

Postgraduate Assignment coversheet & feedback form

THIS SHEET MUST BE THE FIRST PAGE OF THE ASSIGNMENT YOU ARE SUBMITTING
(DO NOT SEND AS A SEPARATE FILE)

For completion by the student:		
Student Name: Xinyu Zhang		
Module code: SICH7019 Module title: : Readings from The Compilation of Books and Writings on the Important Governing Principles 《國學治要·諸子治要》	Student ID number: 2016173	Educational support needs: Yes / No
Module tutor: Prof. Su-Fan Chen Assignment due date: 2026.8.3		
If your module has multiple submissions please indicate which piece of work this is. 1 st ☒ 2 nd ☐ 3 rd ☐ 4 th ☐ 5 th ☐ 6 th ☐		
Word count:		
I confirm that this is my original work and that I have adhered to the University policy on plagiarism. Signed <u>Xinyu Zhang</u>		
Email submission: if you are submitting this form via email, please tick this box ☐ (as a substitute for your signature) to confirm that you agree to the above declaration.		

Assignment Mark	
1st Marker's Provisional mark	
2nd Marker's/Moderator's provisional mark	
Agreed Internal Mark:	
External Examiner's mark (if relevant)	

Final Mark	
NB. All marks are provisional until confirmed by the Final Examination Board.	

For completion by Marker 1:	
Comments:	
Marker's signature:	Date:
For completion by Marker 2/Moderator:	
Comments:	
Marker's Signature:	Date:
AGREED INTERNAL MARK (where necessary): Comment on process on arriving at agreed mark:	

External Examiner's comments (if relevant)	
External Examiner's Signature:	Date:

AI Acknowledgement

☒ 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.

☐ I have used AI in my assignment

I acknowledge the use of [AI Tool 1] [(AI Tool 1 url)] on [Date] to [Purpose my work: (e.g. support my research/proofread/edit photographic material etc.)]. I used the prompt(s):

1. [Prompt]
2. [Prompt]
3. [Prompt]

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used before, and after the use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

(Delete or continue list as required)

I acknowledge the use of [AI Tool 2] [(AI Tool 2 url)] on [Date] to [Purpose my work (e.g. support my research/proofread/edit photographic material etc.)]. I used the prompt(s):

1. [Prompt]
2. [Prompt]
3. [Prompt]

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used before, and after the use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Water as a Symbol of the Dao in the *Zhangzi*

Module code : SICH7019

Module tutor: Dr. Chen, Sufan

Student name: Xinyu Zhang

Student ID : 2016173

Date : 31st July 2026



1

Introduction

2

1. Introduction

《道德經》：

「**上善若水**。水善利萬物而不爭，
處衆人之所惡，故幾於道。」

The highest excellence is like (that of) water. The excellence of water appears in its benefiting all things, and in its occupying, without striving (to the contrary), the low place which all men dislike. Hence (its way) is near to (that of) the Dao.

---Translated by James Legge



non-contention

1. Introduction

《道德經》：

「天下莫柔弱於水，而攻堅強者
莫之能勝，其無以易之。」

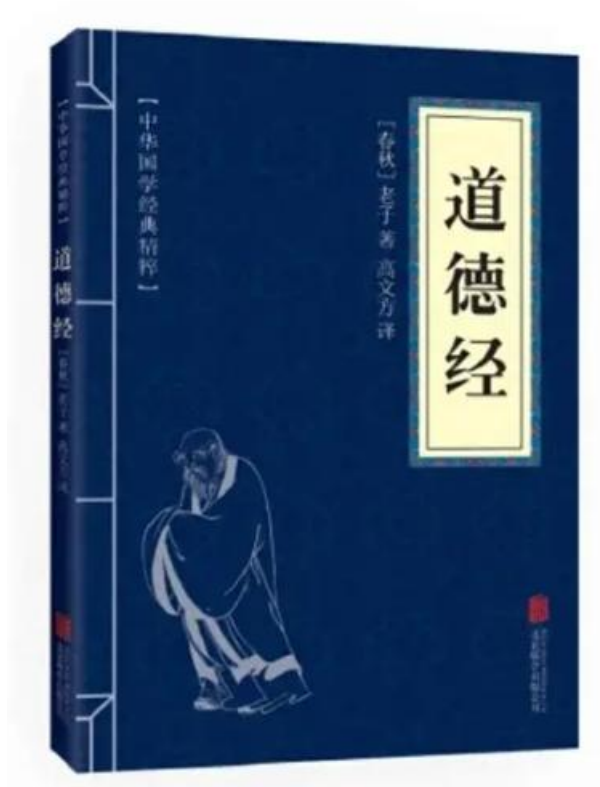
There is nothing in the world more soft and weak than water, and yet for attacking things that are firm and strong there is nothing that can take precedence of it; - for there is nothing (so effectual) for which it can be changed.

---Translated by James Legge



softness overcomes hardness

1. Introduction



three times



more than forty times

1. Introduction



海 河 ...

seas / rivers

1. Introduction



**non-contention &
softness overcoming hardness**



1. Introduction

directly
mention ‘水’



different physical states of water
like steam or ice

water-derived place-names

1. Introduction



《莊子》：

➤ 〈逍遙遊〉：「往見四子藐姑射之山，汾水之陽。」

➤ 〈天地〉：「黃帝遊乎赤水之北。」

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Contents

- **Still Water :**
- **Flowing Water:**
- **The Union of Still and Flowing Water:**



An abstract painting with a teal and blue color palette. The upper portion features a textured, swirling sky with a small, pale circular object resembling a sun or moon. Below the sky, dark, jagged mountain peaks are visible. The foreground is dominated by a large, dark, textured mass that looks like a body of water or a dense forest, with some lighter, more defined shapes on the left side.

2

Still Water:

2. Still Water

- 魯有兀者王骀，從之遊者，與仲尼相若……常季曰：「彼為己，以其知得其心，以其心得其常心，物何為最之哉？」
- 仲尼曰：「人莫鑑於流水，而鑑於止水，唯止能止眾止。」——〈德充符〉

In Lu there was a Wang Tai who had lost both his feet; while his disciples who followed and went about with him were as numerous as those of Zhongni.

---Translated by James Legge



2. Still Water

- 魯有兀者王骀，從之遊者，與仲尼相若……常季曰：「彼為己，以其知得其心，以其心得其常心，物何為最之哉？」
- 仲尼曰：「人莫鑑於流水，而鑑於止水，唯止能止眾止。」——〈德充符〉

The reply was, 'Men do not look into running water as a mirror, but into still water - it is only the still water that can arrest them all, and keep them (in the contemplation of their real selves).

---Translated by James Legge



2. Still Water

【疏】鑑，照也。夫止水所以留鑑者，為其澄清故也；王駘所以聚眾者，為其凝寂故也。止水本無情於鑑物，物自照之；王駘豈有意於招攜，而眾自來歸湊者也。



成玄英



2. Still Water

「何謂德不形？」曰：「平者，水停之盛也。其可以為法也，內保之而外不蕩也。德者，成和之修也。」——〈德充符〉

‘And virtue without outward form ; what is that ?’

‘ In a water-level,’ said Confucius, ‘the water is in a most perfect state of repose. Let that be your model. The water remains quietly within, and does not overflow. It is from the cultivation of such harmony that virtue results.’

---Herbert. A. Giles

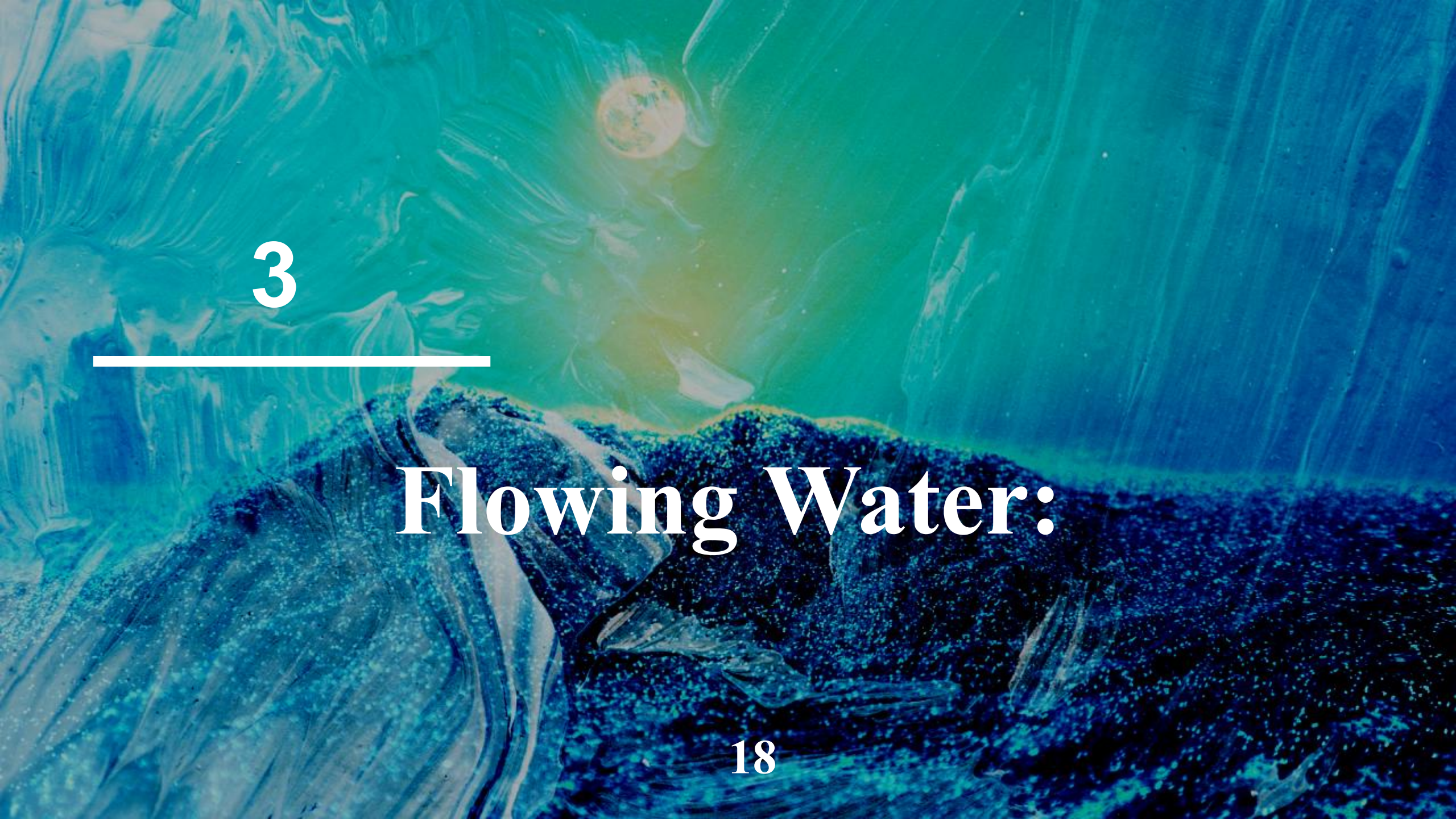
2. Still Water

【疏】夫水性澄清，鑒照於物，大匠雖巧，非水不平。故能保守其明而不波蕩者，可以軌〔轍〕工人，洞鑒妍醜也。

Water is naturally clear and transparent, so it can show things exactly as they are.

2. Still Water

- stands for inner clarity
- just like a bright mirror
- reflect everything truthfully and thoroughly



3

Flowing Water:

3. Flowing Water

老聃曰：「不然。夫水之於汭也，無為而才自然矣。至人之於德也，不修而物不能離焉，若天之自高，地之自厚，日月之自明，夫何修焉！」 — 〈田子方〉

Lao Dan replied, 'Not so. Look at the spring, the water of which rises and overflows - it does nothing, but it naturally acts so. So with the perfect man and his virtue - he does not cultivate it, and nothing evades its influence. He is like heaven which is high of itself, like earth which is solid of itself, like the sun and moon which shine of themselves - what need is there to cultivate it?'

---Translated by James Legge

3. Flowing Water

【疏】 洑者，水自然涌出，非若泉之有源，而溪澗之交匯以流行也……水之涌出，亦若激而有聲。**無為而才自然**，言無有疏導之者。



郭嵩燾

3. Flowing Water

- Still Water——Stresses a state of clarity and inner calm
- Flowing Water——Stands for acting to no purpose, simply being what it is

3. Flowing Water

彼至人者，歸精神乎無始，而甘冥乎無何有之鄉。
水流乎無形，發泄乎太清。

— 〈列禦寇〉

The perfect man directs the energy of his spirit to what was before the Beginning, and finds pleasure in the mysteriousness belonging to the region of nothingness. He is like the water which flows on without the obstruction of matter, and expands into the Grand Purity.

---Translated by James Legge



3. Flowing Water

【郭象注】泊然無為而任其天行也。

They act to no purpose and follow the natural course of things.

3. Flowing Water

【成玄英疏】無以順物，如水流行，隨時適變，不守形跡。跡不離本，故雖應動，恆發泄於太清之極也。

3. Flowing Water

- acting to no purpose and following nature
- the sage reacts to the world naturally, changes with situations, but always keeps his fundamental inner purity





4

The Union of Still and Flowing Water:

4. The Union of Still and Flowing Water

夫子曰：「夫道，淵乎其居也，
濇乎其清也。」——〈天地〉

**The Master said, ‘ How profound
in its repose, how infinite in its
purity, is Dao!’**

--Herbert. A. Giles

4. The Union of Still and Flowing Water

【疏】至理深玄，譬猶淵海，濔然清絜，明燭（鬢）
（鬢）眉。淵則歎其居寂以深澄，濔則歎其雖動而
恆絜也。

4. The Union of Still and Flowing Water

【疏】至理深玄，譬猶淵海，濔然清絜，明燭（鬢）
（鬢）眉。淵則歎其居寂以深澄，濔則歎其雖動而
恆絜也。

4. The Union of Still and Flowing Water

- These two qualities come together as one.—— Dao



The background is an abstract composition of teal and blue brushstrokes. A small, textured globe is visible in the upper center. The overall style is painterly and expressive.

5

Conclusion

5. Conclusion

Still water symbolises the Dao's tranquillity and clarity. Like a mirror, it reflects all things truly.

Flowing water stands for acting to no purpose and natural spontaneity.



The background is a solid teal color with a complex, organic pattern of white and light blue lines and swirls, resembling marbled paper or a textured surface. The text is centered and reads "THANK YOU FOR LISTENING." in a white, serif, all-caps font.

THANK YOU FOR
LISTENING.