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A Translation of Chapter 59 and 63 of the *Daodejing* 道德經

and Its Annotation by Shi Deqing

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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

1.2 Translation

Managing material desire and following the nature not as good as having but not using it. Only having but not using it can early recover. Early recovering is to accumulate virtue anew. Accumulating virtue anew, nothing can not be solved. Nothing is invincible, then, not knowing its ultimate. Not knowing its ultimate, the person can own countries. There is the mother of a country, it can last long. It is called that the way of deep and strong roots, long life and enduring vision.

2. Original text and translation of Shi Deqing's 釋德清 annotation of chapter 59

¹ Shi Deqing 釋德清, *The Daodejing and Its Annotation by Shi Deqing* 老子道德經解 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2020), p. 121.

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。調聖人在位，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，所謂堯舜有天下而不與，此以嗇治人也。聖人並包四海，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。

2.2 Translation of Part A

It is said that the sage stay away from the desire and recover the nature, which is regard as the Dao 道 of the virtue of the saint inside and have the demeanour of the king outside. The character of se 嗇 means having something but not using it. The characters of ren 人 and tian 天 said by Laozi was explained very clearly by Zhuangzi. As saying that do not hurting tian because of ren and do not hurt xing 性 because of wu 物. The characters of ren refers to material desire. The characters of tian refers to the nature. Saying to manage material desire and to follow the nature not as good as having but not using it. The characters of se refers to recover the nature. It say that when the sage is highly placed as an emperor. Because possessing the whole country he is rich. People, property, music, women's charms, goods and wealth, all these will be very abundant for him. However, the sage use Dao(the law of nature) to restrain themselves. When seeing he do not pay attention to these. He has no desire. Although having all these he do not use. Emperors Yao and Shun owned the world, but they would not occupy these things. Which is managing material desire with having but not using. The sage hold the world and his wisdom pervades all things. Not hurting the nature as worrying too much with cleverness. What is called not exhausting your energy and body and

not making yourself more thinking. Having wisdom but not use, which is following the nature with possessing but not using.

2.3 Original text – Part B

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。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。故曰無不克，則莫知其極。極，至極，猶涯量也。

2.4 Translation of Part B

Recovering the nature is the fastest. So it is said early recovery. The characters of fu 復 means that recovery is not far of Fu Gua 復卦. Which refers to fast speed. It also have the meaning of restraining ourselves and making our actions accord with etiquette, people of the world will pay allegiance to kindheartedness. Zhuangzi said that nothing hurts more than doing good for a purpose. To do good purposefully is outward alms giving, which is light but not heavy. The nature recover better day by day. Without expecting, it will recover naturally. It is so-called returning to see the heart of heaven and earth. Hence, it is said that early recovering is to accumulate virtue anew. If people can accumulate virtue again, nothing can not be solved. The characters of ke 克 is the ke of defeat the enemy and restrain oneself from Yanzi. As the nature grows day by day, material desires will melt away. All the problems encountered can be solved, and nothing can be an enemy. This morality is wise and extensive,

people do not know how to praise it. Therefore, it is said that nothing is invincible, then, can not knowing its ultimate. The characters of ji 極 means ultimate namely limit.

2.5 Original text – Part C

此內聖之德既全，雖無心於天下，乃可以托於天下，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。

2.6 Translation of Part C

Such the morality of internal sage is complete. Although he does not want to own the world, he can be entrusted the world. Therefore not knowing its ultimate, the person can own countries. This is the way of inner sage, which can real cultivate self-cultivation and the rest of the function can govern the world. So the person can own countries. This way is not old before heaven and earth, but not the end after heaven and earth. Therefore, it is said that can lasting long. The ancients said that the way of deep and strong roots, long life and enduring vision, that is all. The closing sentence is an old saying. Lao Tzu's quotation is used to summarize his literary meaning.

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。²

3.2 Translation

Actions done with no intention. Affairs handled with no purpose. Tasting without anticipation. The big is regard as the small and the most as the least. Requite injury with kindness. Dealing with what difficult from simple aspects. Disposing of what big from small aspects. The most difficult things must start from the easiest. The biggest events must start with the smallest ones. The sage do not deal with the biggest but accomplishing it. Easy to promise must be little trust. How easy it is, how difficult it will be. Therefore, what the sage consider is more difficult is not 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。

4.2 Translation of Part A

This chapter talks about the wonder for the sage to enter the Dao and shows people real practice. Actions done with intention means tact. Handling affairs with purpose means feats. Tasting with aim refers to fame and gain. These three are valued by common people.

² Shi Deqing 釋德清, *The Daodejing and Its Annotation by Shi Deqing* 老子道德經解 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2020), p.127.

However, Dao is non being and actions done with no intention. Extremely tranquillity and handling affairs with no purpose. Extremely light and tasting with no aim. Only the sage keep the Dao in mind, let go those and aim at these. Therefore, what he act is actions done with no intention. What he handle is affairs handled with no purpose. What he taste is tasting without anticipation.

4.3 Original text – Part B

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。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。

4.4 Translation of Part B

Common people select fame, position, money and rank as they take fame and position as great and money and rank as many. However, the Dao is extremely nihility, not to seek fame and wealth and nothing. They think it is small and few. So they give up and do not select it. The sage let go the fame and reputation. Dispelling wisdom and forgetting the body. They only pay attention to the Dao wherever. This is to abandon the majority and take the minority. Therefore, the sage regard the smallest as the biggest and the least as the most. So treating those common people take as the smallest as the biggest and the least as the most.

4.5 Original text – Part C

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。此舉世古今之恒情也。豈非其事極大且多哉。

4.6 Translation of Part C

Try to see people in the world return good for evil, some truth can be known. Why? The biggest and most difficult thing for people, whether high or low, is grudge. However, the beginning of grudge is due to wrong word as a slip of the tongue or a wrong thing. In this way, they had a grudge against each other so that they incur disaster like being killed, destroyed fame, ruined country and family. There are even those who have accumulated resentment and deep anger, from father, son and grandchildren, who have reported to each other for many generations. This is the continuous emotional state of people from ancient to modern times. Is not it because of those big and many things.

4.7 Original text – Part D

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。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。

4.8 Translation of Part D

The sage are not like this. They find that there is nothing before the grudge not yet formed. It is little thing if the grudge begin to form. If there is already a grudge, it will have no impact on himself. Therefore, they are no stubborn heart and no the thought that It is hostile. Now that the matter has passed and cleared up, it is impossible to find its trace. In this way, even if others will have resentment, I do not have any desire for revenge. Since the other considers there is resentment, and I have no desire for revenge, the other will think that I return good for evil. The so-called turning good for evil does not mean that people should return good for

evil against their will. Confucius said that meeting resentment with upright dealing. That is what it meant.

4.9 Original text – Part E

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。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

That is what the grudge is the biggest thing and there is a great many of it. Everyone will encounter something difficult to solve. Little do we know that there is things that is very easy. It is what he act is actions done with no intention. What he handle is affairs handled with no purpose. Treating those common people take as the smallest as the biggest and the least as the most. Everything in the world is like this, not just resentment. Therefore, the most difficult thing has the easiest side. For the biggest thing, there are the smallest aspects. People do not see its easy and small. They solve things starting from the difficult and big place. It will not succeed in the end. If people can deal with it from easy and small aspects, there are few unsuccessful ones. Therefore, the most difficult things must start from the easiest. The biggest events must start with the smallest ones. The character of zuo 作 means start. The sage is modest to experience the Dao and hid out of sight. The more hidden his tracks are, the brighter the Dao becomes. The grace will last forever and coexist with heaven and earth. This is what is called not dealing with the biggest thing but accomplishing it.

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。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。

4.12 Translation of Part F

When Lao Tzu said this, he was afraid ordinary people regard the character of yi 易 as easy. Therefore, he warned that if people promise easily, they will have little trust and how easy it is, how difficult it will be. Tell people not to take things as easy. Easy to promise is called qingnuo 輕諾. He who is easy to promise will break his promise and have little trust. When encountering something easy and do it hastily, it will have the beginning but no the ending. So the character of yi does not mean easy. What is difficult for common people is easy for the sage. What is easy for the common people is difficult for the sage. Therefore, it is said that what the sage think is more difficult is not difficult in the end. The characters of you 猶 should be 尤. In ancient times, these two characters could be used in common. It means even more. It is easy for the common people but more difficult for the sage so it is not difficult in the end. It can be seen that the king of Wen and Zhougong are cautious and conscientious. They are careful and worried about things they can not see or hear. Which is the difficult thing for the sage.

4.13 Original text – Part G

餘少誦圖難於易為大於細二語，只把作事看。及餘入山學道，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

when I was young, I read these two sentences that dealing with what difficult from simple aspects and disposing of what big from small aspects. I just regard it as the things. By the time I went into the mountain to learn the Dao. At the beginning, I felt very difficult and miserable. When getting the knack of how to cultivate my heart, I find it is very easy. However, the difficulty at first is easiness at present. The easiness now is the difficulty at the beginning. Cultivating our hearts is so. By extension, the same is true of everything. This is what sage shows people the real practice of entering the Dao. These encourage those who aspire to the Dao.

5. Self-Reflection

In the process of translation, I used the online dictionary *Han Dian*. I also referred to some Chinese books, such as the Analects of Confucius and Zhuangzi.

After translating Han Shan's annotation, I have a deeper understanding of these two chapters. For example, there are some people who think that the character of 治人事天，莫若嗇 is sparing and economy. The interpretation for this is managing human affairs but Han Shan interprets it as managing material desire and following the nature, which guides people to return to the nature of mind.

In addition, it is easy for people to get resentment and revenge is inevitable. Therefore, the vicious circle of revenge does not end. The sage can repay their grievances with virtue because they are bent on the Dao and believe that returning the nature is the most important.

Hence, they can forget the harm done to them by others. Personally, I consider this is very difficult to do. The first step should be to let go of desire.

6. Bibliography

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