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A Translation of Chapters 59 and 63 of the *Daodejing* 道德經 and their Annotations by Shi Deqing

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1. Original text and translation of chapter 59 of the *Daodejing* 道德經

1.1 Original text

治人、事天、莫若嗇。夫惟嗇，是謂早復。早復，謂之重積德。重積德，則無不克。無不克，則莫知其極。莫知其極，可以有國。有國之母，可以長久。是謂深根固蒂，長生久視之道。¹

1.2 Translation

Nothing can compare with *se* 嗇 to manage material desire and serve the nature of virtue, the character *se* means to early restore. It means advocating accumulated virtue. If you can do it, there is nothing you cannot overcome. And you do not know where the limit is, and you can get the country. Once a country has its foundation, it can exist for a long time. This is the deep-rooted Tao of longevity.

2. Original text and translation of Shi Deqing's 釋德清 annotation of chapter 59

2.1 Original text – Part A

此言聖人離欲復性，以為外王內聖之道也。嗇，有而不用之意。老子所言人天，莊子解之甚明。如曰，不以人害天，不以物傷性。蓋人，指物欲。天，指性德也。言治

¹ Shi Deqing 釋德清, *The Daodejing and Its Annotation by Shi Deqing* 老子道德經解(Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2020), p.121.

人事天莫若嗇者。然嗇，即復性工夫也。謂聖人在位，貴為天子，富有四海。其子女玉帛，聲色貨利，充盈於前。而聖人以道自守，視之若無，澹然無欲，雖有而不用。²

2.2 Translation of Part A

This means that sages can control desires and restore true nature, and they think this is the Tao to govern the country externally and have the virtue of sages internally. The character *se* means that although people have it, they do not use it. Zhuangzi explained very clearly what Laozi said about the *rentian* 人天. This means that they will not damage their nature of virtue and true nature because of material desire and external things, the character *ren* 人 refers to material desire, and the character *tian* 天 refers to the nature of virtue. That is to say, nothing can compare with *se* to manage material desire and serve the nature of virtue. However, the character *se* refers to the state to restore the true nature. It means that sages are in power, they are honorable as a great emperor, and have the wealth of the country. Their children use jades and silks, and like material enjoyment full of now. But sages use Tao to keep their true nature, they see these as non-being, they are tranquil and have no worldly desire. Although they have these, they do not use them.

2.3 Original text – Part B

所謂堯舜有天下而不與，此以嗇治人也。聖人并包四海，智周萬物。不以私智勞慮，而傷其性真。所謂毋搖爾精，毋勞爾形，毋使汝思慮營營。蓋有智而不用其智，此以嗇事天也。復性工夫，莫速於此。故曰是謂之早復。此復字，是復卦不遠復之意。言其速也。又如一日克己復禮，天下歸仁之意。³

2.4 Translation of Part B

² Shi Deqing 釋德清, *The Daodejing and Its Annotation by Shi Deqing* 老子道德經解(Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2020), p.121-122.

³ Shi Deqing 釋德清, *The Daodejing and Its Annotation by Shi Deqing* 老子道德經解(Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2020), p.122.

That is to say, *Yao and Shun* 堯舜 had the country, but they never wanted to get it, this is to manage material desire by *se*. Sages tolerate the country, and wisdom pervades all things. They do not think hard about personal strategies, which will damage their true nature. That means not disturbing your mind, consuming your body, and confusing your thoughts. Sages have wisdom but do not use it, this is to serve their true nature by *se*. No state to restore the true nature can be more effective than this, Therefore it says, this is early restore. The character *fu* 復 means that it will recover soon in the *fu trigram* 復卦, which means it is very fast. It is also like restraining desires and making words and deeds conform to etiquette in one day, then the country will submit to benevolence.

2.5 Original text – Part C

莊子曰，賊莫大於德有心。然有心之德施於外，故輕而不厚。復性之功，天德日全，不期復而自復，所謂復見天地之心。故曰早復謂之重積德。能重積德，則無不克矣。此克字，乃克敵之克。即顏子克己之克。以性德日厚，則物欲消融。而所過者化，無物與敵。則其德高明廣大，民無得而稱焉。⁴

2.6 Translation of Part C

The Zhuangzi said that the great disaster is scheming morality. However, it is imposed on the outside, so it was despised. The effort to restore true nature is complete day by day, the mind does not expect to recover it, but it naturally recovered. This is understanding the mind of heaven and earth again. Therefore it says, early restore means advocating accumulated virtue. If you can do it, there is nothing you cannot overcome. The character *ke* 克 is the *ke* that defeated the enemy, and the *ke* that *Yanhui* 顏回 restrained his desires. Because their nature of virtue is increasing every day, and material desire gradually disappears. And all the

⁴ Shi Deqing 釋德清, *The Daodejing and Its Annotation by Shi Deqing* 老子道德經解(Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2020), p.122.

places they passed were influenced, and nothing could be against them. Therefore, their virtue is lofty, and ordinary people do not have these and praise them.

2.7 Original text – Part D

故曰無不克，則莫知其極。極，至極，猶涯量也。此內聖之德既全，雖無心於天下，乃可以託於天下。故曰莫知其極，可以有國。此內聖之道，真以治身，其緒餘以為天下國家。故曰可以有國。此道先天地不為老，後天地不為終。故曰可以長久。古人所言深根固蒂長生久視之道者，如此而已。結句蓋古語。老子引證，以結其意耳。⁵

2.8 Translation of Part D

Therefore it says, there is nothing they cannot overcome, so they do not know the limit. The character *ji* 極 means reaching the extreme, just like the meaning of limit. This is that they have the virtue of sages internally, although they do not want the country, it can be entrusted to them. So, if you do not know the limit, you can get to the country. This is the Tao with the virtue of sages internally, they cultivate themselves with sincerity, and their descendants can get the country. Therefore it says, they can get the country. This Tao did not exist long before the emergence of heaven and earth, and did not end after it. Therefore, it can exist for a long time. As the ancients said, the deep-rooted Tao of longevity is just like this. The ending sentence is an ancient saying, and Laozi quoted it as evidence to summarize the meaning.

3. Original text and translation of chapter 63 of the *Daodejing* 道德經

3.1 Original text

⁵ Shi Deqing 釋德清, *The Daodejing and Its Annotation by Shi Deqing* 老子道德經解(Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2020), p.122.

為無為。事無事。味無味。大，小。多，少。報怨以德。圖難於其易。為大於其細。天下難事，必作於易。天下大事，必作於細。是以聖人終不為大，故能成其大。夫輕諾必寡信。多易必多難。是以聖人猶難之。故終無難。⁶

3.2 Translation

Therefore, actions are without intention, doing is natural, and interesting things are uninteresting. Important and unimportant things, respected and unrespectable things, and *Baoyuan Yide* 報怨以德. Seeking difficult things from the simplest place, and do great things from the minutest place. The difficult things in the world must start from the simplest place, and the great things must start from the minutest place. Therefore, sages do not want to achieve great things from beginning to end, but they can achieve it. if they promise easily, it would be difficult to keep their promises. And if they look at things easily, they will encounter many difficulties. So sages are more difficult, but there is no difficulty in the end.

4. Original text and translation of Shi Deqing's 釋德清 annotation of chapter 63

4.1 Original text – Part A

此言聖人入道之要妙，示人以真切工夫也。凡有為，謂智巧。有事，謂功業。有味，謂功名利欲。此三者，皆世人之所尚。然道本至虛而無為。至靜而無事。至淡而無味。獨聖人以道為懷，去彼取此。故所為者無為。所事者無事。所味者無味。故世人皆以名位為大，以利祿為多而取之。然道至虛微淡泊無物，皆以為小少，故棄而不取。⁷

4.2 Translation of Part A

⁶ Shi Deqing 釋德清, *The Daodejing and Its Annotation by Shi Deqing* 老子道德經解(Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2020), p.127-128.

⁷ Shi Deqing 釋德清, *The Daodejing and Its Annotation by Shi Deqing* 老子道德經解(Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2020), p.128.

This means that sages follow the profound and subtle of the Tao, showing people the practical state. The actions with intention are called cunning, doing something are called achievements, and interesting things are called fame and desire. These three things are advocated by ordinary people. However, Tao is originally an extremely non-being action without intention, and an extremely peaceful and nothing, and an extremely indifferent and uninteresting. Only sages have the Tao in their mind and have something to take and give up. Therefore, actions are without intention, doing is natural, and interesting things are uninteresting. Therefore, ordinary people regard reputation and status as important things, and choose profit and salary as respected things. However, Tao is extremely non-being, subtle and indifferent. They think it is unimportant and unrespectable, so they abandon it instead of choosing it.

4.3 Original text – Part B

聖人去功與名，釋智遺形，而獨與道游。是去其大多，而取其小少。故以至小為至大，至少為至多。故大其小，而多其少也。試觀世人報怨以德，則可知矣。何也。且世之人，無論貴賤，事最大而難解者，怨也。然怨之始也，偶因一言之失，一事之差。遂相構結，以至殺身滅名，亡國敗家之禍。甚至有積怨深憤，父子子孫，累世相報而未已者。⁸

4.4 Translation of Part B

Sages give up their achievements and reputation, let go of their wisdom and body, and travel in the world only with Tao. They give up the important and respected things in the eyes of ordinary people, and choose the opposite. Therefore, sages regard the unrespectable things as the most respected things, regard the unimportant things as the most important things. So

⁸ Shi Deqing 釋德清, *The Daodejing and Its Annotation by Shi Deqing* 老子道德經解(Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2020), p.128.

they pay attention to those unimportant and unrespectable things. It is understandable if we try to observe those ordinary people *Baoyuan yide*, and why is it? And for ordinary people, no matter gentle and simple, the most serious and difficult thing to solve is resentment. However, resentment begins because a word or a thing is wrong, so it caused a heart knot with each other. So that there was the fatal disaster, damage to reputation, the subjugation of the country, and the collapse of the family. There was even resentment accumulated for a long time. Father, son, and even several generations have retaliated against each other without end.

4.5 Original text – Part C

此舉世古今之恆情也。豈非其事極大且多哉。惟聖人則不然。察其怨之未結也，本不有。始結也，事甚小。既結也，以為無與於己。故無固執不化之心，亦無有我以與物為匹敵。其既往也，事已消之，求其朕而不可得。以此觀之，則任彼之怨，在我了無報之之心矣。然彼且以為有怨，在我全無報復之心，彼必以我為德矣。⁹

4.6 Translation of Part C

This is the common situation in the ancient and modern world, and is not this an extremely important and numerous thing? Only sages are not like this. They observe that resentment is not over, they think it is non-being. It was just ended, they think it was extremely unimportant. It has ended, they think it has nothing to do with themselves. So they did not insist on not changing their wrong ideas, and they do not want to be compared with all things. The resentment is over, things are over, and they cannot seek the omen of resentment. From this observation, they can bear the resentment of others, and have absolutely no idea of

⁹ Shi Deqing 釋德清, *The Daodejing and Its Annotation by Shi Deqing* 老子道德經解(Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2020), p.128-129.

retaliating. However, others think they have resentment. They do not have this idea of retaliating, and others must think they have morality.

4.7 Original text – Part D

是所謂報怨以德，非謂曲意將德以報怨也。孔子以直報怨，正謂此耳。斯則怨乃事之至大而多，人人必有難釋者。殊不知有至易者存焉。是所謂為無為，事無事，大其小，而多其少也。天下之事，何獨於怨，而事事皆然。¹⁰

4.8 Translation of Part D

This is the so-called *Baoyuan yide*, which does not misinterpret the meaning as returning others' resentment with morality. But as Confucius said, returning them with fairly. Then resentment is an extremely important and numerous thing. Everyone must have something difficult to put down, but they do not know it is extremely easy to exist. This is the so-called, actions are without intention, doing is natural, they pay attention to those unimportant and unrespectable things. Things in the world are not just resentment, but everything is like this.

4.9 Original text – Part E

故天下之事至難者，有至易存焉。至大者，有至細存焉。人不見其易與細，而於難處圖之，大處為之，必終無成。苟能圖之於易，而為之於細，鮮不濟者。以天下難事必作於易。天下大事必作於細，故也。作者，始起也。是以聖人虛心體道，退藏於密。跡愈隱而道愈光，澤流終古而與天地參。此所謂終不為大，故能成其大也。¹¹

4.10 Translation of Part E

¹⁰ Shi Deqing 釋德清, *The Daodejing and Its Annotation by Shi Deqing* 老子道德經解(Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2020), p.129.

¹¹ Shi Deqing 釋德清, *The Daodejing and Its Annotation by Shi Deqing* 老子道德經解(Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2020), p.129.

Therefore, the most difficult thing in the world also has the simplest place, and the most important thing also has the minutest place. People cannot see the simplest and minutest place, but try to gain in the difficult and great place, and they will eventually achieve nothing. If people can seek in simplest and minutest place, and few people cannot succeed. Therefore, sages practice the Tao modestly, they are hiding in a secret place. The more they hide their tracks, the more luminous the Tao will be. It has spread for a long time, and understand the Tao from heaven and earth. This is the so-called, they do not want to achieve great things from beginning to end, but they can achieve it.

4.11 Original text – Part F

老子言及至此，抑恐世人把易字當作容易輕易字看。故誠之曰，夫輕諾必寡信，多易必多難。謂世人不可將事作容易看也。且容易許人，謂之輕諾。凡輕許者，必食言而寡信。見事之容易而輕為者，必有始而無終。是故易字，非容易也。世人之所難，而聖人之所易。世人之所易，而聖人之所難。¹²

4.12 Translation of Part F

Laozi said that to this extent, he was still for fear of ordinary people would regard the character *yi* 易 as easy, so he warned them that if they promise easily, it would be difficult to keep their promises, and if they look at things easily, they will encounter many difficulties. So ordinary people cannot look at things easily. And it is easy to make promises to others, this is called promise easily. Those who promise easily will break their promises and rarely keep their promises. Those who think things are easy and doing it rashly must have a beginning and no end. So the character *yi* does not mean easy. It is difficult for ordinary people, but easy for sages. It is easy for ordinary people, but difficult for sages.

¹² Shi Deqing 釋德清, *The Daodejing and Its Annotation by Shi Deqing* 老子道德經解(Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2020), p.129.

4.13 Original text – Part G

故曰聖人猶難之，故終無難。猶，應作尤。古字通用。更也。謂世人之所甚易者，而聖人更難之，故終不難耳。觀夫文王兢兢，周公業業，戒慎恐懼乎不睹不聞，皆聖人之所難也。余少誦圖難於易為大於細二語，只把作事看。及余入山學道，初為極難，苦心不可言。及得用心之訣，則見其甚易。然初之難，即今之易。今之易，即初之難。然治心如此，推之以及天下之事皆然。此聖人示人入道之真切工夫也。志道者勉之。¹³

4.14 Translation of Part G

Therefore, sages are more difficult, so there is no difficulty in the end. The character *you* 猶 should be used as the character *you* 尤, these two ancient characters can be used interchangeably, which means more. This means that it is very easy for ordinary people, but more difficult for sages, so it is not difficult in the end. Observing *King Wen* 文王 and *Chou Kung* 周公, they were practical and cautious, even in places where no one could see or hear, these are the difficulties of sages. When I was young, I read the two sentences, doing difficult things and great things must from the simplest and minutest place, I just regarded it as related to things. When I entered the mountain to study Tao, it was very difficult at the beginning, and I could not say how much energy it took. When I understand the method of using the heart, I feel very easy. However, the initial difficulty is the present ease, and the present ease is also the initial difficulty. However, cultivating one's own heart is still so, which can extend to all things in the world. This is the practical state for sages to let people know how to follow the Tao, and those who are determined to the Tao should work hard.

¹³ Shi Deqing 釋德清, *The Daodejing and Its Annotation by Shi Deqing* 老子道德經解(Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2020), p.129-130.

5. Commentary

For this translation, I still read the original text repeatedly, and I used several Chinese dictionaries, and the website dictionary *handian* 漢典 to help me translate. For choosing vocabularies, I use *The Oxford Dictionary* 牛津辭典 and the website dictionary *Bing* 必應. Moreover, in the process of translation, I found that the original text involved some chapters of *The Analects of Confucius* 論語. For example, ‘巍巍乎!舜禹之有天下也,而不与焉’, and ‘一日克己复礼, 天下归仁焉’. Therefore, I refer to Li Bingnan's *The Jiangyao of The Analects of Confucius* 論語講要 and the e-book *The Jiangji of The Analects of Confucius* 論語講記 on the website of *Min Lun Monthly* 明倫月刊, which is very helpful for my translation.

6. Reflection

In the process of translation, the idiom ‘*Baoyuan Yide* 報怨以德’ aroused my thinking. In the past, I just understood it as returning resentment with morality. But now, I realize that I understand wrong. Sages not only have no idea of retaliating, but also treat each other with a fair attitude. This makes me reflect on myself, sometimes I feel that I no longer resent someone, but when I do things, I still unconsciously prejudice him. In fact, I still do not put down my resentment, and what I do will naturally hurt each other.

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