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一 庄子时代

Chapter I The Time of Zhuangzi

The time of Zhuangzi was a time of war and slaughter.

During the Warring States Period, incessant wars were fought for wealth, land, and domination of China. In their struggle to conquer their rivals economically and militarily, the Chinese states all underwent various degrees of reform.

In the state of Wei, Lord Wen (in office from 445 B.C. to 396 B.C.) assigned Li Kui to take charge of political reform. He also incited farming and fighting, the construction of irrigation systems, and promoted economic development, all of which caused the state of Wei to become the first powerful state of its time. In 356 B.C., King Xiao of Qin employed Shang Yang to carry out political reform, causing the state to grow rapidly in power. That same year, the state of Qi also underwent political reform and became stronger. King Dao of the state of Chu (ruled from 401 B.C. to 381 B.C.) charged Wu Qi with reforming state affairs, and though this did not produce great results, it did preserve the state's original position as a great power. During the constant wars, the state of Yan also increased in power. The competition between these seven states came to define the condition of the Warring States Period.

In order to obtain more land, population, and tax revenue, the wars between states began to intensify, and the scale of the conflicts began to escalate. For example, in 341 B.C. at the battle of Maling, fought between the states of Wei and Qi, Wei mobilized 100,000 soldiers. In 293 B.C., the great general of Qin, Bai Qi, delivered a crushing defeat to the army of Wei at Huayang, beheading 150,000 soldiers. Because the various states employed mandatory conscription during the Warring States Period, all farmers within the age limit could be forced to join the army during times of war. Because of this, a large battle would involve tens or even hundreds of thousands of men and horses, and the scale of battles became larger than ever before.

In the chapter "In the World of Men," Zhuangzi describes the carnage of war. Through the character Yan Hui, he explained that in his time, there were many kingdoms like the state of Wei. The monarchs of these states acted arbitrarily and dogmatically. They were reckless in the administration of their kingdoms, viewing the commoners' lives to be as worthless as weeds. On a whim, they would send commoners to their deaths; consequently the corpses of commoners were piled high on the fields of battle. To mock the cruelty of these bloody wars, Zhuangzi created the character Crippled Shu to explain how commoners would escape being drafted into the army. Crippled Shu was extremely ugly: his chin was pulled back under his navel, his shoulders were higher than his head, his guts were piled on top, and his legs pressed on his

庄子的时代是战争和杀戮的时代。

战国时期，为了财富、土地和雄霸天下，各国之间的战争非常频繁。为了能在战争中靠经济、军事实力战胜对手，各国进行了不同程度的改革。

魏国由于魏文侯（前445—前396在位）任用李悝变法，改革政治、奖励耕战、兴修水利、发展经济，最早成为强国。公元前356年，秦孝公任用卫鞅变法，秦国强盛起来。同年，齐国也进行政治改革，国势也强盛起来。楚国在楚悼王（前401—前381在位）时任用吴起变法，虽然没有取得很大成果，但它保持了原来就是强国的地位。燕国也在战争中渐露头角。于是，形成了七强并立的形势。

为了夺取更多的土地、人口和税收，国与国之间的兼并战争更激烈，战争规模更大了。公元前341年，魏与齐之间的马陵之战，魏国动用了“十万之军”。公元前293年，秦国大将白起大败魏军于华阳，斩首15万。战国时期，由于各国已普遍实行郡县征兵制度，作战时所有及龄农民都有可能被强迫编入军队。因而，一场大战往往动用几万、几十万人马，战争规模达到了前所未有的地步。

庄子在《人间世》篇中对战争的杀戮有所描述。他借着颜回的口告诉我们这样一个历史事实：在庄子时代，像卫国这样的诸侯国很多。这些国的国君行事独断，治理自己的国家十分轻率，视百姓的性命如芥草，轻易就让百姓去送死，在战争中死去的百姓尸横遍野。同时也通过塑造“支离疏”这一人物形象来说明当时百姓对征兵的逃避。支离疏，人长得丑陋不堪，

ribs. Because he was so handicapped, he could wander around the field used for drafting soldiers, waving good-bye to all the soldiers leaving for war. ①

War and death were not only in the background of Zhuangzi's life, but they were also integral pieces of the inconstant, cruel, and violent world which he saw. It was this cruel reality that contributed to Zhuangzi's decision to withdraw from "law of the jungle" world which he inhabited.

In the time of Zhuangzi, scholars became the most active social class.

During the Warring States Period it was common practice for scholars to travel extensively. In intrastate affairs, these traveling scholars helped to prosper and rule the state; in interstate affairs, they were also adept at negotiating the interests of the various states. Consequently, it became common for all levels of the governing class, from local wealthy families to the dukes and kings of great countries, to recruit these traveling scholars. The nobility realized that in obtaining one truly great scholar, it would be possible for them to obtain all of China. With able men in their employ, they could realize their dreams of greatness, accumulate the wealth of all under heaven, and enlarge the land of their states. For instance, the state of Yan was once one of the weakest of the seven great kingdoms. When King Zhao of Yan came to power, he planned to grow his strength, declaring that he would do anything and spend any price to recruit worthy scholars. Because of this policy, many talented men came to the state of Yan: Su Qin arrived from Zhou, Zou Yan came from Qi, Le Yi came from Zhao, and Qu Jing from Chu. The state of Yan became stronger with each passing day.

For traveling scholars, this was a time of rare opportunity to develop their ambitious plans. As long as they proved their usefulness to their respective lords, it was enough for them to have just one small talent to be kept on at court. Even men who resorted to petty, under-handed schemes could be received by lords such as Lord Mengchang of Qi. Traveling scholars gave council and formulated plans, traveled around to advance their lords' interests, and managed political or economic affairs. If able to win the appreciation of their lord, even those of humble birth were able to experience a meteoric rise in their careers, possibly becoming permanent chancellors in court. Wei Yang, for example, began as a retainer of Gong Shucuo, the prime minister of Wei. After coming to Qin, he attracted the attention of King Xiao of Qin, eventually rising to the highest position in the government, *da liang zao* ②.