

郢人漫堊為質

《莊子·徐無鬼》

莊子送葬，過惠子之墓，顧謂從者曰：「郢人堊漫其鼻端，若蠅翼，使匠石斲之。匠石運斤成風，聽而斲之，盡堊而鼻不傷，郢人立不失容。宋元君聞之，召匠石曰：「嘗試為寡人為之。」匠石曰：「臣則嘗能斲之。雖然，臣之質死久矣。」自夫子之死也，吾無以為質矣！吾無與言之矣。」

Master Zhuang in a Funeral Procession

< The Zhuangzi >

Master Zhuang once joined a funeral procession and walked past the tomb of his friend, Master Hui. He turned to the others in his company and said,

‘There was once a person in Ying, who spread a small patch of white paint over the tip of his nose. The paint was no thicker than the wing of a fly. He asked his carpenter friend, Shi, to chop it off with his axe. The carpenter held his axe high in the air and wielded it as swiftly as he could alongside his friend’s face, and he chopped off whatever paint there was on his friend’s nose, without causing even the slightest harm to the nose. What was more amazing was that the man from Ying stood there in perfect ease while his friend performed his feat.

The story went round and finally reached King Yuan of the Song state. His Majesty summoned the carpenter to the court and said, “Please do it again in front of me.” The carpenter said, “Your Majesty, though I did this before, I cannot do it any more without my friend as my teammate. He died long ago.”

With the demise of Master Hui, I find myself in a situation comparable to the carpenter’s, going about the world alone without a teammate who can trust me and share a common language with me.’