

→Training → Learning ↙
Zhuang Zi and the Fully
Realized Human



莊周與至人

莊周

Zhuang Zhou

Translation, commentary,
and observations

by

Patrick Edwin Moran

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Chinese title: 莊子與至人

For the included Chinese text

Author's surname: 莊 Zhuang

Author's given name: 周 Zhou

Physics constitutes a logical system of thought which is in a state of evolution, and whose basis cannot be obtained through distillation by any inductive method from the experiences lived through, but which can only be attained by free invention. The justification (truth content) of the system rests in the proof of usefulness of the resulting theorems on the basis of sense experiences, where the relations of the latter to the former can only be comprehended intuitively. Evolution is going on in the direction of increasing simplicity of the logical basis. In order further to approach this goal, we must make up our mind to accept the fact that the logical basis departs more and more from the facts of experience, and that the path of our thought from the fundamental basis to these resulting theorems, which correlate with sense experiences, becomes continually harder and longer.

—Albert Einstein, 1936

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Preface

This book was originally intended solely for students of the martial arts, but it turned out to have wider relevance.

In the earliest times, martial arts skills may have been developed in childhood games such as wrestling, play-fighting with wooden swords, and other ways that children act out the struggles they see going on in adult life. Perhaps it was later understood that these games had genuine utility when their players grew to adulthood and faced real opponents. Martial arts still retain an element of sporting competition today, but there is a clear awareness that these adult games have a potential for serious application.

As martial arts developed it must have become obvious to some teachers from generation to generation that the mental preparation of fighters was important to their survival. Awareness of the mental side of this serious game is already clearly present in the *Zhuang Zi*, written more than twenty-four centuries ago.

Developments over centuries in Japan led to the realization that martial arts could be a pathway to eliminating mental blocks and delusive forces that hinder enlightenment. To make progress toward the goal of perfecting techniques and character is also to advance toward spiritual perfection and enlightenment.

We live in a world that has been repeatedly devastated by military conflicts and is still threatened today. Civil societies are all too often torn apart by struggles over resources, religions, and ideologies. Individuals and

groups that cannot tolerate differences attack others in order to quell their own fears and inadequacies. Trouble occurs when people cannot clearly see the roots of conflicts in their world and cannot, therefore, find a root cure.

The world offers the individual many chances to be led astray. The *Zhuang Zi* is particularly interested in dealing with delusions, preconceptions, prejudices, biases, and other dysfunctional processes that can get humans into serious trouble.

Whether one is involved in a combative world of camouflage and concealed attacks or an ostensibly more civil world of indoctrination into bigotry and denial of civil rights, the *Zhuang Zi* has much to offer in the way of training to prepare one to see the Universe as it really is and to act accordingly.

I have organized this book into three principle parts. In the first part I present some of the best teaching stories from the *Zhuang Zi*, with the most concrete presentations of his ideas coming before the more abstract or mystical passages that are more difficult to get a line on. In the second part I present what are called the "inner chapters" of the *Zhuang Zi*, the chapters that have traditionally been regarded as those most likely to have been written by Zhuang Zi himself, and one chapter that may have been written by someone in Zhuang Zi's circle of followers but is famous in its own right. In the third part I step away from the writings and both synthesize and analyze Zhuang Zi's understanding of the world and how best to make one's way in it.

Zhuang Zi's ideas are important to all of us, particularly to those who may find themselves in the line of fire. The ability to react effectively when faced with any severe challenge can only be gained by good mental processes. Correct interpretation of the world and its challenges is important not only in individual combat but also in wider kinds of interactions.

Zhuang Zi understood full well how to guard the mind against misconceptions of all kinds, from visual illusions to deeply engrained prejudices. One must see with what one is truly faced or else one will be deceived and quite likely defeated.

Readers may proceed directly to the third part, my synthesis and analysis, if they prefer to approach Zhuang Zi's thought in a way that is more tightly linked than are his teaching stories. Those who are directly involved in combat-related situations may find that Zhuang Zi's insightful ideas appear in a more readily assimilated way there. However, the depth of Zhuang Zi's thought deserves careful study in its original context too.

Zhuang Zi places heavy emphasis on individual human responsibility. It is up to individuals to choose between destroying or nurturing. It is up to you, the reader.

Humans cannot achieve goals if they cannot see the world as it really is. They are tied to the concepts by which they make their world and by which they understand it.¹ They are driven by natural motivations, but those motivating factors must be made disciplined because they can fatally bias judgment.

Humans must temper not only the body but also the mind in preparation for handling whatever may come their way. To that end, humans need to free the self from misconceptions, preconceptions, and prejudices. If one does not free oneself from indoctrination and other forms of covert control by others, one may well become the tool of people with bad intentions.

Humans can lose spontaneity and autonomy, so Zhuang Zi offers indications of how they can be restored.

By better nurturing and cultivating the self, humans can avoid doing counterproductive things that merely look as though they must surely work. Just as one trains the body one must also train the mind.

Despite all precautions, bad things will happen. Humans should prepare themselves to respond to what is really there, not to what they have been conditioned to see. Do not remain in a prison of thought². Do not act under covert compulsion by others. Become aware, become strong, become free.

Humans can take responsibility for protecting themselves and others from harm and for securing the good. To get free from one part delusion is to gain one part of enlightenment. Enlightenment promotes success in the broadest meaning of the term.

Those who can and do truly see what is going on are the best guardians for us all.

Dedication:

To my martial arts teachers

恩師

陳開山 Chén Kāi-shān

陳眉壽 Chén Méi-shòu

岡崎照幸 Okazaki Teruyuki

黒羽根貞治 Kurobane Sadaharu

衛笑堂 Wèi Xiào-táng

Ray Dalke

Edmond Otis

William Kent Carson

矢口豊 Yaguchi Yutaka

Christopher M. Smaby

In Memorium:

Irwin "Ran" Sclar, M.D.

嚴靈峯 Yán Líng-fēng

愛新覺羅毓鋆 Aisin Gioro Yuyun

Charles Davis

鄭李韻琦 Zhèng Lǐ Yùn-qí

"See the enemy! If you practice hard you will develop a mind that is as calm as still water. Karate is moving Zen, and it is the Zen state that you must strive for."

— Masatomo Takagi to C. W. Nicol, quoted in the latter's *Moving Zen*, p. 45.

Introduction

The people who wrote the early Daoist texts were writing for the people of their time, and had no inkling of the people more than two millennia in their future who would not share their cultural context, so it may be difficult to gain a correct understanding of this early thought. Therefore I have elected to begin by presenting passages that are concrete and have cultural contexts that modern readers are likely to find fairly familiar. I reserve technical points for endnotes.³

The word 道 *dào* means "Way," and is pronounced like the "Dow" in "Dow Jones."

Zhuang Zhou lived and taught around 350 B.C. He was a contemporary of the Confucian philosopher Mencius, and possibly even a friend of his.⁴ His viewpoint was very different from that of the Confucians. It was much more in line with the shamanic tradition dramatized in the *Chu Ci* (translated by David Hawkes as *The Songs of the South*) by Qu Yuan.

The book that bears his name was not all written by him. Some chapters are clearly by later authors, but others are subject to dispute. The last chapter, 天下 *Tiān Xià* (In the

World), describes several other figures of the time as well as Zhuang Zi himself, and most people believe that chapter must surely have been written by somebody other than Zhuang Zi.

"Zhuang Zi" means "Master Zhuang." Master Zhuang's family name is 莊 Zhuāng, and the word for "master" is placed after the surname. The word 子 zǐ has other meanings, but when it follows a family name it generally means "teacher, master."

Master Zhuang's given name is 周 Zhōu, which is pronounced about like "Joe." Just as titles such as "mister," "mrs.," etc. come after surnames in Chinese, given names also come after the family names. So his full name is 莊周 Zhuāng Zhōu, which is pronounced about like "Jwong Joe." Zhuang Zi is pronounced about like "Jwong Dz" (the "dz" is like the "dz" in "adz," or the "dds" is "adds").

Most of what can be learned about Zhuang Zi must come from the book that bears his name. Some of the stories are very fanciful, and not to be taken seriously, but their point is always serious. In the points that these stories make we can discern the mind of Zhuang Zi himself.

Detailed Conclusions Drawn from
The Zhuang Zi

Professor Donald Davidson critiqued the idea that a physical process brings information about something, let's say the family dog, in through eyes, ears, nose, etc., and a little image of the dog is presented, "on screen" as it were, in the brain. What, asked Dr. Davidson, happens next? There must be a little man inside the mind who views the image on the screen. But, wait a minute, an image must then form on a screen in the little man's mind. Then there must be a second little man inside the first little man's brain, and that leads me to see almost immediately that there will be an endless chain of little men inside little men, each viewing one screen and projecting information onto another smaller screen.

At the time, I speculated that if an image, perhaps a 3-D image of the family dog, is formed in the brain, then in order to do anything useful with it some other component of the mind must do something like my groping for a shoe in the dark and identifying it by how it feels. That image was not very satisfactory to me because a 3-D image is not a solid, and the brain has neither fingers to grasp with, nor left and right feet to try to match to the proper shoes.

This problem originally came up in an epistemology course at Stanford and got reactivated by a philosophy of science course given by Yin Hǎi-guāng 殷海光 at the National Taiwan University in Taipei a few years later. Since I was working on the *Zhuang Zi* at the time, I may have then made the connection with Zhuang Zhou's idea that words (or concepts) are like fish traps

and rabbit snares. I remember at some point thinking that fish nets can let small fish out and retain larger fish, so one would need to run fish through nets of two different weaves to sort out one group of fish of approximately the same intermediate size. Details aside, suppose that one has a "dog trap" that will fit only the family dog, and that the brain uses that device to detect Fido. So what? Put a dozen muffins and a muffin tin into a bag, shake it around, and sooner or later one of the muffins will find a spot in the muffin tin. But then what? Certainly nothing like thinking, nothing like mental processing, has occurred.

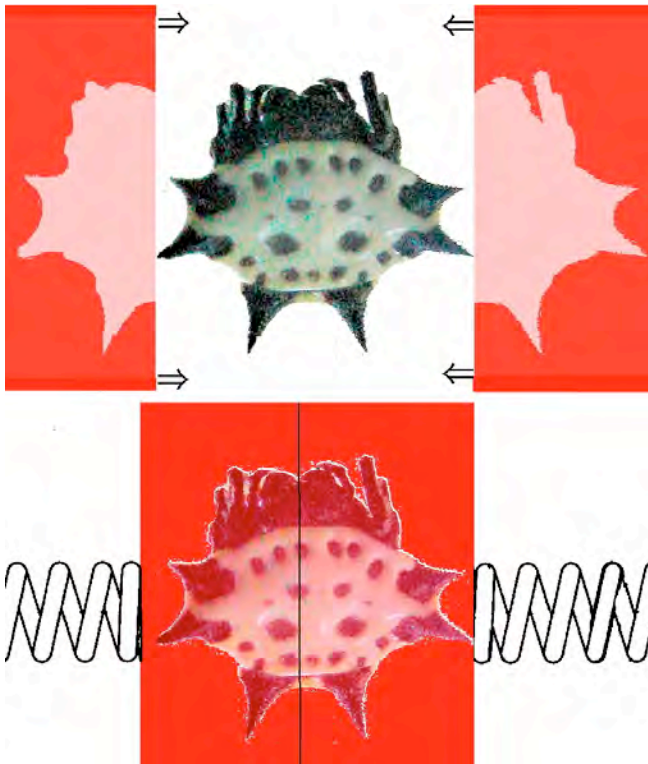
A productive suggestion about recognition emerged from studies of how the simplest forms of it occur in biological systems. For instance, a blood cell that is one part of the immune system may encounter an invasive cell such as a bacterium, and when that happens the immune system cell can mesh its structure, or part of its structure, with the invasive cell, or part of the invasive cell. Typically, there is an ignition-lock analog on the surface of the immune system cell, and a key analog on the surface of the invasive cell. If the key fits the lock, then the immune system cell begins to do something appropriate to dealing with the invader.

The biological ignition system switch and ignition key analogy is useful in investigating one of Zhuang Zhou's insights into the nature of knowledge because the ignition system recognizes the key, but it perceives nothing about the internal characteristics of the key. Going back to dogs, the appropriate negative image or "trap" may exactly fit Fido, but in the process of making the match it provides no information about the internal structure of the animal. In order to expand

knowledge of the dog, it must figuratively or actually be taken apart and negative images of the resulting parts formed. In so doing, images of the major muscles, internal organs, bones, etc., might be produced. However, the problem in understanding the dog has now shifted to the problem of understanding each of the parts. Carried to the limits of what science can now do, at the far end of this process there will be an endless chain of little men inside little men, each viewing one screen and projecting information onto another smaller screen.

Zhuang Zhou makes an assertion that goes beyond what science can comprehend: that the purpose of the fish trap is to catch fish, and that when one has caught a fish one has no immediate use for the fish trap. One will thereafter deal directly with the fish. Once one has captured a fish, one can directly experience the individual organism and forget about how it is categorized. In terms of modern science, this would be like saying that there is some way to have direct experience of a neutron or a photon. Or, to use a biological example, once one has used a "fish trap" to identify a creature as a badger, one can give it a drink of water, feed it, perhaps play with it.³⁹¹

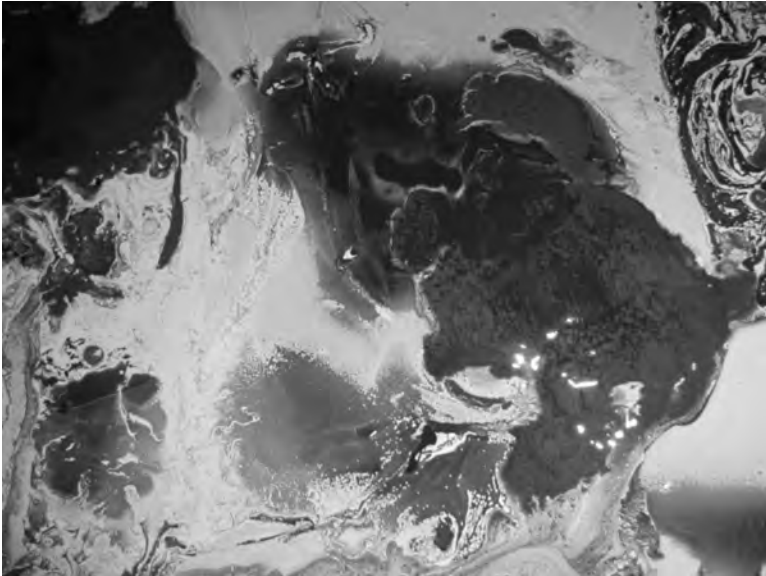
Framing the discussion in the above way, the crux of the matter is that the subject, the mind or even the computer, is set over and against the object, the cat, the electron, or the mind of some other person. It seems appropriate to say that I can know my own feelings and thoughts, but that I have no way to know, e.g., whether earthworms feel pain when they are impaled on a fish hook.



A spider is identified when the two parts of a hollow image of its outer surface can surround it closely.
 (See page 83 for an example from nature.)

Implicit in the framework used in ordinary thought in the West is the idea that the Universe is constituted of discrete components. The boy is one thing, and his dog is another thing. It would be offensive to most people to assert that they are divisible only in thought. Their births are separated by a decade in time. They do not share parents. Any links of common causation that account for their biological natures must be far remote in time, almost as far back as the time when mammals diverged from non-mammals. One thing that should give pause for thought is that those con-

nections are real even though they are temporally separated. How does a juncture that occurs at time t , but involves things that are separated by space at time $t + 1$, differ from a juncture that is present at $x = 0$, $y = 0$ but is replaced by a gap in space anywhere that $y \neq 0$? Even if it be stipulated that "things cease to exist as time changes," the physical interactions that occurred in the past carry their impulses forward into their future and down to the present time. People do not spring into existence with no history of conception, gestation, birth, and subsequent development.



Bob Shanahan 2013

In this picture there is nothing but regions of different shades from black to white and yet people may see things in it.

The Daoists do not begin by assuming that the Universe is composed of discrete entities. They have the opposite assumption, that the Universe is a continuum. In the *Dao De Jing*, translated by Arthur Waley

as *The Way and its Power*, the Universe as a continuum is represented by what Waley translates as "the Uncarved Block." This continuum is ruptured by humans. Doing so is called 制 zhì, which is defined as 切割 qiē gē, cutting apart. In chapter twenty-eight of the *Dao De Jing*, it says, "When the Uncarved Block is sundered then there will be utensils (i.e., usable things) [But] the greatest fabrication (the greatest way of getting something that we can make use of) does not rend apart." In chapter thirty-two it says: "The Way is always nameless.... Once fabrication [of the Uncarved Block] commences, there are names. Names having been given, one should know enough to stop. It is by knowing when to stop that danger is avoided." So the Universe begins as a continuum, but (at least in human perception) it is cut apart into things that humans can use. After that point, humans may decide, e.g., to like dogs and to hate wolves.

When the primordial unity of the Universe is dispersed in human perception and established in thought as containing discrete components, it becomes possible for humans to make sense of parts of the Universe. However, things that are useful to human beings get involved with desires, other subjective motivations, and even selfishness. Subjective motivations can bias human thinking and produce harmful results. so chapter nineteen advises us to "Embrace the Uncarved Block, [and] diminish selfishness and desires." One should become capable of putting aside all prior fabrications and of going back to the originally perceived Dao in its unaltered state.

The so-called parts of the Universe are naively understood by non-Daoists to be originally-present discrete entities with the "real" characteristics that, according

to the Daoists, human fabrication (制 zhì) has decreed for them. Often, treating things as discrete entities will lay traps at the same time that it presents advantages. Humans learned to perceive wolves as enemies and "evil" long before they learned to see them as integral parts of the ecology. Therefore, in chapter thirty-two, it says: "Once fabrication [of the Uncarved Block] commences, there are names. Names having been given, one should know enough to stop. It is by knowing when to stop that danger is avoided." It may provide great benefits to humans to separate the wolves from other members of the animal kingdom, and even to take appropriate steps to deal with their ordinary behavior, but it can be counterproductive to go beyond that stage and say that wolves are evil just because they have interests that sometimes conflict with those of humans. The source of trouble for humans is often that they have been raised in communities that conceptualize themselves and others in ways that may distort reality and may be very harmful to all concerned.

The central aim of Daoism is to give humans a methodology for avoiding harmful or counter-productive actions. The *Dao De Jing* is one of the most intensely political of books, yet it has been parodied as a school of 清靜無為 qīng jìng wú wéi "purity, tranquility, and doing nothing." However, study of the book chapter by chapter shows that it is concerned with how humans can conduct themselves to get desirable results, and those good results include a society that is beneficial to its members. The author continually brings up the ways in which humans trip themselves up.

The beginning of the *Dao De Jing* sets up the main premises for the Daoist view of reality, but perhaps its

rhetorical power has stunned most readers, preventing them from absorbing all of its implications.

Chapter one establishes that human perception of the Universe has two aspects and argues that it is a practical necessity to master the use of both of them. The chapter is constructed by pairing lines of text, the first part of each pair says something about the Universe as a continuum, untainted by the somewhat arbitrary constructs employed by human beings, and the second part of each pair describes the Universe as it is seen under the dissecting microscope of human intelligence. To comprehend what is available to the first mode of human perception would be like drinking the ocean. To rely exclusively on what is available to the second mode of human perception would be like trying to get a comprehensive understanding of the ocean by examining it cupful by cupful.

The first pair of lines mentions the 道 Dao, and contrasts it with 名 míng, names. For "names" we might substitute "concepts," because there is nothing to a name without some kind of a definition for the referent of that name. The Dao is mysterious, beyond our everyday experience, deep and obscure. Names are some of the first things that we learn from our parents. They are so familiar and seem so obvious to us that a major step in learning a second language is putting the old system of names aside, stopping our attempts to translate in the midst of a conversation, and beginning to operate in a new system of names. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis³⁹² deals with the differences in concepts that may lurk behind superficially synonymous words in different languages. It suggests that many human disasters or lesser failures spring from using a set of concepts that proves misleading.

The second pair of lines at the beginning of the *Dao De Jing* contrasts embryos with mammary glands, i.e., embryonic beginnings with mothers. The embryonic beginnings are deeply hidden and beyond our everyday perception. The mammary glands are highly visible and were the object of tactile experience by every infant of Lao Zi's time. The embryonic beginnings are "nameless" because there is no experience available for us to attempt to conceptualize. The "mother of the myriad creatures" is analogous to mammary glands, and so it is easily conceptualized and easily given a name. Problems may arise when some easy conceptualization is erroneous. The correct mnemonic for distinguishing venomous coral snakes from harmless Louisiana milk snakes and scarlet king snakes is: "Red on yellow, kill a fellow. Red on black, venom lack." Get things turned around and the reality of the coral snake may visit its power on anyone who has become confused about the characterization. People sometimes misremember the rule as, "~~Red on yellow,~~ friendly fellow."

The third pair of lines contrasts 妙 miào (ineffable efficacy) with 徼 jiào (fringes, and therefore the outer aspect of the things in our experience). The Dao and the embryonic both exhibit ineffable efficacy. They act, they cause things to come into being, but we can never catch them at it. The names and the mammaries are only the fringes, the outer aspects of things that do whatever they may do in plain sight but without letting us see their inner workings.

The three sets of counterparts are introduced by Lao zi so that he can indicate that they are complementary views of our Universe, and we must use the noumenal side and the phenomenal side at different times.

The author(s) of the *Lao Zi* thought it important for humans to use both modes of perception and thus to take account both of the invisible pattern and process of the entire Universe, the embryonic sources of everything, and the ineffable efficacies, and also to take account of what can be conceptualized, what is perceptible and nurturing, and what is available to ordinary perception. Therefore, the first chapter asserts that humans should make themselves be without desires (or any other subjective motivations) in order to observe the ineffable efficacies of the Universe, and that they should restore the conditions under which they can feel subjective motivations and feelings in order to observe the outer fringes, the phenomenal aspects of the things of ordinary human experience.

Review of the general analysis supplied by the Daoists may serve to demystify the above doctrine: Humans start by perceiving a continuum and learn to impose boundaries on regions of that continuum, an activity that can vastly improve survival probability but that can also become counterproductive. Even in adult life humans sometimes have yet to learn to separate certain things from the background of their experience. Beginning beekeepers must learn to spread their attention beyond individual bees in order to be able to pull the pattern of a queen bee surrounded by a circle of attendant bees out from the chaotic-looking background of bees moving everywhere on the comb while doing their daily tasks. The ability to distinguish well-camouflaged animals from their background may never have been important to some individual before moving to an area populated by a highly venomous snake species. New patterns to learn may appear at any time.

Once the activity of separating figures from backgrounds has begun, it is almost inevitable that some figures will be highly valued and other figures will receive highly negative evaluations. Sometimes the conceptualizations one makes may be problematical, e.g., by mistakenly putting zebras and horses into a single category, or by separating humans of one skin color from humans of another skin color. The human who enters a corral containing a zebra with the intention of putting a saddle and bridle on it and riding it will be lucky to have things end well. The human who is in danger of dying but will not ask for help from somebody of the "wrong color" will likely fail to survive.

When humans realize that they have learned to misconceptualize the Universe, and that they are bound up by a complex of interlocking ideas, then, if they are perceptive they may also come to understand that they have lost a significant degree of autonomy.

When conceptualizations are inappropriate, when constructions that cannot hold up under close inspection are imposed on sense data, humans need to be able to revise their concepts. However, concepts are often firmly attached to value systems. How one feels about oneself may be firmly attached to a problematical set of concepts. Changing the problematical set of concepts may threaten one's feeling of self esteem.

Were somebody to realize that he or she is a bigot, or had some other problematical preconceptions or prejudices, the *Dao De Jing* suggests a cure. It indicates that one can leave the system of conceptions that one has grown into and once again see the Universe without using concepts and language. From that standpoint one may make one more attempt to fabri-

cate a useful way of separating the Universe into notionally simple entities that one can work with.

Names and concepts are provisional, and, when circumstances change, names can become sufficiently inappropriate to cause problems. Then they need to be overthrown. Names apply to the myriad creatures, and those myriad creatures are in a way the product of the creative powers of the human mind. But humans are not compelled to accept and retain any name, any concept, or any prejudice. There is a way to move from the world of names and phenomena to what we call the Dao.

As noted above, the first chapter of the *Dao De Jing* indicates that humans should make themselves be without desires (or any other subjective motivations) in order to observe the ineffable efficacies of the Universe, and that they should also be able to recover the conditions under which they felt subjective motivations and feelings in order to observe the outer fringes, the phenomenal aspects of the things of ordinary human experience. During ordinary times, humans will keep themselves in the state wherein they feel desires and other subjective motivations, but when they need to dispense with old concepts and form more appropriate ones, they must put values, emotions, and all such subjective factors aside.

The *Dao De Jing* provides an analogy that may be helpful for understanding how the Daoists understood perception. The Uncarved Block is like an ordinary piece of wood from which people might decide to cut figures. Given a beautiful piece of wood, one person might look at its grain and coloration and carve a bear out of it. Another person, given the same piece of

wood, might make part of it into a seated man. Both figures might share some of the same wood. Shown the same piece of marble, one sculptor might see the form of Athena within, and another may descry the shape of Mars.

The *Dao De Jing*, chapter 28, speaks of the recovery and maintenance of virtue and power as being facilitated by the mind's being returned to an awareness of the Un-carved Block. It adds that when the Un-carved Block is "dispersed," then things of utility are made out of it. It continues to say that a great act of fabrication does not involve any cutting. One interpretation of this passage says that the mind reaches out to the undifferentiated esthetic continuum that is the face that the Universe presents to humans and uses its creative ability to mentally carve out classes of things such as mice, moose, and mastodons. As he demonstrates in his discussion of the butcher who never needs to sharpen his knife, even if a steer is a single entity with no discontinuities in its makeup, there are nonetheless differences among the *quale* that pertain to different volumes within it, and one who has an acute awareness of the steer can guide his knife between the hard parts that we call bones. (See page 214.)

In the *Dao De Jing*, chapter 32, the idea of the Un-carved Block is again brought into connection with fabrication, names that are attached to the things that are identified by conceptualization, and (by implication) emotions and other subjective reactions. That chapter says:

The Way is always nameless. Although the Uncarved Block is (small =) unobtrusive, there is nothing in all under Heaven that can subordinate it. Lords and kings, if able to preserve it, will [draw in] the myriad creatures as clients, and Heaven will cleave to Earth in order to let fall the sweet dew, so, without the people giving any command, it is equitably self [distributed].

Once fabrication [of the Uncarved Block] commences, there are names. Names having been given, one should know enough to stop. It is by knowing when to stop that danger is avoided.

All [creatures] under Heaven resort to the Way just as the streams and valleys pass [their contents] on to the great rivers and eventually to the sea.

In chapter 37, awareness of the Uncarved Block is tied to being without desire (or other subjective reactions). In chapter 57, the connection is reaffirmed in pragmatic terms. Those chapters are as follows:

The Way is always without ado and yet there is nothing it fails to do. If

the nobles and kings could manage to preserve it, then the myriad creatures would transform by themselves. Should they transform and yet desire arise anew, I would suppress it by means of the nameless Uncarved Block. [By means of] the nameless Uncarved Block, [they] will in future be without desire. By desirelessness stilled, all beneath Heaven will in the future become settled on their own.

*

Use uprightness to regulate the nation. Use guile to wage war. Use not having things to do to take over the world. How do I know that things are this way? By **This**.

When the world is burdened with many taboos, the people become ever more impoverished. When the ordinary people have many sharp weapons, the nation will be increasingly benighted. When human beings are widely clever and ingenious, anomalous creatures will burgeon and flourish. When laws and commandments gain growing resplen-

dence, then robbers and thieves will proliferate.

Meditation

The second chapter of the *Zhuang Zi* begins with the story of a teacher who is "sitting in forgetfulness" and who says that before his student intruded he had lost his self. How can one lose one's self? If the teacher tells the student, "Lose your self!" that is not at all the same as saying: "Get lost!" It directs the student to put aside awareness of self. In the *Dao De Jing*, chapter thirteen, it says:

The reason that I can experience great suffering is that I have a self. At the point that I cease to have a self, what suffering could I experience?

To put aside the self involves learning to direct one's mind to put certain ordinary processes in an inactive mode. In ordinary physical education all directions one gives to one's body involve exerting muscular force, and relaxation is left to occur naturally when exertion is no longer required.

It is easier to learn to relax muscles on command than it is to learn to "relax" mental operations such as internal discourse on command. Therefore it is most beneficial to learn hatha yoga (the part of yoga that has to do with various postures and movements from posture to posture, relaxation, balance, etc.) first. The same kind of control, the same ability to mentally direct any muscle to relax, can be learned from a teacher of the Alexander Method. Once one has learned to direct a muscle to stop spasming, one can begin to transfer application of that way of directing oneself to one's mind. One can direct oneself to temporarily cease internal discourse, for instance.

The most direct and efficient method to learn the relaxation command is to work with a partner. Let one member of the partnership lie supine and the other kneel by the outstretched feet and hands and the head in turn. Start by having the first partner raise a leg about a foot above the floor and make all of the muscles in that leg as tense as possible. Then the second partner issues an agreed-upon command such as: "Release!" At that point the first partner is to let the raised leg drop freely, and the second partner is to catch it in cupped palms reinforcing each other. The second partner is to judge whether the foot fell freely, or whether the

first partner tried to let it down more slowly by using muscular force to impede its falling acceleration. It is the whole point of the exercise that no resistance to falling be exerted. It is easy enough to let a foot or a hand fall freely even if one is lying on a carpet and there is nobody there to catch it. It is very difficult to let the head fall freely because our instincts are naturally to protect the brain from damage. Both team members need to practice until they can let their head fall without resistance. Don't let it down easy!

By working with a partner one can learn in a few half-hour sessions to give a "release" direction to any muscle to absolutely relax. (This skill must be practiced to keep up the ability. It is a very useful skill to have on a long drive when one suddenly finds a leg starting to get a cramp.) Before long the ability to relax any muscle can become so well internalized that just the unspoken intention to have it relax will be sufficient. If one wants it to relax it will relax when one directs attention to it with that intention just as one's hand will fly up to smack a mosquito immediately upon one's attention being directed toward the sensation of being bitten.

When one knows how to tell a cramp to go away it is relatively easy to tell an intrusive

thought to go away, to put internal discourse on hold, etc.

When one begins to spar one will be able to effectively direct the body to relax, to direct oneself to disattend to jeers from the crowd, to direct one's internal discourse to cease and desist, and one will begin to be able to let a block initiate itself without one's thinking about it, and to let a strike initiate itself just as Herrigel's arrows began to fire themselves.

When one's mind is no longer sticking on things (see "sword sticking"), one will be better able to see that the kick that was initiated by one's opponent advancing the left foot will actually be delivered by the right foot. One will be better able to see that attacker, having brought both one's hands up to block head punches, is now following up with a side-thrust kick. One will see what is happening now, not what one thought was going to happen a moment ago.

When one's ego has been put on hold one will be better able to see that the gleam in one's "attacker's" eye is mischievous, and the smile in a "helpful stranger's" lips is not matched by smiling eyes.

Total situational awareness is an ideal; the fact is that factors in any battlefield, large or small, can disappear from view. A good strategist like General Erwin Rommel in World War II can keep a fluid model of a battlefield in the unconscious that extrapolates the positions of forces that have disappeared in the fog of war. Out of sight must never be out of mind. The well-prepared mind keeps a running projection of where the missing contingents of an opponent's forces might be. If a contingent of an enemy army disappeared behind a ridge paralleling our army's direction of movement, how far ahead or behind us might they be by now? This map must be updated upon any new information being received from scouts or other reporters.

Such a map must not be biased by the general's subjective judgments. Rommel could not afford to think, e.g., "Montgomery is a timid general and would not dare execute such a move." Subjectivity cannot exist when one is in the "no mind" state. Learning to build and maintain an objective map, and learning to keep it updated as new data comes in, is not an easy task. It requires long practice.

If I have no ego I will not be motivated to put somebody else down for the sake of making myself appear exalted. As the sage of Gauden-

zia said: "When you're looking good, you're looking bad."

I am nothing. I know nothing. If I am lucky and prepared I see what is before me in all its context. If I am well prepared by play fighting with my friends I will see openings and balances and myself and my opponent as one quasi-thing that can be under my direction because I hold the center. If something untoward happens I will immediately be in combat mode with all distracting mental processes put on hold, with total situational awareness, with full attention to a situation that may be perilous or may just be a random glitch in somebody else's movements or perhaps one person who has been pushed into one's path by a third individual.

I grow in response to my environment. To the extent that I keep my mirror clean I will adapt to my environment through maturation. To keep my sensorium pure I must put aside all elements of desire and emotional reactions.