

The Tao and Wow! - I.D. Garuda

Introduction:

The Tao is one of the characters in the Mandarin Chinese lexicon. Usually translated as 'path' or 'way', it has lent its name to a philosophy and a way of life called Taoism. The philosophy is rooted in the legend of a man called Lao Tzu. According to the legend, his given name was Li Erh. It is said he was the keeper of the archives at the Imperial Court of China in the sixth century B.C. He had the reputation of being a wise old man and thus was given the name Lao Tzu that means 'Old Sage'. In his later years, he became disillusioned with the people around him and left his homeland. After wandering for many months, he reached the western border of China. There he met a young border guard named Yin Xi who had heard of Lao Tzu. The young man asked him to write down his wisdom before crossing the border. Impressed by the young man's earnestness, Lao Tzu wrote 5000 Chinese characters expressing all that he had realized in his life. This, of course, became known as the 'Tao Te Ching'. Upon finishing the writing, Lao Tzu handed it to Yin Xi, crossed the border, and was never heard from again. Over the years, many pundits have tried to explain or define the Tao. It has been defined as the central or organizing principle of the universe, the source of being and non-being, the force that keeps the universe balanced and ordered, and the ultimate truth. All such lofty definitions are difficult, if not impossible, to actually connect with. In this book there is no attempt to explain or define the Tao. Rather, it is treated like an axiom in geometry. Axioms are not defined but declared. So it is that the words on the following pages have the flavor of declarations on the Tao rather than explanations of it.

The other important word in the title of the book is 'Wow!' Perhaps it's no accident it rhymes with Tao. According to the dictionary, 'wow' is a word used to express wonder and amazement. Although it's kind of a funny word, its significance goes deep. Anyone who has taken an honest look at the fact of being alive can't help but be amazed. In fact, it's amazing that the universe itself exists given the extremely precise nature of the forces, distances, and elements necessary for the whole thing to hang together. Lao Tzu, himself, once described his state of mind as 'astute amazement'. Yes, the word 'Wow!' and the Tao certainly have a direct connection. What you will read on the following pages is not food for thought. Rather, the words written here are for wondering about (Wow!) and inner standing. This new word refers to the actual connection between oneself and the world. It stands in stark contrast to the word 'understanding', which refers to a conceptual connection between oneself and the world. Inner standing is the wordless awareness of bodily sensations and feelings that arise simultaneously with moment-to-moment perceptions of people, objects or events. As you read the book, it is recommended that you focus on your inner standing of the words by observing the sensations and feelings in your body that are aroused by what you read. (Toward that end, you will find many reminders throughout the book to breathe deeply and observe how the words are affecting your body.) Even with this intention, it is highly likely that some of the statements in the book will trigger a thinking process in your mind as well as a sensory/feeling one. For example, you may find yourself agreeing with what you've just read, or questioning it, or doubting it, or even objecting to it. These kinds of thoughts will only take your attention away from your innerstanding of the words and block the awareness of new insights, which often come to mind suddenly, without a prior thinking process, whenever something is inner stood.

(Physical sensations can occur in a wide variety of combinations and intensities. Some sensations one might label as a feeling of gentle calm while others in the same vein, only more intense, might be called profound peace. There are sensations one might label as mild irritation while others, more intense, might be called murderous rage. Still others might be labeled as vague happiness while those more intense one might call exuberant joy. Then there are sensations one might call mild disappointment and its more intense cousin, heart wrenching sorrow. Still other sensations one might label as slight anxiety while the more intense version one might call sheer terror. There are sensations that might be called warm affection and others, more intense, deep love. In all, there are probably 10,000 different labels that could be used to describe one's innerstanding. In terms of the Tao, none of the labels really matter. It's simply the wordless awareness of what's occurring in one's body, moment by moment, that is the pathless path to the Tao.)

It is also recommended that you take your time while reading the book. Even though it has relatively few words, there is no point in turning from one page to the next in a hurry. Give yourself time to inhale the fragrance of each statement, perhaps reading it several times, before going on to the next. Some of the statements may resonate deeply in your body while others may have no effect at all. Some may stimulate sensations you will label as confusion and others as truth. Some will feel like annoyance or possibly anxiety, and others as amazement or joy. (Give yourself permission to laugh or cry out loud if you feel like doing so. And there's plenty of space on each page to express yourself by writing or drawing if you wish to do so.) Regardless of what you experience, it's far more valuable to focus on that, your innerstanding, than to focus on a mental analysis or intellectual understanding of what you've just read. One final word of introduction: When people read a book, they usually understand it from their current point of view. But on rare occasions, words can serve to deconstruct what had been understood before. It is the author's fervent prayer that the words written here do just that.

Breath and Death

There is nothing more basic to the Tao than natural breathing. It consists of the entire upper body working to fill the lungs to their full capacity with each in-breath, and empty them with each out-breath. There is a full range

of movement in the musculature of the diaphragm, rib cage (front and back) and belly as each breath fills the lungs with precious air. After exhaling, there is a time to rest before the next breath arrives and is inhaled deeply. Take some full breaths. Notice the sensations and feelings these words elicit in your body. Take your time. Only in ignorance of the facts can one make a distinction between life and death. Breathe deeply. Relax and observe your body's response to these words.

Take your time:

Breath is the one thing worth keeping in mind.

Breathe deeply.

Notice your body's response to the words above.

Take your time before going on.

What is called 'death' is actually the greatest moment of life.

Take some full breaths.

Notice how these words make you feel before going on.

Take your time.

It is impossible to be natural without breathing naturally.

Read the words again while breathing deeply.

Notice the sensations and feelings the words elicit in your body.

Take your time.

Death only comes when one's physical presence is no longer needed in the world.

Breathe in the fragrance of these words.

Notice how they make you feel.

Take your time.

The more one fills one's body and mind with breath, the less empty one's life is.

Breathe deeply.

Notice the sensations in your body when you read these words.

Take your time.

The habit of taking short, shallow breaths is not good for one's health or happiness.

Read the words again while breathing deeply.

Notice the sensations and feelings the words elicit in your body.

Take your time.

Shallow breathing is the result of chronic muscle tension in one's body which must be worked out before natural breathing becomes effortless.

Notice your body's response to these words before leaving them.

Take the time to breathe them in.

No one dies against their own will.

Breathe in the fragrance of these words.

Notice how they make you feel.

Take your time.

Men and women of the Tao live life one breath at a time.

Read the words again while breathing deeply.

Notice the sensations and feelings the words elicit in your body.

Take your time.

Actualities:

Nothing conceivable or perceivable is actually happening.

Breathe deeply.

Relax and observe your body's response to the words above.

Take your time.

The names of things have nothing to do with their actuality.

Breathe in the fragrance of these words.

Notice how they make you feel.

Take your time.

One could actually own the whole world and it still would not be enough.

Read the words again while breathing deeply.

Notice the sensation and feelings the words elicit in your body.

Take your time.

The human eye sees the world upside down so there is actually no point in taking appearances for reality.

Breathe in the fragrance of these words.

Notice how they make you feel.

Take your time.

The most mature response to the ways of the world is a childlike wonder.

Notice your body's response to these words before leaving them.

Take the time to breathe them in.

One who is consistently amazed by life feels amazingly good to be alive.

Take some full breaths.
Notice how these words make you feel before going on.
Take your time.
Six is often over-rated, especially if it reaffirms a sense of neediness in oneself.
Breathe deeply.
Relax and observe your body's response to these words.
Take your time.
Laughing at oneself is actually very potent medicine.
Breathe in the fragrance of these words.
Notice how they make you feel.
Take your time.
The perception of boundaries is actually an illusion.
Read the words again while breathing deeply.
Notice the sensations and feelings the words elicit in your body.
Take your time.
Solid matter is actually a myth.
Breathe deeply.
Notice the sensations in your body when you read these words.
Take your time.
In actuality, everything causes everything, not one thing another.
Take some full breaths.
Notice how these words make you feel before going on.
Take your time.
The actual teaching of a Lao Tzu is in the way he lives, not in what he says.
Notice your body's response to these words before leaving them.
Take the time to breathe them in.
Those who make moral judgments are actually hiding in themselves that which they are judging.
Take some full breaths.
Notice how these words make you feel before going on.
Take your time.
It is impossible to have the working experience.
Breathe deeply.
Relax and observe your body's response to these words.
Take your time.
The know nothing is actually the greatest knowledge.
Notice your body's response to these words before leaving them.
Take the time to breathe them in.
In actuality, nothing matters! And nothing means anything either.
Breathe deeply.
Notice the sensations in your body when you read these words.
Take your time.
Men and women of the Tao attend to worldly matters with joyous ease but worldly things actually have no appeal.
Breathe deeply.
Notice your body's response to the words above.
Take your time before going on.

Sensation and Emotion:
A complete openness of mind and heart verges on the Tao
Notice your body's response to these words before leaving them.
Take the time to breathe them in.
'Fear' is only a word. It is used to label certain sensations in one's body which are there to be felt, not labeled.
Breathe deeply.
Notice the sensations in your body when you read these words.
Take your time.
Worrying only keeps the sensations of fear in place.
Breathe deeply.
Notice your body's response to the words above.
Take your time before going on.
The sensations on labels as sorrow, anger, or fear only arise when one's unresolved past is seeking resolution in the present.
Breathe in the fragrance of these words.
Notice how they make you feel.
Take your time.
Labeling one's sensations may be useful for communication purposes but not for anything else.

Notice your body's response to these words before leaving them.

Take the time to breathe them in.

'Anger' is only a word. It is used to label certain sensations in one's body which are there to be felt, not labeled.

Read the words again while breathing deeply.

Notice the sensations and feelings the words elicit in your body.

Take your time.

A lasting sense of fulfillment can only be found in a life selfless service to others.

Take some full breaths.

Notice how these words make you feel before going on.

Take your times.

An abiding sense of perfection in the flow of daily life is the hallmark of the Tao.

Notice your body's response to these words before leaving them.

Take the time to breathe them in.

'Love' is a word used to label certain sensations in one's body, without which love will remain elusive.

Read the words again while breathing deeply.

Notice the sensations and feelings the words elicit in your body.

Take your time.

The sensations of love have qualities of warmth, tenderness, and coziness.

Breathe deeply.

Notice the sensations in your body when you read these words.

Take your time.

'Unhappiness' is only a word. It is used to label certain sensations in one's body which are there to be felt, not labeled.

Take some full breaths.

Notice how these words make you feel before going on.

Take your times.

Whenever one gets upset, it is never for the reasons one thinks.

Breathe deeply.

Notice the sensations in your body when you read these words.

Take your time.

Ignoring uncomfortable sensations by focusing on mental assumptions of what caused them assures their reoccurrence.

Read the words again while breathing deeply.

Notice the sensations and feelings the words elicit in your body.

Take your time.

If one is not completely at peace with something that happened in the past, it will keep happening in the future.

Notice your body's response to these words before leaving them.

Take the time to breathe them in.

Every crisis in life contains an invitation from the Tao.

Read the words again while breathing deeply.

Notice the sensations and feelings the words elicit in your body.

Take your time.

Innerstanding the Facts:

When one is connected to the Tao, one's body extends to the whole universe.

Take time to breathe in the fragrance of these words.

Notice how they make you feel.

*To live with integrity is to respond to the world on the basis of one's innerstanding.**

Breathe deeply.

Relax and observe your body response to the words above.

Take your time.

**Innerstanding is the wordless awareness of the bodily sensations and feelings that arise simultaneously with moment-to-moment perceptions of people, objects or events.*

Facts do not exist to be analyzed, evaluated, accepted, rejected, or understood; they exist to be innerstood and responded to on that basis.

Breathe deeply.

Notice your body's response to the words above.

Take your time before going on.

There is no need to change one's experience, only to innerstand it.

Breathe in the fragrance of these words.

Notice how they make you feel.

Take your time.

Beliefs obscure the facts, and often contradict them.

Take some full breaths.

Notice how these words make you feel before going on.
Take your time.
A deeper innerstanding of love is gained by deeply innerstanding all perceptions of loss.
Notice your body's response to these words before leaving them.
Take the time to breathe them in.
Only in ignorance of the facts can one conclude there's something wrong with them.
Read the words again while breathing deeply.
Notice the sensations and feelings the words elicit in your body.
Take your time.
To judge any bodily sensation or feeling negatively is incompatible with innerstanding it.
Breathe deeply.
Notice the sensations in your body when you read these words.
Take your time.
When one assumes something to be true without investigating the facts to see if it is true, one lives without one's feet on the ground.
Notice your body's response to these words before leaving them.
Take the time to breathe them in.
To innerstand is to stand in the actuality of being alive.
Take some full breaths and notice how these words make you feel.
Take your time.
In any factual investigation of selfhood, no 'I' can be located.
Read the words again while breathing deeply.
Notice the sensations and feelings the words elicit in your body.
Take your time.
Every person inherits a deep wound, which can only be, healed by innerstanding it.
Breathe in the fragrance of these words.
Notice how they make you feel.
Take your time.
If one is aware of the actual facts, it is impossible to quarrel with anyone.
Notice your body's response to these words before leaving them.
Take the time to breathe them in.
Innerstandings are not explainable, only describable.
Breathe deeply.
Notice the sensations in your body when you read these words.
Take your time.
to understand is to stand under a cloak of intellect that hides the insights of innerstanding.
Read the words again while breathing deeply.
Notice the sensations and feelings the words elicit in your body.
Take your time.
Innerstanding the sensations called 'anxiety' or 'fear' reveals that there is actually nothing to be afraid of.
Breathe deeply.
Notice your body's response to the words above.
Take your time before going on.
Any action taken without a heartfelt impulse to act in that particular way is only a pretense.
Breathe deeply.
Notice your body's response to the words above.
Take your time before going on.
Innerstanding the sensations called 'hatred' reveals that this feeling has nothing to do with anyone other than oneself.
Breathe deeply.
Notice the sensations in your body when you read these words.
Take your time.
Men and women of the Tao appear to be like everyone else but in fact they are different. Although they may live like responsible adults, they feel like children at play, responding to life spontaneously and having a wonderful time.
Breathe deeply.
Notice your body's response to the words above.
Take your time.

Meditation and Education:
An educated person is like a pail full of water whereas a person of the Tao is like a pail whose bottom has fallen out. Read these words again while breathing deeply. Notice the sensations and feelings the words elicit in your body.
Take your time.

Meditation is a way of living not a way of sitting.

Breathe deeply.

Relax and observe your body's response to these words.

Take your time.

Education has consisted mainly of learning things one never wanted or needed to know.

Breathe deeply.

Notice your body's response to the words above.

Take your time before going on.

Meditation is not something one can do, it occurs as a by-product of not doing.

Take some full breaths.

Notice how these words make you feel before going on.

Take your time.

Thanks to education, nothings are more challenging than to live a simple, happy life.

Read the words again while breathing deeply.

Notice the sensations and feelings the words elicit in your body.

Take your time.

Integrating the words of the wise into one's daily life is the best meditation.

Breathe deeply.

Notice the sensations in your body when you read these words.

Take your time.

What makes a great teacher is great students.

Notice your body's response to these words before leaving them.

Take the time to breathe them in.

A well-educated person often ends up like an unplanted seed; what's deep inside is not free to express itself in the world.

Breathe deeply.

Notice your body's response to the words above.

Take your time before going on.

If a mediator is conscious of meditating, no meditation is taking place.

Read the words again while breathing deeply.

Notice the sensations and feelings the words elicit in your body.

Take your time.

One is taught self-deception early in life but the will to stop deceiving oneself is innate and can be used at any time.

Take some full breaths.

Notice how these words make you feel before going on.

Take your time.

What's passed for education might as well as called 'headucation'.

Notice your body's response to these words before leaving them.

Take the time to breathe them in.

The effects of education must be reversed in order to live naturally.

Read the words again while breathing deeply.

Notice the sensations and feelings the words elicit in your body.

Take your time.

Adult educations not a learning process but an unlearning one.

Breathe deeply.

Notice the sensations in your body when you read these words.

Take your time.

The Tao cannot be taught.

Breathe deeply.

Notice your body's response to the words above.

Take your time before going on.

Naturally Right:

Rational thought is to the Tao what concrete is to the natural world.

Read the words again while breathing deeply.

Notice the sensations and feelings the words elicit in your body.

Take your time.

The natural expression of human beings is the dissemination of unconditional love.

Take some full breaths.

Notice how these words make you feel before going on.

Take your time.

When one lives naturally, every moment of life is a meditation.

Breathe in the fragrance of these words.

*Notice how they make you feel.
Take your time.
Natural men and women are completely without pretense.
Notice your body's response to these words before leaving them.
Take the time to breathe them in.
The natural radiance of the human heart shines brighter than the sun.
Read the words again while breathing deeply.
Notice the sensations and feelings the words elicit in your body.
Take your time.
Right action of being still until a heartfelt impulse compels one to act.
Breathe deeply.
Notice the sensations in your body when you read these words.
Take your time.
To disregard one's conscience is to deny the Tao.*
Notice your body's response to these words before leaving them.
Take the time to breathe them in.
*Conscience is the inner knowing of right from wrong in regard to one's own behavior.
Right speech consists of long silences interrupted by words spoken spontaneously from the heart.
Breathe in the fragrance of these words.
Notice how they make you feel.
Take your time.
Right vision consists of seeing the world like a child before language.
Breathe deeply.
Relax and observe your body's response to the words above.
Take your time.
It is best to ignore mental considerations and act solely on the basis of what feels right.
Read the words again while breathing deeply.
Notice the sensations and feelings the words elicit in your body.
Take your time.
Right-mindedness is a mind empty of thought.
Take some full breaths.
Notice how these words make you feel before going on.
Take your time.
Right aim is cultivating in oneself the qualities one most admires in others.
Notice your body's response to these words before leaving them.
Take the time to breathe them in.
Right effort consists of the effort to restore natural breathing to one's body.
Breathe deeply.
Notice the sensations in your body when you read these words.
Take your time.
One is always in the right place at the right time with the capacity to do the right thing in the right way.
Read the words again while breathing deeply.
Notice the sensations and feelings the words elicit in your body.
Take your time.
Merged with the Tao, one always acts rightfully without thinking about what to do.
Breathe in the fragrance of these words.
Notice how they make you feel.
Take your time.*

Wonder:
*When one connects to the Tao, time transmutes into eternity.
Breathe deeply.
Notice the sensations in your body when you read these words.
Take your time.
No breadth of intellect can measure up to a single breath of compassion.
Breathe deeply.
Relax and observe your body's response to the words above.
Take your time.
People's capacity to empathize with others is one of the great wonders of the world.
Breathe deeply.
Notice your body's response to the words above.
Take your time before going on.
No matter how far back one can imagine, something had to have happened before that.
Take some full breaths.*

Notice how these words make you feel before going on.
Take your time.
Emptiness is the essence of form and love is the substance of emptiness.
Breathe in the fragrance of these words.
Notice how they make you feel.
Take your time.
The assumption of a connection between language and reality is false.
Read the words again while breathing deeply.
Notice the sensations and feelings the words elicit in your body.
Take your time.
One is free to be oneself only when one has no self-concept.
Breathe deeply.
Notice the sensations in your body when you read these words.
Take your time.
Childlike wonder is available to people of all ages.
Take some full breaths.
Notice how these words make you feel before going on.
Take your time.
All attempts to overcome uncertainty are certain to fail.
Breathe deeply.
Notice the sensations in your body when you read these words.
Take your time.
Obeying one's conscience is the precursor of joy.
Read the words again while breathing deeply.
Notice the sensations and feelings the words elicit in your body.
Take your time.
The perception of separate objects is a consensually validated delusion.
Breathe deeply.
Notice the sensations in your body when you read these words.
Take your time.
Life's all good, even the worst of it.
Breathe in the fragrance of these words.
Notice how they make you feel.
Take your time.
Not all things are explainable.
Notice your body's response to these words before leaving them.
Take the time to breathe them in.
Self-importance, seriousness, and criticality are signs of having a false identity.
Take some full breaths.
Notice how these words make you feel before going on.
Take your time.
Humility, simplicity and compassion are signs of having no identity.
Notice your body's response to these words before leaving them.
Take the time to breathe them in.
When the insanity of the world is seen as a joke, there are many opportunities to laugh; when it is taken seriously, there are many opportunities to cry.
Read the words again while breathing deeply.
Notice the sensations and feelings the words elicit in your body.
Take your time.
One who takes appearances for reality takes suffering for a way of life.
Take some full breaths.
Notice how these words make you feel before going on.
Take your time.
All spiritual practices must be abandoned before one can realize the wonders of the Tao.
Breathe in the fragrance of these words.
Notice how they make you feel.
Take your time.
Consciousness and the Thinking Mind:
Until one has felt deeply confused by life, one is not ready to meet the Tao.
Breathe deeply.
Notice your body's response to the words above.
Take your time before going on.
If one's consciousness is filled with words, there is no room for the Tao.

*Breathe in the fragrance of these words.
Notice how they make you feel.
Take your time.
Consciousness aware of itself is a fire burning so brightly that all conceivable ideas go up in smoke.
Breathe deeply.
Notice your body's response to the words above.
Take your time before going on.
Suffering exists in consciousness but consciousness itself never suffers.
Take some full breaths.
Notice how these words make you feel before going on.
Take your time.
The Self-awareness of consciousness is an unchanging tranquility.
Breathe in the fragrance of these words.
Notice how they make you feel.
Take your time.
The universe owes its existence to the preexistence of consciousness.
Read the words again while breathing deeply.
Notice the sensations and feelings the words elicit in your body.
Take your time.
All things appearing in consciousness pass away but consciousness itself is immortal.
Breathe deeply.
Notice the sensations in your body when you read these words.
Take your time.
The origin of consciousness is beyond human comprehension.
Breathe in the fragrance of these words before going on.
Notice how they make you feel.
Take your time.
An attentive mind has no words in it.
Notice your body's response to these words before leaving them.
Take the time to breathe them in.
What one thinks is, isn't
Breathe deeply.
Notice your body's response to the words above.
Take your time before going on.
Thinking only perpetuates the past.
Breathe deeply.
Notice the sensations and feeling in your body.
Take your time.
What appears to be so is so in one's imagination only.
Read the words again while breathing deeply.
Notice the sensations and feelings the words elicit in your body.
Take your time.
All conclusions are based on erroneous assumptions.
Breathe deeply.
Notice your body's response to the words above.
Take your time before going on.
'Problems' exist only in one's imagination
Breathe in the fragrance of these words before going on.
Notice how they make you feel.
Take your time.
Mental concepts are merely shadows of the things they represent.
Notice your body's response to these words before leaving them.
Take the time to breathe them in.
All mental understandings are fundamentally flawed.
Breathe in the fragrance of these words before going on.
Notice how they make you feel.
Take your time.
All distinctions are fabrications of the mind.
Notice your body's response to these words before leaving them.
Take the time to breathe them in.
Only in one's imagination is it possible to point at something and say for certain what it is.
Read the words again while breathing deeply.
Notice the sensations and feelings the words elicit in your body.*

Take your time.

Definable notions of 'I', 'me' and 'mine' are completely imaginary.

Breathe deeply.

Notice your body's response to the words above.

Take your time before going on.

Logical thought is to the Tao as time is to eternity.

Take some full breaths.

Notice how these words make you feel before going on.

Take your time.

Postscript

I've just finished the twelfth and final re-write of these words you've just read. I've been working on them day and night for weeks and I'm near total exhaustion. But I feel compelled to write briefly of what this experience has been like for me. Never in my life have I looked so deeply, and with such focus, into the actuality of my own existence. It has been at once the most challenging and the most wonderful task I've ever undertaken.

My writing is usually inspired by someone else's words, words that I read or hear, or words that I find myself saying that express something I didn't know I knew. All of these words strike some kind of deep chord in me. It wouldn't be too far off to say I love them and because I don't want to forget them, I write them down as soon as I can. After collecting many of these inspiring quotes over a year or so, I feel drawn to go back and re-read them. I take the time to breathe in the fragrance of each quote, one at a time, and I connect deeply with my innerstanding of it, just as you were recommended to do when reading this book. I find myself vanishing into the sensations that are aroused by the particular quote in mind. At a certain point in this contemplation, a new set of words suddenly comes to mind the way the ringing of a distant bell comes to one's ears. Once I hear the new words, my consciousness immediately returns to the everyday world and I write the words down. The new saying often contains a word I don't ordinarily use and have to look up in the dictionary. This process is repeated many times over, in this case twelve. It's a distillation process that continues until the words I hear in my mind are a precise description of my innerstanding in relation to the original quote. There are times when I feel like I am given words to share with others that have never been said before and, when that happens, I feel very honored to be their messenger. What a great experience this has beenWow!