

THE MYSTERIOUS TECHNIQUE OF THE CAT

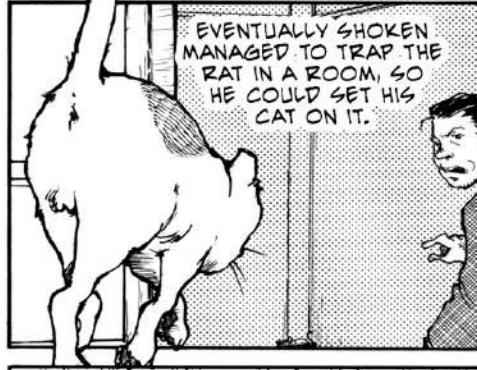


THERE WAS A SWORDSMAN BY THE NAME OF SHOKEN.

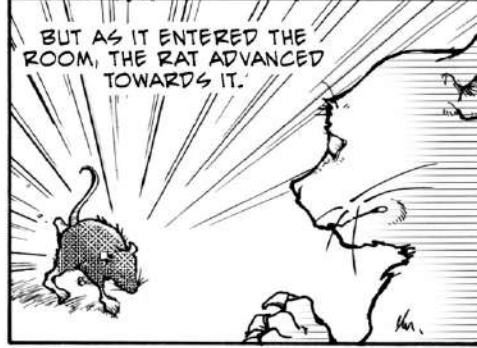
ONE DAY, A LARGE RAT TURNED UP IN HIS HOUSE. THE RAT WOULD NOT LEAVE, AND TOOK TO ROAMING AROUND THE HOUSE.



EVENTUALLY SHOKEN MANAGED TO TRAP THE RAT IN A ROOM, SO HE COULD SET HIS CAT ON IT.



BUT AS IT ENTERED THE ROOM, THE RAT ADVANCED TOWARDS IT.



AND HURLED ITSELF UPON THE CAT'S FACE!



SCREEOOOAAA!!!





REALIZING HE WAS UP AGAINST MORE THAN HE HAD BARGAINED FOR, SHOKEN WENT AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD BORROWING A NUMBER OF CATS THAT HAD MADE NAMES FOR THEMSELVES AS THE BEST OF THEIR KIND.



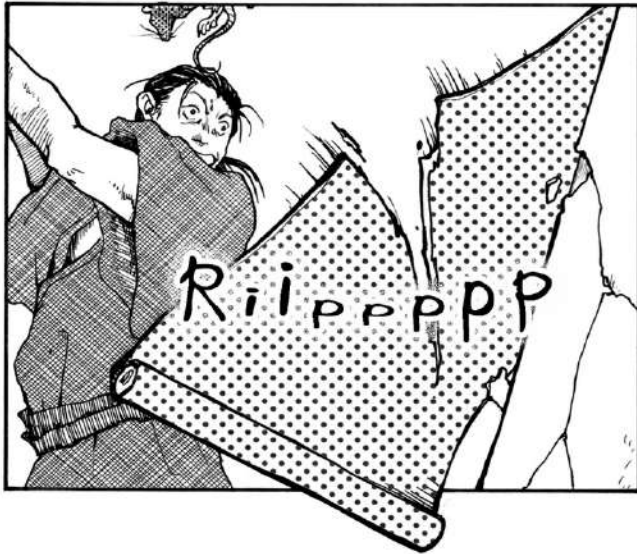
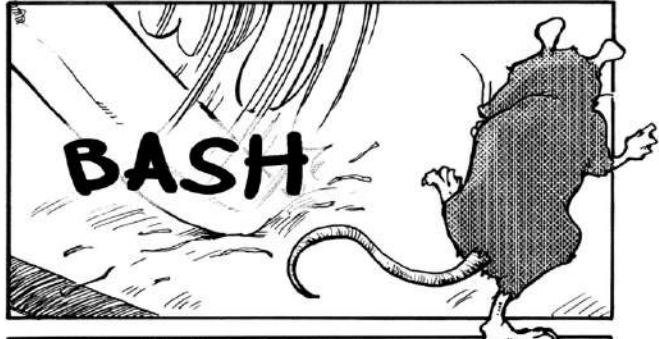
BUT WHEN ONE OF THE CATS APPROACHED THE RAT...



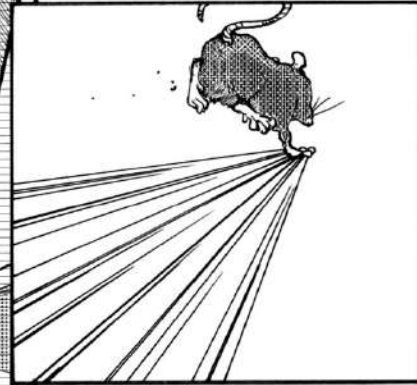
THE OTHER CATS ALL FLED IN FEAR...

waaaaooooooooo!!!

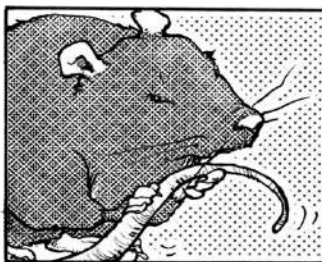
SHOKEN WAS OUTRAGED
AND GRABBED HIS
WOODEN SWORD.



EVEN THOUGH THE PAPER COVERED DOORS WERE SMASHED IN THE FRACAS...



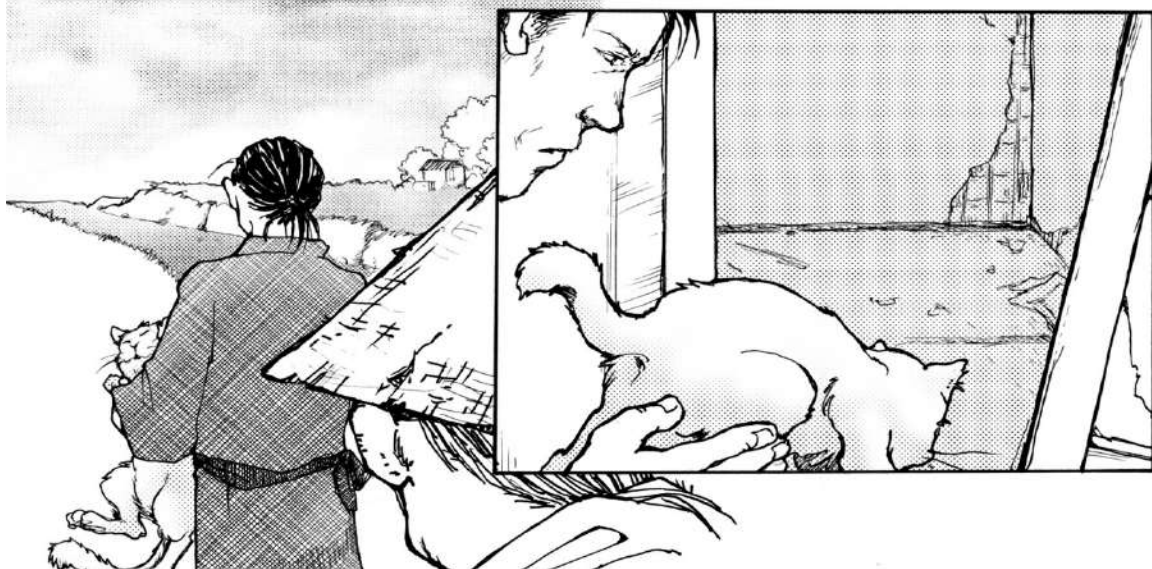
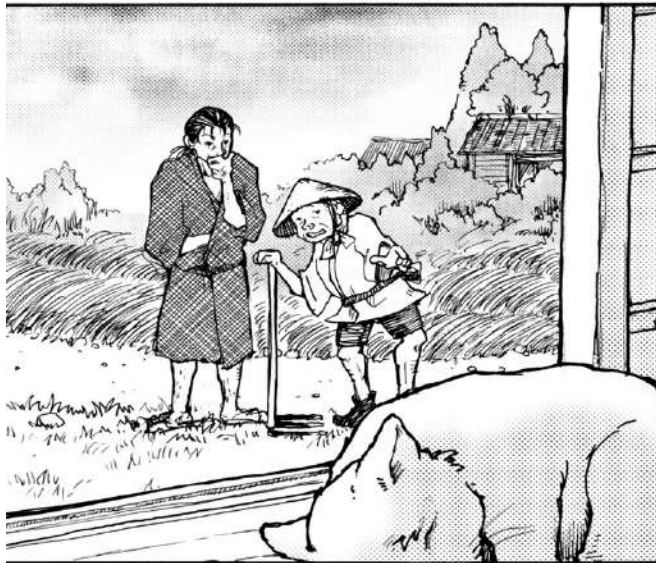
THE RAT WOULD ALWAYS ESCAPE BACK INTO THE CENTER OF THE ROOM.

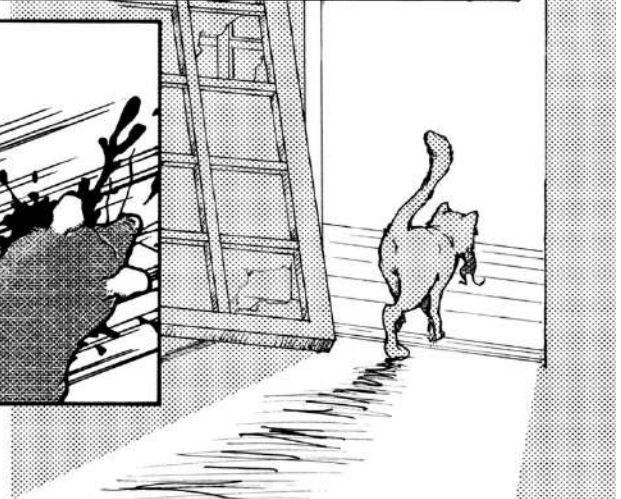
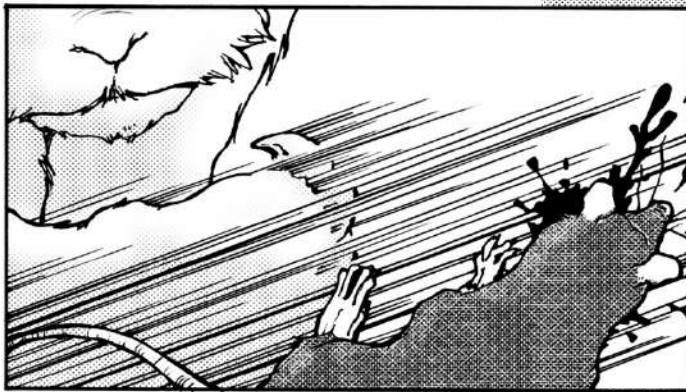
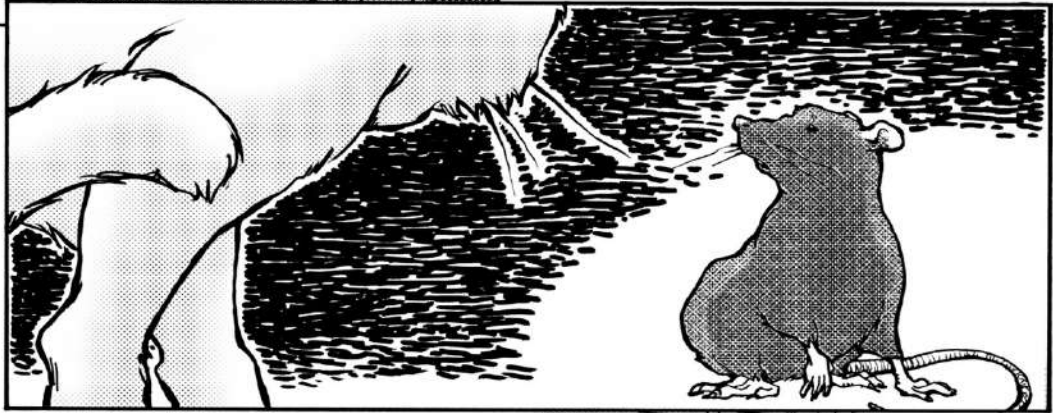
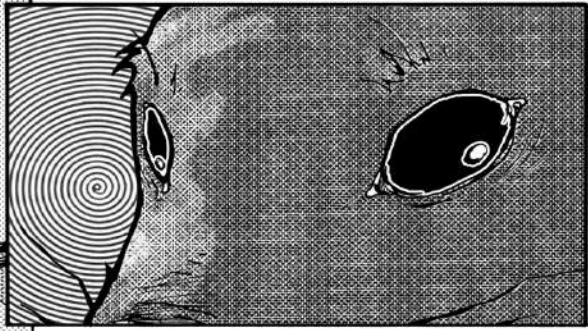
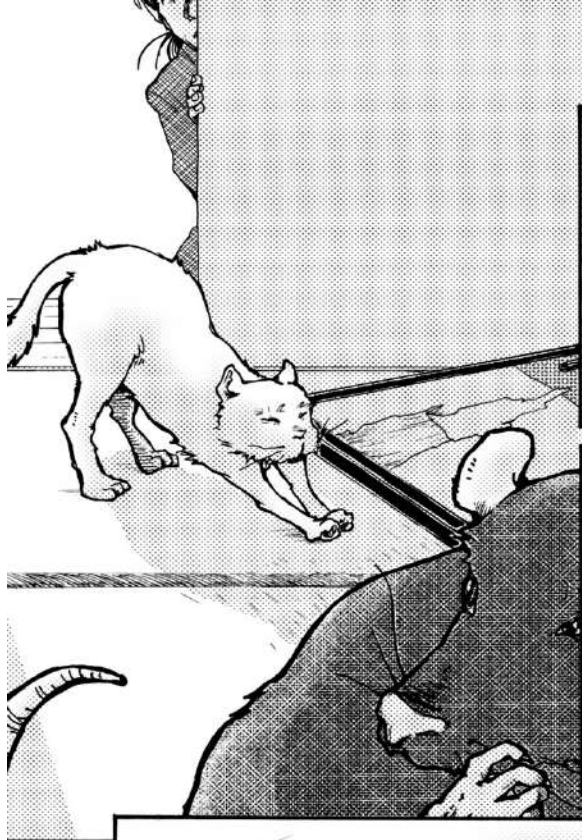


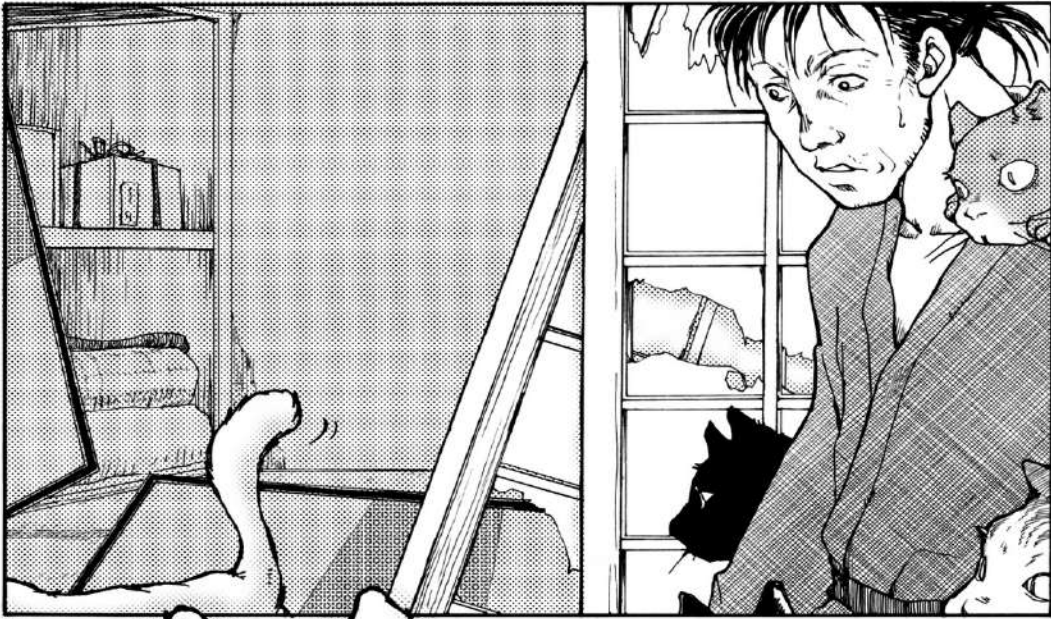
SHOKEN, BROKEN DOWN WITH SWEAT, THOUGHT THAT THE RAT WOULD SOON SINK ITS TEETH INTO HIS FACE TOO.



SHOKEN SAID TO HIMSELF, "I'VE HEARD THAT NOT FAR OFF FROM HERE, THERE IS A CAT THAT IS FIRST-RATE. I'D BETTER GO BORROW THAT ONE."

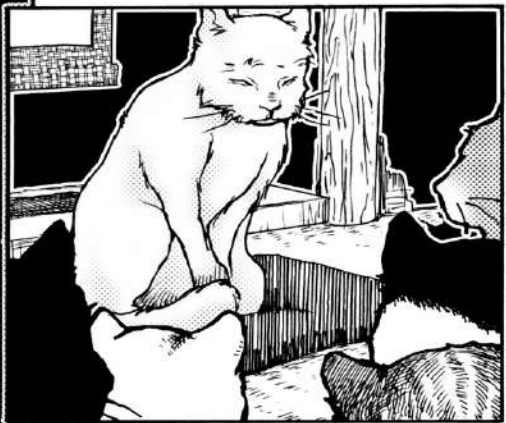








THAT NIGHT, ALL THE OTHER CATS GATHERED AT THE HOUSE AND INVITED THE OLD CAT TO TAKE THE MOST HONORED SEAT.

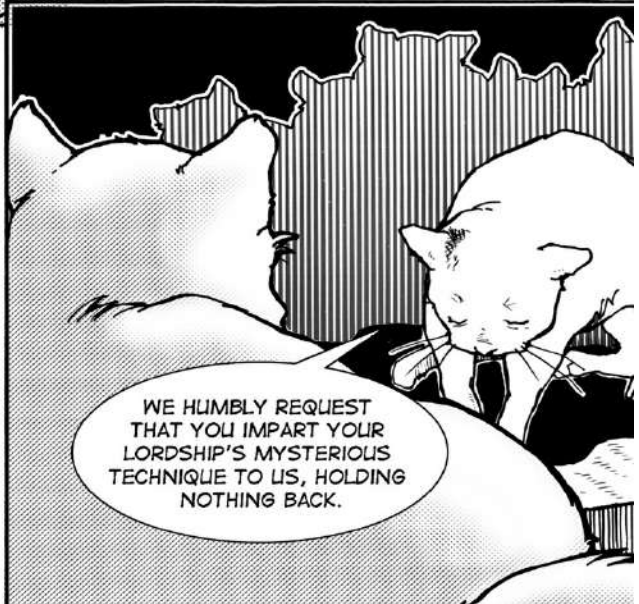


SENSEI, WE ARE ALL CALLED FIRST-RATE CATS. WE HAVE DISCIPLINED OURSELVES IN OUR WAY, AND SHARPEN OUR CLAWS TO CRUSH EVEN WEASELS AND OTTERS, NOT TO MENTION RATS.



UP TO NOW, HOWEVER, WE HAVE NEVER ENCOUNTERED SUCH A STRONG RAT AS THIS ONE.

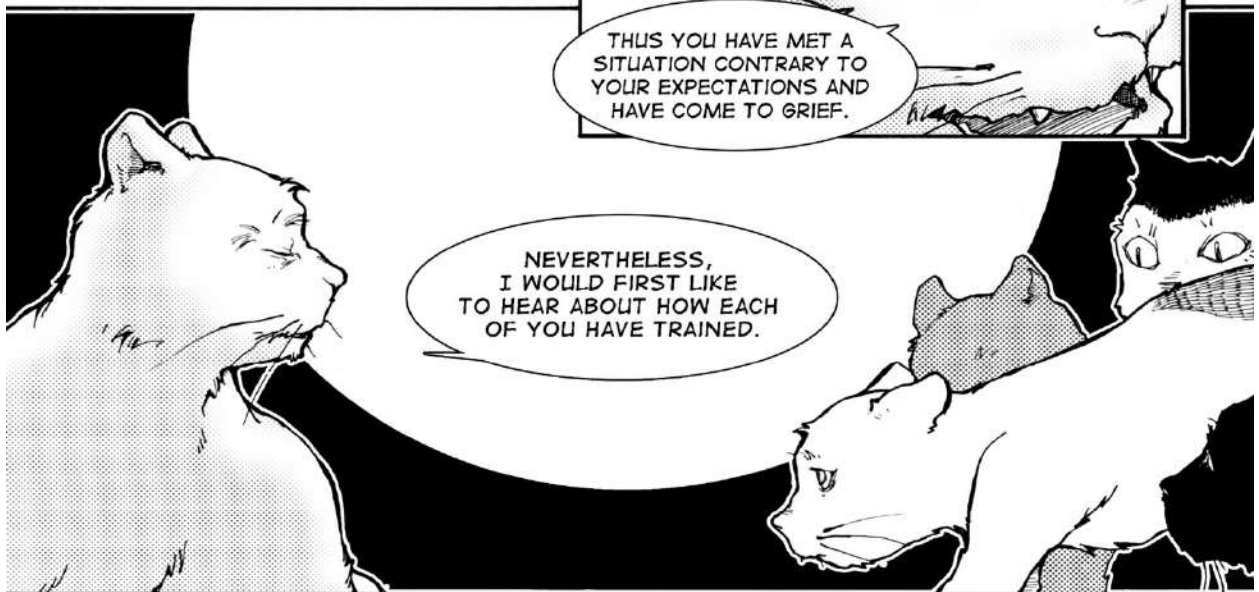
YET YOU OVERCAME HIM EASILY, PERHAPS BY SOME PERSONAL TECHNIQUE.



WE HUMBLLY REQUEST THAT YOU IMPART YOUR LORDSHIP'S MYSTERIOUS TECHNIQUE TO US, HOLDING NOTHING BACK.

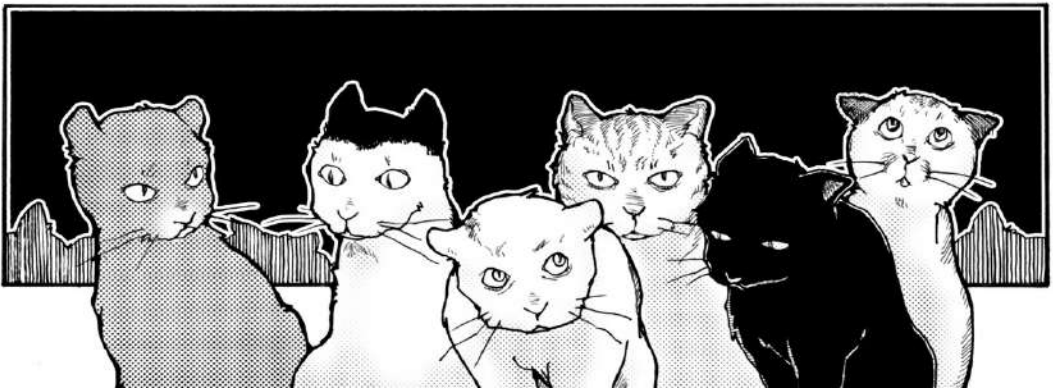


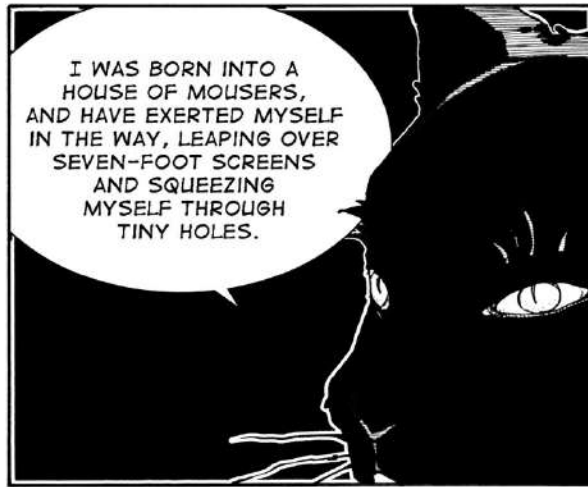
ALL YOU YOUNG CATS
WORK WITH CONSIDERABLE
SKILL, BUT YOU HAVEN'T
HEARD ABOUT THE METHOD
OF THE CORRECT WAY.



THUS YOU HAVE MET A
SITUATION CONTRARY TO
YOUR EXPECTATIONS AND
HAVE COME TO GRIEF.

NEVERTHELESS,
I WOULD FIRST LIKE
TO HEAR ABOUT HOW EACH
OF YOU HAVE TRAINED.



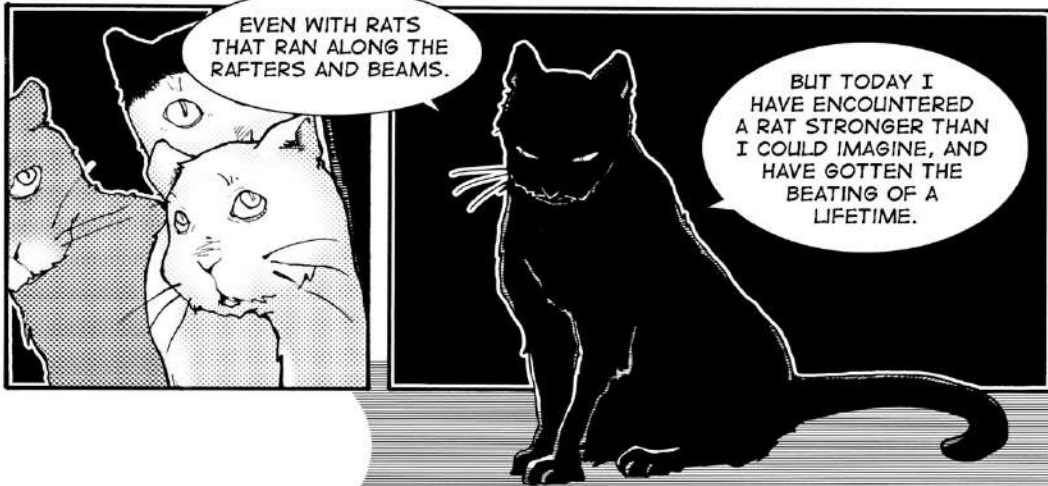


I WAS BORN INTO A HOUSE OF MOUSERS, AND HAVE EXERTED MYSELF IN THE WAY, LEAPING OVER SEVEN-FOOT SCREENS AND SQUEEZING MYSELF THROUGH TINY HOLES.



SO THAT FROM THE TIME I WAS A KITTEN, THERE WAS NO QUICK OR NIMBLE TRICK I COULD NOT DO.

WHETHER IT WAS THE STRATEGY OF PRETENDING TO BE ASLEEP OR SUDDENLY EXPLODING IN A BLAZE OF ENERGY, I NEVER FALTERED...


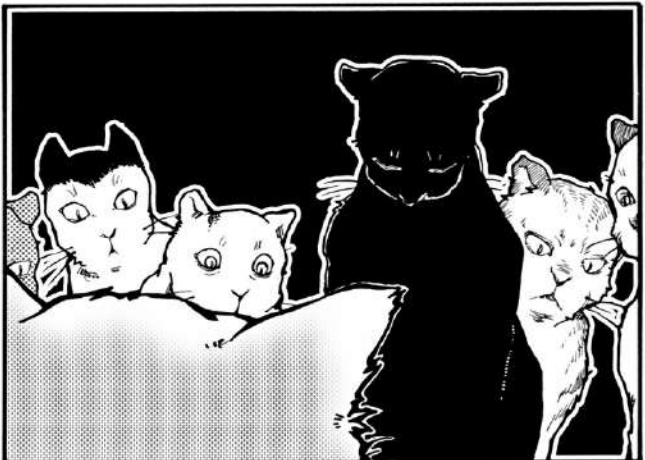


EVEN WITH RATS THAT RAN ALONG THE RAFTERS AND BEAMS.

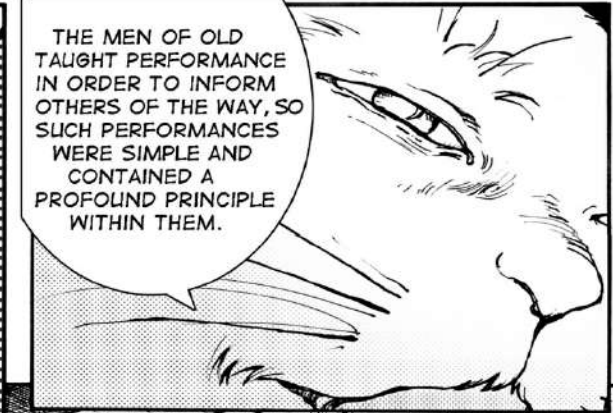
BUT TODAY I HAVE ENCOUNTERED A RAT STRONGER THAN I COULD IMAGINE, AND HAVE GOTTEN THE BEATING OF A LIFETIME.



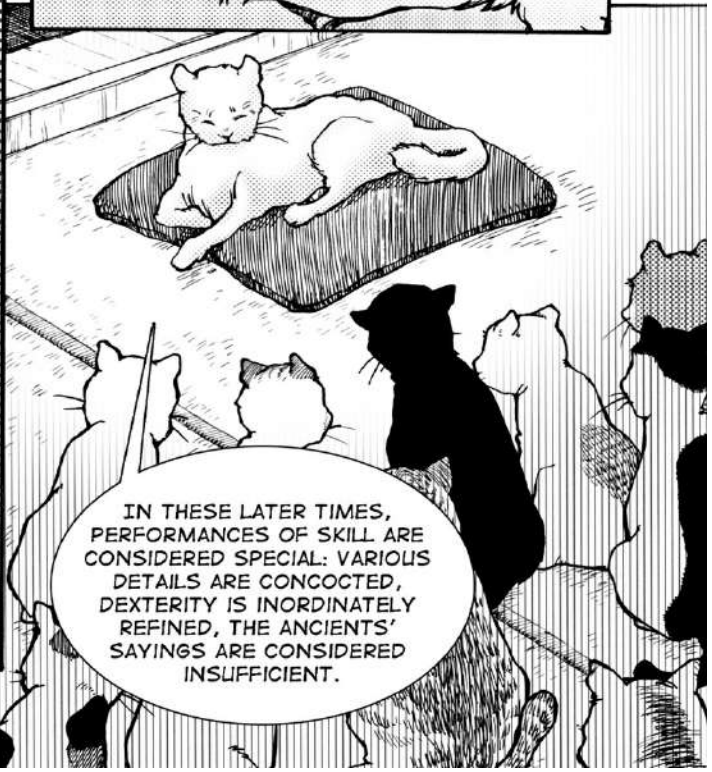
THIS IS SOMETHING I NEVER EXPECTED.

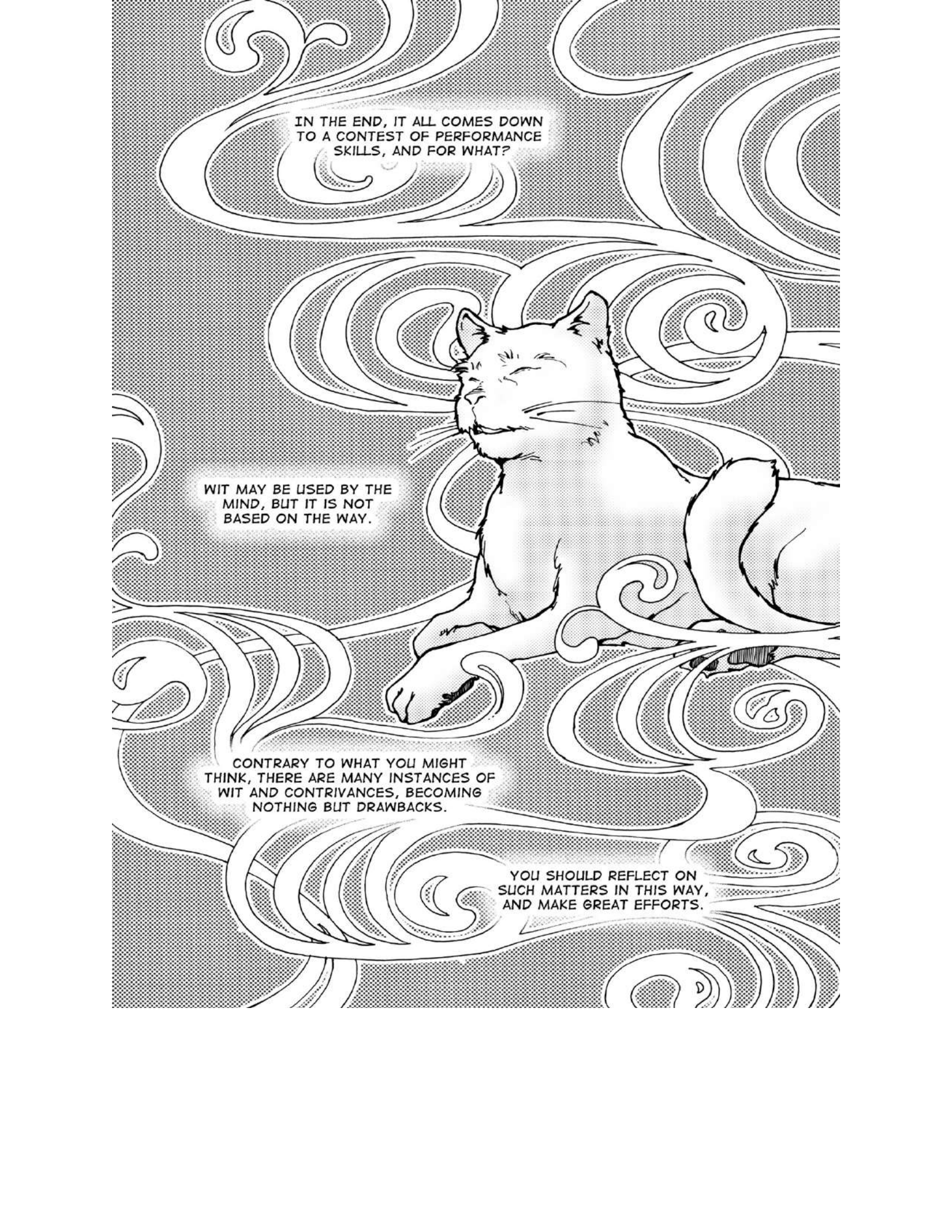


AHH, YOUR DISCIPLINE IS ONLY A PERFORMANCE OF SKILL. THUS, YOU STILL HAVEN'T ESCAPED FROM THE MIND THAT AIMS AT SOMETHING.



THE MEN OF OLD TAUGHT PERFORMANCE IN ORDER TO INFORM OTHERS OF THE WAY, SO SUCH PERFORMANCES WERE SIMPLE AND CONTAINED A PROFOUND PRINCIPLE WITHIN THEM.



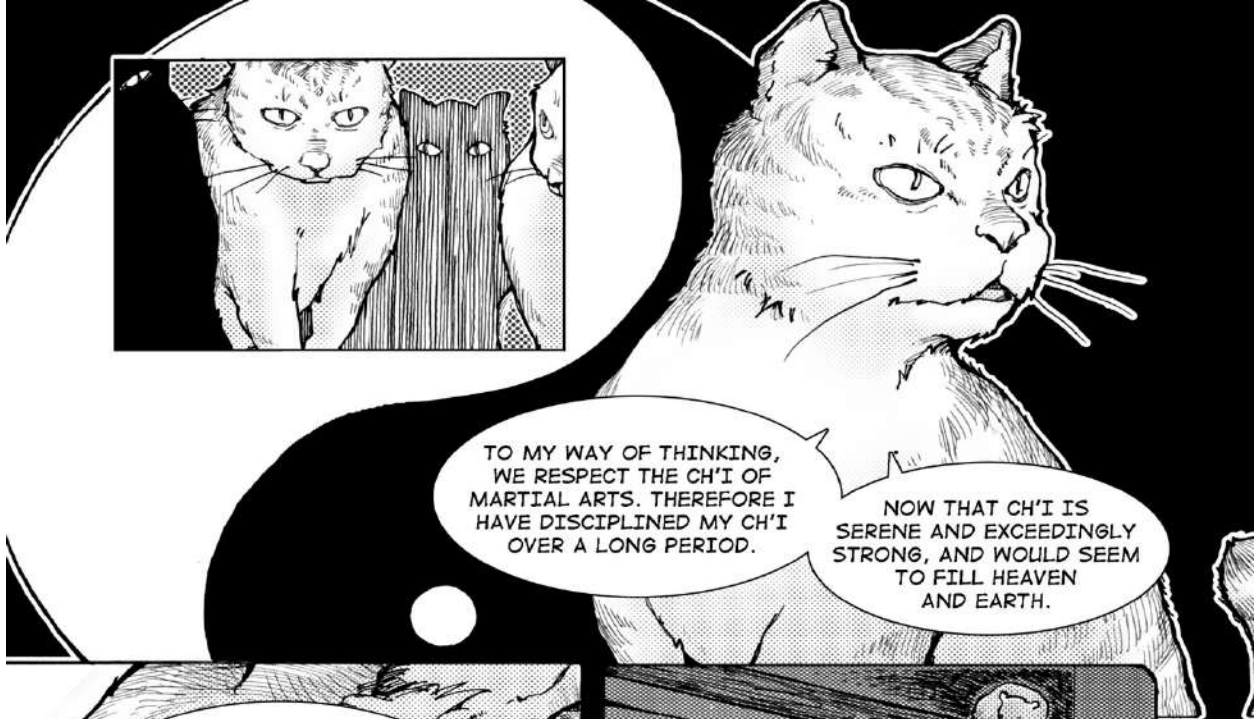


IN THE END, IT ALL COMES DOWN
TO A CONTEST OF PERFORMANCE
SKILLS, AND FOR WHAT?

WIT MAY BE USED BY THE
MIND, BUT IT IS NOT
BASED ON THE WAY.

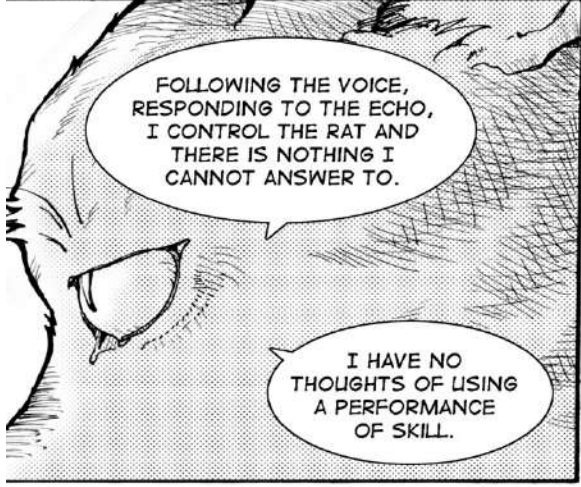
CONTRARY TO WHAT YOU MIGHT
THINK, THERE ARE MANY INSTANCES OF
WIT AND CONTRIVANCES, BECOMING
NOTHING BUT DRAWBACKS.

YOU SHOULD REFLECT ON
SUCH MATTERS IN THIS WAY,
AND MAKE GREAT EFFORTS.



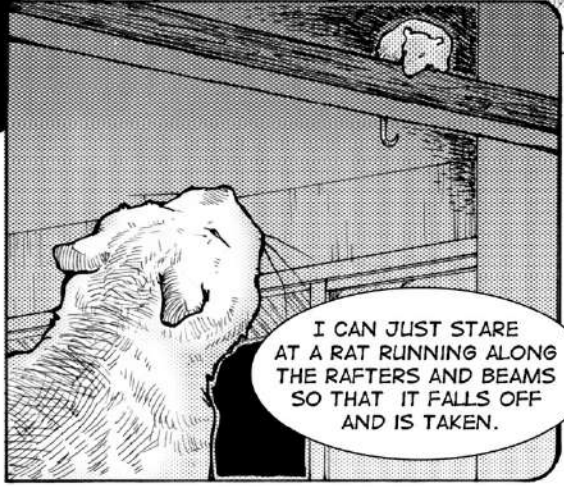
TO MY WAY OF THINKING, WE RESPECT THE CH'I OF MARTIAL ARTS. THEREFORE I HAVE DISCIPLINED MY CH'I OVER A LONG PERIOD.

NOW THAT CH'I IS SERENE AND EXCEEDINGLY STRONG, AND WOULD SEEM TO FILL HEAVEN AND EARTH.

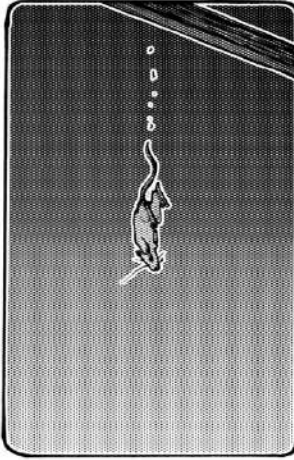


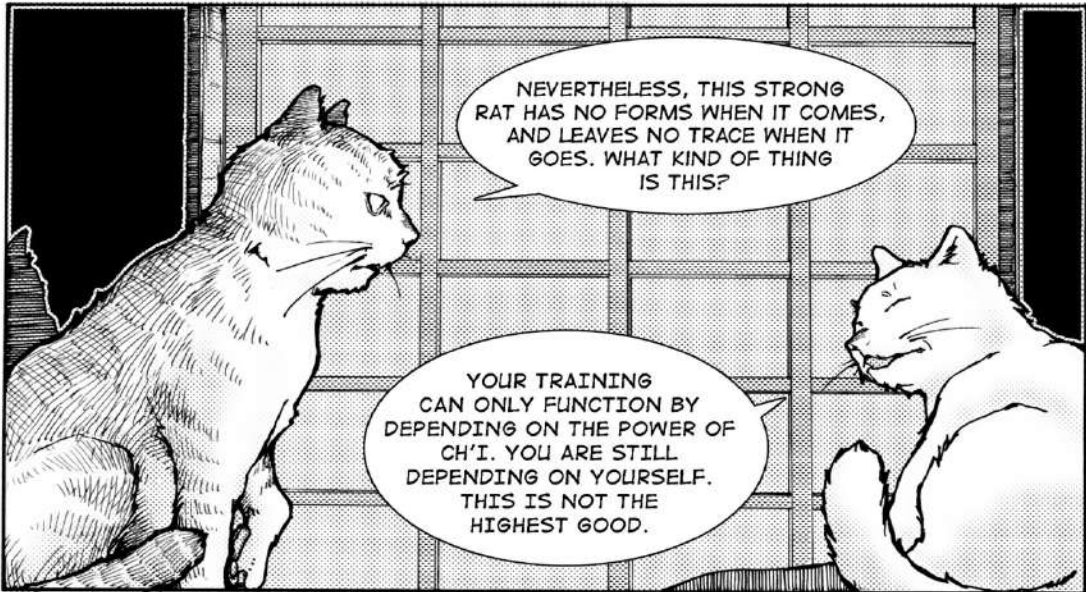
FOLLOWING THE VOICE, RESPONDING TO THE ECHO, I CONTROL THE RAT AND THERE IS NOTHING I CANNOT ANSWER TO.

I HAVE NO THOUGHTS OF USING A PERFORMANCE OF SKILL.



I CAN JUST STARE AT A RAT RUNNING ALONG THE RAFTERS AND BEAMS SO THAT IT FALLS OFF AND IS TAKEN.





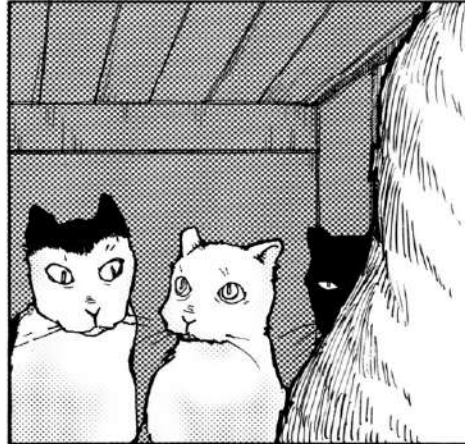
NEVERTHELESS, THIS STRONG RAT HAS NO FORMS WHEN IT COMES, AND LEAVES NO TRACE WHEN IT GOES. WHAT KIND OF THING IS THIS?

YOUR TRAINING CAN ONLY FUNCTION BY DEPENDING ON THE POWER OF CH'I. YOU ARE STILL DEPENDING ON YOURSELF. THIS IS NOT THE HIGHEST GOOD.



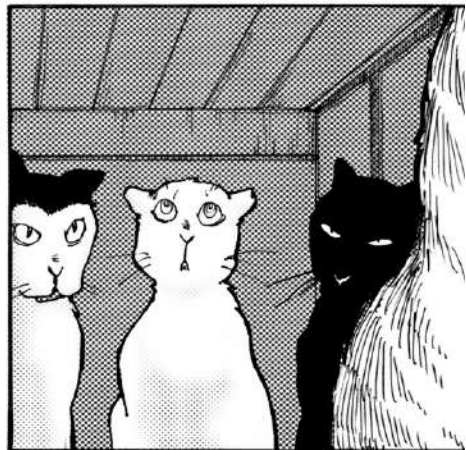
IF YOU ARE GOING OUT TO DEFEAT YOUR OPPONENT, HE MAY ALSO BE COMING OUT TO DEFEAT YOU.

AND WHAT ABOUT WHEN DEFEAT TURNS INTO NO DEFEAT AT ALL?



YOU MAY DISGUISE YOUR INTENTIONS TO DEFEAT YOUR OPPONENT, BUT YOUR OPPONENT MAY DO THE SAME.

AND WHAT ABOUT WHEN A DISGUISE TURNS INTO NO DISGUISE?





HOW CAN IT BE THAT
ONLY YOU WILL BE
STRONG AND ALL YOUR
OPPONENTS WEAK?
WHEN SOMEONE
WILL NOT YIELD
TO THE ENERGY
OF YOUR CH'I,
WHAT THEN?



THERE ARE OCCASIONS
WHEN A CORNERED RAT
WILL BITE A CAT, CONTRARY
TO EXPECTATIONS.



PRESSED WITH
CERTAIN DEATH
IT FORGETS
ABOUT LIFE,
FORGETS ITS
DESIRES,
DOES NOT
CONSIDER
VICTORY OR
LOSS AS
INEVITABLE.



THUS ITS RESOLVE IS LIKE
IRON. HOW COULD YOU DEFEAT
AN OPPONENT LIKE THIS WITH
THE FORCE OF CH'I?

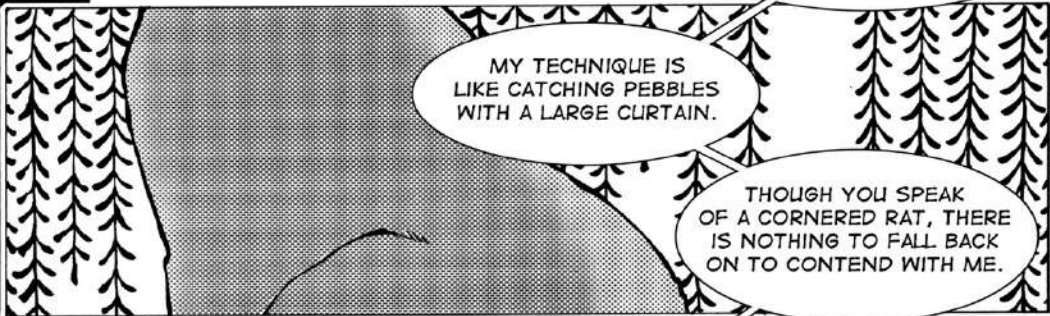


THE CH'I OF WHICH YOU SPEAK IS FULLY ACTIVE, BUT HAS A FORM. THINGS THAT HAVE A FORM MAY BE INDISTINCT, BUT CAN BE SEEN.



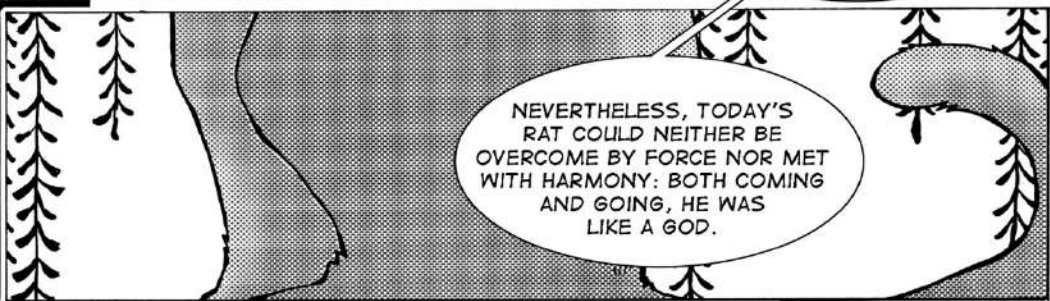
I HAVE DISCIPLINED MY MIND FOR A LONG TIME. I DO NOT DEVELOP FORCE, NOR DO I CONTEND WITH THINGS. I AM IN HARMONY WITH OTHERS, AND RUN COUNTER TO NOTHING.

WHEN SOMEONE ATTEMPTS TO BE TOUGH WITH ME, I MEET HIM WITH HARMONY AND SO BECOME HIS COMPANION.



MY TECHNIQUE IS LIKE CATCHING PEBBLES WITH A LARGE CURTAIN.

THOUGH YOU SPEAK OF A CORNERED RAT, THERE IS NOTHING TO FALL BACK ON TO CONTEND WITH ME.



NEVERTHELESS, TODAY'S RAT COULD NEITHER BE OVERCOME BY FORCE NOR MET WITH HARMONY: BOTH COMING AND GOING, HE WAS LIKE A GOD.



I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE HIM UP UNTIL NOW.



YOUR HARMONY IS NOT NATURAL HARMONY.

YOU THINK, AND SO CREATE HARMONY.



THOUGH YOU INTEND TO AVOID YOUR OPPONENT'S SHARP SPIRIT, YOU STILL RETAIN A SMALL BIT OF INTENTION, SO YOUR OPPONENT SEES THROUGH YOUR TACTIC.

SHUN

IF YOU ATTEMPT TO REACH HARMONY BY INSERTING YOUR MIND, YOUR CH'I WILL BE CORRUPTED AND YOU WILL BE APPROACHING NEGLIGENCE.

WHEN YOU THINK AND THEN DO SOMETHING, YOU OBSTRUCT YOUR NATURAL PERCEPTION. SO, HOW CAN THE MYSTERIOUS FUNCTION BE GIVEN LIFE FROM ANYWHERE AT ALL?



SIMPLY, WITHOUT THINKING, WITHOUT DOING ANYTHING, MOVE BY FOLLOWING YOUR NATURAL PERCEPTION AND YOUR MOVEMENT WILL HAVE NO FORM.

AND WHEN YOU HAVE NO FORM, THERE IS NOTHING IN HEAVEN AND EARTH THAT COULD BE YOUR OPPONENT.



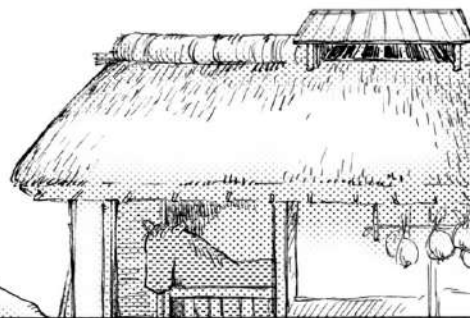
STILL, THE WAY IS NOT LIMITED AND YOU SHOULD NOT THINK THAT WHAT I SAY IS THE ULTIMATE.



LONG AGO THERE WAS A CAT IN MY NEIGHBOURHOOD; IT SLEPT ALL DAY AND HAD NO VITALITY AT ALL. IT WAS LIKE A CAT MADE OUT OF WOOD. PEOPLE NEVER SAW IT CATCH RATS...



BUT WHEREVER THE CAT WAS, THERE WERE NO RATS TO BE SEEN.



I WENT OVER AND ASKED WHY THIS WAS SO.



BUT IT GAVE NO ANSWER.



EVEN THOUGH I ASKED IT FOUR TIMES.



IT WAS NOT THAT IT COULD NOT ANSWER, BUT IT DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.



IT WAS AN EXAMPLE OF "THOSE WHO KNOW DON'T SPEAK - THOSE WHO SPEAK DON'T KNOW."

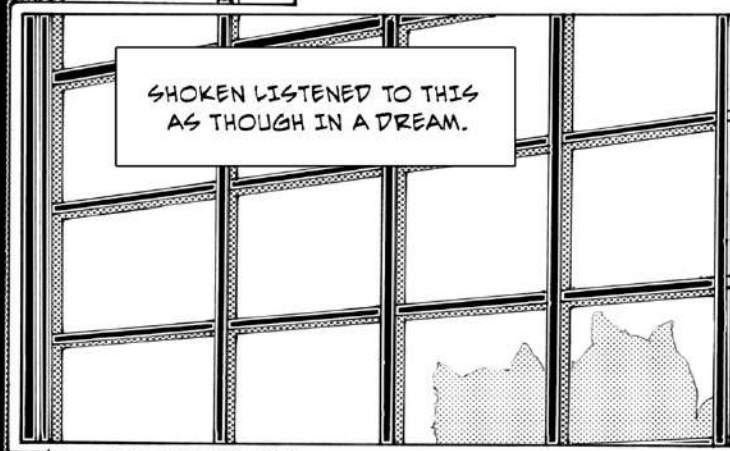
THAT CAT HAD EVEN FORGOTTEN THAT IT HAD FORGOTTEN ITSELF, AND RETURNED TO A STATE OF "NOTHINGNESS."



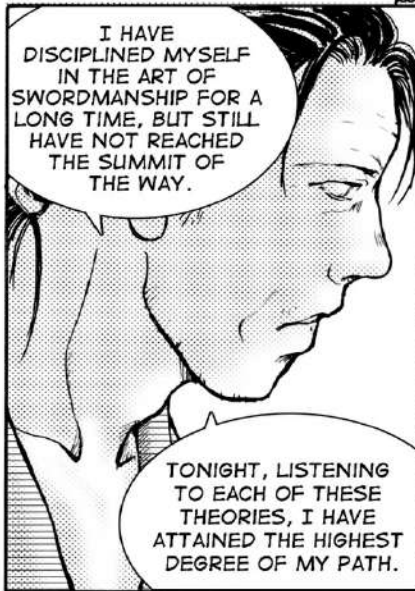
THE VERY SPIRIT OF THE MARTIAL, IT KILLED NOTHING.



I AM FAR AND AWAY UNABLE EVEN TO APPROACH THAT CAT.



SHOKEN LISTENED TO THIS
AS THOUGH IN A DREAM.

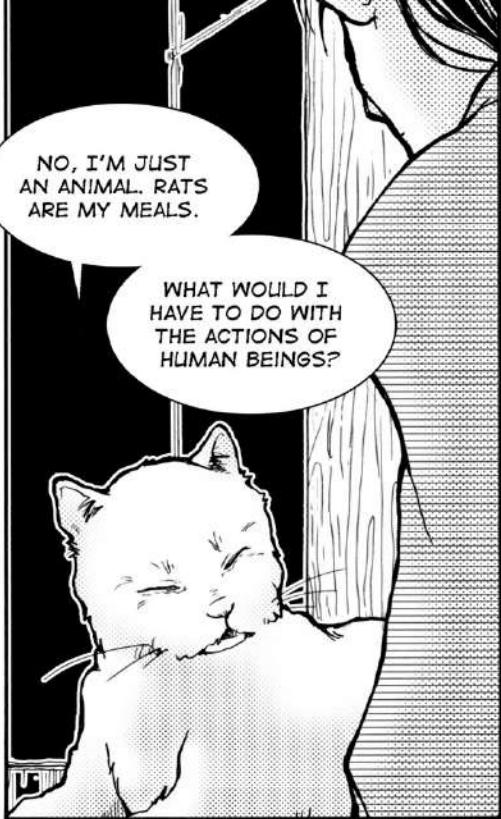


I HAVE
DISCIPLINED MYSELF
IN THE ART OF
SWORDSMANSHIP FOR A
LONG TIME, BUT STILL
HAVE NOT REACHED
THE SUMMIT OF
THE WAY.

TONIGHT, LISTENING
TO EACH OF THESE
THEORIES, I HAVE
ATTAINED THE HIGHEST
DEGREE OF MY PATH.

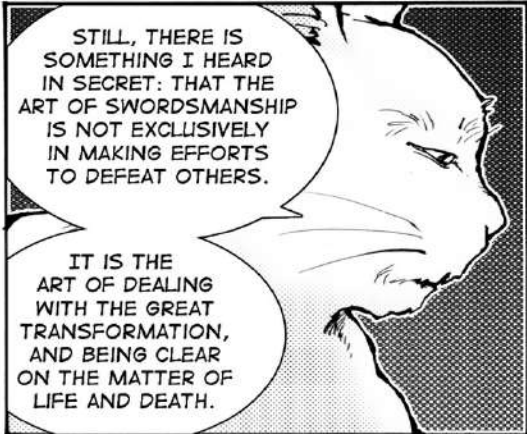


MAY I REQUEST
THAT YOU POINT OUT
ITS VERY DEEPEST
MYSTERIES?




NO, I'M JUST AN ANIMAL. RATS ARE MY MEALS.

WHAT WOULD I HAVE TO DO WITH THE ACTIONS OF HUMAN BEINGS?

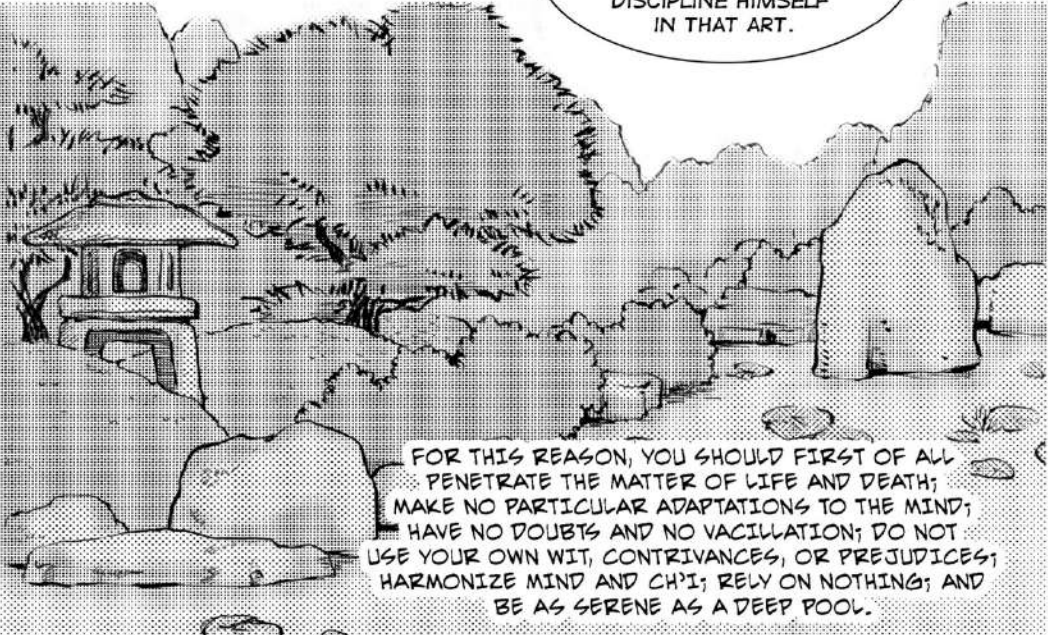


STILL, THERE IS SOMETHING I HEARD IN SECRET: THAT THE ART OF SWORDSMANSHIP IS NOT EXCLUSIVELY IN MAKING EFFORTS TO DEFEAT OTHERS.


IT IS THE ART OF DEALING WITH THE GREAT TRANSFORMATION, AND BEING CLEAR ON THE MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH.



A MAN WHO WOULD BE A SAMURAI SHOULD ALWAYS MAINTAIN THIS KIND OF MENTALITY, AND SHOULD DISCIPLINE HIMSELF IN THAT ART.



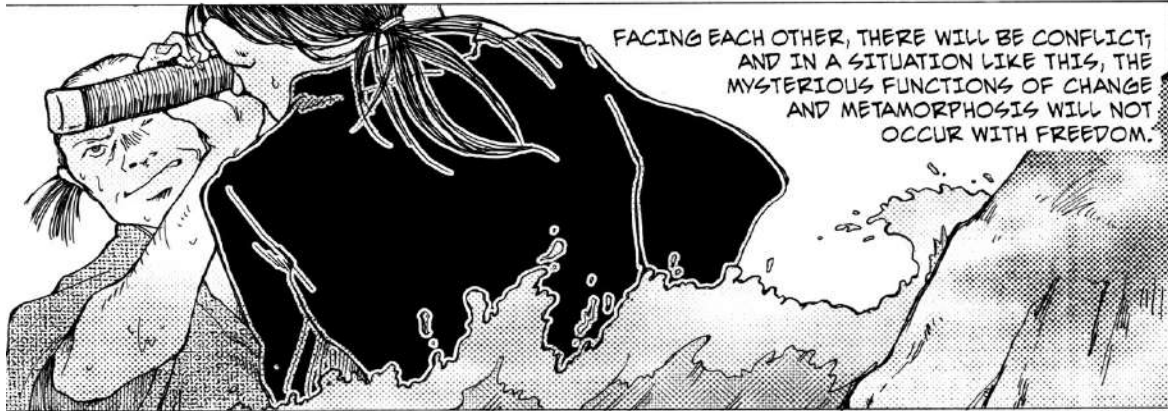
FOR THIS REASON, YOU SHOULD FIRST OF ALL PENETRATE THE MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH; MAKE NO PARTICULAR ADAPTATIONS TO THE MIND; HAVE NO DOUBTS AND NO VACILLATION; DO NOT USE YOUR OWN WIT, CONTRIVANCES, OR PREJUDICES; HARMONIZE MIND AND CH'I; RELY ON NOTHING; AND BE AS SERENE AS A DEEP POOL.



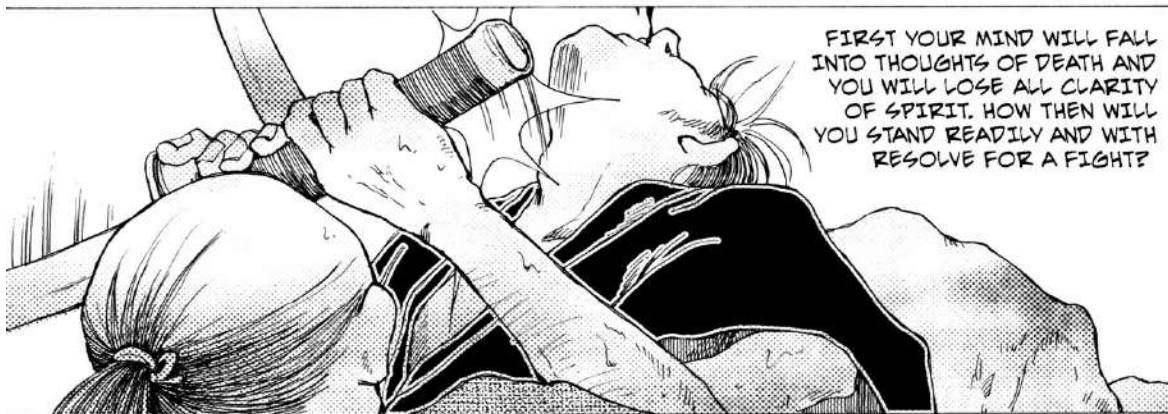
IF YOU ARE ALWAYS LIKE THIS, YOU WILL BE COMPLETELY FREE TO RESPOND TO ANY CHANGE.



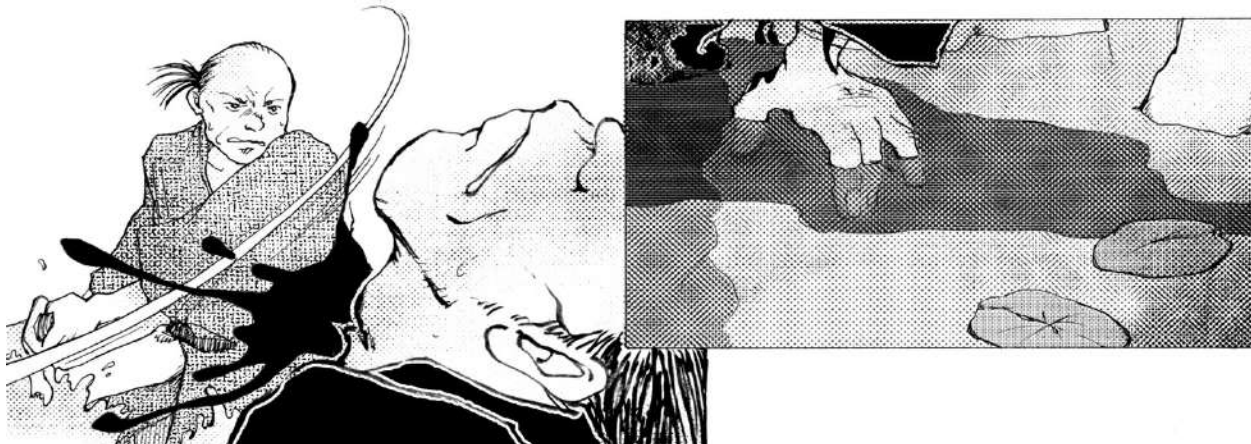
BUT WHEN THE SMALLEST THING ENTERS YOUR MIND, FORM WILL APPEAR. AND WHEN THERE IS FORM, THERE WILL BE AN OPPONENT AND THERE WILL BE YOURSELF.

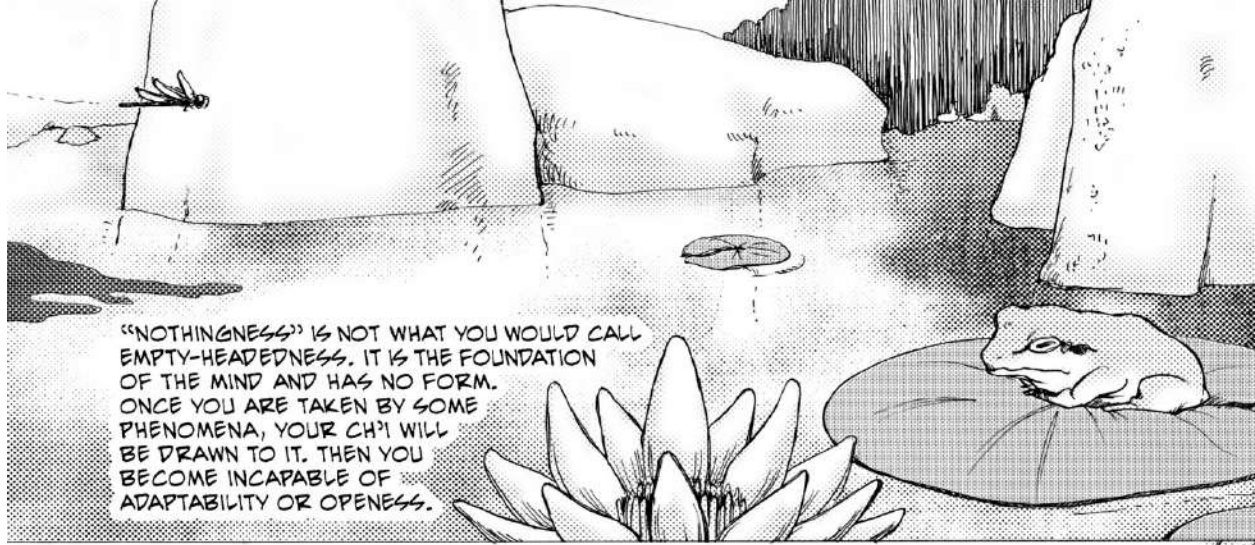


FACING EACH OTHER, THERE WILL BE CONFLICT; AND IN A SITUATION LIKE THIS, THE MYSTERIOUS FUNCTIONS OF CHANGE AND METAMORPHOSIS WILL NOT OCCUR WITH FREEDOM.

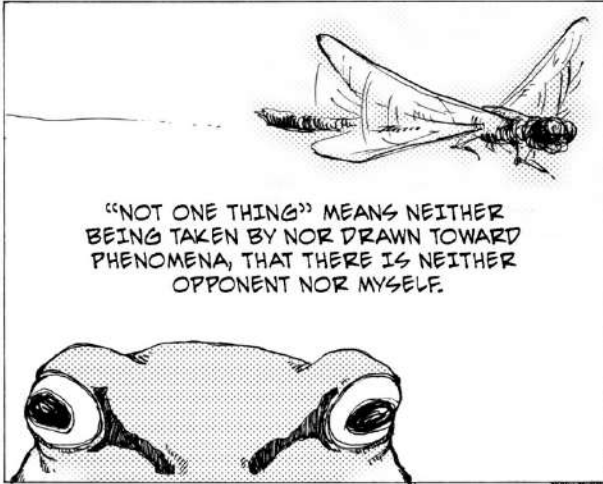


FIRST YOUR MIND WILL FALL INTO THOUGHTS OF DEATH AND YOU WILL LOSE ALL CLARITY OF SPIRIT. HOW THEN WILL YOU STAND READILY AND WITH RESOLVE FOR A FIGHT?

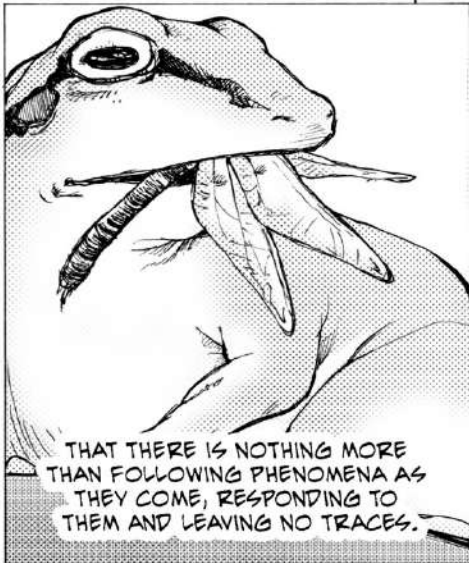
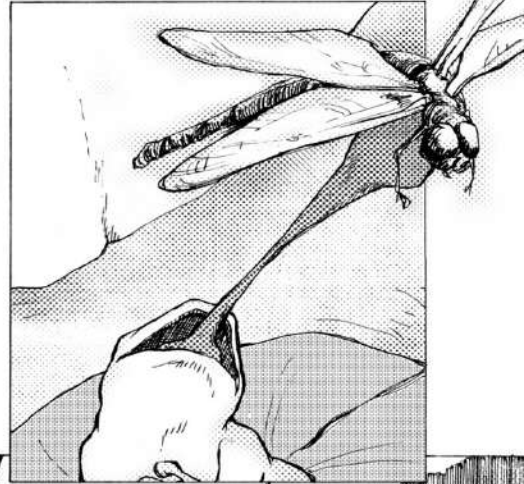




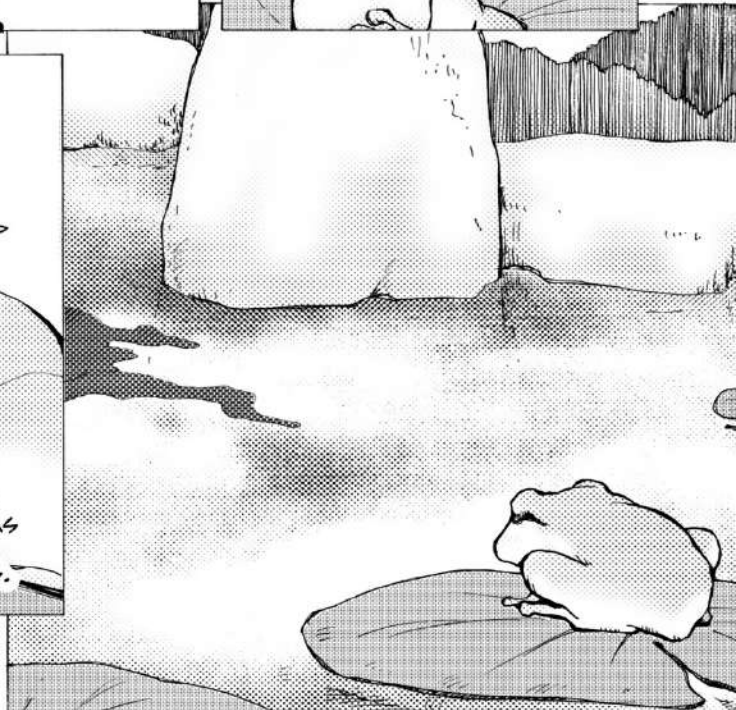
"NOTHINGNESS" IS NOT WHAT YOU WOULD CALL EMPTY-HEADEDNESS. IT IS THE FOUNDATION OF THE MIND AND HAS NO FORM. ONCE YOU ARE TAKEN BY SOME PHENOMENA, YOUR CH'I WILL BE DRAWN TO IT. THEN YOU BECOME INCAPABLE OF ADAPTABILITY OR OPENESS.



"NOT ONE THING" MEANS NEITHER BEING TAKEN BY NOR DRAWN TOWARD PHENOMENA, THAT THERE IS NEITHER OPPONENT NOR MYSELF.



THAT THERE IS NOTHING MORE THAN FOLLOWING PHENOMENA AS THEY COME, RESPONDING TO THEM AND LEAVING NO TRACES.

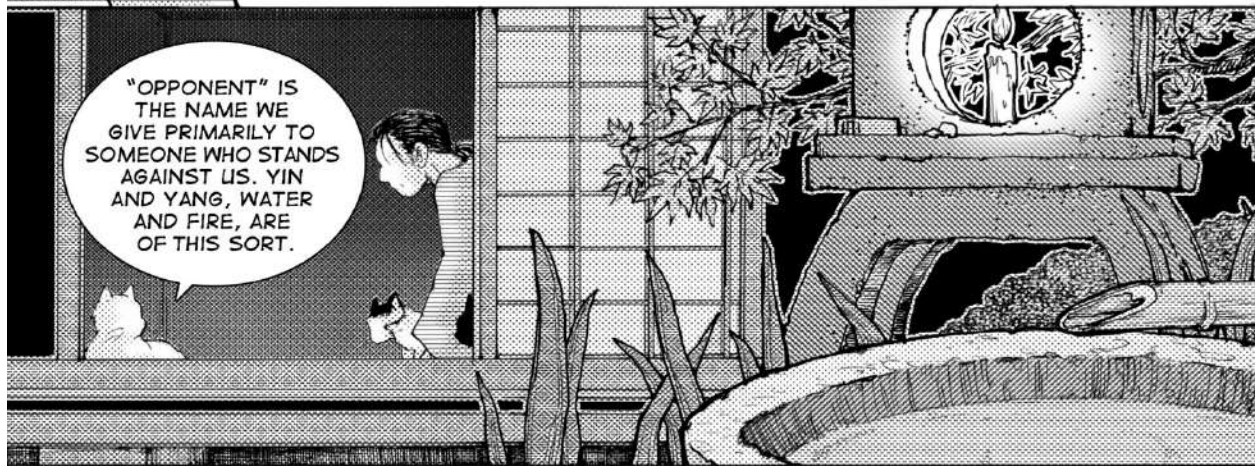




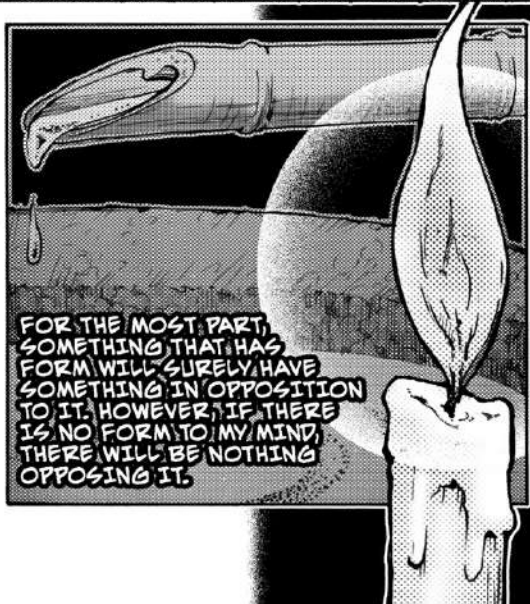
WHAT DOES
"THERE IS NEITHER
MY OPPONENT NOR
MYSELF" MEAN?



BECAUSE I EXIST,
MY OPPONENT EXISTS.
IF I DO NOT EXIST,
NEITHER WILL
MY OPPONENT.



"OPPONENT" IS
THE NAME WE
GIVE PRIMARILY TO
SOMEONE WHO STANDS
AGAINST US. YIN
AND YANG, WATER
AND FIRE, ARE
OF THIS SORT.



FOR THE MOST PART,
SOMETHING THAT HAS
FORM WILL SURELY HAVE
SOMETHING IN OPPOSITION
TO IT. HOWEVER, IF THERE
IS NO FORM TO MY MIND,
THERE WILL BE NOTHING
OPPOSING IT.

WHEN PHENOMENA AND MYSELF HAVE
BOTH BEEN FORGOTTEN, AND I AM
DEEPLY SERENE AND TRANQUIL, THEN I
AM IN HARMONY AND AT ONE WITH
THE WORLD.



THOUGH I CRUSH THE FORM OF MY
OPPONENT, I MYSELF WILL
NOT KNOW IT.



WHEN THE MIND IS DEEPLY SERENE AND
TRANQUIL, THE WORLD IS MY WORLD.
THERE IS NO RIGHT OR WRONG, NO
LIKING AND DISLIKING.



EVERYTHING WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF PAIN
AND PLEASURE OR GAIN AND LOSS ARE CREATED
BY MY MIND. AND THOUGH WE SAY THAT HEAVEN
AND EARTH ARE VAST, THERE IS NOTHING TO
SEEK OUTSIDE OF OUR OWN MINDS.



AN ANCIENT WORTHY SAID: "WHEN
THERE IS DUST IN THE EYE, THE THREE
WORLDS ARE SHUT OUT; WHEN THE MIND
AND HEART ARE WITHOUT A CARE,
ONE'S WHOLE LIFE IS AT EASE."





ANOTHER SAYING IS:

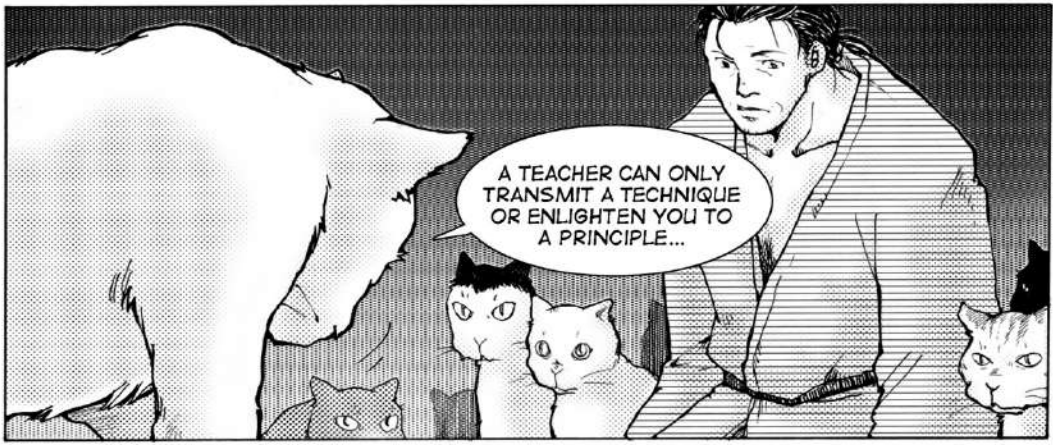
"SURROUNDED BY TENS OF THOUSANDS OF THE ENEMY, YOUR FORM MAY BE PUMMELED INTO SMALL PIECES, BUT THIS MIND IS STILL YOURS. EVEN THE GREATEST OPPONENT CAN DO NOTHING ABOUT THAT."



BUT WHEN YOU ARE CONFUSED, THAT VERY MIND WILL BECOME AN ASSISTANT TO YOUR OPPONENT.



I'LL STOP TALKING HERE. YOU SHOULD NOW SIMPLY ENGAGE IN SELF-REFLECTION AND SEEK WITHIN YOURSELF.



A TEACHER CAN ONLY TRANSMIT A TECHNIQUE OR ENLIGHTEN YOU TO A PRINCIPLE...

