

2. 兩小兒辯日

《列子·湯問第五》

孔子東游，見兩小兒辯鬪，問其故。

一兒曰：「我以日始出時去人近，而日中時遠也。」

一兒以日初出遠，而日中時近也。

一兒曰：「日初出大如車蓋。及日中則如盤孟，此不為遠者小而近者大乎？」

一兒曰：「日初出滄滄涼涼，及其日中如探湯，此不為近者熱而遠者涼乎？」

孔子不能決也。

兩小兒笑曰：「孰為汝多知呼？」

Two Children Arguing About the Sun

< The Lie Zi >

Confucius was traveling east when he came across two boys who were locked in a heated debate. Confucius asked them what they were debating about. One boy said, "I think the sun is nearer to us when it rises in the morning and further away from us at noon. When the sun rises, it is as big as a canopy of a carriage. At midday, it is as small as a saucer. Doesn't this attest to the fact that an object looks smaller when it is far away, and bigger when it is near?" The other boy thought the sun was further from us at sunrise and nearer at noon. He said, "When the sun first rises, the air is cool. At noon, the air is as hot as boiling water. Isn't it right to think that we feel so hot when it is closer to us, and feel cool when it is further away from us?" Confucius said he could not make a judgment. The two boys laughed and said, "Do people still think you are the one who knows most?"