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| Module Code: SICH4002                                                                                     | Student number:<br>1804594 |
| Module title: Sinological English I                                                                       |                            |
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# A Translation of Chapter 58 of the *Daodejing* 道德經

## and Its Annotation by Shi Deqing

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Word count:1285

Respected provost, Miss Deng and everybody, good morning. My name is Liu Siyu. Today I am very happy to present you the translation about the original text of *Dao De Jing* and the annotation by Venerable master Hanshan.

The speak will divided into three parts. First, I will read my translation of original Chinese text chapter 58 and Shi Deqing's 釋德清 annotation. Second, I will share my commentary of translation about the text. Finally, I want to talk some reflection on the whole translation.

### 1. Original text and translation of chapter 58 of the *Daodejing* 道德經

#### 1.1 Original text

其政悶悶，其民醇醇。其政察察，其民缺缺。禍兮福所倚，福兮禍所伏。孰知其極，其無正耶。正復為奇，善復為妖。人之迷，其日固久。是以聖人方而不割，廉而不剝，直而不肆，光而不耀。<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.2 Translation

If the state's politics are lenient and moderate, the people will be simple and honest. If the politics are harsh and meticulous, then the people will complain and not satisfied. Fortune

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<sup>1</sup> Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清, Laozi Daodejing Jie 老子道德經解, (Beijing, ZHONG HUA Book Company,2020) p.119.

and misfortune depend on each other. Misfortune hid in happiness. Who knows what it is? It is not fixed. The positive can become strange, and the good can become evil. People's confusion has days for a long time. Therefore, the sage's virtue is upright and does not hurt others, incorruptibility but not harsh to others, integrity and will not be presumptuous, bright and does not flaunt himself.

## 2. Original text and translation of Shi Deqing's 釋德清 annotation of chapter 58

### 2.1 Original text – Part A

此詳言上章有為之害，而示之以無為之方也。悶悶，無知貌。所謂民可使由之，不可使知之之意。由百姓皆注其耳目，若示有知，即上雲法令滋彰，盜賊多有矣。故聖人潛行密用，令其悶悶然若無所知。則民情不鑿，奸偽自然不生。故其政悶悶，其民醇醇。若其政令察察然分星擘兩，則民多不自安，缺缺然憂有餘矣。故雲其政察察，其民缺缺。缺缺，多憂不足之意。<sup>2</sup>

### 2.2 Translation of Part A

This is a detailed introduction to the harm of actions done with intention in the previous chapter, to show the method without any intention to do so. These characters ‘悶悶’ mean the unknown appearance. That is what it means by ‘The people can follow but cannot let them know the reason.’. Because the people focus on seeing and listening. Then, if to increase their knowledge, as mentioned in the previous chapter, there will be more and more onerous laws, as well as more and more robbers and thieves. Therefore the sages just guide the people with skillful means thabs so that people do not know the situation like walking in the muddy water. Then people will have no understanding of the situation and there will be no cases of committing crimes. So if the state's politics are lenient and moderate, the people

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<sup>2</sup> Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清, Laozi Daodejing Jie 老子道德經解, p.120.

will be simple and honest. If decrees are made very clear and square accounts in every detail, then the people will only fear that they will violate and make mistakes, that they will suffer losses, and that they will become worried all day long. So Laozi said, If the country's politics are harsh and meticulous, then the people will complain and not satisfied. These characters ‘缺缺’ mean a lot of worry and discontent.

### 2.3 Original text – Part B

蓋禍福之機，端在人心之所萌。若其機善，則禍轉為福。若其機不善，則福轉而為禍。此禍福相倚伏也。由人機心不息，則禍福旋轉如循環之無端，人孰能知其止極耶。故孔子曰，知機其神乎，謂是故也。然禍福循環之如此，豈無真人而以理正之耶。<sup>3</sup>

### 2.4 Translation of Part B

In fact, whether good or bad things happen or not depends on the first thoughts in one's heart. If people's thoughts are good, it will turn and change bad things to good things. If people's thoughts are bad, it will turn and change good things to bad things. This is a truth that misfortune and happiness often come together. Because people's motives and ideas will never stop, so the good and bad things are just like a cycle in a circle. How people will know to stop. Thus, Confucius said : ‘How incredible to predict the minute signs of things’ . Is there no sage to help people with truth to correct the cycle of misfortune and happiness?

### 2.5 Original text – Part C

但世衰道微，人心不古，邪正不分，善惡顛倒。本示之以正，則彼反以為奇詭。本教之以善，而彼反以為妖怪。正所謂未信而勞諫，則以為厲謗。此人心之迷固已久

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<sup>3</sup> Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清， Laozi Daodejing Jie 老子道德經解， p.120.

矣，縱有聖人之教，亦不能正之矣。莊子曰，三人行，一人迷方，猶有解者。二人惑，則不能易。今天下皆迷，其誰能解之耶。<sup>4</sup>

## 2.6 Translation of Part C

But now morality has declined, and people's hearts are not as simple as those of the ancients. They cannot distinguish between evil and good, and also reverse good and evil. The sage's painstaking efforts to reveal the right truth, which are considered strange and weird. Sages taught people to do good, but they treated sages as monsters. That is to say, if you admonish others diligently before building trust with them, they will think you are speaking ill of them. This is because the right way in people's heart has been lost for a long time, even if there is a sage's teaching, it can not be corrected. Zhuangzi said, three people walking together, one lost the way, but also can solve, but two people are confused, it is not so easy to solve. Now everyone in the world is lost, could who solve it.

## 2.7 Original text – Part D

是以聖人遊濁世以化民，貴在同塵和光，渾然無跡。故雖方而不傷其割。割，謂割截，乃鋒稜太露也。雖廉而不傷於劇。劇，謂刻削太甚也。雖直而不傷於肆。肆，謂任意無忌也。雖光而不傷於耀。耀，謂銜耀已見也。此聖人有所長，而能養其所長，故為天下貴。此所以無為而治，好靜而自安，無為而民自化矣。<sup>5</sup>

## 2.8 Translation of Part D

Therefore, the most important thing for sages to educate the people in such a turbid world is to be able to integrate into them and influence them with own light without any traces. Therefore, the sage's behavior is upright, but does not harm others. The character 割 means sectioning, that is too sharp. Although he is incorruptible, it will not hurt others like a knife.

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<sup>4</sup> Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清，Laozi Daodejing Jie 老子道德經解，p.120.

<sup>5</sup> Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清，Laozi Daodejing Jie 老子道德經解，p.121.

The character 剡 means too much cutting. Although he is integrity, but not indulge to do anything. The character 肆 means 'at will'. Although he is outstanding, he will not show off himself or belittle others. The character 耀 means flaunt one's opinion. That is to say sages have strengths, and they are also good at self-restraint their own strengths. Therefore, they are the reverence people in the world. Hence, he influence people without any intention and expectation. He like quiet can make inner peace, and in that way, without doing anything, the people themselves have changed.

### 3. Commentary

Next is my commentary of translation. I used dictionaries such as *Shuowen Jiezi* and online dictionary Handian to check some words or characters that I cannot understand in the Chinese original texts. Then when I translate in English, I checked the lexico online dictionary and sometimes look up the notes in the previous lectures to help me translate more accurately. Despite this, many places are still difficult to translate. Because in Chinese I cannot tell whether it is a verb or a noun or other part of speech. This may cause me to misunderstand the original text. For example, for this sentence '孔子曰，知機其神乎。' At the beginning, I understood the character *Shen* as equivalent to the ancient Chinese immortal. So I translated it——Confucius said: 'People who can grasp opportunities are immortals.' But I think there is a big gap between this and the context. So I looked for information everywhere and read this sentence repeatedly. I realized that this sentence is to show that it is very rare to be able to pay attention to own motivation. Because immortals are very rare. This place is to describe that there are very few people who can know and see their motives. Thus, Confucius had such a sigh. So, I translated it——Confucius said : 'How incredible to know the minute signs of things'.

### 4. Self-Reflection

Then next, I'll share some reflection from my translation. for this sentence 'Fortune and misfortune depend on each other. Misfortune hid in happiness'. , my understanding is that whether it is good or bad, we should be able to treat it with an ordinary heart. If we meet some good things and be very happy, or meet some bad things and be very sad. That is not

good choice, because we cannot observe the learning process from it. Everything has two sides. If you are proud and vain when it comes to good things, you only increase your bad behavior. On the contrary, if you can be calm in the face of good things, you will not easily get carried away, and you will be able to observe your mind from them. If something bad happens, you also can learn many experiences that how can we do the next time from it. So do not immerse yourself in joy when encountering good things, and do not feel irritable or depressed when encountering bad things, that is, do not put your mood on the things that have passed, and more importantly, do the things that are now.

That is all for my presentation, thank you for listening.

## **5. Bibliography**

### **Books (Chinese)**

Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清, Laozi Daodejing Jie 老子道德經解, (Beijing, ZHONG HUA Book Company, 2020)