantic commentaries, but Zhuangzi also mastered the style of commentaries, and then of course there are poems, quite beautiful poems like for example in Book 11, about the lord of the yellow earth and the deity, then all kinds of proverbs like in the Daodejing, proverbs, wisdom, for example about the monkeys, the

three monkeys in the morning and the four monkeys in the evening and the four monkeys in the morning and the three monkeys in the evening, and then there are all kinds of other stories, and if you think about it, the whole book, 33 chapters, the first impression is once a hodgepodge, a huge chaos, but the readers in traditional China very quickly understood that this impression of chaos is intentional, and that underneath the chaos there is a structure. And in China, in East Asia, people have really written huge monographs, even doctoral dissertations, to tease out this structure.

FM: Thank you very much for this informative and rich introduction. I hope we'll talk about the parables at a later point, but I think we need to take a step back first. So the Zhuangzi is made up of poems and parables, maybe philosophical components as well, but what's the reason for this stylistic mix and are certain themes in the book also tied to certain forms of expression?

KM: So, one important reason is certainly that in China, that is, in traditional pre-modern China there was never the...sharp distinction between poetry and philosophy. So unlike in ancient Greece, where the poets, as we know, were to be driven out of the Polis, with Plato, in China there was never this attempt to separate logos from myth, so to speak, or to establish a pure conceptual, philosophical conceptual language, but the philosophers or the thinkers, if you will, have always made use of all possible linguistic tools. Confucius, for example, always resorted to poetry, and Zhuangzi was a stylistic genius who in no way adhered to genre boundaries. And then, of course, I think there's also the conscious intention, with this kaleidoscope of text types, of perspectives, to really... to captivate the reader. Yes, to captivate and this idea of perspective, which we'll talk about again later, is very central in the Zhuangzi, that is, multi-perspectivity, as some scholars call it, the idea that one should never look at the world from just one perspective, but from all kinds of different perspectives, that's very important in the Zhuangzi and I think these text types, these different text types, already underline this idea.

FM: But could you also transfer the Zhuangzi into exclusively direct speech, so there are clear statements?

KM: Yes exactly, you had just asked about the relationship between themes and forms of expression, that's a very, very interesting question, but it's not easy to answer. First of all, of course, there is the question of the accessibility of this text, so most of our listeners don't know Chinese, I assume, and will read the translated text, and a translation, of course, in a certain way already reduces the richness of this text, so just as one cannot easily translate poems, the text of the Zhuangzi, unlike many other Chinese texts, is hardly translatable. So you would really have to go back to the Chinese, to the Chinese original and also try to grasp this richness of the characters, so to speak, in order to really understand the text, so there are all kinds of words and characters that only appear in the Zhuangzi, nowhere else, and until today these characters have been applied in East Asian culture, and then the question, I would say, of performativity is important. The text doesn't just try to tell us something, a lesson that could be summarized abstractly in a kind of summary, or thesis, that's not what the text does, but the text tells us again and again, through this special form, that linguistic expression is very difficult, so the author struggles with words and when he speaks, he understands this speaking, this philosophical speaking, as an activity, as something performative, so there's the famous chapter of the autumn floods, there's also this idea of different perspectives, so there are different waters, there are small waters and big waters, rivers, and then there's the sea and this process of opening up. You open up from a small perspective, the stream, to a big, comprehensive perspective, the ocean. I think this insight, now of course I can say it like this in direct speech or in abstract speech, conceptual speech, but the Zhuangzi actually expects us to actually go through the chapter. So, we have to read it and internalize, visualize, so to speak, these images in order to really come to the, to gain insight into this multi-perspectivity and into the reality of the Dao.

FM: You spoke about performativity now, but I'd like to circle back- is there no positive formulatable lesson that can be drawn from the text?

KM: Indeed, there probably isn't. In research, in reception, there's always been an attempt to grasp Zhuangzi, to somehow grab it by the scruff of the neck. Then there's the idea that Zhuangzi is a nihilist like Nietzsche, he's a fatalist, he's a relativist, he's a skeptic, or that he's a representative of the theory of evolution, and in the long history of the reception of this text you find all these positions. So, you try to ascribe a theory to Zhuangzi, an independent

position, but I think basically Zhuangzi would have rejected all of that. The problem is similar or comparable to the problem of how to actually read Nietzsche, because Nietzsche, of course, also provoked all kinds of readings, but basically none of these does him complete justice. And then, what I just mentioned, there's this basic skepticism in the Zhuangzi, so you always find questions, he doesn't give positive answers, but he asks questions. There's a whole cascade of questions in Chapter 2, the gap-filler asks the germ-keeper: "Do you know..." - and I quote - "Do you know in what the world agrees with the I?" He said, "How should I know?" "Do you know what you do not know?" He said, "How should I know?" "Then there is no knowledge of things?" He said, "How should I know? After all, I will try to talk about it! How do I know that what I call knowledge is not non-knowledge? How do I know that what I call non-knowledge is not knowledge?" and so on, and so on. So, in this... there is this style, it's a very peculiar philosophical style, but it always cancels itself out, so to speak, and also repeatedly calls us to abstain from judgement. Something is told, but then nothing is asserted. And then there is a very famous passage in the 26th chapter, a locus classicus, about the fish trap and the rabbit trap. Zhuangzi wants to tell us that words have certain meanings, but as soon as you understand the meaning, these words have to be forgotten, just as the fish trap and the rabbit trap, as soon as you have caught the fish and the rabbit, they no longer have any function and you should get rid of them, or just as the famous ladder in Wittgenstein must also be thrown away as soon as you have climbed up, in Zhuangzi language must be forgotten when we have really gone through this whole exercise.

FM: You have now spoken of Zhuangzi as the author of the book and also compared him to Nietzsche, but I wonder, the text is much older than what Nietzsche wrote. Is it even that simple that there was an author as a historical figure to whom we can attribute this work?

KM: Exactly, so strictly speaking there is no such author. There are many authors, so again and again we have the impression that these different text fragments or these building blocks come from different authors, and that's what research argues about to this day. So, of course, there is a historical figure called Zhuangzi and there is also a biography by the famous Chinese historian Sima Qian, who comes from, who is said to come from the state of Song, today's Henan province, and was supposedly a low-level official, and the historian

goes on to say: "Zhuangzi possessed exceedingly extensive knowledge, but he adhered mainly to the words of Laozi, Laodan. Thus, he wrote a work that contains over 100,000 words, most of which consist of quotations and parables. And then there are other passages, descriptions in this biography, and if you look at the book Zhuangzi itself, you also learn some things about the author, or about this historical personality Zhuangzi, that's the interesting thing, another postmodern element, so to speak, about this text, that in the text Zhuangzi the author or the person Zhuangzi himself appears, so he didn't feel like earning his living with the princely servants, as Richard Wilhelm calls it, and he lived in relatively poor circumstances, and he just didn't really take it seriously anymore and he... was nevertheless very serene and somehow spent his life that way. And if you know the text, then of course you also know that...what a lively, stimulating contemporary that was. But this figure of Zhuangzi, you should put it in brackets, because the text as we know it today, in 33 chapters, did not come from the pen of a Zhuangzi, but came from the hands of Guo Xiang, a later Daoist scholar, so early 4th century AD, who also wrote a famous commentary. It's getting a little complicated now, but this is important, so this text itself, 33 chapters, is from a much later time, probably there were many more textual components, but they haven't survived, so this question about the author...yes, a tad...is pointless, so maybe we should just read the text and not even think about the question of who the author actually is. And here, of course, one can immediately think of Borges, Borges and postmodernism. So Borges appreciated the Zhuangzi very much, as did Oscar Wilde, many people, many intellectuals, many writers and philosophers in Europe and North America have been inspired by the Zhuangzi and what is perhaps also interesting, in order to be able to better understand the afterlife of this text, until today the book Zhuangzi serves as a repertoire for translation vocabulary, so not only the Buddhist texts have been translated again and again with the help of the 'Zhuangzian' vocabulary but also Baudelaire, for example. The great 20th century Chinese Baudelaire translations often draw their material, or their richness of language, from the Book of Zhuangzi. So basically, it's a text without an author, it works in all directions, and it should be taken seriously as a hypertext that stretches in all directions.

FM: So, the question of authorship is not so easy to answer. But maybe you can still tell us something about the historical context, or rather about the historical contexts in which the book was written. What kind of political or social circumstances is the book responding to?

KM: So, the Book of Zhuangzi was written at the time of the contending empires, so in the...yes, 4th, 3rd century. That was a time of political decline, so the...the original order fell apart, and the cultural horizon gradually darkened. The idea that the Dao, that is, the overall order, the cultural and political order had been lost, is also found in Confucius, about 200 years before Zhuangzi, and in Zhuangzi this idea is even more dramatic, this idea is spelled out even more dramatically, so you find numerous descriptions of political violence in the book of Zhuangzi. There are always the crippled people who, yes, apparently lost certain limbs on the battlefields of the time, and Zhuangzi then tries to tell them that this loss of their limbs doesn't necessarily lead to suffering, but it's something that you have to learn to deal with. And then there's this description, in the 4th chapter, for example, where Zhuangzi and Yan Hui, a favorite disciple of Confucius, which is of course fictional, so Zhuangzi of course never met this favorite disciple of Confucius, but there's a description in which Zhuangzi gives political instructions, or advice to the favorite disciple Yan Hui. Yan Hui would very much like to become the Prince of Wei and push the Prince of Wei for political reform, but Zhuangzi is then cautious and says this can easily lead to death, this is an autocrat, this is a tyrant, we have to be very careful, and a wise person would better hide. So the concealment, I mean this idea of the self, the concealment, spilling oneself, the melting away of the self, is already found in the Daodejing but is then continued in the Zhuangzi, so the favorite disciple of Confucius is definitely asked to go to this prince, but he may then, he needs then, or in the audience with the prince, he should resort to certain techniques of self-concealment, and this then manifests itself, among other things, in an underdetermined language, so he's not allowed to make his direct criticism, but has to conceal that under certain, yes, courtesies or under somewhat vague language. So that's a context that becomes very...important in this book and then of course Zhuangzi also reacts to the intellectual cultural situation of his time, for example in Chapter 33, where you find an overview of the schools of philosophy at that time. This chapter has often been called the first history of philosophy of China, where you find mainly the Confucians, of course, but also the Mohists and then Laozi and Zhuangzi reacts to these directly and then also of course his good friend, Hui Shi, who you might call a...a sophist.

FM: Do I understand this correctly, the book is called Zhuangzi, the author is called Zhuangzi and the author also appears under this name in the book as the protagonist of the book?

KM: Exactly, Ms. Maas. That's a bit confusing, of course, but that's also the interesting thing about this book, that there are these very different perspectives, and everything somehow...everything is connected, and everything is intertwined.

FM: The Daodejing is addressed to a ruler, we've already recorded a podcast on that. I would be interested to know who the Book of Zhuangzi is addressed to. Is there an image of a wise person that is drawn here, too? To what extent is that a different image and, yes, what makes this person wise, what is the advice that the Zhuangzi gives on how to become such a wise person?

KM: So, I think the implied reader of this text is in fact every person, so that can be us too. Zhuangzi will have certainly thought about the possible readers of his book who...it's difficult to reconstruct, but they were certainly people like him who thought about their time, who reflected, who were thoughtful, who also of course had a certain education, and who for example had understood Confucianism and who then also just had a certain dissatisfaction with Confucianism. And yes, the question of the alternative image of the wise man, the 'Zhenren', that is a very central question, and one could talk about it for hours. So the 'Zhenren', the wise man, is, so to speak, the man we become at the end of the path of practice, so Chinese philosophy is often about the path of practice, philosophy is not just theory or something that you can learn by heart, but philosophy needs practice or certain exercises, so to speak, it must be practical, it cannot consist of me sitting down at a table somewhere and then reading a book, but it must be embodied in life, it must have a place in everyday life. And yes, of course that's not quite comprehensible to us, modern people, because we understand philosophy primarily as an academic undertaking, but in those days that must have been highly plausible to many people. And then, of course, you can spell it out further, and in the Zhuangzi there are numerous concrete descriptions of this sage, the supreme man. So for example in the 2nd chapter it says, according to the translation of Richard Wilhelm: "The highest man is spirit. If the big sea went up in fire, it would not be able to make him hot. If all the rivers froze, it would not be able to make him cold. If violent

thunder rent the mountains, and the storm whipped the ocean, it would not be able to instill terror in him." That sounds a little bit biblical, but it gives this idea of invulnerability.

FM: Yes, that still sounds relatively abstract to me. You were just talking about the very practical side of it, so are explicit practices mentioned in the book as well?

KM: Yes, absolutely. Right in the beginning, the 2nd chapter is about breathing techniques. So, which breathing technique can help bring the Qi closer. And then, of course, the scholars have really racked their brains through the centuries, what kind of breathing techniques these are, but...yes, I think breathing techniques we all know, that you become attentive to the breath, that you breathe more attentively or that you also, with the help of a certain...I had already talked about visualization practices, that you close your eyes, that you imagine certain things, that you let certain images appear in your mind's eye, these are, so to speak, somewhat more concrete descriptions. There is of course no, so to speak...it's not...Zhuangzi is not a yoga teacher. The yoga teacher certainly becomes more concrete than Zhuangzi, which still remains on a rather abstract level and yes, but this description on the approximation of Qi, it keeps coming up, also in Chapter 4, which I had already mentioned. And if one then looks into other texts, then one can find substantially more concrete descriptions. There is also something like dietetics, so what am I allowed to eat, what am I not allowed to eat and how should I behave, what kind of clothes should I wear, that is spelled out very concretely in different Daoist schools.

FM: What you're describing also sounds like a retreat into oneself, perhaps, which sounds somewhat ascetic. The sage that this book is targeting, is that someone who withdraws from the ordinary world, that is, from the social world of people, perhaps in order not to be polluted by it?

KM: Yes, definitely, this is a very important motif in the Book of Zhuangzi and Zhuangzi himself also refused to serve at the princely court, he didn't want that at all, and in his book there are recurring descriptions of wise people who then live away from the big cities in the villages or in the bamboo groves. This is a very important motif, but then there is also a somewhat different reading of the Book of Zhuangzi, which begins in the 4th century AD and

is connected with the name Guo Xiang, whom I already mentioned, the first and most important commentator on this book, who then emphasizes that one can also become a wise person at court as an official in the service of princes. Then there is a certain tension, Zhuangzi was probably more critical, but in the later reception, attempts were made to bring this idea of the wise man back into everyday life and, so to speak, these breathing techniques, which I had just mentioned, were undertaken by countless scholars and intellectuals not only in China, but throughout Asia, and then there are... there are also techniques such as Tai Chi Xuan, which were often developed... further developed from the Book of Zhuangzi, or even hypnosis. So, there is also the idea that one can come closer to the Dao with the help of hypnosis. That then becomes very concrete and then you must look, so to speak, in the different centuries and how this landscape of self-cultivation develops.

FM: You mentioned at the beginning that parables play a particularly central role in the Zhuangzi, I would now like to look at a concrete example with you. Perhaps the butterfly parable that I have here in front of me in a translation by Martin Buber is particularly well known. I'll read it out: "I Zhuangzi, once dreamed I was a butterfly. A butterfly fluttering to and fro, a butterfly in all purposes and aims. I knew only that I followed my whims like a butterfly, and was unconscious of my being human. Suddenly I awoke, and there I lay again, myself. Now I don't know, was I a human being dreaming that I was a butterfly or am I a butterfly dreaming that I am a human being? Between a human being and a butterfly there is a barrier. To cross it is called transformation". It seems to me that the parable alludes to the fact that perhaps, yes, there are no hierarchies between modes of being, between dreaming, being human, reality, or how should I understand this parable?

KM: Yes, so this parable is one of the most famous Daoist parables, and I think that while listening, many of our listeners will have gotten the impression that it also has an incredible linguistic power in Chinese. It is a German translation, it has an incredible suggestive power. It is quite simple, the idea of this transformation that appears at the end, of course we already know it, we immediately think of the Dao, and then yes, it seems to describe an experience of awakening, as we are all familiar with in everyday life. So, we wake up every morning from our dreams, most of the time we are dreaming, and suddenly we are back, in

the middle of everyday life, that's sort of the entry point of this parable. If you have listened to these translations, you will have heard again and again the word 'I', and yes in Chinese this word 'I' does not exist as such. Of course there is a word for 'I', a personal pronoun, but that doesn't appear here, so that translation also easily steers us in a wrong direction. So, the idea of such an 'I' or an I-core, is of course destroyed by Zhuangzi. He doesn't believe that I have an 'I', there are just all kinds of forces in me, but not an 'I' identical with itself or a kind of consciousness. And then of course this parable plays with the, as you said, the absence of hierarchy. So, the waking consciousness and the dream consciousness, they're basically on the same level, so you can, we kind of go around in everyday life, of course, just to be able to function, we must assume that our waking consciousness is superior to the dream consciousness. So, I'm clearer when I'm awake...so I would never buy a car in a dream, or I would never want to...get married in a dream, you might do that in a dream, but then if you actually got married in a dream, and then woke up and then continued to be married to that person, that might be a nightmare. We all kind of think that we can make clearer and more rational decisions in waking consciousness. This is exactly the idea that Zhuangzi is trying to undermine, so this distinction between waking and dreaming, he doesn't just accept that, he thinks that's an arbitrary distinction and in Zhuangzi there are all kinds of similar considerations, so often these are similes, there are also individual arguments, so there are also regress arguments or even *reductio ad absurdum*, and it always goes in the same direction, so we can't really make certain elementary distinctions in a convincing way. So even the distinction between being or not being, 'you' and 'wu' in Chinese, doesn't make sense, you get tangled up in self-contradictions, Zhuangzi argues, so that therefore this butterfly dream in very simple form, presents a very central thought, a skeptical thought of Zhuangzi. When I wake up, maybe I'm Zhuangzi, maybe I'm the butterfly, and basically, I have no way to really generate certainty there.

FM: But it seems to me, in terms of the dissolution of hierarchies, maybe you could say there's something anarchistic about that?

KM: Yes, definitely. So, there are other passages in which the anarchist motif comes through even more clearly than in this butterfly dream, which describes something more like a metaphysical or speculative experience, and if you look at the reception process, then you

see that Oscar Wilde, for example, was quite enthusiastic. So at the end of the 19th century, he was very excited when he discovered Zhuangzi, and there's an essay: 'The Soul of Man under Socialism', which is obviously directly inspired by this Zhuangzian anarchism. So, the idea in the Zhuangzi is kind of that all authority is wrong because it alienates us, reifies us, and we are supposed to just do what we want to do, and this 'we' includes not only humans, but also animals, and basically all living things and maybe even non-living things or beings.

FM: That's very interesting. This seems to me to be about a kind of change of perspective, perhaps questioning whether my perspective is the only correct one. I may well be a butterfly, and perhaps this is also meant to encourage people to take other perspectives, and the technique of changing perspective plays a central role in the Zhuangzi anyway - I would be interested to know whether this is theoretically justified in the book itself. So, whether the book also addresses its own method, so to speak.

KM: Yes, so this perspectivism of Zhuangzi plays a very big role in research, I think I already mentioned it, there is the thesis that Zhuangzi was a relativist, a skeptic, a nihilist or even a perspectivist. Then you can work your way through the text and reconstruct and interpret the stories, the parables, the poems, the sayings from different perspectives. And then you have...yes, the second question, so to speak, does the text have a view of itself, or does the text itself address its position, its intellectual effort, so there is, of course, already in the 2nd chapter the very, very profound consideration of how one can in fact assert something about the world and the self. Is it possible to express oneself in language, about the self and the world, and there is always this pair of terms, 'shi fei', which is translated in English as 'this' and 'not this'. 'Shi' is 'this' and 'fei' is 'not this' and in some way 'shi fei', this pair so to speak, describes the attempt to make elementary distinctions. So being and nothingness, as I just mentioned, day and night, you could mention, or order and disorder. And Zhuangzi always takes the skeptical position. So it doesn't make sense to make that distinction.

FM: Lastly, I would like to turn to the present. The perspectivism that you mentioned now, that's also a technique that many postmodern authors use, would you say that can be

compared at all, that...that's the same thing that they do, or am I misunderstanding, is that actually a completely different thing?

KM: Yes, that's an interesting question. As soon as we say is it the same, of course we presuppose an understanding of identity in some way. So, A is equal to B or A is identical with B, and in a certain way the Zhuangzi of course undermines comparability by questioning precisely all such general judgments or judgments that are context-independent and not related to a standpoint. Or by relativizing them to their respective context. Of course, in research, in literature, if our listeners are interested in this, they only have to google Zhuangzi and postmodernism, there are many texts, also books, Deleuze, Derrida, Nietzsche of course, probably also Feyerabend, you will easily find them in relation to Zhuangzi. I just have a bit of a feeling, or the impression, that in Zhuangzi there is a basic trust in the Dao that one probably no longer has in postmodernity. So, the Dao in Zhuangzi flows through the world like water, like a great body of water, I think we've already talked about that, the chapter of the autumn floods. There is in some way the idea that everything is suspended in unity, so there is a kind of basic trust in the world, in the Dao. And you can argue about that, but postmodernism, of course, has its beginning in Nietzsche's declaration of.... about the death of God, so the situation is probably a little bit different, and then of course you could also say that the Chinese have just read one book through the centuries, the book of Zhuangzi or the book of Zhuangzi was one of the most important books and from this Zhuangzi you can extract all kinds of things, so it's like a mirror in which one is reflected, so a genius will be reflected there as a genius and a monkey as a monkey, and while in postmodernism all kinds of books, a whole library of books are read, so there's such an interesting tension. The Zhuangzi, if one reads the Zhuangzi with postmodern lenses, as it happens at times, then this basic trust returns, so to speak, so basically this one book can then explain the whole world to us. And I'm rather skeptical about that.

FM: Unfortunately, we have already reached the end of our podcast. I would like to thank Kai Marchal for your participation and the stimulating conversation. I would like to invite our listeners to follow further Wisdom Talks and to browse the media offerings on the internet portal for intercultural wisdom literature and practices at www.metis.ethz.ch. Directly below

the podcast you will find the link to our text archive. Thank you for your time, and I hope to see you soon again.

KM: Thank you Ms. Maas!

FM: This podcast was produced by Martin Münnich, with support from ETH Zurich and the Udo Keller Foundation Forum Humanum.