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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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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。

1.2 Translation

If the country's politics is tolerant and benevolent, the people will be honest and sincere. The country's policies are strict, people will complain and not be satisfied. Disaster and happiness are interdependent, and disaster often 孩子 hides in happiness. Who knows what it will eventually become? Nothing is fixed. Normal will become oddity, and kindness will become evil. Human doubts have existed for a long time. With the virtue of sages, they are frank and do not hurt others, they are upright and do not criticize others, they are honest and do not be presumptuous and glory without ostentation.

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，即上云法令滋彰，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。故云其政察察，其民缺缺。缺缺，多憂不足之意。

2.2 Translation of Part A

This chapter describes in detail that intentional intervention in people is harmful and teach to govern the world without being the touch to anything. The Chinese characters 悶悶, it is to describe the appearance of unknown. It means that people should be guided and should not be allowed to add too much knowledge. People pay much attention to the feelings of their eyes and ears, if they increase their knowledge, there will be more and more laws and more thieves. If the sage only guides the people silently and keeps them in a state of unknown. If the people are simple, they will not break the law, which is called 其政悶悶，其民醇醇。If the decree [di'kri:] is too complex['kɒmpleks], the people will worry about violating the law and suffering losses ['lɒsɪz], which is called 其政察察，其民缺缺. The Chinese characters 缺缺 means worry about insufficient [ˌɪnsə'fɪʃnt] income.

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。

2.4 Translation of Part B

In fact, the key to misfortune and happiness lies 赖子 in the beginning of people's mind. If people has a good idea, the disaster will turn into a blessing['blesɪŋ]. If people have evil thoughts, good things will become bad. This is the truth that misfortunes and blessings depend on each other. People's thoughts don't stop for a moment, so misfortune and blessing keep circulating .People don't know when it will stop. Therefore, Confucius said that knowing the key to things is very magical, it what they talk about. There is such a cycle['saɪkl] of misfortunes and blessings, is there no sage to correct the people.

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。

2.6 Translation of Part C

Just because the social atmosphere is declining and the human heart is not honest and simple, evil and good cannot be distinguish, and kindness and evil are reversed . When a sage tells the truth, it is easy to be regarded as a fallacy. Sages teach to be kindness, but they are considered monsters. It is the so-called failure to listen to advice and criticism, but it is considered to be slandering him. People's hearts have been lost for too long, even if they are taught by sages, they can't be completely corrected. Zhuang Zi said that when three people walk together, one loses his way, and there is still a way to save him. If the two people get

lost, the rescue is not so easy. Now people all over the world have lost their way, who can save them.

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。

2.8 Translation of Part D

Sages educate people in the this turbid world. The important thing is that they will not show themselves. They have no edge and corner. They will do the same things as ordinary people without showing their edge. They are upright and will not hurt others, the Chinese character 劇 means that stab something with the tip of a knife, and it's very deep. Honest but not presumptuous. The Chinese character 肆 means willful without any scruples. Although they are dazzling, however, they never shows off themselves. The Chinese character 耀 means show off their opinions. Sages have their own strengths, but they never rely on them, so they are the most noble people in the world. Sages govern the country with no intention. they love peace, people are naturally stable. The sages do not touch to anything, people are naturally influenced.

3. Commentary and Self-Reflection

To be honest, I have some difficulties in understanding Chinese in this book. I cannot fully understand the meaning of these sentences. In order to translate this article better, I refer to the 《道德经注释》 written by Huang Yuan Ji, 《道德经心传》 written by Lu Zubi, and 《老子道德经憨山注》解读 written by 释德清、逸尘, These books have helped me a lot. In English translation, I often feel distressed because I can't find the right English words.

Lao Zi's idea is reflected at the beginning of this chapter that the sages influence the world without being the touch to anything. He respect the laws of nature and hope to keep the people in a simple state. In a state of ignorance, society can maintain stability.

This chapter is followed by the previous chapter on the way of governing the country. Although it is completely silent, it does not know anything, but knows it well. Leave space for the people, and the people will naturally be at ease and maintain this most natural nature. On the contrary, if all laws and regulations are strict, the people will feel pressure and depression. They will try to find loopholes in the law and take chances. Over time, they will lose their original nature.

Then Lao Zi talked about misfortunes and blessings, justice and evil are not invariable. It will change with time, space and people's heart. Good things could become bad things, and bad things also could become good things. There is a very famous story in ancient China, an old man lives along the border, called Sai Weng. His horse ran to the state of Hu, his neighbor came to comfort him. He said it could not be a bad thing that my horse ran away. A few months later, his horse led many good horses back, His neighbors came to congratulate him. Sai Weng said that it could be not a good thing. His son liked the horses very much, but he broke his leg while riding. In the eyes of others, this may be a very bad thing, but Sai Weng was not sad about it. a year later, his countries invaded on a large scale. many young people joined the army and died in the war. his son was saved from the war because of his lameness . it can be seen that there is no absolute boundary between misfortune and happiness. as long as we can face everything in life calmly, it is a high state of life.