



Undergraduate assignment feedback form
(to be completed by marker)

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<i>Module title:</i> Sinological English II: Translation of Daoist Literature	
<i>For completion by marker:</i> <i>Comments:</i> 	
<i>Marker's signature:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
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Translation 1

《道德經·第四十四章》

名與身孰親？身與貨孰多？得與亡孰病？

是故甚愛必大費；多藏必厚亡。

知足不辱，知止不殆，可以長久。

Translation on Chapter 44 of *Daodejing*

Your reputation and your life,¹ which one is dearer?² Your possessions and your life, which one is more important? ³Gaining fame and fortune compared to losing one's life,⁴ which one is more harmful?⁵

Therefore, extreme fondness⁶ leads to a huge cost, and gathering too many possessions⁷ lead to heavy losses.⁸

Knowing to be content can prevent you from disgrace.⁹ Knowing where to stop can prevent you from danger.¹⁰ In this way, one can be long-lasting.

¹ *Shen* 身 literally means 'body', also means 'life'. In this text, it contains both meanings, emphasizing the natural self that is opposite to fame and wealth. For the translation, I choose 'life', as it might be easier to understand than 'self' and also emphasize the comparison.

² *Qin* 親 means 'close' in this context. As I have chosen 'life' for *shen* 身, it might sounds awkward to describe 'life' as 'close', so I use 'dear', which is borrowed from Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall's translation.

³ According to Chen Guyin, *duo* 多 means *chong* 重 (repeated), through extension, we can take it as *zhong* 重, which original meaning is 'heavy' and often refers to 'important' (重要).

⁴ Chen Guying 陳鼓應 said, "Receiving (得)" refers to gaining reputation and fortune. "Losing (失)" refers to losing one's life.'

⁵ According to Yu Peilin 余培林, *bing* 病 means 'harmful' (害).

⁶ 'Extreme fondness' is borrowed from Thomas Cleary. In Cambridge Dictionary, the first definition of 'fondness' is 'to like someone or something very much; to like doing something'. I choose this word because I think it contains the meaning of 'love, like', and also a sense of 'being fascinated'.

⁷ 'Gathering too many possessions' is borrowed from Paul J. D'Ambrosio and Xiao Ouyang's English translation of Chen Guying's contemporary translation. I think it fully conveys the meaning using simple words.

⁸ 'A huge cost' and 'heavy losses' is from Ames and Hall. I think it fully expresses the idea in a similar structure.

⁹ 'Disgrace' means 'embarrassment and the loss of other people's respect, or behaviour that causes this' in Cambridge Dictionary. Many translators choose this word, and I find it perfectly expresses the meaning of '辱', which is caused by one self's inappropriate behaviour.

¹⁰ According to Yu Peilin 余培林, '知足' refers to mentally restriction, and '知止' refers to the restriction in behaviours. (「知足」是心理上的節制，「知止」是行為上的節制。)

Translation 2

《道德經·第十五章》

古之善為道者，微妙玄通，深不可識。夫唯不可識，故強為之容。

豫兮若冬涉川；猶兮若畏四鄰；儼兮其若客；渙兮若冰之將釋；

敦兮其若樸；曠兮其若谷；混兮其若濁；

孰能濁以靜之徐清？孰能安以動之徐生？

保此道者，不欲盈。夫唯不盈，故能蔽而新成。

Translation on Chapter 15 of *Daodejing*¹

In ancient times, those who are good at practicing the Dao are subtle and delicate, mysterious and penetrating. They are so deep and profound that is beyond comprehension.² Because they are beyond comprehension, we could only describe them vaguely by their appearance.³

They are hesitant and uncertain, as if crossing a river in winter.⁴ Cautious and alert, as if being afraid of the neighbours on all sides.⁵ Solemn and polite, as if being a guest.⁶ Relaxed and kind as if ice begins to melt.⁷

They are genuine and sincere like uncarved wood.⁸ Open and modest like a valley.⁹ Murky

¹ For the Chinese text, I used Yu Peilin's version, which has four variant readings compared to Wang Bi's version. The major ones would be 善為道者 instead of 善為士者, and 蔽而新成 instead of 蔽不新成. I think they are better than the received version.

² 'Beyond comprehension' is borrowed from Roger Ames and David Hall. This emphasizes their greatness and profundity.

³ John C. H. Wu 吳經熊 used the word 'vaguely'. Though it isn't a direct translation of '強', I think it express the sense of 'unable to describe it accurately' with a milder tone than 'force someone to describe it'.

⁴ Wang Bi 王弼 explained this sentence as 'Someone crossing a [frozen] river in winter is hesitant about whether he should cross or not, and has an expression that makes it impossible to read his feelings. 冬之涉川，豫然若欲度，若不欲度，其情不可得見之貌也'. (trans. by Rudolf G. Wagner)

⁵ 猶兮, Chen Guying interpret it as 'an expression of vigilance and care'.

⁶ Wu Cheng 吳澄 interpret 儼 as 矜莊貌, so I translate it as 'solemn and polite'.

⁷ Wu Cheng 吳澄 said, '渙 means a loose and relax appearance. It's like ice about to melt, dissolving and flowing but not stagnant. 渙，解散貌。若冰將釋，融液而不凝滯也'. Meanwhile, Liu Xinfang 劉信芳 said, "'like thawing [ice]'" refers to their being free and easy.' Therefore, I use 'relaxed and kind' to try to express the original and extended meaning of '渙'.

⁸ Heshanggong 河上公 said, '敦 is simple and thick, while 樸 is a state that forms hasn't been divided. 敦者質厚，樸者形未分'. Yu Peilin 余培林 further interpreted 敦兮 as 'sincere and thick 誠厚貌', and 樸 as 'wood that hasn't been made into a ware 未成器的素木'.

⁹ Su Zhe 蘇轍 explain this sentence as 'being empty and modest and accommodate all things 虛而無所不受也'.

and mixed like muddy water.¹⁰

Who can make muddy water gradually clear through tranquillity? Who can make the still gradually come to life through activity?¹¹

Those who preserve the Dao do not deserve fullness. Because there is no fullness, the worn-out can be renewed.¹²

¹⁰ The character 渾 has meanings of ‘muddy 渾濁’ and ‘to mix 混合’, and I translate both of them.

¹¹ The translation of these two sentences is from Wing-tsit Chan. I think it perfectly express the ideas with the original questioning tone, flow of the sentence and elegance.

¹² Chen Guying interprets the last sentence as ‘replacing the old with the new’. And the translation is borrowed from Paul J. D’Ambrosio and Xiao Ouyang’s translation.

Translation 3

《道德經·第二十四章》

企者不立；跨者不行；自見者不明；自是者不彰；自伐者無功；自矜者不長。

其在道也，曰：餘食贅行。物或惡之，故有道者不處。

Translation on Chapter 24 of *Daodejing*

Standing on tiptoes cannot stand firm; walking with long strikes cannot go far;¹ those who show themselves² are not luminous;³ those who justify themselves are not distinct;⁴ those who boast themselves have no merit;⁵ those who are conceited⁶ of themselves do not endure. From the perspective of the Dao,⁷ these are like leftovers and superfluities⁸—things that inspire disgust.⁹ Therefore, those who have the Dao do not act in this way.¹⁰

¹ In the first two lines, the original text does not mention ‘firm’ or ‘far’, but they are implicitly in it. Wu Cheng 吳澄 said, ‘A person can do this (to tiptoe and to stride) for a while but not for long.’ (translated by Bill Porter)

² 見, Yu Peilin 余培林 read as xiàn. Also, in chapter 22, Chen Guying 陳鼓應 explain 自見 as ‘to make oneself appear (自現), to make oneself stand out from the crowd.’ Therefore, I translate it as ‘show themselves’.

³ As I have interpreted 自見 as ‘show themselves’, 明 therefore means ‘clearly seen by others’ rather than ‘knowing things clearly’. The word ‘luminous’ is from Wing-tsit Chan and Lin Yutang’s translation.

⁴ ‘Distinct’ is borrowed from Arthur Waley’s translation.

⁵ I choose ‘merit’ instead of ‘credit’ to avoid the ambiguity that ‘credit’ also has meanings related to money.

⁶ 矜 and 伐 both have the meanings of ‘boast’ or ‘brag’, but when they are mentioned together, they have slightly different meanings. 矜 contains the meaning of ‘thinking oneself is great’ and 伐 is ‘boast one’s achievements’ (尚書孔傳：“自賢曰矜，自功曰伐。”孔穎達疏：“矜與伐俱是誇義。”) Therefore I choose ‘conceited’ for 矜.

⁷ This sentence is borrowed from Paul D'Ambrosio and Xiao Ouyang’s translation of Chen Guying’s contemporary translation. It perfectly expresses its meaning in simple words.

⁸ 贅行, Wang Bi 王弼 interpreted it as 疣贅, which means tumour originally, and by extension, it means things that are redundant or superfluous. Therefore, I use D'Ambrosio and Ouyang’s translation ‘superfluities’.

⁹ For this sentence, I use Brook Ziporyn’s translation, for it smoothly expresses the idea.

¹⁰ 不處, literally means ‘not dwell (in these behaviours)’, which is to say that they do not have these behaviours, so I translate it as ‘do not act in this way’.



Three Translations on Chapter 9 of *The Daodejing*

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《道德經·第九章》

持而盈之，不如其已；

揣而銳之，不可長保。

金玉滿堂，莫之能守；

富貴而驕，自遺其咎。

功遂身退，天之道。

Translation 1

(straightforward, complete)

持而盈之，不如其已；揣而銳之，不可長保。

If you hold on tight to something and make it full (like being too proud of your ability and accomplishments), it is better to stop (as early as possible).

If you beat something and make it sharp (just like showing and boasting your privilege and talent), it cannot sustain for long.

Translation 1

金玉滿堂，莫之能守；富貴而驕，自遺其咎。功遂身退，天之道。

If you are as rich as full of gold and jade in your house, you cannot guard them.

If you have wealth and privilege and therefore become arrogant, you are giving yourself misfortune.

After fulfilling your achievements, step aside and not possess it. This is the Way of Heaven.

Translation 2

(concise, poetic)

持而盈之，不如其已；揣而銳之，不可長保。

金玉滿堂，莫之能守；富貴而驕，自遺其咎。功遂身退，天之道。

Cling to it and fill it, is not as good as to stop it.

Beat it and sharpen it, you will never keep it.

Having a house full of gold and jade, no one will be able to guard it.

Being conceited with wealth and fame, means that misfortune is your aim.

Have accomplishments and step away, this aligns with the natural way.

Translation 3

(domesticating)

持而盈之，不如其已；揣而銳之，不可長保。

If you keep filling a bowl, the water will spill, just like pursuing power and profit—it is better to stop early.

If you keep sharpen a sword to its utmost, the edge is easily broken, just like displaying your talent—it is better to hide away.

Translation 3

金玉滿堂，莫之能守；富貴而驕，自遺其咎。功遂身退，天之道。

It is difficult to safeguard a room full of treasures.

It is casting yourself disaster to being arrogant of your wealth and fame.

Therefore, after having accomplishments, retire in time—this is the way of nature.



Thank you for listening!

