

NATURE QUEST ORACLE

Taoist Wisdom for Modern Times

BY THERESA HUTCH



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INTRODUCTION

SAMPLE

You are the entire universe in a nutshell. All of the elements: Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water are all found inside of you. With inspiration from the *Tao Te Ching*, *Nature Quest Oracle* invites you on a journey that holds keys to manifesting a life without struggle by living in harmony with nature. Mindfulness forms deeper connections and can be practiced with your daily waking breath. Let's find a way to make these connections to nature with a cup of tea in hand and sidewalks under our feet!

NATURE QUEST ORACLE & TAO TE CHING

The *Tao Te Ching*, or the *Book of the Way*, is a philosophical guide to life written by a wise sage named Lao Tzu. It is one of the most widely published books in the world. Parts of the Tao verses are found in this guidebook. Whether you are new to the Tao (pronounced dào), or the Way, or have been practicing with it for years, *Nature Quest Oracle* makes these wise teachings accessible and relevant to your daily life. It contains practical ways to find a moment of calm through light-hearted images, reflections and affirmations for each card.

The *Tao Te Ching* is a text with around 5,000 Chinese characters. There are many translations of the *Tao Te Ching* but what they have in common is that they are all divided into 81 numbered passages. The passages are short bold statements that can be experienced with your heart and help you live in the flow of nature in your everyday life.

Nature Quest Oracle is a unique deck of 50 cards created with traditional watercolor and collage techniques. The deck is divided into five sections corresponding to the five elements: Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water.

In this guidebook, the text that accompanies each card includes:

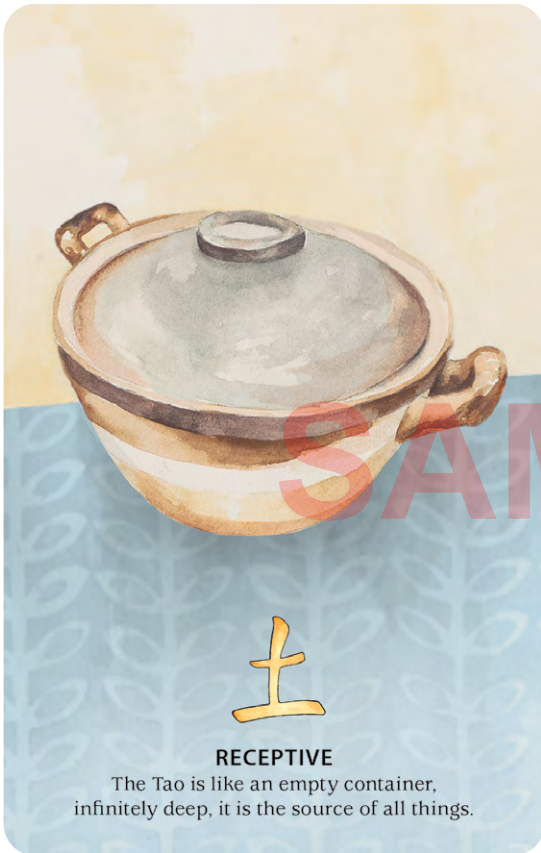
- Insights related to the card topic and a quote from an author or sage (from several religious and philosophical traditions)
- A numbered Tao verse
- Three items to reflect upon
- An affirmation

The source/reference information for the quotes and the translated Tao passages are listed on page 128.



WORKING WITH THE FIVE ELEMENTS

Think of the five elements as phases of nature rather than as solid unchanging substances. Matter is made of particles of energy that are always changing. The creation cycle illustrates how the five elements influence one another. Wood fuels and sustains Fire. Fire transforms Wood with its flame. Fire's ash generates Earth's soil. Earth contains Metal deep inside. Metal begets Water as Metal traps falling Water from its source. Water grows Wood and the cycle begins again.



RECEPTIVE

The Tao is like an empty container,
infinitely deep, it is the source of all things.

RECEPTIVE

This useful pot is only good because of the empty space within. When we sit in meditation we sense this open space. Ramana Maharshi recommends looking inside; “Happiness is your nature. It is not wrong to desire it. What is wrong is seeking it outside when it is inside.”

TAO #4

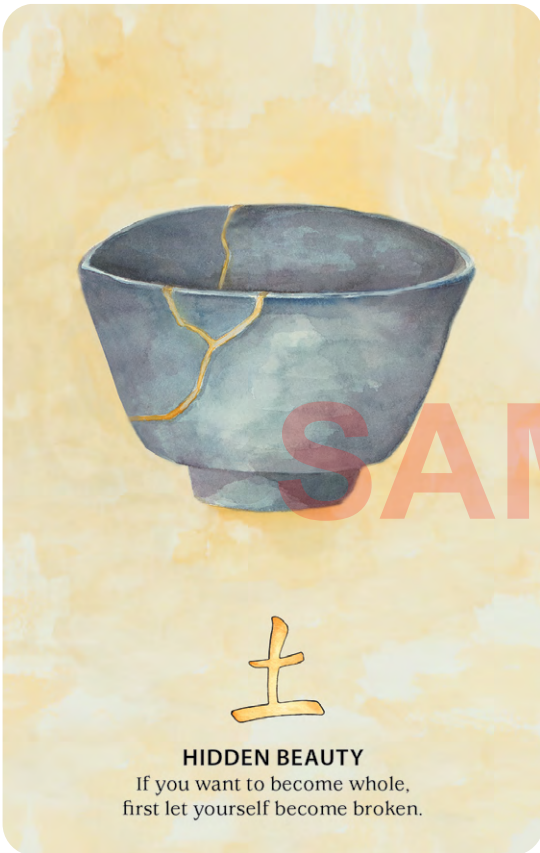
The Tao dulls the sharp, unties the knotted, shades the light, and unites all of creation.

REFLECTIONS

- Consider beliefs that may be limiting your experience.
- What is the laundromat of thoughts that repeat through your day?
- There is nowhere to go, nothing to do.

AFFIRMATION

I am not my thoughts. I am not my mind.



HIDDEN BEAUTY

If you want to become whole,
first let yourself become broken.

HIDDEN BEAUTY

Kintsugi is the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery by fixing it with lacquer dust or powdered gold. The result of this process is a new unique and beautiful form. Ramana Maharshi suggested, “Correcting oneself is correcting the whole world. The Sun is simply bright. It does not correct anyone. Because it shines, the whole world is full of light. Transforming yourself is a means of giving light to the whole world.”

TAO #22

If you want to become straight, first let yourself become twisted. If you want to become full, first let yourself become empty. If you want to become new, first let yourself become old.

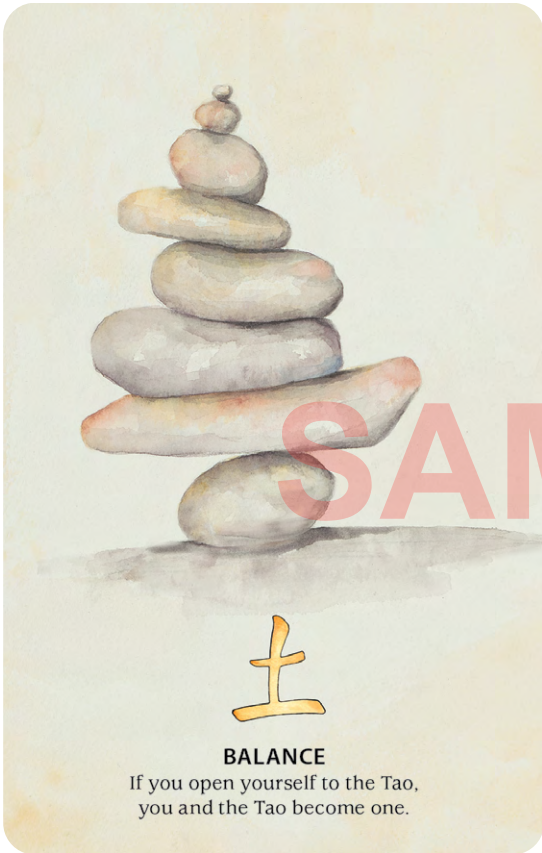
REFLECTIONS

- Notice the judging mind that tells you that you need to improve.
- It continues to mourn things that change and break.
- How would it feel to accept things as they are?

AFFIRMATION

Inhale: I allow things to come.

Exhale: I allow things to go.



BALANCE

If you open yourself to the Tao,
you and the Tao become one.

BALANCE

This stack of stones symbolizes a precarious balancing act that seems to lift up as much as it grounds down. Be in the world the way gravity works, without hesitation. Ramana Maharshi said, "Peace is your natural state. It is the mind that obstructs the natural state."

TAO #23

*When the gale blows, it will not last long;
when it rains hard, it lasts but a little while.*

REFLECTIONS

- Create space for being, and in this space the universe has room to flow.
- Feel yourself open.
- Notice your connection to the earth.

AFFIRMATION

I live a spontaneous life.



COEXIST

When we do things for others,
we get more than we need.

COEXIST

Once you know and respect yourself, it affects all beings around you. This water buffalo is comfortable in its own skin and doesn't think twice about helping out a local egret. The egret then eats the bugs, so both benefit. According to Ramana Maharshi, "Whatever is done lovingly, with righteous purity and with peace of mind, is a good action. Everything which is done with the stain of desire and with agitation filling the mind is classified as a bad action."

TAO #81

*The Tao of Heaven nourishes by not forcing.
The Tao of the wise acts by not competing.*

REFLECTIONS

- When we work together, our load is lighter.
- Is it hard for you to delegate tasks?
- Accept gifts with a pure spirit and a humble heart.

AFFIRMATION

Humility opens the doors to new opportunities.



BOUNTY

The way of the Tao is unpaved,
yet people like having a path.

BOUNTY

Snakes move through the world with confidence and grace, carving out their own paths. This snake reminds us to consider the gifts from the earth. The fear of not having enough can prevent us from seeing things as they are. Start with gratitude and make your next move from love. Ramana Maharshi concludes, “You are now thinking that you are the body and therefore confuse yourself with its birth and death. But you are not the body and you have no birth and death.”

TAO #53

*Accumulation of luxuries makes us suffer.
It is a futile attempt to find happiness
in the temporary material things of the world.*

REFLECTIONS

- Real happiness is beyond the collecting of material possessions.
- Cravings are the opposite of both contentment and freedom.
- How would it feel to enjoy life and not cling too tightly?

AFFIRMATION

I am limitless.

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SAMPLE



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