

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 stated, 'The reason of saying everyone has a sense of compassion is because when a human suddenly sees a little child is about to fall into a well, sense of fright and compassion would come out. It is not for making friends with the child's parents, not for earning reputations from neighbourhood and friends, and not for fear of bringing himself into disrepute. It shows that, without a sense of compassion, one cannot be called human; without a sense of shame, one cannot be called human; without a sense of modesty, one cannot be called human; without a sense of right and wrong, one cannot be called human. A sense of

compassion is the start of benevolence; a sense of shame is the start of righteousness; a sense of modesty is the start of etiquette; a sense of right and wrong is the start of wisdom. These four senses to humans are like the four limbs to humans.’

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 word *Zha* means suddenly. *Ruzi* means ignorant child. The reason why say everyone has this sense is because if one sees a little child is about to fall into a well, no matter how wise or foolish this person is, he would definitely feel panic-stricken for the child.

The reason one would be palpitating and frightening is because it is an instinctive feeling arose from the inside, which is not for others, nor is for fear of the reputation of being not benevolent.

Commentary on the annotation from ‘Zhazan’ to ‘Chuti ye’. Commentator’s words: It is stated in the Thirty-third Year of King Xi of *Gongyang Zhuang* that ‘A hasty battle that betrays the alliance will not be dated’. It is annotated that ‘Zha means hastily’. In the volumes of Shigu of *Guangya*, it is said that ‘Zan means suddenly’. In the volumes of Shiyan, it is said that ‘Zha means suddenly.’ The word *Zha* 乍 is interchangeable with *Zha* 詐, *Zu* 卒 is interchangeable with *Cu* 猝. The three words *Zha* 乍, *Zan* 暫 and *Zu* 卒 are mutually explanatory. In the Zi 子 Radical of *Shuowen Jiezi*, it is said that, ‘*Ru* 孺 means infant.’ According to the Explanation of Zhangyou of *Explanations of Names*, written by Liu Xi, it records that, ‘An infant who is able to walk is called *Ruzi*. *Ru* 孺 can be defined as *Ru* 濡, which means weak.

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「芮良夫云猶日怵惕，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 Neize of the *Book of Rites*, it is recorded that ‘Children go to bed early and get up late.’ The annotation of it stated, ‘*Ruzi* means little child.’ It was saying that an ignorant child who just can walk, do not know a well would drown people, therefore, he is about to fall into a well. In Zhouyu of *Guoyu*, Rui Liangfu said ‘Even so, he still feels palpitating and

frightening every day, for fear the resentment comes.’ The annotation of it stated, ‘*Chuti* means frighten.’ In the Sing of Dongjing of *Wenxuan*, it is stated, ‘Still being palpitating and frightening by a man.’ Xue Zong annotated, ‘*Ti* means being frightened.’ The meaning of the word *Jing* is the same as *Hai*. *Jinghai* means fear. Zhao defined the word *Yin* of ‘Yinqi Wuzui’ recorded in Lianghuiwang of *Mencius* as feeling pain for. In the *Xin* 心 Radical of *Shuowen Jiezi*, it is stated, ‘*Ce* means feeling pain for.’ In the Biography of Baoxuan of the *Book of Han*, it states, ‘Is there any one who feels compassion for the ordinary people?’ The annotation of it states, ‘Both *Ce* and *Yin* mean feeling pain for.’

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

Therefore, ‘fright and compassion’ means being frightened and feeling compassion for the child who falls into the well. As the meaning of *Yin* has been explained before, and it is also illustrated afterwards that compassion can be *Ren*, the annotation had skipped over the term ‘*Ceyin*’. In the book *Yinyi*, it records that ‘The word *Nei* 內 can also be written as *Na* 納.’ Making friends with the child’s parents, earning reputations from neighbourhood and friends,

both these are all for pleasing others, thus it is called ‘not for others’. In the version of Kong, it was written as ‘It is arose from the inside, instead of motivating by someone.’ It loses a word ‘*Qing*’ but adds a word ‘*Qi*’. In Chapter Guoli of *Lüshi Chunqiu*, it is said that ‘I have heard that reputation’. In Xiuwuxun of *Huainanzi*, it is said that ‘reputation spreads thousands of li’. Gao You had annotated and said, ‘*Sheng* means reputation.’ In Biaoji of the *Book of Rites*, it is said that ‘The great emperors in ancient times conferred posthumous titles to eulogise the reputation of the passed emperors and ministers’. The annotation of it stated, ‘*Ming* means reputation.’ Therefore, the word *Sheng* is defined as reputation here.

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: This is saying if a person lives without the four senses, this person is like an animal, his heart is inhuman. As long as one is a human, one would have those senses.

However, ordinary people just cannot extend them and put them into practice.

Commentary on the annotation from ‘*Yanci*’ to ‘*Xinger*’. Commentator’s words: Mencius’ view of *xingshan* is that human beings are intrinsically good, animals are intrinsically not good. As animals are not intrinsically good, they do not have these senses. Animals do not

have these four senses is because their hearts are non-human. If it is a human heart, no matter it is wise or foolish, it would have those senses. Mencius strongly emphasised that human hearts must have these four senses by repeating ‘one cannot be called human’ four times. The annotation of Zhao shows a very good grasp of Mencius’ gist. He really deserves the name of *Tongru*.

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

There is a quotation about the conduct of ancient sages in the Biography of Zhongyao of the *Records of the Three Kingdoms*. Li Ying told Zhong Jin that, ‘Mencius believed that if one does not have the sense of good and evil, right and wrong, one is not a human.’ There is a quotation in the annotation of Quli of the *Book of Rites*, which had quoted Mencius’ statement as ‘if one has no sense of right and wrong, one is not a human.’ The commentary of Kong also quoted as ‘if one has no sense of compassion, one is not a human; if one has no sense of right and wrong, one is not a human.’ They both added the word ‘human’ at the origin of the sentence, making the four-time repeats of the term *Feiren* like a denunciation and scolding. However, this is not what Mencius meant. Zhao stated, ‘ordinary people just

cannot extend them and put them into practice.’ This has made a good proof of the view that human hearts would definitely have the four senses, yet animals don’t.

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 word *Duan* means start. All people have the start of benevolence, righteousness, etiquette and wisdom, which can be grown and applied.

Commentary on the annotation from ‘*Duanshou*’ to ‘*Yongzhi*’. Commentator’s words: There is an annotation in Xiangsheli of the *Book of Rites*, it is stated, ‘*Xuduan* means the southern tip of the east wall of the hall.’ The word *Tou* means start. Therefore, *Duan* means start. *Duan* 端 is also written as *Duan* 耑. In the *Duan* 耑 Radical of *Shuowen Jiezi*, it is stated, ‘*Duan* means the point at which something begins.’ The word *Ti* also means head. The annotation of the term *Zaoduan* in Lunren of *Kaogongji* is ‘the head of the inside’. The head is the part where the whole begins. In *A Discussion of the Great Learning*, written by Hui Shiqi, it is said that ‘*The Great Learning* talks about extending one’s *Zhi*, the *Doctrine of the Mean* talks about extending one’s *Qu*, they are all for enlightening the inner sincerity. *The*

Great Learning called it *Qu*, Mencius called it *Duan*. For physical, it is called *Qu*, for spiritual, it is called *Duan*. The word *Zhi* means extend and develop something.

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

Daizhen in his book *Mengziziyishuzheng* said that ‘*Ren* is a virtue of nourishing lives mutually. There is a lyric that “People are so simple that they content with daily diet”, this shows nothing more than how humanity nourishes lives. One can fulfill one’s life, then further help others to fulfill their lives, this is called *Ren*. *Ren* can fulfilled righteousness. Because if affection and nourishment are not fair-minded and aboveboard, it means there is a lack of righteousness, which indicates *Ren* is unfulfilled too. *Ren* can fulfill etiquette. Because if there is no distinction and respect between the intimate, the estranged, the senior and the junior, then the lack of etiquette also demonstrates *Ren* is incomplete.’ The reason of saying righteousness can fulfill etiquette and etiquette can fulfill righteousness is because the education of etiquette that the great ancestors taught was nothing more than fair-minded and aboveboard principles. The excellent righteousness of *Junzi* is being clear on the distinctions between the intimate, the estranged, the senior and the junior and not ambiguous at all. On

the other hand, it is no doubt that perfecting righteousness and etiquette is a fulfillment of *Ren*. Perfecting *Ren* and etiquette can fulfill wisdom. Wisdom means knowing about these.’

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。自人道溯之天道，自人之德性溯之天德，則氣化流行，生生不息，仁也。」

2.16 Translation of Part VIII

‘*The Canon of Yee-Change* records that “The fundamental principle of being a human is *Ren* and righteousness.” *The Doctrine of the Mean* records that “*Ren* is humanity. Loving one’s family is the greatest *Ren*. Righteousness means appropriate. Respecting the wise is the most appropriate. The order in loving family members and respecting the wise is where etiquette comes from.” By assist of etiquette, *Ren* and righteousness can be perfectly fulfilled. The great virtue normally consists in wisdom and *Ren*. Nevertheless, *the Doctrine of the Mean* states, “Wisdom, *Ren* and courage are the three most general virtues in the world.” The reason of adding courage as one of them is because virtue can be accomplished by it. In relationships and daily lives, down to the subtle details, there are *Ren*, righteousness and etiquette there. Combining these three to judge everything in the world will be fair like the scale in weighing, no shortage of *Ren* and no error in righteousness, by this, the *Dao* would

be fulfilled. Tracing the *Dao* of heaven from the *Dao* of humanity, following the virtue of heaven from human virtue, then the changes of all things are in motion restlessly, this is *Ren*.’

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

‘As the nourishment of lives has its natural order, by observing how orderly it is, etiquette can be seen. By observing the clarity and regularity of the order, righteousness can be seen. For the heaven, it is the nourishment of everything’s movement. For human, it is a heart of nourishing oneself and others. This why *Ren* is a virtue. For the heaven, the order of changes is important. For human, it is important to know the regularity of the order. This is why wisdom is a virtue. Only order can bring nourishment to lives. If losing the order, the mutual nourishment of lives would be broke up. The contrast between *Ren* and righteousness and that between wisdom and *Ren*, are all talking about the order of mutual nourishment of lives.’

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

Cheng Yaotian in his book *Lunxuexiaoji* of *Tongyilu* stated, ‘The substance of benevolence is love, which is the opposite of cruelty. As to the benevolent politics, it is said “A merciful politics is carried out by a merciful heart.” Those impropriety of seeing, listening, speaking and acting always starts with the cruelty in one’s heart. If one is cruel, benevolence is gone. If one has no benevolence, then etiquette is gone. This is why say “restraining oneself and returning to propriety is *Ren*.”’ According to Chapter Daoshu of *Xinshu*, written by Jiayi, it stated, ‘Compassion and mercy to others called *Ci*, the opposite of *Ci* is cruelty.’ A merciful heart is a compassionate heart. Compassion is the start of *Ren*, the four starts of benevolence, righteousness, etiquette and wisdom are consistent with each other. Therefore, it only mentions compassion so that the sense of shame, modesty, right and wrong are all followed. If the start of benevolence is available, the starts of righteousness, etiquette and wisdom will be available too.

3. Commentary

It is mentioned that ‘these four senses to humans are like the four limbs to humans’. This indicates the four starts is as indispensable as one’s four limbs, humans are born with four limbs and the four starts. If a person do not use his limbs, his limbs will mean nothing to him. Similarly, if one do not extend one’s intrinsic four starts, turn them to behaviour and put them into practice, the four starts will mean nothing at all. However, the four starts are always there, and it is never late to extend them and use them. One can achieve great things by ones

limbs, the four starts as well. What Mencius wanted to send is that human are intrinsically good, human beings are good in nature, it means everyone could be a good person.

4. Conclusion

This passage shows the meaning of the four starts of virtues by giving an example on a child in danger. The reaction of a human mind had revealed that human are born to be good, which is Mencius' main idea about human nature called *Xingshan* 性善.