What is wu-wei? Understanding "Wu-wei to complete anything"

「无为」是什么?读懂「无为而无不为」

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道德经提及"无为"之处:

Places in Tao Te Ching mentioning wu-wei:

Wu-wei in Tao Te Ching is associated with:

上德

圣人

无不为

第十一章 無爲

【爲學者日益 聞道者日損】

致力于学习知识的人,收获的知识一天比一天多;体察道的人,愿意运用、应用的规律一天比一天少(搁置的规律一天比一天多)。

Those devoted to learning gain more knowledge each day, while those who perceive Tao find themselves willing to use and apply less rules each day (with the accumulation of shelved rules increasing day by day).

【損之又損 以至於無爲】

愿意运用、应用的规律越来越少(搁置的规律越来越多),不断逼近,最终达到不做任何事的状态。

The number of rules that one is willing to use and apply keeps decreasing (with the accumulation of shelved rules increasing day by day). One keeps approaching continuously till reaching the state of doing nothing in the end.

【無爲而無不爲】

愿意运用、应用的规律少之又少,才能实现想要做的事。(无为,作为一种极限状态,永远无法达到,只可能不断逼近。)

The number of rules that one is willing to use and apply continuously decreasing so that one can complete what is wanted. (Wu-wei as a state of extremum can never be reached but can only be continuously approached.)

本章中剩余部分以进一步举例的方式更具象地传递无为是何种状态:

The rest part used a more concrete example to help readers feel what the state of wu-wei is.

將欲取天下也 恆無事

及其有事也 不足以取天下

道德经中,对无为这一概念的表述,从方式上,与对道这一概念的表述具有结构上的共同抽象元素:

In Tao Te Ching, the way to deliver the notion of wu-wei, from the perspective of how it is expressed, shares common structural abstract elements with how the notion of Tao is delivered:

一个人类可以不断逼近却永远不可能到达的极值

an extremum humans can continuously approach but never reach

玄, 之于道:

Xuan in the context of Tao:

玄之又玄 第四十五章 觀眇

损, 之于无为:

Decrease in the context of wu-wei:

无不为,人类无法到达的状态。但人类可以不断逼近。这是又一个人类可以不断逼 近却永远不可能到达的极值。

Completing anything wanted is a state humans can never reach. But humans can continuously approach. This is again an extremum humans can continuously approach but never reach.

无为而不无为。两个此类的极值出现在同一句话中。表达的是:

Two extremums of this kind appear in the same sentence, 无为而不无为. This means:

人类可以通过不断逼近无为而实现不断逼近无不为。

Humans can continuously approach the state of completing anything wanted by continuously approaching wu-wei.

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The source of the original text of Tao Te Ching: https://zh.wikisource.org/wiki/老子_(帛書校勘版)

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