

# Tao



**Richard Gavette**

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**Tao**

Copyright © 2022 Richard Gavette  
Publisher: Richard Gavette  
Produced by Vulkan.se, printed in Riga

ISBN 978-91-89724-25-9

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## Preface

This book was born out of a musical piece with the same name, which I wrote and recorded in the summer of 2013 after I for the first time had read the book *Tao Te Ching* written by Lao Tzu. There was something in the Taoist teachings that activated the creativity within me. Its wisdom and mystery moved me deeply.

When I, more than seven years later, by chance rediscovered the musical piece, which had completely fallen into oblivion, the texts that would become this book came to me.

My intention with the book has never been to write a version of *Tao Te Ching*. There are plenty of them already and they all serve their purpose. This book is my personal interpretation of the Taoist teachings – a philosophy that has been of great help to me in dealing with the difficulties that I have encountered in my life. I write from my own experiences and the relationship with the Tao that I have developed over the years.

The first part of the book consists of poems connected to the musical piece that I wrote and together they depict an inner journey with the Tao. The second part of the book is my humble attempt to describe the Tao in practical terms and how we can live our lives guided by it.

If you want to dive deeper into the Taoist teachings, I highly recommend reading the masterpiece *Tao Te Ching*.

I wish you pleasant reading, my friend!

With love,  
Richard Gavette

# **Part 1**

## *An Inner Journey with the Tao*

## 1. A New Beginning

In the beginning,  
everything was whole.  
Vibrating.  
One eternal soul.

In the beginning,  
everything was free.  
Pulsating.  
Suddenly the Tao was born out of eternity.

It happened spontaneously.  
It was a new beginning.  
It happened playfully.  
Everything started singing.



## 2. The Tao

Expanding.  
Never-ending.  
The creator of everything.  
Creating without trying to create.  
A mystery.  
A miracle.  
Always there.  
Within us all.  
It cannot be fully described with words.  
Thus, it is free.

Expanding.  
Never-ending.  
The Great Mother.  
Forever loving.  
Both big and small.  
Both silent and singing.  
It is older than time.  
Thus, it is free.

Expanding.  
Never-ending.  
The Eternal Flower.  
Forever blossoming.  
Both wise and humble.  
Always playful.  
It is like a newborn child.  
Thus, it is free.



### **3. Eternal Beings**

Eternal beings.  
With dying bodies.  
We're travelling fast.  
Into the future.

Forsaken dreams.  
Our souls are crying.  
We're running blindfolded.  
Into the night.

Hold on.  
Let go.  
Breathe in.  
Breathe out.

Eternal beings.  
With bleeding hearts.

#### **4. The Thinking Mind**

Our thinking minds.  
Can make us blind.  
The home of fear.  
Always near.  
Enslaving.  
Craving.  
The thinking mind.  
The burden of humankind.



## **5. Lost**

I'm lost in the fog of thoughts and confusion.

I'm searching but cannot find a solution.

Starving heart.

Falling apart.

My inner child is crying.

My soul is slowly drying.

Is hope still there?

All I feel is despair.

## 6. Clearing the Fog

The fog of thoughts  
cannot be fought,  
and it cannot be cleared  
as long as it is feared.

So, I open myself up to love and the Tao,  
for they seem to work together somehow –  
they help me rediscover the paths between my heart and mind,  
and then I take a deep breath and leave history behind.

No more blinding fear and endless inner wars  
and no more drowning in the ocean of remorse –  
I say goodbye to everything that has led me astray  
and I let the wind of change blow the fog away.

## 7. Choosing the Journey

Somewhere in the essence of our essence,  
we might find what is always present.  
A glimpse of something that is free, wild and untamed.  
We may call it the Tao even though it cannot be named.

When we embody it, we are free like birds  
and honesty finds its way into our words.  
If we let it be our guide, we will follow our hearts.  
A journey back to the place where we all start.  
A place where stars are born and where souls unite.  
A place where hot is cold and where darkness is light.

If we choose the journey, we will travel both day and night.  
As long as we embrace the Tao, everything will be all right.



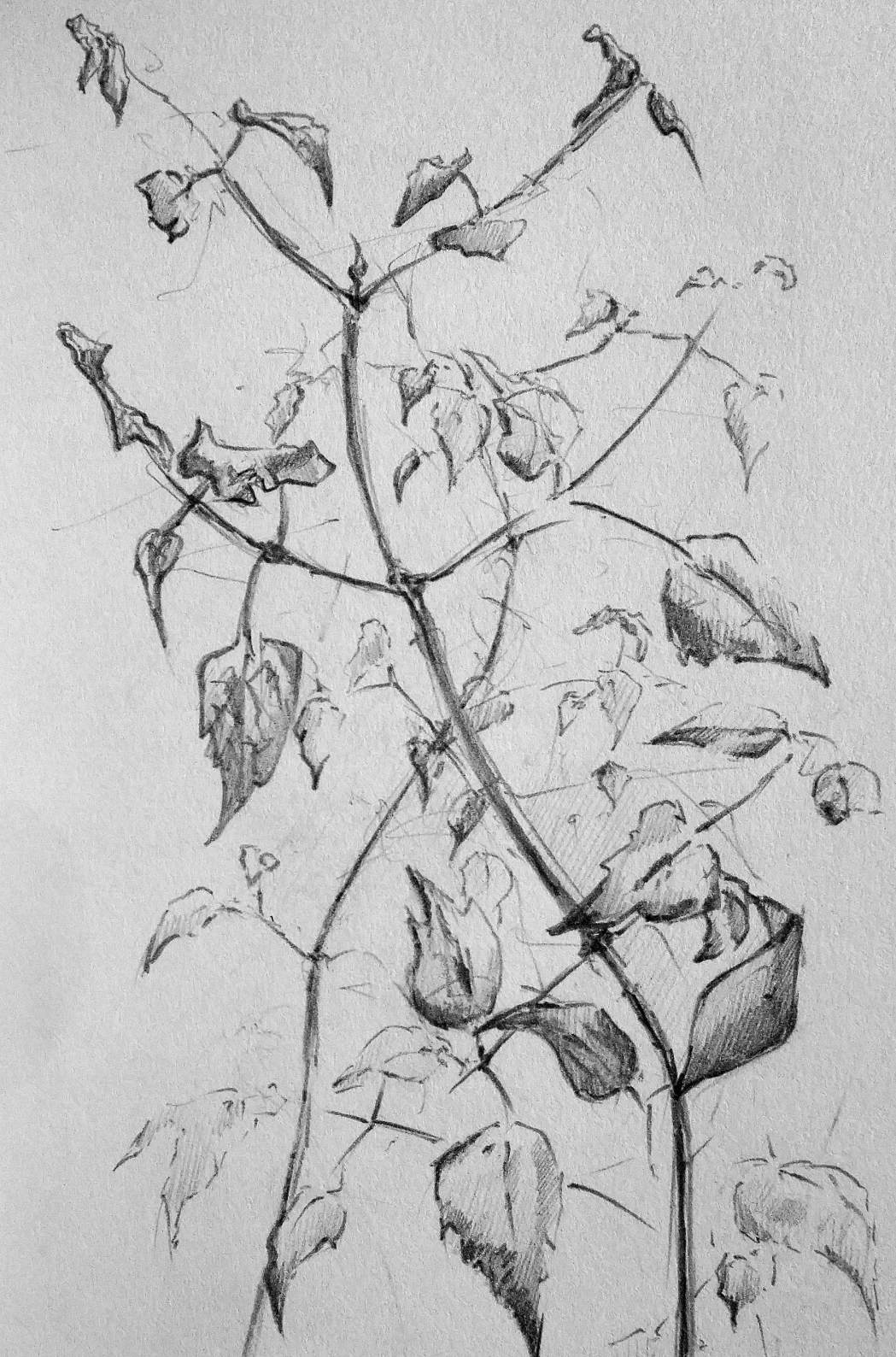
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## 8. Climbing up the Wall

I'm climbing up the wall.  
What happens if I fall?  
The journey has begun.  
I'm naked under the sun.  
The wind is blowing cold.  
So many stories yet untold.  
Love is dancing with fear.  
I can taste them both in my tears.

I'm climbing up the wall.  
Is it over if I fall?  
The journey has begun.  
I'm letting go of my guns.  
The wind chills me to the bone.  
But I know that I'm not alone.  
The Tao is dancing like the wind.  
I can feel it deep within.

I'm climbing up the wall.  
I will do my best not to fall.  
The journey has begun.  
What is done cannot be undone.  
The silence tells me to let things flow.  
I can trust it – this I know.  
I must continue my climb.  
And leave history behind.



## 9. Don't Look Back

Don't look back!  
Fear will attack.  
Eyes forward.  
Continue inwards.  
One breath at a time.  
Beyond yours and mine.  
The Tao is always there.  
Through both hope and despair.

No, don't look back!  
Thoughts will attack.  
Feel your beating heart.  
It is where you start.  
One step at a time.  
Beyond yours and mine.  
Let the Tao be you.  
In everything you do.

## **10. Travelling Inwards**

I'm travelling fast.  
I'm diving deep.  
I've let go of the past.  
I've taken the leap.

What will I find?  
I really don't know.  
The stars within me align.  
My soul has been longing so.



## **11. Dancing Like the Wind**

I'm dancing like the wind.  
It takes me home.  
Home deep within.  
Where I'm never alone.

I'm dancing like the wind.  
It makes me free.  
Free deep within.  
Where I find my destiny.



## **12. In the Void inside the Void**

I've reached the core of the core.  
The world outside is no more.  
I'm floating freely in empty space.  
I can still see, hear, smell, feel and taste.

My mind is still thinking and I am still me.  
Is it then possible for me to be free?  
What will happen now I do not know.  
Best to do like the Tao and let things flow.

### **13. The Ego Crumbles**

The fear within me is running wild.  
There's nowhere left for it to hide.  
So the fear is fighting.  
Inner thunder and lightning.

The ego trembles.  
The ego crumbles.  
The mightiest of earthquakes.  
My entire defence breaks.

## 14. Almost There

I'm travelling deeper into my heart.  
Towards the place where everything starts.  
The walls inside of me are no more.  
I've taken farewell to fear and its wars.

The ego has crumbled, so my heart is expanding.  
All I see is light that seems to be never-ending.  
I can hear the laughter of my inner child.  
I feel its love and playfulness everywhere inside.  
It feels as if I'm vibrating.  
Everything is pulsating.  
So, I continue my journey guided by the Tao.  
My soul is shining and singing out loud.



## 15. Letting Go of Everything

The journey has reached its final destination.  
Curiosity is dancing with expectation.  
It's time to let go of everything that I think I know.  
My heart and my soul whisper that it's right to do so.

It's time to let go of the one I used to be.  
It's time to truly let go of my history.  
It's time for me to return home.  
Home to the eternal home.

All I see and feel is light.  
Endless light – oh, so bright.  
It's time for me to be reborn from within.  
So, I'm letting go of everything.





## **16. One with the Tao**

I feel it now – the Tao flows within me.  
I hear it now – my heart sings beautifully.  
Somehow the Tao is always there.  
Nowhere and everywhere.

When we embrace it, we nourish our souls.  
When we embody it, we are whole.  
When we are guided by it, we are free.  
The Tao will always be a mystery.

## **Part 2**

# Living Guided by the Tao

## 17. Experiencing the Tao

Those who try to catch the Tao will become disappointed.

The Tao cannot be caught.

Still, the Tao is always present.

It is always there.

Right now.

In every moment.

The Tao is forever spontaneous and authentic.

Thus, it flows freely without hinder.

The Tao acts without trying to act and it acts in harmony with itself and everything else.

This kind of action is called non-doing.

Non-doing does not mean doing nothing or being lazy.

It means doing without effort.

It is spontaneous.

It is authentic.

Non-doing is only possible in the present moment.

No, we cannot catch the Tao.

No matter how hard we try.

But we can experience it.

But the Tao can only be experienced beyond our human senses.

So, how do we accomplish this?

By practising non-doing.

Just like the Tao.

This means that we need to let go of everything that hinders us from flowing freely.

Thus, we need to allow ourselves to be spontaneous and authentic.

Since non-doing is only possible in the present moment, we need to let go of everything that keeps us separated from what is here and now. This means that we need to take a break from our memories as well as from our thoughts about the future.

As a human being, this is far easier said than done, but it is possible for those who choose to embrace the possibility.

It takes curiosity, playfulness and courage.

But it is possible.

When we are one with the present moment, we are one with the Tao.

When we are one with the Tao, we are one with ourselves.

When we are one with ourselves, we are one with everything.

The child in our hearts knows that it is so.

## 18. Control, Freedom and Happiness

Everything in this world is constantly changing.

Everything.

Constantly.

The impermanence of all things seems to be a fundamental part of the laws of physics.

At the same time, it seems to be in our innermost human nature to want to have control.

And what might be ever greater than our will to have control is our fear of not having control.

Both our will to have control and our fear of not having control are born as a consequence of our thinking minds.

Evolutionary, not having control equals uncertainty – and uncertainty may equal danger.

Since everything in this world is constantly changing, it is absolutely impossible for us to have total control over any aspect of our lives.

This fact, in combination with the biological structure of the human brain, creates a subtle yet profound conflict within ourselves.

Over time, this inner conflict grows stronger and can make us stressed, worried, exhausted and unhappy – just to mention a few of the potential negative consequences.

One of the reasons why the Tao is forever free is that it has no will to control things.

Nor does it fear not having control.

Those who wish to live guided by the Tao make sure to follow the same principles.

They make sure to let go of their will to control things as well as their fear of not having control.

So, how do we achieve this when our brains are what they are?

The first step is to understand and to truly accept that everything in this world is constantly changing.

The second step is to understand the underlying mechanisms to why our thinking minds want to have control and why we are afraid of not having control.

These two steps we have covered earlier in this text.

The third step is to start practising a curious and mindful approach towards our feelings, thoughts and actions in everyday life.

This will not only bring us closer to ourselves and the present moment, but it will also help us notice and understand our behaviour patterns and what impact they have on our lives.

This will make us ready for the fourth step, which is to mindfully choose our actions and behaviour patterns so that they no longer are driven by our thinking minds' will to have control or their fear of not having control.

This is a daily practice that takes place in each and every moment and we must be prepared that our old ways of doing things will fight for their survival.

It is in their nature to do so.

No, the path may not be straight and it will take some time, but it is a transformation that is possible for all of us.

Let us call it mindful reprogramming of our brains.

If we practise this daily, we will eventually start to notice and experience the positive effects of our practice.

We will become more in tune with ourselves as well with the present moment, which also makes us more in tune with the Tao.

Our hearts and minds will expand and we will discover new layers and dimensions in our lives.

We will be able to let things flow freely and thereby let things be what they have potential to be.

As a consequence of our practice and the transformation we have done, and are continuously doing, we will inevitably become freer and happier as human beings.

Remember:

The Tao works through everything.

Yet the Tao controls nothing.

## **19. Aspects of the Tao**

The Tao sings, but its songs cannot be heard.

The Tao shines, but its light cannot be seen.

The Tao vibrates, but its vibrations cannot be felt.

The Tao does nothing, yet nothing is left undone.





## 20. The Child in Our Hearts

As we know by now, the Tao can only be experienced in the present moment.

But for most of us adult human beings, this can be difficult.

This is because our thinking minds keep us separated from what is here and now.

Yet we are all born as masters of being in the present moment.

When we are newborn, there is nothing else.

There is only here and now.

When we are born, we are also free from the illusion of separation.

There is no yours or mine.

All is one.

Every newborn child is a master of experiencing the Tao.

When we grow up as children, we are still natural talents when it comes to experiencing the Tao.

We are playful, spontaneous and our imagination flows freely.

But the older we get, the more we seem to stop playing and being spontaneous.

Our imagination slowly withers.

Our experiences and traumas raise walls within us that separate us from ourselves as well as from the world outside of us.

Yours and mine are born and our egos take shape.

Our thoughts and memories begin to blind us and over time we become imprisoned in our minds.

The newborn child, along with all its wisdom, is still there inside our hearts.

No matter how old we get or where life takes us.

The child waits for us to once again open our eyes as if it were our very first time.

It waits for us to break free from the prison of our minds.

It waits for us to truly be here and now.

Thus, those who wish to live in harmony with the Tao make sure to allow themselves to reunite with the child in their hearts.

They allow themselves to be playful, spontaneous and childish.

They allow their imagination to flow freely.

When we live guided by the child in our hearts, we also live guided by the Tao.

## 21. The Art of Giving

The Tao gives us everything.

Yet it expects or demands nothing in return.

The Tao gives because it wants to give.

Giving seems to be a part of its innermost nature.

Those who live guided by the Tao give from what they have to others.

They do it not because they have to but because they want to.

It makes them happy.

Giving does not only mean donating money to charity or giving our food and belongings to those in need.

Giving also includes giving our time and our competences.

Another word for giving is helping and we can all help the world in some way.

Giving and helping have the same parents:

Generosity and kindness.

Those who give in harmony with the Tao give from their hearts without expecting or demanding anything in return.

Why?

Because if we give something with the expectation or demand of getting something in return, what we give becomes a manifestation of our thinking minds' will to control things.

This means that we do not truly let go of what we give.

Thus, what we give is not free and what is not free cannot be what it's meant to be.

Imagine a world where a majority of all human beings practised giving in the spirit of the Tao.

Poverty, hunger and many other problems maintained by us humans would be no more.

When we give, it's important to never force anything upon someone. If those who we intend to give to do not want to accept what we give, that's just fine.

There's no need for us to worry about giving too much.

As long as we give from our hearts, we will always have more than we need.

## 22. Being

The sun is the sun without trying to be the sun.

It shines without trying to shine.

The sun is therefore authentic.

The wind is the wind without trying to be the wind.

It blows without trying to blow.

The wind is therefore authentic.

When we humans try to be someone, we fail to be who we really are.

When we humans try to do things, our deeds are not authentic.

The sun is the sun.

The wind is the wind.

We may envy them.

We may admire them.

Either way, they are what they are.



### **23. Let Go and Open Up**

Let go of your ignorance and you open up to knowledge.

Let go of your knowledge and you open up to wisdom.

Let go of your wisdom and you open up to enlightenment.

Let go of your enlightenment and you open up to the Tao.

## **24. Courage**

Courage is to dare to say no to violence.

Courage is to dare to be vulnerable.

Courage is to dare to feel what you feel.

Courage is to dare to cry.

Courage is to dare to question yourself.

Courage is to dare to love yourself.

Courage is to dare to see through fear.

Courage is to dare to follow your heart.



## 25. The Ego

The Tao has no ego.

This is because the Tao doesn't think.

The Tao only acts and it acts without trying to act.

We humans, on the other hand, are equipped with an ego.

This is because we think.

The ego is merely a thing that is created by our thinking minds.

Thus, the ego wants to control things and it's terrified of not having control.

It is the ego that creates yours and mine.

It is the ego that separates us from the world outside of us.

It is the ego that separates us from who we really are – as in who we are beyond our thoughts and feelings.

It is the ego that separates us from what is here and now.

Thus, the ego hinders us from being one with the Tao.

The ego, like most things in this world, wants to grow and become stronger.

It knows how to feed itself.

The ego fears to be questioned and to be seen through.

Prestige, stubbornness and selfishness are all children of the ego.

Fear is one of its loyal friends.

The ego's highest wish is to control and enslave.

By practising what's been explained earlier about being in the present moment and letting go of our thinking minds, we will also eventually learn how to live our lives without being controlled or enslaved by our egos.

When we are free from the influence of our egos, we are one with both ourselves and the Tao.

## **26. The Peaceful Tao**

Violence can never end our wars.

Violence will always give birth to more violence.

Violence is nothing but a manifestation of the fear that lives inside our thoughts.

Since the Tao promotes letting go of our thoughts, it thereby also promotes non-violence.

And non-violence gives birth to peace.

Those who are one with the Tao still experience fear, but they accept fear for what it is and choose not to act on it.

Instead, they choose to act on love.

Why?

Because their hearts tell them to.

## 27. Power and Leadership

Power is a treacherous thing.

It is both alluring and addictive.

Power, in most cases, is not a manifestation of the Tao.

Why not?

Because power normally means controlling others which makes it a manifestation of the thinking mind's will to control things.

Since the will to control is connected to the fear of not having control, those who are clinging on to power are in most cases actually clinging on to fear.

By controlling others, we do not only enslave those who we control, but at the same time, we enslave ourselves.

So when we cling on to power where we control others, we become enslaved, and when we let go of such power, we free ourselves.

Has there ever been anyone with a lot of controlling power who has felt truly free?

Those who live in harmony with the Tao make sure to let go of all power associated with trying to control others.

Instead, they practise a leadership where they lead others by supporting others in leading themselves.

A leadership built upon freedom and trust is a leadership of the Tao.

## 28. Relating to Reality

Both darkness and light can blind us.

Both ignorance and knowledge can lead us astray.

Those who live in accordance with the Tao see and accept both sides of the coin for what they are.

Why do they do that?

Because it opens up their eyes to reality.

By not judging the two sides of the coin as good or bad, they prevent misunderstandings about reality.

By preventing misunderstandings about reality, they prevent inner struggle.

By preventing inner struggle, they promote inner peace.

By promoting inner peace, they promote their ability to live and act in harmony with themselves and everything else.

They achieve this without trying to achieve it.

They achieve it by practising non-doing.

Thus, they let things flow freely and be what they are.

This does not mean that they are indifferent or do not care about what is happening in the world.

It means that they let go of their thinking minds' will to judge things – which would otherwise limit them in their ability to understand the true nature of things.

This is the natural way to relate to reality.

## **29. The Tao of Love**

The Tao supports everything that supports freedom.

Thus, it supports love.

Love, just like the Tao, promotes letting go of control.

What we control we enslave, and what we enslave we do not love.

What we enslave we hinder from being as free as it has potential to be.

Thus, to truly love someone or something, we need to let them be free.

When we embody love, we embody the Tao.

When we embody the Tao, we embody love.

They are interconnected.

Now and forever.



### 30. Silly Indeed

How silly we humans are!  
Believing that we own this planet.  
Believing that we are more important than other animals.  
Believing that only we know what is right.

So we keep on living our lives.  
Separated by the walls inside of us.  
We're too stressed out to see the miracles everywhere around us.  
We're too distracted to hear the symphony of silence.  
Unknowingly we neglect the child in our hearts.  
So, the child cries.  
Day and night.  
We're running faster and faster, but we don't take the time to ask  
ourselves: Why?

Still, the Tao flows freely within us all.  
It is always there no matter how we live our lives.  
Patiently the Tao waits for us.  
It waits for us to wake from our ignorance so that we can start living  
in harmony with this beautiful planet and its other animals.  
It waits for us to tear down our inner walls.  
It waits for us to notice the miracles.  
It waits for us to embrace silence.  
It waits for us to reunite with the child in our hearts.  
It waits for us to stop running and instead start letting go of  
everything that hinders us from being whole and free.  
The Tao patiently waits for us to return home.

Home to the birthplace.  
The birthplace that is here and now.

How silly we humans are!  
Silly indeed.



### **31. Not What It Seems**

The empty glass is not empty.

The filled glass is not full.

Open eyes are often blind.

Closed eyes are ready to see.

## 32. Cornerstones

Spontaneity.

Playfulness.

Curiosity.

Humility.

Kindness.

Simplicity.

Generosity.

Cheerfulness.

Honesty.

Gratefulness.

These words are, when put into practice, cornerstones for those who wish to personify the Tao.

### **33. Interconnections**

No day.

No night.

No wrong.

No right.

No words.

No lies.

No birds.

Lonely skies.



### **34. The Tao Does Nothing**

The Tao flows freely inside of everything.

Inside of every animal.

Every tree.

Every stone.

Every little particle.

Everything is created through it.

Yet the Tao does nothing.

### **35. Your Life Is in Your Hands**

Love every stranger.

Love every friend.

Let go of anger.

Your life is in your hands.

Embrace life every day,

for one day it will end.

Dare to choose which is your way.

Your life is in your hands.

### **36. The Mysteries of the Tao**

Silence sings.

Darkness shines.

Empty space is full of something.

Death in life is life in death.

The Tao is limitless and so are its mysteries.



Two square red artist seals are located in the lower right corner of the painting. The seal on the left contains the characters '海山' (Haishan), and the seal on the right contains the characters '作' (Zuo), indicating the artist's name and the work.



### **37. Relationships**

Those who live their lives guided by the Tao meet each day with open arms, minds and hearts.

They practise the same approach towards the people that they meet.

They do not judge others by their appearance – nor do they judge others for what they have done before.

Those who are in harmony with the Tao only live here and now and that is where they meet others.

Those who are one with the Tao always reflect the light that exists within everyone they meet.

They do this without trying.

They do this without effort.

This is one of the reasons why people feel happier, safer and more relaxed when they spend time with someone who embodies the Tao.

Those who are one with the Tao have no enemies.

They have only friends.

Their relationships with others are based on freedom, trust and kindness.

They are always happy to help others help themselves, but they make sure to never force their help upon anyone.

They know that they cannot walk someone else's path.

They know that they cannot carry someone else's reality.

But they genuinely care about others and are always willing to help if someone invites them to do so.

Those who live guided by the Tao make sure to nurture the relationship with themselves.

They know that to be a good friend to others, they must also be a good friend to themselves.

They know that to truly love someone else, they must also truly love themselves.

Only then can the friendship and love be whole.

Only then can the friendship and love be free.

Whole and free.

Just like the Tao.

### **38. Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow**

We do not have to experience the Tao or live guided by it.

We do not have to let go of our thoughts and our will to have control.

We do not have to embrace the child in our hearts.

We do not have to choose which ways that are ours to walk.

We do not have to do any of this.

The Tao demands nothing of us.

It does not judge anyone or anything.

To the Tao, there is no right or wrong.

Everything is exactly what it is.

The Tao is the Tao no matter what we do or don't do.

Yesterday, today and tomorrow.



### **39. Beating Is Your Heart**

Thinking minds.  
Thoughts are spinning.  
We're not born blind.  
The Tao is singing.

Every day.  
A brand new start.  
Let love lead the way.  
Beating is your heart.

## 40. The Two Dragons

Within every human, there are two dragons.

One dragon breathes the fire of love.

A fire that illuminates, gives warmth and creates.

The other dragon breathes the fire of fear.

A fire that blinds, burns and destroys.

Both of the dragons must exist.

Otherwise, none of them would exist.

When we love, the dragon of love grows stronger.

When we fear, the dragon of fear grows stronger.

It's up to each one of us to choose which of the dragons we feed the most.

For it is a choice we make.

Every day.

Every minute.

Every moment.

## **41. Dare**

Dare to question what you think is right.  
This will make you humble.  
Humbleness makes you wise.

Dare to embrace the child in your heart.  
This will make you playful.  
Playfulness makes you free.

Dare to close your eyes and search inwards.  
This will make you curious.  
Curiosity makes you expand.

Dare to be guided by your heart.  
This will make you honest.  
Honesty makes you brave.





## **42. Choose**

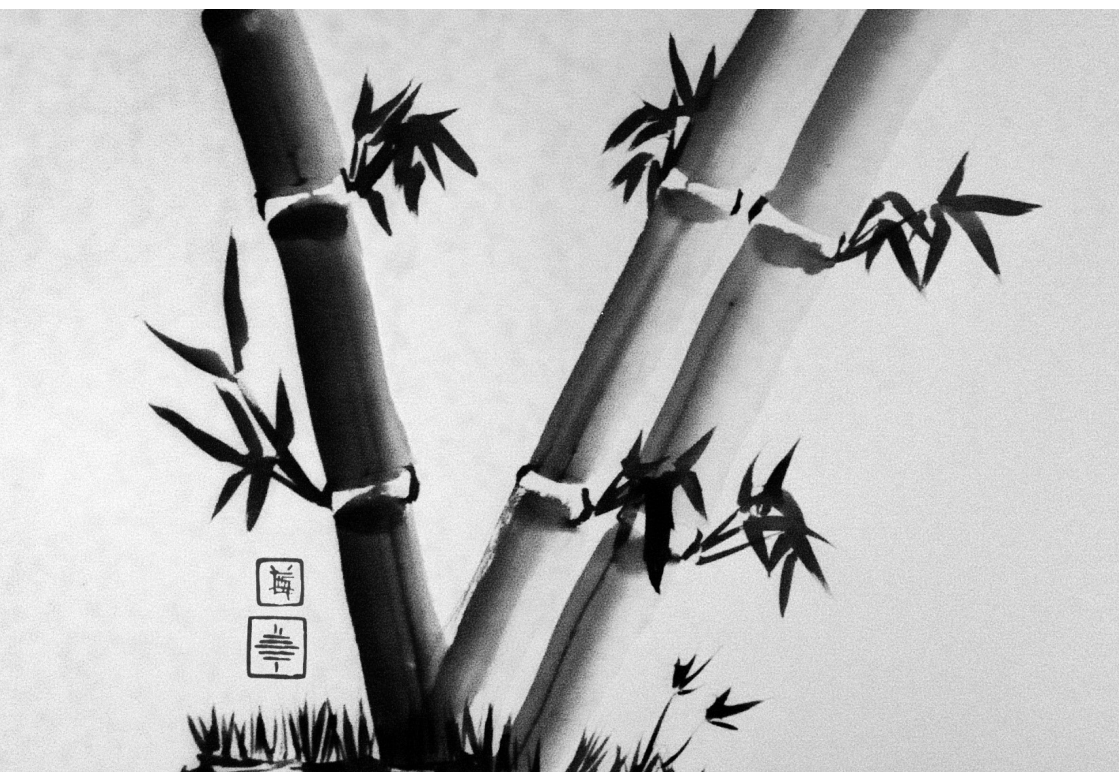
Choose to be the change that you wish for this world.  
Not because you have to, but because you can.

Choose to be kind and generous.  
Not because you have to, but because it feels good.

Choose to end your inner wars.  
Not because you have to, but because your heart wants you to.

Choose to embody love.  
Not because you have to, but because it makes you whole.

Choose to choose.  
Not because you have to, but because it is a choice.



### 43. The Circle of Life and Death

The Tao supports all life in this world.

It is in its innermost nature to do so.

Since life would not be possible without death, the Tao also supports death.

Everyone who is born will eventually die.

Everything that is created will eventually fade away.

Both life and death must be what they are.

Otherwise, the circle would not be complete.

Thus, there is no need for us to fear death.

Death is merely a portal to a new journey.

The Tao sings when we are born.

The Tao sings when we die.

To the Tao, there is no beginning or end.

Everything is now.

Everything is free.

Everything is one.



李梅

#### **44. The Way of the Way**

The way of the Tao is the natural way.

A way where we allow ourselves to flow like rivers.

A way where we allow ourselves to shine like the sun.

A way where we allow ourselves to grow like flowers.

A way where we allow ourselves to dance like the wind.

The way of the Tao is the eternal way.

A way where we allow our thoughts to appear and vanish like steam.

A way where we allow the tears of sorrow nourish the seeds of joy.

A way where we allow our past and our future to unite in our hearts.

A way where we allow ourselves to embrace eternity.

The way of the Tao is not the only way.

But it is the way of the Way.

Thank you for reading this book!

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Thinking minds.  
Thoughts are spinning.  
We're not born blind.  
The Tao is singing.

Every day.  
A brand new start.  
Let love lead the way.  
Beating is your heart.