

The soft and weak overcomes the firm and strong.

Module code : SICH4002
Module tutor : Prof. Lo
Student name : Yirong Cui
Student number: 2016053
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Introduction

Chapter 36:

將欲歛之，必固張之；將欲弱之，必固強之；將欲廢之，必固興之；將欲奪之，必固與之。是謂微明。柔弱勝剛強。魚不可脫于淵，國之利器不可以示人。

1. 將欲歛之，必固張之；將欲弱之，必固強之；將欲廢之，必固興之；將欲奪之，必固與之。是謂微明。

歛:gather 固:temporary 微明:subtle indicating omens

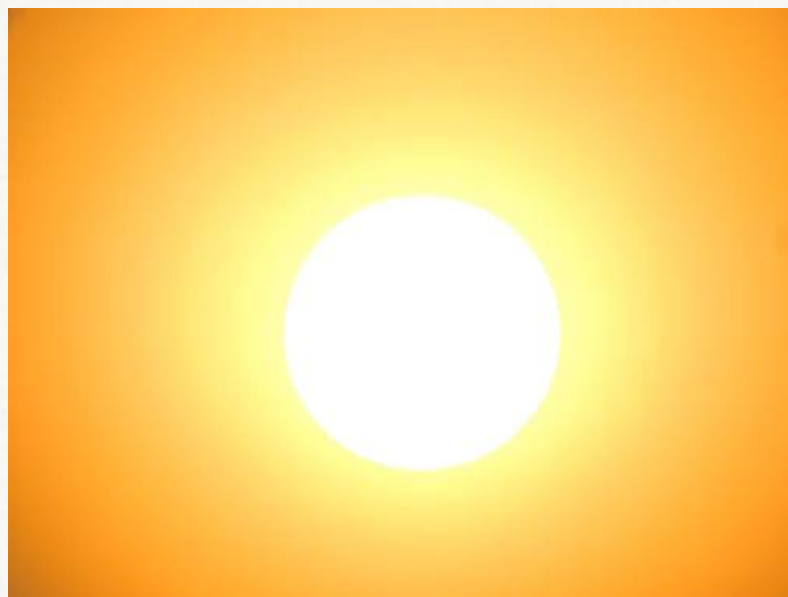
Fan Yingyuan:

“When we expand something, strengthen something, excite something, and take something there is already the subtle implication of accumulating something, weakening something, abandoning something, and taking something. Although the implication is minute, the things are already quite obvious. Therefore, it says: ‘This is called subtle bright.’ ” (1)

1. 將欲歛之，必固張之；將欲弱之，必固強之；將欲廢之，必固興之；將欲奪之，必固與之。是謂微明。

Hanshan:

- This describes the natural propensity of things, but people usually fail to observe it. Everything in the world reverses after it tends to an extreme. (1)



sun



moon



damp

1. 將欲歛之，必固張之；將欲弱之，必固強之；將欲廢之，必固興之；將欲奪之，必固與之。是謂微明。

Hanshan:

- Expansion is the sign of accumulation (歛); strength must be the bud of weakness; to rise up and excite (興) must be an sign of abandonment (廢); giving (與) must be the sign of seizing (奪).” (1)

1. 將欲歛之，必固張之；將欲弱之，必固強之；將欲廢之，必固興之；將欲奪之，必固與之。是謂微明。



Kaiyuan prosperous age



The demise of Tang Dynasty

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D. C. Lau :

“If you would have a thing shrink, you must first stretch it.” (1)

Conclusion :

This is a description of the famous Daoist ideas about when things reach their peak they must return (物極必反), when influence and authority is great it must weaken (勢強必弱). (2)

(1) Lao Tzu Tao Te Ching, trans. by D.C.Lau (New York, Penguin, 1963), p41.

(2) 陳鼓應 [Chen Guying], ed. 老子今注今譯 [The Annotated Critical Laozi], p179.



2. 柔弱勝剛強

chapter 77:

When you draw the bow, if you lift it too high, press it down a bit; if you lift it too low, lift it up a bit. Up and down, left and right, must make an appropriate adjustment for the target. ⁽¹⁾

天之道，其猶張弓與？高者抑之，下者舉之；有餘者損之，不足者補之。

chapter 42:

People who are very violent won't get their timely death. ⁽²⁾

(1) 陳鼓應 [Chen Guying], ed. 老子今注今譯 [The Annotated Critical Laozi], p287.

(2) 陳鼓應 [Chen Guying], ed. 老子今注今譯 [The Annotated Critical Laozi], p200.

2. 柔弱勝剛強

chapter 50:

There is nowhere for the rhinoceros to pitch its horn;
there is nowhere for the tiger to place its claws; there
is nowhere for the weapon to lodge its blade. ⁽¹⁾ 兕無所
投其角，虎無所措其爪，兵無所容其刃。 兕: rhinoceros



rhinoceros



tiger



weapon

(1) 陳鼓應 [Chen Guying], ed. 老子今注今譯 [The Annotated Critical Laozi], p230.

(2) 圖片來源: <https://unsplash.com/>

2. 柔弱勝剛強

chapter 76:

The hard and strong are follower of death, the soft and weak are follow of weak. ⁽¹⁾ 堅強者死之徒，柔弱者生之徒

chapter 22:

Bowed down then preserved, bent then straight, hollow then full, worn then new. ⁽²⁾ 曲則全，枉則直，窪則盈，弊

則新，少則得，多則惑。

(1) 陳鼓應 [Chen Guying], ed. 老子今注今譯 [The Annotated Critical Laozi], p284.

(2) 陳鼓應 [Chen Guying], ed. 老子今注今譯 [The Annotated Critical Laozi], p136.



People work in saleslisten to the customer
quietly and help them solve the problem.

3. 魚不可脫於淵，國之利器不可以示人。

利器 : sharp instruments

Several explanations of sharp instruments:

Heshang Gong : “It’ s the way of power.” (1)

Hanfeizi : “It’ s the punishments.” (2)

Xuehui : “ Sharp instruments are a metaphor for a country’ s power.” (3)

Wangbi : “Showing people means employing punishment.”

12(4)

3. 魚不可脫於淵，國之利器不可以示人。

D. C. Lau :

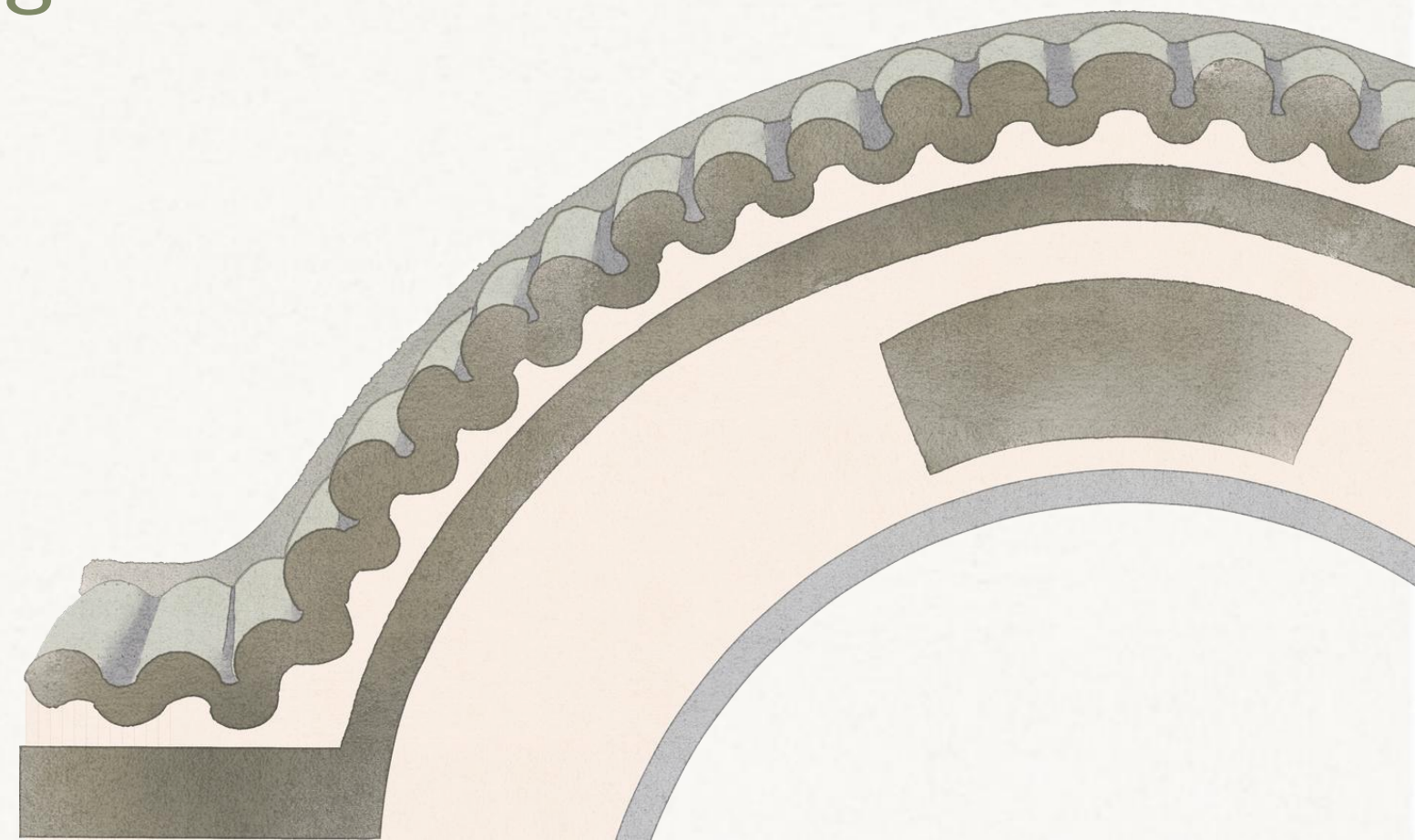
The instruments of power in a state must not
berevealed to anyone. (1)

Personal idea :

If you always show your muscles to others,
they will know your weakness.

Conclusion:

Something which is weak and soft,
it' s usually can resist to the
pressure much more than the strong
things.



Bibliography



1. 陳鼓應 [Chen Guying], ed. 老子今注今譯 [The Annotated Critical Laozi] (Xinbei: Taiwanshangwu, 2017)
2. 釋德清 [Shi Deqing], ed. 道德經解 [The Explanation of Daodejing] (Shanghai: East China Normal University chubanshe, 2009)
3. Lao Tzu Tao Te Ching, trans. by D.C.Lau (New York, Penguin, 1963)

Thank you
for
listening

