

老子道德經憨山解

Laozi daodejing hanshan jie

Chapter Two

天下皆知美之為美。斯惡已。皆知善之為善。斯不善已。

故有無相生。難易相成。長短相較。高下相傾。音聲相和。前後相隨。

是以聖人處無為之事。行不言之教。萬物作焉而不辭。生而不有。

為而不恃。功成而不居。夫惟不居，是以不去。

【註】此釋前章「可名非常名」以明||世人居有為之跡，虛名不足尚(尊崇、注重)，This chapter explains '可名非常名' in the previous chapter and clarifies the fact that ordinary people dwell on the signs of their actions done with intention/expectation and therefore their good reputations (good names, good reputation) are false and not worth attention/being favoured. (false/unreal reputation 與 reputation is false/unreal 不同)

聖人處無為之道以御世，功不朽而真名常存之意也。(By contrast) sages govern the world without any intention/expectation to do so, and therefore their achievements are enduring and their reputations are true and ever-lasting.

意謂天下事物之理，若以大道而觀，本無美與不美，善與不善之跡。It means that viewing all things in the world/under heaven from the perspective of the Great Dao, there is no differentiation between beautiful and ugly or between good and bad.

良由人不知道(‘知’‘道’分開)，而起分別取捨好尚之心(mind, heart, thoughts)，故有美惡之名耳。It is all because people do not know the Dao and consequently

develop the thoughts of differentiation, taking or discarding, liking or **favouring**.

Therefore there are terms (names?) for 'beautiful' and 'ugly'.

然天下之人，但(only)知適己意者為美。However, people in the world only consider what suits them to be beautiful.

殊不知在我以為美，自彼觀之，則又為不美矣。Little do they know that what is beautiful from my perspective may not be beautiful from the perspective of others.

譬如西施顰美，東施愛而效之，其醜益甚。For example, Xishi looked beautiful when she frowned. Dongshi liked it and imitated Xishi, but she looked even uglier by doing it. (English proverb – 'A man's meat is another man's poison' 'Beauty is in the eye of the beholder' 'There is no disputing about tastes' 'Never judge a book by its cover'.)

此所謂「知美之為美，斯惡已」。「惡」醜也。This is what it means by '知美之為美，斯惡已'. The character '惡' means ugly.

又如比干，天下皆知為賢善也，紂執(執意)而殺之。Another example is Bigan. Everyone knows that he was virtuous but King Zhou **insisted in** killing him.

後世效之以為忠，殺身而不悔。此所謂「知善之為善，斯不善已」。People after him followed his example and regarded it as being wholehearted, they did not regret when being killed. This is what it means by '知善之為善，斯不善已'.

此皆尚名之過(fault 不能用 mistake)也。是則善惡之名因對待而有。These are all the fault of paying attention to/liking/favouring/being attached to **good** reputations. Therefore, the names of good and bad arise due to the relativity.

故名則「有無相生」，事則「難易相成」，物則「長短相形」，位則「高下相傾」，言則「音聲相和」，行則「前後相隨」，此乃必然之勢。Therefore with regard to names,

it is '有無相生'; to matters, '難易相成'; to objects, '長短相形'; to positions, '高下相傾'; to speech, '音聲相和'; and to actions, '前後相隨'. All these are natural tendencies. (parallelism 排比 - the use of successive verbal constructions in poetry or prose which correspond in grammatical structure, sound, metre, meaning, etc.)

譬如世人以尺為長，以寸為短。For example, people consider a foot is long and an inch is short.

假若積寸多於尺，則又名寸為長，而尺為短矣。But when inches are added up, it may become longer than a foot. We would then call the inches to be long and a foot short.

凡物皆然，斯皆有為之跡耳。All things are like this and these are the signs of action done with intention/expectation.

凡可名者，皆可去，此所謂「名，可名，非常名」也。All names that is nameable can be removed. This is what it means by '名，可名，非常名' (「此地講的名，就是老子所說的，本來沒有名，名都是人給它建立的，所以名都是叫假名，這個一定要知道。你叫什麼名字？假名，為什麼？你喜歡你就改了，它不是一定的，不是永恒的。永恆不變的是真的，所有會變的是假的。縱然你這一生，譬如我這一生出家叫淨空，我前一生不是用這個名字，來世也不曉得在哪一道，也不是這個名字。所以，名全是假名，不要在意。如果執著在名相上，死在名句之下，那都是迷惑，那都是過失，那不是智慧，是煩惱。所以名也得要放下，叫名聞利養，你看名聞擺在頭，利養還在其次。由此可知，世間人，六道眾生對名分的執著多重！所以六道難出，真難！難在哪裏？我們能細心觀察，想到這個問題就明白了，就不難理解。言語也離不開名相，離開名詞術語我們都不會

說話了，我說人，人也是個名詞，動物它也是個名詞。佛教導一切眾生，也要立很多名相，佛學裏專門的術語，佛學大字典裏面就起了這個作用。你要懂得名裏頭所含的意義，這叫義理，名的後頭有意義。明白了，這是智慧，不明白會造成煩惱。||一切法不生不滅，這是真的！我們凡夫今天看一切法有生有滅，人有生老病死，植物有生住異滅，礦物有成住壞空，那都是我們看錯了，其實沒這回事情。||真如就是本性，就是自性，也叫法性，也叫真心，也叫第一義，佛說了幾十種名字。一樁事情為什麼說這麼多？就是教我們不要執著名字，你知道是說這樁事情就行了，名字是假的。正是《道德經》上所說的，「名可名，非常名；道可道，非常道」。所以，名不能執著。言語也不能執著，你要懂得言語裡頭的意義，意在言外，這叫真言，你得要會聽。怎麼叫會聽？不分別不執著、不起心不動念，你就聽出來了，起心動念聽不出來。換句話，看經，同樣個道理，不起心不動念、不分別不執著，以真誠恭敬心面對這個佛經，你去看，裡頭的意思體會到了，不能想像。一有分別、有執著，有自己的想法，你讀這部經全是你自己的意思，不是佛的意思。不是從自性流出來的，是從你妄想裡頭流出來的，經到你手上變質了。真與真相應，妄與妄相應。||其實著了名相都錯了，老子《道德經》頭一句話說，“名可名，非常名；道可道，非常道”。真正的道說不出來，能說出名相，名相全是假的，這是學佛的同學不能不知道。所以馬鳴菩薩在《起信論》裏面，教導我們聽教誦經，這是我們最平常用的，聽教就是上課聽講、讀誦，必須要懂得三個原則。第一個，不著言說相，我們聽經不要執著他的言說，要聽他所講的意義。他長說短說、深說淺說都不要緊，都無所謂，要聽他的意思，不執著言說相。看經呢？看經不要執著文字相，執著言語相錯了，執著文字相也錯了，不能著相。第二個，不能執著名字相，譬

如這裏講小乘是名字，涅槃也是名字，第一義空也是名字，偏真但空還是名字，這個名字相是假的，也不能執著。你明白它的意思就行了，隨便他怎麼說沒關係，只要我在這個裏頭把意思體會到。第三個，不著心緣相，心緣相是什麼？我們中國人講望文生義，就是聽了之後我有自己的意思，不行。為什麼不能？因為佛沒有意思說出來的，你怎麼聽了會有意思出來？那意思是你的，不是佛的。所以“願解如來真實義”，你自己意思生起來不是如來真實義。這樣才叫會聽，讀誦的時候會讀，這樣讀誦、這樣聽經會得三昧、會得定，會開悟。如果你著相，著相無論是著言說相、名字相、心緣相，你都不能得定，都不能開悟。用我們現在的話說，著這三種相你學的是佛學、是知識；你不著這三種相，你是智慧，你會得定，你會開悟。這是世法跟佛法修學心態不相同，我們明白這個道理，就曉得今天學佛學的是什麼。佛法修學，無論用什麼方法，八萬四千法門全都是戒定慧，離開戒定慧不是佛教的法門，佛教的法門決定跟戒定慧相應。譬如你誦經，誦《無量壽經》從頭到尾念一遍，初學的人大概念兩個小時，字字句句念清楚，不著文字相、不著名字相，一直念下去，自己沒有一個念頭起來。有念頭是什麼？就像照，一看到這個就覺悟，那是照見，你沒有去思想；我想想這個意思是什麼，一想就落意識裏去了，不能想。一聽，明了就明了，不明了不要緊，再念第二遍，讀書千遍，其義自見，總有一次意思一下出來。所以你守這個方法就是持戒，你真的去幹那就是修定，所以他會得三昧、會開悟。這是佛法學習跟世間法不一樣的地方，一切時、一切處都離不開戒定慧三學。」--- 師父上人)

是以聖人知虛名之不足尚，故處無為之道以應事。Therefore sages (clearly) know that false names are not worth attention/being favoured and consequently respond

to things with no intention. (有為法 -- 「有為就是有造作的，就是有生有滅，無為是不生不滅。什麼是造作？起心動念是造作，分別執著是造作，用我們頭腦去思考，應該怎麼做怎麼做，是造作，那叫有為法。所有一切是因為我們自己思想、設計、發明、創造、去施工，全是有為法，不是自然的。自然纔叫做無為法。釋迦牟尼佛為我們所示現的，無為法。他晚上住什麼地方？大樹底下。樹下一宿，日中一食。日中一食到外面去托鉢。不起心不動念，不分別不執著。人家給什麼吃什麼。他過的是無為法的生活。他把無為法在生活上表現給我們。每天教學，無為法。釋迦牟尼佛沒有寫過講稿，沒有寫過什麼大綱，沒有先想想給你說什麼。沒有。你提出問題，也沒有想想我該怎麼回答你。沒有，都沒有，全是自然的。無為呀。無為而無所不為，無所不為而無為。這叫真無為法。

11 《探玄記》賢首國師作的，《六十華嚴》的註解，大師說“緣所起法，名曰有為”，就是因緣所生起的法，一切法，叫有為法。“無性真理，名曰無為”故知無作、無為皆真理之異名。《金剛經》四句偈講得很清楚，“一切有為法，如夢幻泡影。” 哪些是有為法呢？百法裡面除了最後六個無為，前面九十四個全是有為法。有生有滅啊。你只想到一切法裡頭有生有滅，動物有生老病死，植物有生住異滅，礦物有成住壞空，這都叫有為法。只有虛空沒有看到它有有為，看不到生滅現象，這是無為法。相似的無為，不是真的無為。真無為只有一個，自性。真如自性是真的無為。明心見性就是見到這個。那是宇宙萬事萬物的本體，一般人也把它稱之為真理。真理確實只有一個沒有兩個。」11第八個是「無為空。若離有為，無為不可得故。」離有為，無為跟有為是對立而產生的一個抽象概念，在《百法明門》裡面叫做不相應行法，相對產生的概念。如果有為沒有了，無為也就沒有了，也就不可得。諸佛菩薩離有為，他是怎麼個離法？

離對有為法的執著，離對有為法的分別，離對有為法的起心動念，這叫真離，這叫離有為法。有為法在不在？在。在你為什麼要離？因為它是假的，它不是真的，你可以欣賞它，你可以受用它，你沒有辦法得到它，你也沒有辦法控制它，假的。就像看電視一樣，電視的畫面你什麼也得不到，電視畫面是有為法，你知道它是假的，你對它沒有起心動念，沒有佔有，沒有分別執著，這叫無為法。所以說無為而無所不為，這個意思你就懂了。||「心常諦住度世之道」即「心常安住於出世無為之道」——「為」是造作，就是思想，「無因緣造作」這叫無為，又無生住異滅、四相的造作叫無為，「即真理之異名」。真理就是本性，就是諸法實相，也叫法性。這個理是不具生住異滅四相，沒有這個相的，也不是因緣造作的。此無為法有三種、六種之別。。。三無為中的擇滅無為，六無為中之真如無為，是正為聖智所證之真理。曰涅槃，曰法性，曰實相，曰法界，皆無為之異名也。。。擇滅，滅是小乘的涅槃，滅一切有為的因，也滅一切有為的果。小乘有為的因是見思煩惱。能把見思煩惱放下了，見惑-身見、邊見、見取見、戒取見、邪見，真能把這五種錯誤的看法放下，等於說把它滅掉，這個人就證得小乘初果。如果是學大乘的呢，就是十信位裡頭的初信位菩薩。前面說過他是聖人他不是凡夫。這就是轉凡成聖。雖然是小聖，他沒有出三界六道，在三界六道裡頭決定不墮三惡道，也不會墮在修羅、羅剎魔道之中。從這個時候修行再去破思惑，思惑是貪嗔癡慢疑，這個東西放下比較難，沒有前面那個痛快。五種見惑能同時放下，貪嗔癡慢疑不容易。古人講斷思惑好比藕斷絲連。但是還是要斷，不斷出不了六道輪迴」——師父上人||子曰：「無為而治者，其舜也與？夫何為哉，恭己正南面而已矣。」---《論語·衛靈公》《論語講要》)

知(who 知)多言之不可用，故行不言之教以化民。They know that too much speaking should not be used/is ineffective and consequently they educate and reform the people by actions (rather than by words). (英文諺語 Actions speak louder than words: it is what we do really matters, not just what we say. || 《了凡四訓》積善之方，舜帝教民。|| 《雍正皇帝上諭》宋文帝與侍中何尚之對話“洵乎可以垂拱坐致太平矣” || 君子之德隱。愈秘密去做，愈能養德。只要有德不必去度化人，自能感人。--《雪公師訓集錦》)

如天地以無心而生物，即萬物皆往資(取用)焉，不以物多而故辭。For example, heaven and earth give rise to things without any thought/intention. Even when all things take whatever from them, they do not shirk their duties.

雖生成萬物，而不以萬物為己有(沒有控制、佔有的慾望、念頭)。Although they have (成) given rise to everything, they never consider anything to be their own/they never have the desire to control or own anything.

雖能生物，而不自恃其能。Although they are able to give rise to things, they are never boastful of /are not attached to what they are capable of doing (三輪體空).

且四時推移(變遷)，雖有成物之功，功成而不居。What is more, with the change of the four seasons, they have the merits of giving rise to things but they never claim credit of what they have achieved.

夫惟不居其功(不居功，即不執著)，故至功不朽。不尚其名，故真名常存。It is solely because they do not claim credit of/are not attached to what they have achieved, their achievements are supreme and enduring; because they do not **favour** the good names of their achievements, their names are true and ever-lasting.

聖人處無為之道，亦由是也。Sages' acting without expectation, differentiation and attachment is also because of this.

蓋「萬物作焉」已下，皆是說天地之德，以比聖人之德。The text after 萬物作焉 all talks about the virtue (單數，不是複數) of heaven and earth and likens it to sages' virtue.

文意雙關，莊子(書名)釋此意極多。The text has double meaning and the Zhuangzi frequently explains this meaning.

Chinese and Western Attitudes to Nature

(By **Joseph Needham** from *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. VII:2, p 90-94)

The sixth and last major point which I would like to take up in this discussion is the question of the different attitudes to Nature held traditionally by China and Christendom. This is a subject which readily lends itself to vague generalisations, but nevertheless I think that something relatively concrete can be said. Many half-truths (or even less) concerning it have been in circulation for a long time. For example, F. S. C. Northrop wanted to characterise the Chinese approach as basically aesthetic in contrast with the scientific approach of Europe. Or again, Feng Yulan once said that the Chinese philosophers had never sought to dominate Nature; it was themselves they sought to dominate. If this sort of thing had been the whole story it would obviously have been impossible to fill many volumes with the recital of achievements of the Chinese in all scientific realms from mathematics to medicine, over a period of some years. But there were great differences in the attitude to Nature, and here once again **there is much for the world of today to learn from the Chinese tradition.**

In the first place it is evident to anyone who knows anything about Chinese civilisation that it did not have any well-developed theology of a creator deity. Unlike the thinkers of other early civilised peoples, the ancient Chinese philosophers did not give much credit to creation myths accounting for the origins of the world. There were myths of organising and arranging gods, or demi-gods, but they were not taken too seriously. Chinese thinkers did not, in the main, believe in a single God directing the cosmos, but thought rather in terms of an impersonal force (*Tian* 天), meaning 'heaven' or 'the heavens' indeed, but here better translated as 'the cosmic order'. Similarly, the Dao 道 (or *Tian* 天 *dao*) was the 'order of Nature'. **Thus in the old Chinese world-view man was not regarded as the lord of a universe prepared for his use and enjoyment by God the Creator. From early times there was the conception of a *scala naturae* in which man was thought of as the highest of the forms of life, but nevertheless that did not give to him any authorisation to do exactly what he liked with the rest of 'creation'. The universe did not exist specifically to**

satisfy man. His role in the universe was 'to assist in the transforming and nourishing process of heaven and earth', and this was why it was so often said that man formed a triad with heaven and earth (三才者, *Tian* 天, *di* 地, *ren* 人). It was not for man to question the way of Heaven nor to compete with it, but rather to fall in with it while satisfying his basic necessities. It was as if there were three levels each with its own organisation, as in the famous statement, 'Heaven has its seasons, man his government, and the earth its natural wealth'.

Hence the key word is always harmony; the ancient Chinese sought for order and harmony throughout natural phenomena, and took this to the ideal in all human relationships. Early Chinese thinkers were extremely impressed by the recurrences and cyclical movements which they observed in Nature – the four seasons, the phases of the moon, the paths of the planets, the return of comets, the cycle of birth, maturity, decay and death in all things living. *Fan zhe dao zhi dong* 反者道之動, as the *Dao De Jing* says, 'returning is the characteristic motion of the Dao'. *Tian*, or Heaven, was more and more seen as an impersonal force generating the patterns of the world of Nature; phenomena were thought of as parts of a hierarchy of wholes forming a cosmic pattern in which everything acted on everything else, not by mechanical impulsions but by co-operation in accordance with the spontaneous motivations of its own inner nature. Thus for the Chinese the natural world was not something hostile or evil, which had to be perpetually subdued by will-power and brute force, but something much more like the greatest of all living organisms, the governing principles of which had to be understood so that life could be lived in harmony with it. Call it an organic naturalism if you like; however one describes it, this has been the basic attitude of Chinese culture through the ages. Man is central, but he is not the centre for which the universe was created. Nevertheless he has a definite function within it, a role to fulfil, i.e. the assistance of nature, action in conjunction with, not in disregard of, the spontaneous and interrelated processes of the natural world.

Of course the ancient Chinese hunted and fished, but by and large their civilisation was always agricultural rather than pastoral; hence perhaps a more patient, less dominating, more feminine attitude to natural resources. The 'Man of Song', who pulled up his sprouts in order to make the crop grow faster, was a standard laughingstock for the peasant-farmers of China through two millennia, accustomed as they were to a much more patient attitude towards Nature. It is true that widespread deforestation occurred as the ages went by, but this should be put down to the pressures of social conditions, and warnings against it can be found in many texts, as in the *Meng Tzu* book (Mencius), or in the *Huai Nan Tzu* protesting against the inordinate use of the wood for firing metallurgical furnaces. Warnings against depletion of natural resources are quite common in Chinese literature; another good example would be the action of that governor of Guangdong in the Later Han period, Meng Chang 孟嘗, who made the pearlers give a rest for a few years to the pearl-oysters, and afterwards guard against over-fishing. Whenever anything could be done in accordance with Nature (this was the great *wu wei* 無為 doctrine of the Daoists) it was best to do it that way. For example, if water was wanted at 50 ft. above the level of a river, it was much better to take it off by a derivate lateral canal some miles upstream and follow the contours, rather than laboriously lift it by water-raising machinery at the spot. All this was not a 'passive' attitude to Nature, as some superficial minds have supposed; it was a

profoundly right instinct that to use Nature it was necessary to go along with her. The Daoists would have applauded Francis Bacon's saying, *Natura enim non imperator nisi parendo* (**Nature can only be commanded by obeying her**). Thus to sum it up, there was throughout Chinese history a recognition that man is part of an organism far greater than himself, and by corollary a great sensitivity to the possible depletion, and pollution, of natural resources.

How different was all this from the feudal or imperialist domination of Nature arising from the Hebrew tradition. The People of the Book were never guided towards any restraints in the utilisation of those natural resources which God had provided for their use. As long as modern science still lay in the womb of time this lordship may have done no great harm, but once science had become airborne, as it were, then whole forest could be cut down every day to provide paper for the banal (and often vicious) printed matter of the popular press; while noxious chemicals, like organic mercury compounds or radioactive poisons, could freely spread about everywhere. Lynn White in his remarkable book *Machina ex Deo* **has revealed the responsibility of Christendom in inducing men to have an utterly possessive and destructive attitude to the rest of Nature**, a record only mitigated by the relatively minor voice of St Francis. Western man will have to retrace his steps.

Meanwhile today there is evidence that the Chinese are conscious of the possibilities of pollution, which after all they have seen in horrifying forms very close at hand in Japan; and they are building into their industrial plants all kinds of arrangements for avoiding toxic or opprobrious effluents. Clearly this is something much easier to do in a socialist economy than when a private firm, or limited liability company, is under the constraints of competitive marketing and profit making. Modern science too is validating some of the characteristic Chinese techniques. For example, the use of human excreta as fertiliser has been a characteristic feature of Chinese agriculture for 2,000 years. It was always a good thing in that it prevented the losses of phosphorus, nitrogen and other soil nutrients which happened in the West; but it was also a bad thing because it contributed to the spread of disease. But now in the light of modern knowledge of composting technique it is quite easy to avoid the latter drawback while retaining the former advantage.

One last thought which emerges from this discussion of attitudes to Nature is that the Peoples of the Book, and **the West in general, have always been far too given to masculine domination.** It seems imperative and urgent that **the Western world should learn from the Chinese the infinite value of feminine yieldingness.** This is the message of the 'Valley Spirit' (*gu shen* 谷神) of the *Dao De Jing*. Of course for the Chinese the greatest perfection always consisted in the most perfect balance of the Yin and Yang, the female and male forces in the universe. These great opposites were always seen as relational, not contradictory; complementary, not antagonistic. This was far different from the Persian dualism with which the Yin-Yang doctrine has often been confused. Indeed, the Yin-Yang balance might be a good pattern for that equilibrium between the forms of experience which we need so much, that harmony between compassion and knowledge-power. Here again, then, there is something vital which the rest of the world has to learn from the Chinese tradition, if it is not to be torn to pieces by the interplay of intrinsic warring psychological factors, and external aggression against Nature and between men. The *ewig*

Weibliche comes to us in Chinese dress, a Margaret-Gretchen, a Xuan Nü 玄女, who can be the salvation of the world as she was of Faust himself.

It is high time that I came at last to my general conclusion. What I have been trying to urge is that in very many respects Chinese culture, Chinese traditions, Chinese *ethos* and Chinese human beings, those living today as well as those of all the ages, have contributions of outstanding importance to make for the future guidance of the human world. Nothing that I have been saying denies the 'Everlasting Gospel' of the two great commandments; but it is time that Christians realised that some of their highest values may be coming back to them from cultures and peoples far outside historical Christendom. The question is: what is humanity going to do with **the Pandora's box of science and technology**? Once again I should like to say: *Ex Oriente Lux*.

天下皆知美之為美。斯惡已。

(Legge) All in the world know the beauty of the beautiful, and in doing this they have (the idea of) what ugliness is;

(Waley) It is because everyone under Heaven recognises beauty as beauty, that the idea of ugliness exists.

(Chan) When the people of the world all know beauty as beauty,
There arises the recognition of ugliness.

(Lau) The whole world recognises the beautiful as the beautiful, yet this is only the ugly;

皆知善之為善。斯不善已。

(Legge) they all know the skill of the skilful, and in doing this they have (the idea of) what the want of skill is.

(Waley) And equally if everyone recognised virtue as virtue, this would merely create fresh conceptions of wickedness.

(Chan) When they all know the good as good,
There arises the recognition of evil.

(Lau) the whole world recognises the good as the good, yet this is only the bad.

故有無相生。

(Legge) So it is that existence and non-existence give birth the one to (the idea of) the other;

(Waley) For truly 'Being and Not-being grow out of one another;

(Chan) Therefore being and non-being produce each other;

(Lau) Thus Something and Nothing produce each other;

難易相成。

(Legge) that difficulty and ease produce the one (the idea of) the other;

(Waley) Difficult and easy complete one another.

(Chan) Difficult and easy complete each other;

(Lau) The difficult and the easy complement each other;

長短相較。

(Legge) that length and shortness fashion out the one the figure of the other;
(Waley) Long and short test one another;
(Chan) Long and short contrast each other;
(Lau) The long and the short offset each other;

高下相傾。

(Legge) that (the ideas of) height and lowness arise from the contrast of the one with the other;
(Waley) High and low determine one another.
(Chan) High and low distinguish each other;
(Lau) The high and the low incline towards each other;

音聲相和。

(Legge) that the musical notes and tones become harmonious through the relation of one with another;
(Waley) The sounds of instrument and voice give harmony to one another.
(Chan) Sound and voice harmonise with each other;
(Lau) Note and sound harmonise with each other;

前後相隨。

(Legge) and that being before and behind give the idea of one following another.
(Waley) Front and back give sequence to one another'.
(Chan) Front and back follow each other.
(Lau) Before and after follow each other.

是以聖人處無為之事。行不言之教；

(Legge) Therefore the sage manages affairs without doing anything, and conveys his instructions without the use of speech.
(Waley) Therefore the Sage relies on actionless activity,
Carries on wordless teaching,
(Chan) Therefore the sage manages affairs without action (*wu-wei*)
And spreads doctrines without words.
(Lau) Therefore the sage keeps to the deed that consists in taking no action and practises the teaching that uses no words.

萬物作焉而不辭。

(Legge) All things spring up, and there is not one which declines to show itself;
(Waley) But the myriad creatures are worked upon by him; he does not disown them.

(Chan) All things arise, and he does not turn away from them.
(Lau) The myriad creatures rise from it yet it claims no authority;

生而不有。

(Legge) they grow, and there is no claim made for their ownership;
(Waley) He rears them, but does not lay claim to them.
(Chan) He produces them, but does not take possession of them.
(Lau) It gives them life yet claims no possession;

為而不恃。

(Legge) they go through their processes, and there is no expectation (of a reward for the results).
(Waley) Controls them, but does not lean upon them,
(Chan) He acts, but does not rely on his own ability.
(Lau) It benefits them yet exacts no gratitude;

功成而不居。

(Legge) The work is accomplished, and there is no resting in it (as an achievement).
(Waley) Achieves his aim, but does not call attention to what he does;
(Chan) He accomplishes his task, but does not claim credit for it.
(Lau) It accomplishes its task yet lays claim to no merit.

夫惟不居。是以不去。

(Legge) The work is done, but how no one can see;
 'Tis this that makes the power not cease to be.
(Waley) And for the very reason that he does not call attention to what he does,
 He is not ejected from fruition of what he has done.
(Chan) It is precisely because he does not claim credit that his accomplishment remains with him.
(Lau) It is because it lays claim to no merit.
 That its merit never deserts it.