Chapter 71. Method

“I only care for Dao, what’s that got to do with technique?”
臣之所好者道也，進乎技矣。
— attributed to Cook Ding

At the request of a friend, I thought I’d say a bit about our methods in making this book. In general, we proceed by analogy, by juxtaposition, latency, innuendo, jump cut, dialetheia and flirt. Like a sidewinder, like a Pisces. We like the language of cats and dogs. We also like the Wikipedia and don’t consider it infra dig.

By contrast, lawyers are poets who are asked to write in an unequivocally monovalent language, where hermeneuticians can’t get their claws in nor rhinos their horns. This is much harder than writing sonnets, and they don’t even get to rhyme. So we needn’t complain about how much money they earn.

All translations here have been done by us, unless otherwise noted. We tried to avoid the most famous poems, but most of them are spectacularly good, and a number have crept in. When we discover an obscure poem we like, we often find that Paul Kroll has already been there, and done a faultless job with it.

I had a friend in Maine named Al Gardner. He was very fat and a crackerjack martial artist. He told me the difference between ju-jitsu and judō. Both come from the same Japanese word ju, meaning “soft,” but the former refers to the manifold, largely unarmed arts of medieval Japan, their jitsu (jutsu) or techniques. Judō, however, was invented in 1882 as a way of life, a physical and moral cultivation, that is, as an attempt to turn these techniques into a dō or Dao, a Way. Al hated it.

So, with apologies to Cook Ding, we have to say we only like technique, we don’t actually care that much for Dao.