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The Egg and The Stone by David M. Valadez

Sensei: There are many types of students. We will always see more people who become students than we will see types of students. The groups of student types are finite. People who become students are infinite. There are groups under which people allow themselves to be categorized with others across gender, across nations, across age, and across economic status. Two of these groups often seem as one. We can call them “the egg” and “the stone.” The stone is very sturdy. It is very strong and resistant to time and conditions. It is steadfast. People that are like stones in their training are equally strong in their commitment, equally resistant to time and conditions, and equally steadfast in their discipline to train. The egg, when held in the palm of one’s hand, appears to be as strong as the stone. When pressure comes to it in equal amounts, from equal directions, at equal moments, the egg is quite resilient. At such times, it appears to be stone-like. Yet, when it is struck from one angle over another, even with the slightest of taps, the egg breaks. People that are like the egg are subject to stagger in their training, to waiver between the highs and lows in their training, and even to cease in their training. Therefore, we should seek to be stone-like, less egg-like.

Deshi: Sensei, how will we know which type we are – egg or stone?

Sensei: That is the issue. We will not know whether we are egg or stone until we break or remain steadfast in the face of unequal pressure. If you break, you were an egg. If you do not break, you are a stone.

Deshi: What shall we do then?

Sensei: Try not to be a “were,” try to stay an “are.” This type of effort - to be an "are," to not be a "were" - is the nature of the stone and of a healthy practice.