



Undergraduate assignment feedback form
(to be completed by marker)

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<i>Module title: The Daodejing</i>	
<i>For completion by marker:</i> <i>Comments:</i>	
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☐ I have not used AI in my assignment

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

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The Chapter Twenty-Seven of the Daodejing

1

Good morning everyone, today my topic is the 27 chapter of *Daodejing*.

2

I will first give an introduction to the text, then share my gains from studying this chapter, and finally summarize its main points.

3

The translation of Daodejing I have chosen is by D.C. Lau. The text he followed is the standard Wang Pi version. The chapter I have chosen has no difference from the standard version.

We can learn the content of the chapter from the translation, so I will just introduce the meanings of each sentence, rather than explain every word one by one.

4

Let's begin with the meaning of the text.

One who excels in travelling leaves no wheel tracks;

“Travelling” and “wheel tracks” are metaphors here. It means that one who excels in doing good deeds does not act intentionally and does good deeds without others knowing.

One who excels in speech makes no slips;

it means that their speech are focused, purposeful and organized, so they are not at fault.

One who excels in reckoning uses no counting rods;

This is also a metaphor, meaning that in their dealings with others, they never scheme or calculate. They can follow the nature of all things, so they do not need external tools for calculation.

5

One who excels in shutting uses no bolts yet what he has shut cannot be opened ;

This is a metaphor referring to leadership. It means that if a ruler governs the state with diligence and cherishes his citizens, then without resorting to other methods, the people will naturally remain loyal to him.

One who excels in tying uses no cords yet what he has tied cannot be undone.

It refers to relationships between people. By following natural principles in dealing with others, there is no need to forcefully bind them; others will naturally remain close.

6

**Therefore the sage always excels in saving people, and so abandons no one;
always excels in saving things, and so abandons nothing.
This is called following one's discernment.**

The sage enables everyone to fulfill their ability to the fullest, and every thing to be used to its fullest potential. The sage's wisdom can show mercy to all things. “明,” translated here as “discernment,” cannot fully express its meaning. “襲” means to receive, preserve, and follow; “明” means understanding the wisdom of the Way. This sentence means to inherit and preserve this Way.

7

**Hence the good man is the teacher the bad learns from;
And the bad man is the material the good works on.
Not to value the teacher.
Nor to love the material
Though it seems clever, betrays great bewilderment.
This is called the essential and the secret.**

This means that everyone around us, whether virtuous or not, can become a model or mirror for ourselves—to follow or to remind us. We should respect and cherish all people. Otherwise, even if one has wisdom but fails to understand this natural Way, one will lose it. This principle is the ultimate, subtle, and profound Way.

8

Now I would like to talk about the reflections I have gained from this chapter. Firstly, this chapter summarises five types of “excelling”... which could apply equally to rulers and ordinary people. Through these metaphors, it teaches us that the reason for doing good is because we want to make things more convenient for others. It is not for the purpose of pursuing fame. If one deliberately does good deeds and hopes everyone will know about them, the purpose is not pure.

9

Every day we need to talk and give speeches, but we need to learn how to say the right words and how to avoid saying the wrong ones. It is important and not simple. We must speak with care so that no one is hurt. We must speak with clarity and focus so that no one is confused. The remaining three points teach us to treat others with sincerity. If we treat people sincerely, there is no need for calculation, and others will naturally not betray us.

10

Not abandoning people is not just about rulers recognizing talent. For us, it means not denying anyone, for everyone has weaknesses as well as strengths. If we only focus on the weaknesses of others, we may become prejudiced. Once prejudice arises, it becomes difficult to see that person's virtues.

Being adept at saving things is a virtue of thrift. In daily life, we often have many old, broken, or damaged items. At such times, we should think of ways to repair and reuse them as much as possible—such as mending clothes or rebuilding broken furniture—so that we do not waste resources.

11

Everyone respects good people, but we should not look down on bad people. When we see their faults, we should first reflect on whether we have them ourselves. If we do, we should correct them; if not, we shall continue to promote ourselves. In this way, whether good or bad, all people can help us grow.

12

In life, I can feel the kindness from others, which is heartfelt and without pretence; such kindness makes people feel at ease.

Also, knowing how to speak effectively makes it easier to identify key points when listening to others or reading, and enables us to organise the logical structure independently.

When interacting with others with sincerity and honesty, there is no need to worry about misunderstandings, for time will reveal a person's true character.

We should learn from the virtues of those around us and try to put them into practice ourselves. When we see unkind behaviour in society, we should not be quick to judge others. Instead, we should reflect on ourselves and focus on improving our own behaviour first. In this way, the social climate can gradually improve.

These are some reflections I have gained after studying this chapter.

Finally, let us summarise the main points of this chapter.

13

Conclusion

Everything should follow nature's Way. Treat others with sincerity, and treat ourselves sincerely too. Do things sincerely from the heart. Help each person equally to develop their strengths, and cherish every object. Treat all people with respect, regarding them as our teachers or mirrors.

14

This is the end of my presentation , thank you for listening, I look foward to any suggestions.
Thank you very much.

The Chapter Twenty-Seven of the Daodejing

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Content

- Text Introduction
- Gains and Reflection
- Summary

Translated with an introduction by

D. C. LAU



PENGUIN BOOKS

XXVII

- 60 One who excels in travelling leaves no wheel tracks;
 One who excels in speech makes no slips;
 One who excels in reckoning uses no counting rods;
 One who excels in shutting uses no bolts yet what he
 has shut cannot be opened;
 One who excels in tying uses no cords yet what he has
 tied cannot be undone.
- 61 Therefore the sage always excels in saving people, and so
 abandons no one; always excels in saving things, and so
 abandons nothing.
- 61a This is called following one's discernment.
- 62 Hence the good man is the teacher the bad learns from;
 And the bad man is the material the good works on.
 Not to value the teacher
 Nor to love the material
 Though it seems clever, betrays great bewilderment.
- 62a This is called the essential and the secret.

Five types of “excelling”

One who excels in travelling leaves no wheel tracks; 善行無轍跡

One who excels in speech makes no slips; 善言無瑕謫

One who excels in reckoning uses no counting rods; 善數不用籌策

Five types of “excelling”

One who excels in shutting uses no bolts yet what he has shut cannot be opened ;

善閉者無關鍵而不可開

One who excels in tying uses no cords yet what he has tied cannot be undone.

善結無繩約而不可解

**Therefore the sage always excels in saving people, and so abandons no one;
always excels in saving things, and so abandons nothing.
This is called following one's discernment.**

是以聖人常善救人，故無棄人；常善救物，故無棄物。是謂襲明。

“襲” means to receive, preserve, and follow;

“明” means understanding the wisdom of the Way.

**Hence the good man is the teacher the bad learns from;
And the bad man is the material the good works on.
Not to value the teacher.
Nor to love the material
Though it seems clever, betrays great bewilderment.
This is called the essential and the secret.**

故善人者，不善人之師；不善人者，善人之資。
不貴其師，不愛其資，雖智大迷。是謂要妙。

Gains and Reflection

The reason for doing good

- Make things more convenient for others.
- Not for the purpose of pursuing fame.

- To say the right words; avoid saying the wrong ones.
- Speak with care so that no one is hurt.
Speak with clarity and focus so that no one is confused.
- Treat people sincerely, there is no need for calculation.

- Not denying anyone, If we only focus on the weaknesses of others, we may become prejudiced.
- In daily life, we should think of ways to repair and reuse some old or damaged items as much as possible

When we see bad people 's faults:

- Reflect on whether we have them ourselves.
- If we do, we should correct them; if not, continue to promote ourself.

- Do kindness is heartfelt and without pretence.
- Knowing how to speak effectively makes it easier to identify key points when listening to others or reading, and enables us to organise the logical structure independently.
- Interacting with others with sincerity and honesty.
- We should reflect on ourselves and focus on improving our own behaviour first.

Conclusion

- Everything should follow nature's Way.
- Treat others and ourselves with sincerity.
- Help each person to develop their strengths.
- Cherish every object.
- Regarding all people as our teachers or mirrors.

Thank you for listening

Bibliography

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