

A Translation of a Passage from the *Mencius* 孟子

and Its Annotations Collected in *Mengzi Zhengyi* 孟子正義

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1. Original text and translation of a passage from the *Mencius* (Part of Chapter 6 of Gongsun chou zhangju Part I 公孫醜章句上)

1.1 Original text

孟子曰：「所以謂人皆有不忍人之心者，今人乍見孺子將入於井，皆有怵惕惻隱之心。非所以內交於孺子之父母也，非所以要譽於鄉黨朋友也，非惡其聲而然也。由是觀之，無惻隱之心，非人也；無羞惡之心，非人也；無辭讓之心，非人也；無是非之心，非人也。惻隱之心，仁之端也；羞惡之心，義之端也；辭讓之心，禮之端也；是非之心，智之端也。人之有是四端也，猶其有四體也。」

1.2 Translation

Mencius said ‘The reason why everyone has compassion for others is that if someone suddenly sees a child falling into a well, he or she would inevitably feel fright and sympathy. This is not because he or she wants to have a relationship with the child’s parents, not because he wants to gain a reputation among neighbors and friends, or because he hates the cry of this child. From this point of view, without compassion, it is not human; Without shame, it is not human; Without humility, it is not human; Without judgment of right and wrong, it is not human. Compassion is the beginning of benevolence; Shame is the beginning

of righteousness; Humility is the beginning of etiquette; Right mind is the beginning of wisdom. People have these four beginnings, just like having limbs.

2. Original text and translation of related annotations collected in *Mengzi zhengyi*

2.1 Original text – Part I

【注】乍，暫也。孺子，未有知小子也。所以言人皆有是心，凡人暫見小小孺子將入井，賢愚皆有驚駭之情，情發於中，非為人也，非惡有不仁之聲名，故怵惕也。

【疏】注「乍暫」至「怵惕也」。正義曰：僖公三十三年公羊傳云「詐戰不日」，注云：「詐，卒也。」廣雅釋詁云：「暫，猝也。」釋言云：「乍，暫也。」乍與詐通，卒與猝通。乍、暫、卒三字轉註也。說文子部云：「孺，乳子也。」劉熙釋名釋長幼云：「兒始能行曰孺子。孺，濡也。言濡弱也。」

2.2 Translation of Part I

Annotation: The character *Zha* 乍 means suddenly. The Chinese words *Ruzi* 孺子 means a child whose intellect is not yet fully developed. The reason why everyone has such an intention, it is because everyone will be shocked when he suddenly sees a child falling into a well, whether he is a wise man or a fool. Their feelings are from the inside, they are shocked not for someone else or for fear of taking on an unkind reputation.

The explanation of annotation: Note from ‘*Zazan*’ to ‘*Chutiye*’. Zhengyi: ‘In the thirty-third year of the Duke of Xi in *Gongyangzhuan*, it is recorded that “*Zhazhan Buri* 詐戰不日”. The annotation said ‘*zha* 詐 means suddenly’. *Guangya shigu* said ‘*zan* 暫 means suddenly’.

Shiyan said ‘*zha* 乍 means suddenly’. The meaning of *zha* 乍 is the same as *zha* 詐; The meaning of *zu* 卒 is the same as *cu* 猝. *Zha* 乍, *zan* 暫, *zu* 卒 these three words are mutually explanatory. In the *zi* 子 radical of *Shuowen*, it is said that *ru* 孺 means Young children. In the *shiming shizhangyou* of Liuxi, it is stated that when children can walk, they can be called *ruzi* 孺子. *Ru* 孺 means *ru* 濡, it refers to delicate.

2.3 Original text – Part II

禮記內則云「孺子蚤寢晏起」，注云：「孺子，小子也。」始能行而尚無知識，不知井之溺人，故將入井也。國語周語「芮良夫云猶曰怵惕懼怨之來也」，注云：「怵惕，恐懼也。」文選東京賦云「猶怵惕於一夫」，薛綜注云「惕，驚也。」驚即駭，驚駭猶恐懼也。趙氏解梁惠王上篇「隱其無罪」為痛，說文心部云「惻，痛也。」漢書鮑宣傳云「豈有肯加惻隱於細民」，注云：「惻，隱，皆痛也。」

2.4 Translation of Part II

In the chapter *Neize of the Book of Rites*, it is stated that ‘a little child go to bed early and get up late.’ The annotation said ‘*ruzi* 孺子 means little child who just able to walk but not yet have common sense and do not know that wells would drown people, so he will fall into the well. In *Guoyu zhoyu*, it is recorded ‘Ruiliangfu said “he has done things very seriously, and he is still cautious and wary every day. Because he is deeply afraid that he will lead to complaints from the people.”’ The annotation said ‘*chuti* 怵惕’ means fear. The *Dongjingfu in Wenxuan* stated that still afraid of a person. Xuezhong annotated that ‘*ti* 惕’ means shock. *jing* 驚 is *hai* 駭, the meaning of *Jinghai* 驚駭 is like fear. Zhao explained ‘*Yinqiwuzui* 隱其無罪’ in the previous chapter of the king Hui of Liang in *Mencius* as sadness. In the *Xin* 心

radical of *Shuowen*, it is said that *ce* 惻 means sadness. In the biography of Baoxuan in the *Book of Han*, it is stated ‘No one had compassion with the common people.’ The annotation said that the character *ce* 惻 and *yin* 隱 all mean sadness.

2.5 Original text – Part III

然則怵惕惻隱，**謂**為驚懼其入井，又哀痛其入井也。以隱之義已見前經文，下亦自申明之，言惻隱為仁，故略之耳。音義云：「**內**，本亦作『納』。」納**交**教於孺子之父母，要譽於鄉黨朋友，皆為人之事，故統之云非為人也。孔本作「發於中非為其人也」，無「情」字，有「其」字。呂氏春秋過理篇云「臣聞其聲」，淮南子修務訓云「聲施千里」，高誘注並云：「聲，名也。」禮記表記云「先王謚以尊名」，注云：「名者，謂聲譽也。」故以名釋聲。

2.6 Translation of Part III

However, fear and compassion was talking about being shocked and afraid that a child would fall into the well, and also of sorrow that he fell into the well. Because the meaning of the word ‘*yin* 隱’ has been mentioned in the previous scriptures, and it will be clarified later that compassion is benevolence, therefore, it had been ignored. *Yinyi* said ‘*nei* 內’ should be ‘*na* 納’ originally. Wanting to have a relationship with the child’s parents and to gain a reputation among neighbors and friends, these two points are all the thing for others, thus they are all called something that is not for others. The version of Kong is ‘something is from the inside, and not for others.’ There is no character ‘*qing* 情’ and has the character ‘*qi* 其’. In the chapter *Guoli* of *Lushichunqiu*, it is stated ‘I have heard of his reputation.’ The *Wuxiuxun* in *Huainanzi* stated ‘Fame spreads thousands of miles.’ Gaoyou annotated ‘the character “*sheng* 聲” means reputation.’ In *Biaoji* of the *Book of Rites*, it is stated, ‘The posthumous

title of the former king is to respect his reputation.’ The annotation said ‘the character *ming* 名 refers to reputation,’ this is why using the character *ming* 名 to explain the character *sheng* 聲.

2.7 Original text – Part IV

【注】言無此四者，當若禽獸，非人心耳。為人則有之矣，凡人但不能演用為行耳。【疏】注「言此」至「行耳」正義曰：孟子道性善，謂人之性皆善，禽獸之性皆不善也。禽獸之性不善，故無此四者。禽獸無此四者，以其非人之心也。若為人之心，無論賢愚，則皆有之矣。孟子四言「非人」，乃極言人心必有此四者。趙氏此注，深得孟子之旨，不愧通儒。

2.8 Translation of Part IV

Annotation: That is to say, without these four intentions, they are like animals, not human's heart. As human, everyone has this heart, just can't generalise it into behavior.

The explanation of annotation: Note from ‘*Yanci*’ to ‘*Xinger*’. *Zhengyi* said ‘Mencius said that nature was good, which refers to the nature of human beings is all good, animals’ nature are all bad. Because animals’ nature are bad, they do not have these four intentions. Animals do not have these four intentions due to their hearts are not human hearts. If it is a heart of man, no matter he is a wise or foolish people, he would have it. Mencius’s four references to ‘not a human’ are particularly emphasized that with human heart, it must have these four intentions. This annotation of Zhao indicates a very deep understanding of what Mencius meant and Zhao is worthy of being a great Confucian.

2.9 Original text – Part V

三國志鐘繇傳注引先賢行狀，李膺謂鐘觀曰：「孟子以為人無好惡是非之心非人也。」禮記曲禮注引孟子「人無是非之心非人也」。孔氏正義兼引「人無惻隱之心非人也，人無是非之心非人也」，於句首俱加「人」字。則四稱「非人」，竟為指斥罵詈之辭，非孟子義。趙氏云：「人但不能演用為行」，正申明人必有此心，惟禽獸無之耳。

2.10 Translation of Part V

The annotation of *Zhongyao's biography* in *The History of the Three Kingdoms* mention the behavior of previous sages. Liying said to Zhongjin that 'Mencius regarded that a person without the heart of right and wrong is not a human.' The annotation of *Quli* in *the Book of Rites* quote from Mencius 'a person without the heart of right and wrong is not a human.' Kong's *Zhengyi* also quote 'a person without compassion is not a human; a person without the heart of right and wrong is not a human.' They all added a character *ren* 人 at the beginning of the sentence, then these four references of 'not a human' sounds like accusing and abusive words, but this is not what Mencius meant. Zhao said 'people just can't generalise it into behavior.' This is a statement that human certainly have this heart, only animals do not.

2.11 Original text – Part VI

【注】端者，首也。人皆有仁義禮智之首，可引用之。【疏】注「端首」至「用之」，正義曰：儀禮鄉射禮注云：「序端，東序頭也。」頭，首也。故端為首。端與耑通。說文耑部云：「耑，物初生之題也。」題亦頭也，故考工記「輪人鑿端」，注云：「內題方有頭，可由此推及全體。」惠氏士奇大學說云：「大學致知，中庸致曲，皆自明誠也。中庸謂之曲，孟子謂之端，在物為曲，在心為端。致者，擴而充之也。」

2.12 Translation of Part VI

Annotation: The character *duan* 端 means head. Everyone has the beginning of benevolence, righteousness, etiquette and wisdom, which can be used.

The explanation of annotation: Note from ‘*Duanshou*’ to ‘*Yongzhi*’. *Zhengyi* said ‘in the annotation of *Xiangsheli* in *Yili*, it is stated that the word *Xuduan* 序端 means near the south end of the east wall or west wall of the hall.’ The character *tou* 頭 means head, so the character *duan* 端 is head. The character *duan* 端 is the same as *duan* 耑. In the *duan* 耑 radical of *Shuowen*, it is said that *duan* 耑 is the head of the object when it was just born. The character *ti* 題 also means head. Thus the *Lunren zaoduan* 輪人鑿端 in *Kaogongji*, its annotation said ‘Only the upper end of the interior has a head, which can be extended to all.’ *Daxueshuo* written by *Huishi* said ‘the *Great Learning* targets to *Zhizhi* 致知 and the *doctrine of the Mean* targets to *Zhiqu* 致曲, they all aim to self enlightenment. The *doctrine of the Mean* called it as *Qu*. *Mencius* called it as *duan* 端, for object, it is *qu* 曲; for heart, it is *duan* 端. The character *zhi* 致 means expand and fill it up.

2.13 Original text – Part VII

戴氏震孟子字義疏證云：「仁者，生生之德也；『民之質矣，日用飲食』，無非人道所以生生者。一人遂其生，推之而與天下共遂其生，仁也。言仁可以賅義，使親愛長養不協於正大之情，則義有未盡，亦即仁有未至。言仁可以賅禮，使無親疏上下之辨，則禮失而仁亦未為得。且言義可以賅禮，言禮可以賅義，先王之以禮教，無非正大之情；君子之精義也，斷乎親疏上下，不爽幾微。而舉義舉禮，可以賅仁，又無疑也。舉仁舉禮可以賅智，智者，知此者也。」

2.14 Translation of Part VII

In *Mengzi ziyishuzheng* written by Daizhen said ‘benevolence is a kind of endless virtue. How simple the people are, content with daily life and food, isn’t this the reason why human endures. One person survive, so that people all over the world can survive together, that is benevolence. Benevolence 仁 can encompass righteousness 義. If the love in the family cannot be reconciled with the feeling of fairness and justice, then righteousness has not been achieved, and benevolence also has not been achieved. Benevolence 仁 can encompass etiquette 禮, if there is no distinction between intimacy and estrangement, then both etiquette and benevolence would not be achieved. And righteousness can encompass etiquette; etiquette can encompass righteousness. The reason why the previous kings promoted etiquette is of the open and aboveboard principles. The great principles of a *Junzi* 君子 can clearly distinguish the relationship between *qin* 親 and *shu* 疏. There is no doubt with righteousness and etiquette, then benevolence can be achieved. With benevolence and etiquette, then wisdom can be achieved. A man who know this could be a wise man.’

2.15 Original text – Part VIII

「易曰：『立人之道，曰仁與義。』而中庸曰：『仁者，人也。親親為大。義者，宜也。尊賢為大。親親之殺，尊賢之等，禮所生也。』益之以禮，所以為仁至義盡也。語德之盛者，全乎智仁而已矣，而中庸曰：『智仁勇三者，天下之達德也。』益之以勇，蓋德之所以成也。就人倫日用，究其精微之極致，曰仁，曰義，曰禮。合三者以斷天下之事，如權衡之於輕重，於仁無憾，於禮義不愆，而道盡矣。自人道遯之天道，自人之德性遯之天德，則氣化流行，生生不息，仁也。」

2.16 Translation of Part VIII

The Book of Change said ‘The truth of being a human is benevolence and righteousness.’ *The doctrine of the Mean* said ‘A person with benevolence 仁 is a human, loving your parents is the most important thing. Righteousness 義 means appropriate and proper. Respecting for the wise man is paramount. There are grades to love one’s relatives, and there are grades to respect wise men, which are generated from etiquette.’ With etiquette, benevolence and righteousness could be entirely achieved. When it comes to people of great virtue, they are people who are very wise and benevolent. But *the doctrine of the Mean* said ‘Wisdom, benevolence and courage, these three are the ultimate virtue in the world.’ With courage, this virtue can be achieved. For human’s relationships and daily use, to investigate its origin, it is the three aspects: benevolence, righteousness and etiquette. Judging the affairs of the world by these three is like having a scale to weigh the weight, so that there will be no regrets in benevolence, and no mistakes will be made in terms of etiquette and righteousness, and then the Tao 道 will be achieved. From the Tao of humanity to the Tao of heaven; from human virtue to heaven virtue, then it will spread like air never to die, that is *Ren* 仁.

2.17 Original text – Part IX

「由其生生有自然之條理，觀其條理之秩然有序，可以知禮矣。觀於條理之截然不可亂，可以知義矣。在天為氣化之生生，在人為生生之心，是乃仁之為德也。在天為氣化推行之條理，在人為其心知之通乎條理而不紊，是乃智之為德也。惟條理是以生生，條理苟失，則生生之道絕。凡仁義對文，及智仁對文，皆兼生生條理而言之者也。」

2.18 Translation of Part IX

The endless survival has its natural order, observing its orderly order, the etiquette could be known. Observing how well organized the order is, the righteousness could be known. For

heaven, this endless survival is like air; for human, this is their will of endless survival, that is why benevolence is a virtue. For heaven, it is the organization of weather changes, for human, it is a notice of this organized order in mind, that is why wisdom is a virtue. Only with order can there be endless survival, and once there is no order, then the way of endless survival will be extinct. Benevolence, righteousness, and wisdom are all discussed in terms of the endless survival order.

2.19 Original text – Part X

程氏瑤田通藝錄論學小記云：「仁主於愛，與忍相反，故言仁政，則曰「以不忍人之心，行不忍人之政」也。凡視聽言動之人於非禮者，皆生於己心之忍，忍則己去仁，己去仁則己去禮，故曰克己復禮為仁。」按賈誼新書道術篇云：「惻隱憐人謂之慈，反慈為忍。」不忍人之心即是惻隱之心。惻隱為仁之端，仁義禮智，四端一貫，故但舉惻隱，而羞惡、辭讓、是非即具矣。但有仁之端，而義禮智之端即具矣。

2.20 Translation of Part X

The *Tongyilu lunxuexiaoji* written by Chengyaotian said ‘Benevolence focus on love, which is against cruelty 忍, so when it comes to benevolent politics, it is said “Because there is sympathetic mind to others, so there is sympathetic politics.” All people who are discourteous in words and deeds are because of the cruelty in their hearts, and cruelty means that there is no benevolence with them, and no benevolence is no etiquette. Therefore, it is said that to restrain your selfish desires and make your words and deeds conform to etiquette is benevolence.’ According to the chapter *Daoshu* of *Xinshu* written by Jiayi, it is stated ‘To be compassionate and merciful is *ci* 慈, doing things against *ci* 慈 is cruel. The sympathetic mind is the heart of compassion. Compassion is the beginning of benevolence. Benevolence,

righteousness, etiquette and wisdom, these four are connected, so when it comes to compassion, shame, humility and the judgment of right to wrong are all comes to. As long as there is the beginning of benevolence, the three beginnings of righteousness, etiquette and wisdom are all available.

3. Commentary

The original text of above translation comes from a passage about discussing human nature in the chapter 6 of *Gongsun chouzhangju* part I of *Mencius*. Generally speaking, this translation task is rather difficult to me. Compared with the former original text of *Mencius*, I think the latter annotation of the original text is more difficult to translate, because there are lots of technical terms in traditional Chinese culture, such as *Shengsheng* 生生, *Qihualiuxing* 氣化流行 and *Neitifangyoutou* 內題方有頭 and so on. Although I know that my translation accuracy of these technical terms needs to be improved, I have tried my best to translate them in a way that non-Chinese could understand.

4. Conclusion

The core word of this translation is ‘four beginnings’. The theory of ‘four beginnings’ is an important content of Mencius’ thought. Mencius’ theory of good nature, and the theory of benevolent government are all related to these four beginnings. It is regarded that the proposal of the four beginnings theory really marks the maturity of Mencius’ thought.