Abstract

The thesis sets out to provide answers to two questions of the utmost importance concerning Chuang Tzu Chu or Chuang Tzu Commentary by Kuo Hsiang (252-312): 1) How was Chuang Tzu Chu written (or basically, was it an out-right plagiarism of Chuang Tzu Chu by Hsiang Hsiu, 221-300) and 2) Whether Kuo Hsiang was able to explain and expound on Chuang Tzu's philosophy correctly and dutifully, and if not, where did he fail?

Through this approach, the thesis tries to re-evaluate the work of Kuo Hsiang; to explicitly and systematically show the actual value of Kuo Hsiang's interpretation on Chuang Tzu and to assign Kuo Hsiang a rightful place in the history of Chinese philosophy.

The first half of the thesis traces the studies on Hsiang Hsiu and Kuo Hsiang by scholars from the Former Sung (Liu) Dynasty till to-day and ascertains that Kuo Hsiang's Chuang Tzu Chu is a composite work resulting from a broad research based on scholarly works, most significantly the work of Hsiang Hsiu and works by other contemporaries such as Ts'ui Chuan (?-290), Hsi Kung (223-262) and scholars of the Han Dynasty. Kuo Hsiang's work, therefore, is not an out-right plagiarism of Hsiang Hsiu's Chuang Tzu Chu, it is a work of concerted views and wisdom by Kuo Hsiang explaining and developing the philosophy of Chuang Tzu.
The second half of the thesis systematically evaluates the work of Kuo Hsiang in order to ascertain where he excels and where he fails in interpreting and keeping to the original meaning of Chuang Tzu. Comparison is also made between Kuo Hsiang's work and that of Ch'eng Hsuan Ying of the T'ang Dynasty.

In these respects, the writer is of the view that Kuo Hsiang does exceptionally well and is unsurpassed in interpreting the following aspects of Chuang Tzu's philosophy: 1) Ontology-Cosmology; 2) Political Philosophy and 3) Absolute Freedom in Philosophy of Life. This is the main contribution of Kuo Hsiang in his interpretation of Chuang Tzu's philosophy.

Kuo Hsiang also excels in explaining the thought of Chuang Tzu on "Preservation of Life" and "Fast of the Mind".

However, Kuo Hsiang's interpretation on Fatalism in Chuang Tzu's Philosophy of Life is inadequate. His understanding of Equality of Things and Opinions in Chuang Tzu's Epistemology is also questionable.

As a whole the thesis concludes that Chuang Tzu Chu is the most outstanding scholarly work on the philosophy of Chuang Tzu and Kuo Hsiang undoubtedly the top-most authority on Chuang Hsueh.