

What, for example, were Jwāng Jōu's ideas? We may start by looking at passages critical of him, which show him as *not* understanding some essential philosophical point:

7:50 (JZ 2:6, c0255). Once Jwāng Jōu was dreaming he was a butterfly, happily fluttering around as a butterfly, completely satisfied, and not knowing he was Jōu. Suddenly he awoke, and there he was: unmistakably Jōu. And he could not tell if he was Jōu dreaming he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he was Jōu. But between Jōu and a butterfly, there must be *some* distinction. This we call the Transformation of Things.

This is philosophically suggestive, but *in the story*, Jwāngdǔ is confused: his idea of himself does not include both his waking self and his dreaming self.

7:51 (JZ 20:8, c0256). Jwāng Jōu was wandering in Dyāu-líng Park, when he spied a magpie flying from the south; its wings were seven span broad, its eyes more than an inch around. It brushed against Jōu's forehead and settled in a chestnut grove. Jwāng Jōu said, What kind of bird is this? Its wings are huge but they don't carry it away; its eyes are big, but they don't see. He hitched up the skirt of his robe, strode forward, and took aim with his crossbow. Then he saw a cicada; it had found a nice bit of shade and had forgotten itself. A mantis stretched its arms to seize it; seeing a chance of gain, it had forgotten its form. The strange bird had come up and spied an opportunity; seeing the opportunity, it had forgotten its own reality. Jwāng Jōu was distressed and said, Alas! Things are so hostile, each making trouble for the next. He shouldered his crossbow, turned, and ran. The gamekeeper pursued him, cursing at him.

Jwāng Jōu got home, and for three months did not see anyone. Lìn Jyū went up and asked him, Why has the Master not seen anyone for so long? Jwāng Jōu said, I guarded my form and forgot my self; I watched the turbid stream and lost the clear abyss. I heard from my master, "When you go to a place, follow its customs." Now, I wandered in Dyāu-líng and forgot my self; the strange magpie brushed against my forehead and wandered into the chestnut grove, forgetting *its* reality. The gamekeeper took me for a poacher. This is why I have not seen anyone.

He was confused between his small hunting agenda and his larger life. We may notice that in this story, as in few stories in the book, Jwāngdǔ has disciples.

Death. Next comes a more cosmic confusion:

7:52 (JZ 18:4, c0254). Jwāngdǔ went to Chǔ, and saw an empty skull, bleached but preserving its shape. He poked at it with his horsewhip, and asked, Did the Master in seeking life forget reason, and so come to this? Were you in charge of affairs in some doomed state, suffered execution, and so came to this? Did you do some evil deed, and ashamed to leave your father and mother, your wife and children, an ill reputation, come to this? Did you encounter freezing and starvation, and so come to this? Did the course of the seasons bring you to this?

At this point he ceased speaking. He pulled the skull over, and resting his head on it, he went to sleep.

In the middle of the night, the skull appeared to him in a dream, and said, You talk like some sophist. Everything you say reflects the cares of the living. The dead have none of these. Do you want to hear about the pleasures of the dead? Jwāngdǔ said, Yes. The skull said, The dead have no ruler above, and no subjects below. They also do not have the tasks of the four seasons, but have Heaven and Earth for their seasonal cycle. Not even the happiness of a King, facing south and ruling, could exceed it.

Jwāngdǔ did not believe him. He said, If I could have the Arbiter of Fate again give you life and form, make you bone and flesh, return you to your father and mother, your wife and children, your native village and your friends, would you want it? The skull opened its eyes and wrinkled its brow, and said, How could I ever cast away the happiness of a King facing south and once again take on the toils of human existence?

With his conventional view of life and death, Jwāngdǔ can understand only life.

But in this piece on death, someone else holds the conventional view:

7:53 (JZ 18:2, c0250). Jwāngdǔ's wife had died. Hwèidǔ went to mourn for her. Jwāngdǔ was just then sitting with his legs stretched out, beating on a bowl and singing. Hwèidǔ said, You lived with her; you raised children with her; you grew old in body along with her. It's bad enough that when she dies you don't weep for her. Isn't it a little too much to beat on a bowl and sing?

Jwāngdǔ replied, Not so. To be sure, when she had just died, how could I but feel distressed? But then I thought back to how at the beginning she had no life, and not only had no life but had no form, and not only had no form but had no spirit. Then there was a change, and she had spirit. The spirit changed, and she had form. The form changed, and she had life. Now she has changed again, and come to die. This is just like the seasonal progression of spring, summer, autumn, and winter. She has become weary, and for a moment has gone to rest in some great room. Were I to follow noisily after her with weeping, she herself would think I did not understand the ways of fate. Therefore I stopped.

Jwāngdǔ here sees life as part of something larger.

Methodological Recap. We have now seen Jwāngdǔ portrayed either as not understanding the larger picture, or as expounding it to someone else. When friends and enemies agree, it is possible that we have a workable result, and that this is the key Jwāngdǔ issue. We may then adopt it as a hypothesis that Jwāngdǔ's characteristic trait is *the larger view*, an understanding which he himself may have reached only after some time, or after previous confusion, or more likely, which others (his opponents in the text) held in a different form.



The large view is the basis of what we may call philosophical resignation. Death calls on people for whatever philosophical resignation they may possess. Some of the most touching passages in the *Jwāngdž* deal with just this theme. They do not all mention *Jwāng Jōu*, but they are compatible with the general tone of his thought, as far as that can now be isolated from the rest of the book. They may then belong to, or be consistent with, “his” part of the book.

Here is a gentle one:

7:54 (JZ 2:4, excerpt, c0245) . . . How do I know that loving life is not a delusion? How do I know that hating death is like losing one’s way in youth and not knowing how to get back? Lady *Lì* was the daughter of the Border Warden of *Aì*. When *Jìn* first obtained her, she wept until the tears soaked her robe. But when she came to the King’s place, shared the King’s couch, and ate dainty foods, she came to regret that she had wept. How do I know that the dead do not regret having earlier longed for life?

And here is a more fantastic and lyrical one:

7:55 (JZ 6:3a, c0273). *Dž-sž*, *Dž-yw*, *Dž-lí*, and *Dž-lái* were talking together: Who can regard Nothing as the head, Life the back, and Death the rump; who understands that life and death, survival and extinction, are a single body? I will be his friend. The four looked at each other and laughed.²⁹ There was no discord in their hearts, and they became friends.

Presently, *Dž-yw* fell ill. *Dž-sž* went to inquire about him. He said, Mighty indeed in the Creator; he is making me all crooked! My back sticks up like a hunchback, my five organs are on top, my jaw is hidden in my navel, my shoulders are higher than my neck, and my hair grows up toward the sky. His vital forces were all disordered, yet his heart was unconcerned. He dragged himself over to look at himself in the well, and said, Alas! the Creator is certainly making me all crooked!

Dž-sž said, Do you hate it? *Dž-yw* said, No; what should I hate? In a little while, he will transform my left shoulder into a rooster, and with it I will be able to mark the hours of night. In a little while, he will transform my right shoulder into a crossbow, and with it I will be able to get an owl to roast. In a little while, he will transform my buttocks into wheels, and my spirit into a horse, and I will be able to ride around in it, how will I have any more need of a chariot?

Getting is for a season, and losing is a matter of compliance. If one accepts the season, and abides in compliance, sorrow and joy have no place to enter in. This is what the ancients called being freed from bonds. One cannot free oneself: things have their knots; but things have never been able to defeat Heaven. So what should I hate?

Change is inevitable, emotions are futile, and the best course for the individual is to accept what cannot be otherwise. This too amounts to the large view.

²⁹This is the laugh of philosophical recognition; it is often heard in *Dàuist* literature.

Hwèidž. Jwāngdž is frequently paired with Hwèidž, who was found by the authors of part of the text to be a suitable foil for the values they wanted to express through Jwāngdž. Hwèidž or Hwèi Shī 惠施 was a real enough person. He seems to have served Ngwèi Syāng-wáng at the end of the 04c and into the early 03c. He was a student of rhetoric; several paradoxes are associated with him. One is called “hard and white” (the problem of nonexclusive attributes).³⁰ In Jwāngdž stories, Hwèidž represents that artificial logic, or sometimes the common sense of the conventional man. Here is a story about large and small:

7:56 (JZ 1:6, excerpt, c0240). Hwèidž said to Jwāngdž, The King of Ngwèi gave me some seeds of a great gourd. I planted them, and they grew a gourd big enough to hold five stone.³¹ I filled it up, but it was so heavy I couldn’t lift it. If I had split it to make dippers, they would have been too big to dip into anything. It’s not that it wasn’t fantastically big, but I figured that it was useless, and so I broke it up.

Jwāngdž said, Your Excellency is certainly ineffective in using big things . . .³² Now, you had a five-stone gourd. Why didn’t you make it a great barge, and go floating around the rivers and lakes, instead of worrying that it was too big to dip into anything? Your Excellency still has a tangled mind.

And here is a story about other realms; in this case, other species. Hwèidž takes a view of knowledge which is sometimes encountered in our own time:

7:57 (JZ 17:7, c0247). Jwāngdž and Hwèidž were wandering above the weir on the Háu. Jwāngdž said, The minnows go wandering about at their ease – this is what fish like. Hwèidž said, You are not a fish; how do you know what fish like? Jwāngdž said, You are not me; how do you know that I don’t know what fish like? Hwèidž said, I am not you, and I certainly don’t know you. You are not a fish, and so the proof that you don’t know what fish like is complete.

Jwāngdž said, Let’s go back to the beginning. You asked me *how* I knew what fish like, so you already knew *that* I knew it when you asked. As for *how* I knew it – I knew it by being here above the Háu.

This is a plea for intuition instead of intellection, and for the possibility of empathy and feeling between individuals. It can also be seen as an answer to #7:50, the butterfly story, where Jwāng Jōu *did not understand* the other realm. In this story, he does; it is now Hwèidž who represents the less intuitive view.³³

³⁰This problem was discussed by the Mician logicians; see Graham **Disputers** 84.

³¹In weight of liquid; the dried gourd was used as a container.

³²At this point Jwāngdž tells the story of the silk-washing formula; #2:57.

³³The piece is very witty. Hwèidž’s question (“*How* do you know”) implies that Jwāngdž *does* know, and merely inquires as to his *means* of knowing. Further, the adverb in the question is literally “*From where* do you know” 安知, and it is answered by another adverb of place from which, “*from being here on the Háu.*” See Brooks **Yēn**.

A reader might feel that this plea for emotion is inconsistent with Jwāngdǔ's suppression of his emotions at the time of his wife's death (#7:53). Somebody apparently noticed that, and added this piece to the text by way of explanation:

7:58 (JZ 5:6, c0247). Hwèidǔ asked Jwāngdǔ, Can a man really be without emotions? Jwāngdǔ said, He can. Hwèidǔ said, A man, and yet he has no emotions – how can one call him a man? Jwāngdǔ said, The Way gave him an appearance, Heaven gave him form, how can you not call him a man? Hwèidǔ said, Given that we call him a man, how can he not have emotions?

Jwāngdǔ said, That is not what I mean by emotions. What I call having no emotions is when a man does not let his loving and hating do harm to him internally, but constantly follows what is natural and does not try to increase his life. Hwèidǔ said, If he does not try to increase his life, how will he be able to maintain his self? Jwāngdǔ said, The Way gave him an appearance, Heaven gave him form, and he does not let his loving and hating do harm to him internally. But now you are treating your own spirit as external, you are wearying your essence. You lean on a tree and sing, you droop on your desk and doze. Heaven picked out your form, but you still sing of “hard and white.”

It is Hwèidǔ who is disconnected from his inner being, and clutters his mind up (#7:56) with logical quibbles. The way to handle your emotions is to go ahead and have them, but not to let them run around loose inside and cause damage.³⁴

The famous sophist Gūngsūn Lúng 公孫龍, who is traditionally associated with logical problems such as the “white horse” or substance and attribute, appears in person in this next piece. He complains to Prince Móu of Ngwèi that for all his skill in the art of rhetoric and in Confucian philosophy, he is baffled by the words of Jwāngdǔ. Small wonder. In the course of answering him, Prince Móu tells this story:

7:59 (JZ 17:4, excerpt, c0244) Have you alone not heard of the frog in the collapsed well? He said to the Turtle of the Eastern Sea, “How happy I am! I hop around the well railing, or I go back and rest in a place where a tile has fallen out. When I go in the water, it supports me under my armpits and my chin; when I slide in the mud, it covers my feet and reaches my ankles. I look at the crabs and tadpoles, and none is my equal. To have charge of a whole pool of water; to command all the joys of a collapsed well: this is the ultimate! Why does not Your Excellency come some time and see?”

This invitation is accepted, with hilarious results:

³⁴Jwāngdǔ in #7:57 had defended the idea that we can know other entities; here, he defines how our emotions should be kept from interfering with what we do. We may observe that these would make useful guidelines for the modern historical investigator. A certain intellectual tact is inherent in some of the sayings attributed to “Jwāngdǔ.”

The Turtle of the Eastern Sea's left foot was not yet in before his right thigh had become stuck. At that, he worked himself loose, withdrew, and told about the Sea: "A thousand leagues would not measure its size; a thousand fathoms would not compass its depth. In the time of Yǔ there were floods nine years out of ten, but the waters never rose; in the time of Tāng there were droughts seven years in eight, but the distance between its shores did not grow less. Never to alter or shift, whether for an instant or an age; never to advance or recede, whether the inflow is great or small – this is the great delight of the Eastern Sea!"

When the frog in the collapsed well heard this, he was thunderstruck with surprise, bewildered and at a loss.³⁵

The master metaphor for largeness occurs earlier in that chapter. It describes the Autumn Flood and the Sea, and refers in passing to the previous story:

7:60 (JZ 17:1a, excerpt, c0270). The time of the autumn floods had come. The hundred streams poured into the River. Its current swelled so much that, from one bank to the other, you could not tell a horse from an ox. At this the Lord of the River greatly delighted, thinking that the beauty of the world was all his. Following the current, he journeyed east until he came to the Northern Sea. Look as he would to eastward, he could see no end to the waters. The Lord of the River began to wag his head, and seeing how great the waters were, he looked afar off at Rwò, the God of Ocean, and said with a sigh, The vulgar saying has it, "He who is broadly learned in the Way thinks none equal to himself." That describes me. In the past, I heard men belittling the learning of Confucius and making light of the righteousness of Bwō-yí. At first I did not believe them, but now I have beheld your endlessness. If I hadn't come to your gate, I would have been in danger. I would forever have been laughed at by the Masters of the Great Method 大方之家.

Rwò of the Northern Sea said, With a frog in a well, you can't speak of the ocean; he is limited by his dwelling. With a summer insect, you can't speak of ice; he is confined to a season. With a pedantic scholar, you can't discuss the Way; he is bound by his doctrines. Now you have emerged from your banks and seen the Great Sea, so you realize your insignificance. You can now be told about the Great Principle 大理 . . .

The Inner Chapters of the Jwāngdǔ (JZ 1-7) are traditionally supposed to be the real Jwāng Jōu. And indeed, a number of Jwāngdǔ stories are to be found there. But for some readers, JZ 17 is the heart of the matter.

³⁵The "frog in the well" is a common Indian metaphor for one who knows things only on a small scale, and is unaware of anything larger. Maitri Upanishad 1:4 "Be pleased to deliver me; in this cycle of existence I am like a frog in a waterless well." (Hume **Thirteen** 414). Giles **Chuang** 159 remarks that the image "is commonly used in Bengali colloquial;" compare Boyer **Get**, a modern Indian success manual