



Undergraduate assignment feedback form (to be completed by marker)

<i>Student Name: Taiyu Cao (曹泰域)</i>	
<i>Module Code: SIC4002</i> <i>Module title:</i> <i>Sinological English I</i>	<i>Student number: 1706350</i>
<i>For completion by marker:</i> <i>Comments:</i>	
<i>Marker's signature:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
<i>Provisional mark:</i> NB. All marks are provisional until confirmed by the final examination board.	

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

Student name: Taiyu Cao

SID: 1706350

Date: 14/02/2020

Word count: 2900

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。

1.2 Translation

To govern the people and to comply with oneself's true nature, it is most ideal to preserve and value one's essence of energy. Only by doing so, can one realise the innate nature sooner. Sooner realisation yields great accumulation of virtuous deeds; with great accumulation of virtuous deeds, all kinds of difficulties can be overcome; when difficulties are overcome, one's strength and competency is considered limitless; with limitless strength and competency, one can shoulder the responsibilities of ruling a state; with the appropriate fundamental strategies of governing, such a government could last a long time. Entrenched foundation to any matter is the principle for its everlasting existence.

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

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 Translation Part A

This chapter expresses that sages keep themselves away from greed and desire in order to restore the true nature, that is the principle of Sageliness within and kingliness without. The character 嗇 has the meaning of possessing but not using. The relationship between the nature and people that is mentioned by Laozi is explained very clearly by Zhuangzi. For instance, the nature cannot be destroyed because of the desire of human being and one's innate nature cannot be polluted as a result of consuming material matter. The people here refer to the desire for material matter, and the nature refers to one's origin or one's innately true nature. The character 嗇 "嗇" is the method of returning to the origin (one's true nature). When sages are in exalted position, they become emperors and possess the whole country. Their younger generations will have wealth and all the material pleasures present in front of them. However, they hold their principles with the Dao, and consider those as if they did not exist and have no desire, they are their own without using.

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。

2.4 Translation of Part B

The emperors Yao and Shun have the country but do not occupy anything from it. Sages have the world. Their wisdom is above all things in nature. They do not run their wisdom to worry

so much that would harm their true nature. That is about not consuming the essence of energy, not working too hard to tire the body and not thinking so much. They have wisdom but do not use it. That is considered the quickest way of returning to one's true nature. The character *fu* “復” has the meaning of being back from less than a mile away, which expresses how fast it is and it also has the meaning that “If a man can for one day subdue himself and return to propriety, all under heaven will ascribe perfect virtue to him.”

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。

2.6 Translation of Part C

Zhuangzi said of all things that injure (men) there is none greater than the practising of virtue with a purpose. The good deeds are done intentionally, which is of little value. The method of returning the nature can make natural good deeds grow day by day, you do not expect returning but it will come back spontaneously. Therefore, the accumulation of virtue can overcome everything. The character *ke* 克 has the meaning of defeating the enemy. As the virtue of nature is abundant, the desires will disappear gradually. Everywhere sages go by will be influenced and nothing can be their enemy. Their virtue is supreme that people cannot describe it in words.

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。

2.8 Translation of Part D

The character 極 is boundary. Sages' virtue is complete. They have no intention to occupy the country but it can be given to their hand. That is the way to attain the state of Sageliness within. The true nature is taken into maintaining their own body and spirit, the rest are used to govern the country. Therefore, the Dao is born before the heaven and earth but it would not grow old, and it disappears after the heaven and earth end, but there is no end to the Dao. Therefore, last sentence is from old saying. Laozi quote it in order to summarize his thought.

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

3.1 Original text

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。

3.2 Translation

Do without the intention of “doing”; handle affairs without intention of making achievement; taste without the anticipation of its flavour. The small can be recognised as the great, and the few as the many. Resentment is responded with kindness. To resolve difficulties, it is best to deal with them when they are still simple; every great accomplishment begins with the completion of small tasks. In this world, difficulties grow from easier beginnings, and great accomplishments are developed from small details. Sages do not crave for greatness (not

arrogant), but they achieve greatness. If one makes promises too easily, then he/she can lose other's trust; if one considers a matter too easy, he/she is bound to face difficulties. Sages are able to see more difficulties in all matters than there really are, and that is why they find nothing too difficult 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。

4.2 Translation of Part A

This chapter expresses the wonder in how to follow the Dao in practice and illustrate the true method. Doing something without holding expectation is intelligent. Having things means the outstanding work, having taste refers to the achievement, reputation, profits and desire. Three of them are valued by ordinary people. However, the Dao is empty and effortless, steady and light and tasteless. Only sages take the Dao as the priority over other matters. therefore, ordinary people consider reputation as the most significant and desire for as much profit possible. However, the Dao is void and unsophisticated like nothingness, those all are characterized by the small and the less. So they let it go and do not crave to take 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。

4.4 Translation of Part B

Sages forgo the aspiration for great achievement and fame, let go of wisdom and ignore the body, instead they long to travel with the Dao. That means they left the “big” but hold the “small”. Therefore, they regard the “smallest” as the “biggest”, the fewest as the most and consider the biggest as the smallest, the most as the fewest. It can be understood when observing the example of returning resentment with kindness in society. Why? For ordinary people, no matter high or low in social status, the most challenging situation to solve is the grudge between people. Nevertheless, it could be due to the beginnings, whether it might be inappropriate words or a mistake in one’s action, these can be the causes to trigger feud between people, and such feud can evolve into serious hatred that can draw harm and damage to oneself as well as one’s country. Enhanced hatred could possibly last and stay unsolved for generations.

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。

4.6 Translation of Part C

It is an unchangeable law from the past to the present. Is that caused by the big and the many? Sages are different. They understand there is nothing before the grudge has occurred, it is not a big deal in the beginning, it is not a big deal in the beginning, although resentment is formed, they still do not think it will spring influence on them. Therefore, they do not have attachment to it and do not stand in the opposite position to fight against others. When the incident has passed, they let go of their feelings, even any trace of it cannot be found. From this view, one can observe that even when others still hold the sense of grudge, sages do not wish to retaliate against them in any way. However, when there are no thoughts of retaliation in the sages' response, others will regard this manner as virtue.

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。

4.8 Translation of Part D

That is to return resentment with kindness voluntarily, not going against one's own will and force oneself to do so. To requite resentment with justice said by Confucius, has the same meaning here. Resentment is something considered "big and many", everyone will go through difficulties. The hardest things have the simplest aspects. Do without the intention of "doing"; handle affairs without the intention of making achievement; change from "big to small" and "many to fewer". All affairs in the world begin with simple aspects, not just the aspect of resentment, nothing is an exception.

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。

4.10 Translation of Part E

Therefore, the simple exist in the difficult things, the small live in the big. Ordinary people cannot understand the simple and small sides, instead, they handle things from the difficult side and big aspect, which eventually could cause them to not succeed. If they can begin with the simple and start from the small, there are nothing that cannot be achieved. That is because difficulties grow from easier beginnings, and great accomplishments are developed from small details. The character *zuo* 作 is the meaning of “start from”. Therefore, sages experience and observe the essence of the Dao with humility. They retain their wisdom and live in the same way with others. The less wisdom they show, the more light of their true nature will shine. Their nature can shine over all things on the earth, they will be remembered from generations to generations and their principles will live everlastingly just like Heaven and earth. That is the principle that sages do not crave for greatness, but they achieve greatness.

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。

4.12 Translation of Part F

Laozi worry that ordinary people regard the character yi 易 as “easy”, so he tells us that if one makes promises too easily, then he/she can lose other’s trust; if one considers a matter too easy, he/she is bound to face difficulties. He warned people not to take things too easily. Making promise too easily is a rushed promise. Those who make a rushed promise might not fulfill what they have promised and would end up losing the trust from others. Those who see it as something easy when handling things will not eventually finish it. Therefore, the character yi does not refer to “easy”. What is regarded as difficult by the people is seen as simple by sages, instead what is regarded as simple is concerned as difficult by the sages.

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。

4.14 Translation of Part G

Therefore, sages are able to see more difficulties in all matters than there really are, and that is why they find nothing too difficult in the end. The character “you 猶” should be the character “you 尤”, they are interchangeable and mean “more”. This expresses that the things people think as too easy are concerned as something more difficult. It is the reason why they find nothing too difficult in the end. We can see from the history, Wenwang 文王 and Zhougong 周公 lived with the attitude of prudence and they kept to this principle everywhere they went, even those places when they were not seen or heard. That is something that sages

perceive as difficulties. When Venerable Master Han Shan read these sentences in his young age, he did not fully understand it. After he gave up all that he had and went to the mountain to pursue the Dao, it was too hard for him in the beginning and he could not even express his difficulties. As he found the way to focus his mind later, he realised that was simple. Those difficulties he thought before become simple now, instead the simple things now appear to be the difficulties in the past. However, practicing to focus one's mind would have to experience this process. That principle can be applied on all things. This chapter is to express how sages follow the Dao in practice. This annotation written by Venerable Master Han Shan is to encourage those who have some aspirations in the pursuit of Dao.

5. Commentary

During the process of translating chapter fifty nine and chapter sixty three, I realised that to properly understand the true meaning of the original text was far more difficult than the translation itself. Misinterpretation of the original text will lead to incorrect translation. Therefore, after reading the annotation by Venerable Master Han Shan, I also referred to other annotations written by both ancient and contemporary scholars to enhance my understanding of the text and to resolve my doubts and confusion of some parts.

First of all, let's look at the first sentence in chapter fifty nine of Laozi “治人事天”. In Venerable Master Han Shan's annotation, he explained “ren (人)” as the external materialistic desire, and “天 (tian)” as one's innate true nature. So this would mean that one can retrieve one's true nature by removing desire. At first I found this way of explanation not coherent and relevant enough; but I could have misunderstood the venerable master's comment. In scholar He Shang Gong's annotation, he said: To govern the people while

cherishing them, then the people would not have to live in toil (蓄以治人，則民不勞。)¹ “zhi ren (治人)” here refers to the governing or ruling of the people of a state. I later found out that Venerable Master Han Shan’s annotation also contains this meaning. He mentioned the principle of “Sageliness within and kingliness without” in this chapter; for the interpretation of “one can shoulder the responsibilities of ruling a state (可以有國)”, the Venerable Master explains it as “the true nature is taken into cultivating their body and spirit, the remaining are used to govern the state. (真以治身，其緒餘以為天下國家。)”². So the governing of the state is also mentioned here. Therefore, I believe this suggests that sages apply the way of “complying with oneself’s true nature” (事天之道) in governing the people, and they also maintain the same principle of “cherishing” (蓄) whether it is for governing the people or for following the true nature. The fundamental meaning of Venerable Master Han Shan’s annotation is essentially the same as He Shang Gong’s.

The verse of “with the appropriate fundamental strategies of governing (有國之母)” is not mentioned in Venerable Master Han Shan’s annotation. Wang Bi’s annotation explains this as social stability is the motherhood of a state.² Contemporary scholar Yu Pei Lin illustrates this verse as to “uphold the fundamental principles and strategies of governing a state.”³ My own translation of this verse is based on references of those two scholars’ commentary.

The last two verses of chapter fifty nine (是謂深根固蒂，長生久視之道。) appear to be the most difficult to translate directly from its literary meaning, Venerable Master Han Shan suggests that the two verses come from ancient texts and Laozi used them to conclude his

¹ Laozijijie 老子集解 edited by Xitong 奚侗, Laozi Jicheng 老子集成, (Beijing: Zongjiao Wenhua Press 宗教文化出版社, 2011) Vol.13, p. 23.

² Wangbi 王弼, 老子道德經校註釋, (Beijing: Zhonghuashuju 中華書局, 2008), p.156.

³ Yupeilin, 余培林, Xinyi Laoziduben 新譯老子讀本, (Taipei: Sanminshuju 三民書局 2017), p.122.

ideas in this chapter. In the various annotations of Daodejing (including Venerable Master Han Shan's version), little can be found on the explanation of these two verses. He Shang Gong used Su Shi's annotation in his explanation. Su Shi states that: "The sages of ancient times do not allow external materialistic desire to exhaust their inner essence of energy; this would help to prolong their lifespan. It is as if the deep-rooted tree would not easily fall, and flowers from strong stems would not drop from their branch. Thus a long and healthy life is achievable."⁴ Yu Pei Lin explains the character "視" in the verse "長生久視" as living a long life. Moreover, Huangdi Neijing (《黃帝內經》) also says that if one can guard his essence of energy within, then illness has no opportunity to enter one's body.⁵ This tells us that the human body holds sufficient energy to fight the invasion of bacteria and diseases, so the preservation of the essence of energy is the key to maintain long-term good health. Based on these viewpoints, the two verses (是謂深根固蒂，長生久視之道) can be translated as "Entrenched foundation to any matter (preserving energy) is the principle for prolonging life." But then I thought this type of translation tends to overly emphasise the way to maintain the wellness of the body, it cannot fully express the messages that Laozi wishes to convey. In reality, there is a time limit for our bodies to exist in this world, no matter for how long, everybody would eventually leave this world. Our lives are like the rising and the setting of the Sun. Therefore, Laozi would not in his teachings encourage people to try and live forever, but more towards what the ancients said, one may die but his/her spirit will live on. This can be understood that the sages' way of governing the people and complying with the true nature (治人事天) is a great example to be followed. Their principles are like the firm deep root of a tree. While the sages are alive, the practice of such principles can give them a long and

⁴ Laozijijie 老子集解 edited by Xitong 奚侗, Laozi Jicheng 老子集成, (Beijing: Zongjiao Wenhua Press 宗教文化出版社, 2011) Vol.13, p. 23.

⁵ Translated by Taiyu, Huangdineijing 黃帝內經, https://so.gushiwen.org/guwen/bookv_964.aspx, 2020,02,13.

healthy life and at the same time, social stability is achieved under their governing. After they leave this world, their teachings and spirit will continue on. Hence, my final translation for the last two verses (是謂深根固蒂，長生久視之道) is “Entrenched foundation to any matter is the principle for its everlasting existence.”

6. Reflection

In this section, I would like to summarise my reflection on the translation of these two chapters. Chapter fifty nine tells us to cherish our essence of energy in order to comply with our true nature, and chapter sixty three teaches us to begin difficult tasks from simple steps. All of these principles are great guidance to our life and studies. Firstly, it is best to make a plan for our everyday living and study to start a regular routine. A regular and disciplined routine can enhance one’s physical and mental health. For me, this assignment has been a challenge. It took me three weeks to complete the presentation, which gave me about one week to finish the translation of the two chapters. My lack of balance in planning the two tasks has interrupted my regular routine. I believe an improved way of planning the time given to my assessment is essential for my future university life.

7. Bibliography

7.1 Books

1. *Laozijijie* 老子集解 edited by Xitong 奚侗, *Laozi Jicheng* 老子集成, (Beijing: Zongjiao Wenhua Press 宗教文化出版社,) Vol.13, May, 2011.
2. *Wangbi* 王弼, 老子道德經校註釋, (Beijing: Zhonghuashuju 中華書局, 2008).

3.Yupeilin,余培林, *Xinyi Laoziduben* 新譯老子讀本, (Taipei: Sanminshuju 三民書局 2017).

7.2 Websites

Huangdineijing 黃帝內經, https://so.gushiwen.org/guwen/bookv_964.aspx, 2020,02,13.