



Do Nothing: Peace for Everyday Living: Reflections on Chuang Tzu's Philosophy

Siroj Sorajjakool

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"Words," writes Chuang Tzu, "are for catching ideas; once you've caught the idea, you can forget the words." In *Do Nothing*, author Siroj Sorajjakool lends us some of his insightful words to help us all "catch" the provocative ideas of one of China's most important literary and philosophical giants—one who emerged at a time when China had several such giants philosophizing on Tao or "the Way."

Though his thinking dates back to the fourth century, Chuang Tzu's Tao has profound implications for our modern lives. He welcomes an existence that is radically removed from the image of normalcy that society often projects, wherein the individual must always strive for more, always seek greater productivity, and always try to better him or herself and his or her place in life. Chuang Tzu would posit that the definitions of normalcy, success, and happiness are arbitrarily assigned and that our rigid and unquestioning adherence to these so-called "norms" leads to existential restlessness and unease. Instead of striving, he would say, be still. Instead of acquiring, embrace nothingness. Instead of seeking to understand the limitlessness of the universe during your brief and extremely limited existence, enjoy the wonder of it.

Siroj Sorajjakool suggests that when we can embrace nothingness, we undergo a spiritual transformation that liberates us to see more clearly and truly find ourselves. He offers a very personal exploration of Chuang Tzu's Tao, first in its historical and literary context, and then in the context of our twenty-first century existence. What emerges is a liberating and highly readable meditation on the many lessons we can "catch" from Chuang Tzu on how we view our aspirations, our joys and sorrows, our successes and failures, and what it means to be a worthwhile person.

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