

AI Acknowledgement

☒ **I have not used AI in my assignment**

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

☐ **I have used AI in my assignment**

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Translations on Chapter 80 of *The Daodejing*

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《道德經·第八十章》

小國寡民。使有什伯之器而不用；使民重死而不遠徙。

雖有舟輿，無所乘之，雖有甲兵，無所陳之。

使民復結繩而用之，甘其食，美其服，安其居，樂其俗。

鄰國相望，雞犬之聲相聞，民至老死不相往來。

Translation and commentaries on Chapter 80 of *Daodejing*

A small state with small population. Let the people have utensils that are ten times and a hundred times efficient and not use them.¹ Let the people value their lives highly² and do not move far away from home.³

小國寡民。使有什伯之器而不用；使民重死而不遠徙。

¹ 什伯之器, 俞樾 explained as weaponry. In ancient Chinese military system, five people are called a 伍, ten people are called a 什, and a hundred are called a 伯. These are units of the organisation, and each unit have their utensils and weapons. However, in 馬王堆帛書 and 河上公 versions, the text is written as 什伯人之器. Later scholar such as 高明 interpreted it as machine with the power of tens and hundreds of people. (It could be anything that is powerful and efficient.) Also, as there is weapon (甲兵) mentioned in the later text, it will repeat if it is interpreted as weapons here too.

Translation and commentaries

A small state with small population. Let the people have utensils that are ten times and a hundred times efficient and not use them.¹ Let the people value their lives highly² and do not move far away from home.³

小國寡民。使有什伯之器而不用；使民重死而不遠徙。

²重死, 吳澄 said, People regard death as an important thing and love and take care of their lives. (視死爲重事而愛養其生) 余培林's commentary: cherish life. (愛惜生命) If a person take death seriously, it means they love their lives and do not want death. This is what the text means. In translation, I used Wing-tsit Chan's translation 'Let the people value their lives highly'.

³吳澄 said, 不遠徙 means grow up here and die here, do not move for other places. (不遠徙者，生於此，死於此，不他適也。)

Translation and commentaries

Although they have ships and carriages, there is no opportunity to use them.⁴ Although they have armour and weapons, there are no occasion to display them.⁵

雖有舟輿，無所乘之，雖有甲兵，無所陳之。

⁴無所乘之，無所陳之， In this and the following sentences, there is no words about ‘opportunity’ or ‘occasion’, but this meaning is implicitly in it. The contemporary translation by 陳鼓應 says ‘there is no need to’ and ‘there is never any occasion to’. Therefore, I add this sense in the translation.

⁵ I choose the word ‘display’, because the character 陳 is not only limited in deploy military, it is wide-ranged, so I use a common and broader word for it.

Translation and commentaries

Bring the people back to keeping their records with knotted string,⁶ relishing their food,⁷ enjoying their clothing, being safe and content in their homes,⁸ and being happy in their customs.

使民復結繩而用之，甘其食，美其服，安其居，樂其俗。

⁶ This translation is mostly borrowed from Roger Ames and David Hall. Knotting string or tying knots is a way of recording things in primitive time before writing was invented. Also, the character 復 expresses Laozi's idea of returning back to the state of simplicity, and the phrase 'bring back' perfectly expresses the idea.

⁷ Relish, The Oxford Dictionary: 'to get great pleasure from something'. Another meaning (noun) is a seasoned sauce, this suits the context, which is about enjoying their food.

⁸ 安 have both meaning of being content (安於, 安適) and being safe and secure (安全₆ 安穩), so I translate both of them.

Translation and commentaries

Neighbouring states can see each other from far,⁹ the voice of chicken and dogs can also be heard by each other, but the people there would grow old and die without traveling from one to the other.¹⁰

鄰國相望，雞犬之聲相聞，民至老死不相往來。

⁹ 望 means look far into the distance (新漢英大辭典), so I add ‘from far’ in this sentence.

¹⁰ The translation of the last clause is borrowed from Brook Ziporyn. The reason people don’t travel from one place to the other, 王弼 said is that they don’t have desire (無所欲求), and 蘇轍 said that it is because they have plenty of supplies and they are sufficient and ample of themselves so they don’t need to travel to another place. (民物繁夥而不相求，則彼此皆足故也)



Thank you for listening!

