



Undergraduate assignment feedback form

(to be completed by marker)

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<i>For completion by marker:</i> <i>Comments:</i>	
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***Daodejing* Chapter 10 Translation**

「載營魄抱一，能無離乎？專氣致柔，能嬰兒乎？滌除玄覽，能無疵乎？愛民治國，能無知乎？天門開闔，能為雌乎？明白四達，能無知乎？生之、畜之，生而不有，為而不恃，長而不宰，是謂玄德。」¹

Three English Translations of *Daodejing*

1. *The Daodejing of Laozi*

「Embracing your soul and holding on to the One, can you keep them from departing?

Concentrating your *qi* 氣“vital energies” and attaining the utmost suppleness, can you be a child?

Cleaning and purifying your enigmatic mirror, can you erase every flaw?

Caring for the people and ordering the state, can you eliminate all knowledge?

When the portal of Heaven opens and closes, can you play the part of the feminine?

Comprehending all within the four directions, can you reside in nonaction?

To produce them!

To nurture them!

To produce without possessing;

To act with no expectation of reward;

To lead without lording over;

Such is Enigmatic Virtue!」²

—— Translated into English by Philip J. Ivanhoe

¹ 《道德經》，中國哲學書電子化計劃，<https://ctext.org/dao-de-jing/zh>

² Translated into English by Philip J. Ivanhoe, *The Daodejing of Laozi*(Hackett Publishing,2003),p.163, <https://terebess.hu/english/tao/Daodejing-Ivanhoe.pdf>.

Comment:

Firstly, I think one of the good thing about this translation is reflected in the fact that the translator didn't add subjects in the sentences. Because the text in classic read like sentences said by Laozi, and without subjects in them. So the translator complied with this point. And in line 6, the translator use “nonaction”, it is the true meaning of classic *Daodejing*. From Chen Guying's opinion, 「In Wang Bi's version we find *zhi* 知 [to know] instead of *wei* 为 [to act, do, engage in].」³ Besides, in line 7 and 8, “product” and “nurture” expressed the meaning that Dao give birth to everything and help them growing.

Secondly, I have some different understanding about the sentences in this chapter.

In line 2, I think character *zhi* 至 here means to achieve a level, instead a adjective. And “be a child” is a description of people's heart condition to describe the heart pure is like a infant, who knows nothing about the world. It is not means people must be a true child to get Dao. I think maybe “like a infant” will be better.

In line 5, “portal” means 「a website or page on the internet that allows people, especially a group of people who are interested in a particular subject, to get useful information and to find other websites」⁴. It is not suitable to express the meaning of character *men* 門。

In line 10, the *shi* 恃 means someone is proud of the things he did. It not mean someone expects reward of good deeds they did.

2.Lao Tzu-Te Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Ma-wang-tui Texts

「In nourishing the soul and embracing the One—can you do it without letting them leave?

In concentrating your breath and making it soft—can you make it like that of a child?

In cultivating and cleaning your profound mirror—can you do it so that it has no blemish?

In loving the people and giving life to the state—can you do it without using

³, Annotated by Chen Guying and Paul D'ambrosio, *The Annotated Critical Laozi*; (Leiden, Brill, 2020),p.96.

⁴ Cambridge Dictionary, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english-chinese-simplified/portal>

knowledge?

In opening and closing the gates of Heaven—can you play the part of the female?

In understanding all within the four reaches—can you do it without using knowledge?

Give birth to them and nourish them.

Give birth to them but don't try to own them;

Help them to grow but don't rule them.

This is called Profound Virtue.」⁵

—— Translated into English by Robert G. Henricks

Comment:

In this translation, translator use the part before comma as the condition, so the whole sentences are complete

In line 1, *zai* 載 means control or rein in, the nourish is wrong.

In line 2, the meaning of *qi* 氣 are not correct. 「Feng Youlan (Fung Yu-lan) 冯友兰 (d. 1990): “‘Concentrating one’s vital energy’ means the same as ‘bundling vital energy.’ In this context, vital energy compromises what would later be called bodily energy (形气) as well as refined energy (精气).」⁶

Which impresses me a lot is translator use the same sentence after commas to express different meaning in line 4 and 6. In line 4, it means “administering the country without using knowledge intentionally”. However in line 6, it means “understanding all things and handling things well without using wisdom intentionally”. Because of different condition, the same sentences can express different meaning.

⁵ By Robert G. Henricks, *Lao Tzu-Te Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Ma-wang-tui Texts*(New York: Ballantine Books,1992),p.62.

⁶ Annotated by Chen Guying and Paul D'ambrosio, *The Annotated Critical Laozi*; (Leiden, Brill, 2020),p.93~94.

Besides, this translation missed the sentence “為而不恃”.

3.DAO DE JING-The Book of the Way-LAOZI

「 The new-moon soul aborning holds to oneness;

Can you keep it from being divided?

To center all breath-energy, to work gently

Can you keep as if newborn?

To purify the eye within

Can you keep without stain?

To care for the people and rule the kingdom

Must you not master under-acting?

Midst ebb and flow from heaven's gates

Must you not play the female part?

For your vision to reach all quarters

Must you not be unknowing?

Through giving birth and care

Dao gives life without possessing,

Performs without obligating,

Presides without controlling:

Such is the meaning of “hidden power.”」⁷

⁷ Translation and Commentary by Moss Roberts, *DAO DE JING-The Book of the Way-*

LAOZI(University of California Press,2001) p.48, <https://terebess.hu/english/tao/Moss-Roberts.pdf>

Comment:

In this translation, the translator use many things (like moon, ebb) to express the abstract concepts in Chinese (like *ying-po* 營魄). We can find that the translator understand the classic and Chinese background very well. However, it is more difficult for general audience to understand the meaning of sentences.

Besides, all of things that people do in this translation are the things mentioned in the sentences before comma. However, I think all of things mentioned should worked on people themselves. So I disagree these handling in objects.

In line 3, the *qi* 氣 also different with Chen guying's opinion, which I mentioned in second translation.

In line 5, the "eye" didn't mention in the classic, it is the translator's own understand.

In line 14, the translator mentioned *Dao* as subject. This subject has not mentioned in classic text. This method can help reader understand what Dao can do? What is the hidden power? They can understand the sentence more clearly.

Personal translation

載營魄抱一，能無離乎？

Embracing and nurturing the soul to a whole and keep it, can you keep it not divided?

專氣致柔，能嬰兒乎？

Concentrating on vital energy and attaining the utmost suppleness, can you become pure like a infant?

滌除玄覽，能無疵乎？

Cleaning and purifying the mysterious mirror in heart, can you erase every blemish?

愛民治國，能無知乎？

Loving people and governing the state, can you engage in action with your heart instead knowledge?

天門開闔，能為雌乎？

When the heaven gate opens and closes, are you able to act as female ?

明白四達，能無知乎？

Comprehending everything in the world, can you remain to use heart instead brain intentionally?

生之、

Producing things!

畜之、

Nurturing them!

生而不有、

To produce without possessing;

為而不恃、

To act and help without proud and expectation of reward;

長而不宰、

To lead grow without dominating;

是謂玄德。

Such is Enigmatic Virtue!

Reason:

This translation is written for general readers of newspapers. I didn't use the method of character-by-character to translate this chapter. Because I think compare with the culture background behind each character, general audience need to know more the meaning of classic. and the culture background and the connection between Chinese characters can be expressed in annotation. So I choose words carefully to express the subtle different meanings in simple sentences.

In line 3, I use “blemish” instead “flaw” because the meaning in this sentence is abstract, not a concrete fault or weakness.

In line 4, I use “heart” because it used to refer to a person's character. And it is opposite with the knowledge of brain.

In line 5, this sentence is really abstract, I could not express the real meaning, so I just translation character by character.

In line 6, four direction is a symbol of whole world, so I use “comprehend everything” to

express the condition of people's wisdom from heart in Dao.

In line 7, I use “produce” because it means “causing something to exist”. It sounds like one of reason to cause something exist. However, Dao give birth to everything, without any other helps. Dao is the beginning of everything, so I use “produce” to express that only Dao can give birth to everything.

In line 8, I choose “nurture” instead “foster” because foster is usually for a limited time, but nurture usually express a long time. And Dao exist forever, it can always help things growing.

In line 9, the meaning of “possess” is “to take control over a person's mind, making that person behave in a very strange way”⁸, we can feel that it means the people control something to satisfy himself, not to help them growing.

I didn't add subject at the beginning of sentences because the classic text has no subject in Chinese sentences.

⁸ Cambridge Dictionary, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english-chinese-simplified/possess>