

孟子 大学 中庸：
平解·英译

THREE CONFUCIAN CLASSICS WITH RELEVANT PARAPHRASES



吴国珍

著

Author *WU Guozhen*

- The works of Mencius
- The Great Learning
- The Doctrine of the Mean

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《孟子》篇

THE WORKS OF MENCIUS

前言 PROLOGUE

孟子是中国古代杰出的思想家、政治活动家、教育家和社会哲学家。在孔子（公元前 551—前 479）逝世一百多年后，孟子把孔子的学说传授给他的弟子并加以发扬光大。他是儒家杰出的代表人物，在继承和发扬儒家思想方面做出了极大的贡献，享有最高的荣誉。

孟子约于公元前 372 年出生在战国时期（公元前 475—前 221）的邹国（今山东邹城）。

孟子姓孟名轲，“孟子”是他的敬称。西方汉学家把孟子的姓名译成 Mencius，是一个拉丁化的译名，因为最早西译的文字是拉丁文。此名在西方世界一直沿用至今。

孟子所处的年代名义上属周朝。周王国是春秋和战国时期所有诸侯国的宗主国，到孟子的时代已经名存实亡。各诸侯国征战争霸非常激烈，天下大乱，人民生活在水深火热之中。

与孔子周游列国十四年宣传他的治国理念相同，孟子也曾到几个诸侯国活动，劝说这些国家的国君实行他提倡的以“仁政”为核心的政治理念，希望某位国君能通过爱民和行仁政来达到“王天下”的目的，以重新统一早已分崩离析的周王国，给国家和人民带来和平和安宁。

许多诸侯国君尊重孟子，向他请教治国之道，但由于他们忙于争霸征战，几乎没人愿意推行他的治国理念。最终，孟子发现自己的理想落空，便返回故国，同他的几位弟子著书立说，写下了《孟子》一书，记录了他的政治经历并详细总结和阐明了他的政治主张。孟子约卒于公元前 289 年。他的书一直受到历代政界和学界的高度重视，他本人也被尊为仅次于孔子的“亚圣”。

民本思想是孟子最重要的政治思想之一。他主张“民为贵，社稷次之，君

为轻”，主张国君应该重视民众的生计，给他们分配足够的土地，以确保他们有恒产而有恒心；他警告统治者不要违背农时征调民力，不要横征暴敛导致饿殍遍野；他敦促他所接触的国君要爱民、保民、富民、教民。

在人伦关系方面，孟子十分重视孝悌教育，认为一个人处理好家庭中的人伦关系，便能很好地处理社会上的各种人际关系。

孟子一贯主张人性本善，认为人的习性的差异是后天环境影响造成的，因此十分重视人格的养育和自我修成。他曾说过，“养心莫善于寡欲”，还说他善于培养浩然之气，并要求仁人志士做到“富贵不能淫，贫贱不能移，威武不能屈”，当一名堂堂正正的大丈夫。

孔子有弟子三千，孟子也有不少弟子。在教学过程中，孟子更多地采用讨论、推理和辩论的方式。他因材施教，善用生动有趣的比喻。他鼓励学生独立思考，对他们提出“尽信书不如无书”的告诫。

尽管孟子也求取官位，希望借此辅助国君治国，但如果国君无法将他的学说付诸实践，或者他认为国君不仁，他决不会降低自己的道德标准去接受高官厚禄。而且他还会毅然离去。

《孟子》一书主要记载孟子本人和他的若干位学生的言行，是以记言为主的语录体散文，内有许多长篇大论，文情并茂、气势磅礴、议论尖锐，充满机智的雄辩，读来令人荡气回肠，对后世的散文写作产生了深刻的影响。

本书的古文今译和英译，体现了译作者素有的文笔流畅、行文简洁和表意精准的特色。对于每章后面的评析，作者秉承“不泥古、不标新、不拔高、不贬抑”的原则，精心打造出不同于心灵鸡汤而更能为一般受众所接受的“平解”。这种对原文平白而公允的解读，可以说是全书的亮点。我们希望中外读者在阅读他的中英文本和注释评析的同时，能获得多重的收获。

Mencius was a most outstanding thinker, statesman, educator and social philosopher in ancient China. About a hundred years after Confucius (551 BC–479 BC) passed away, Mencius taught and expounded the Confucian doctrine. He is a prominent representative of the Confucian School and enjoys the greatest reputation for succeeding to and carrying forth Confucianism.

Mencius was believed to be born in 372 BC, in the small state Zou near what is now Zoucheng City in eastern China's Shandong Province, during the Warring States Period

(475 BC–221 BC).

The Chinese name of Mencius is Meng Ke. Meng is his family name and Ke, his personal name. “Mencius” is the Latinized name created by some Western sinologist and has since been commonly used in the Western world. But in China, the most frequent form of address for Mencius is Mengzi, which is his honorific title, meaning “Master Meng”.

Mencius lived in a time when the regime of the Kingdom of Zhou, the suzerain of all the princely states, existed only in name within its capital city, and the rulers of the princely states were contending for hegemony in more and more severe ways which plunged the people into the great abyss of sufferings.

Like Confucius who made his 14-year political tour from state to state to introduce his doctrine, Mencius went to some states where he tried to persuade the state rulers to rule by using his doctrine. The core of Mencius’ doctrine was what he called “benevolent governance”. Considering that the kingdom had fallen apart and had been in great disorder for so long, Mencius hoped that a benevolent king, i.e., a truly virtuous king, would arise to unify and pacify the entire kingdom, not by force, but with the “benevolent policies” he proposed.

Many state rulers respected Mencius and loved to consult him about state administrative affairs and policies but few would use his doctrine as they were busy fighting for their own selfish interests. When he found all his efforts were in vain, Mencius went back to his home state where he wrote the book, the *Works of Mencius*, together with some of his disciples, to record his political experiences and sum up and enunciate his political ideology. Mencius was believed to pass away in 289 BC. His book has attracted great attention from both political and scholastic circles in China in all times.

One of Mencius’ most important political thoughts is his people-oriented thought. He declared that the people are the most prized, the state regime comes next and the sovereign is the lightest. He held the view that a state ruler should love his people and guarantee their livelihood by allotting them enough farm land. He warned the state rulers not to requisition labor force in the farming season and not to cause the people to die of starvation by imposing severe requisitions and taxes on them. He urged the state rulers he met to love and protect the people and try to enrich them and educate them.

In dealing with human relationship, Mencius laid great emphases on filial piety

to parents and fraternal love of siblings. He believed that when the human relationship within the family was properly handled, other interpersonal relationships in society would be readily solved.

Mencius had long held the belief that all men are born good in nature, and the diversities of their second nature are only the result of environmental impacts. Thus he placed great importance on the cultivation and self-cultivation of human personalities. He once said: The best way to cultivate goodness at heart is to reduce personal desires. He said he was good at fostering his great and just spirits. He believed that a man of ideal and integrity should be like this: “No riches or ranks may induce him to corrupt; no poverty or lowliness may cause him to waver; no might or force may compel him to submit. Such would be what we call a great man.”

Like Confucius who had three thousand disciples, Mencius had many disciples of his own. In his teaching, Mencius loved to employ the methods of discussing, reasoning and arguing. He taught different learners with different methods and very often with the aid of vivid comparisons. He encouraged his disciples to think on their own, and warned them by this saying: “To give all credit to a book is as wrong as not to have one at all.”

Although he made it his goal to seek official positions so that he could help with state administration, Mencius never lowered his moral criterion to accept a high rank or a big salary offered by a sovereign who failed to put his doctrine into practice, or by one whom he considered not virtuous. Instead, he would leave him without regret.

The *Works of Mencius* mainly records Mencius and some of his disciples' words and deeds in a prose style, with many lengthy speeches that are excellent in both content and style of writing, and have sweeping force, sharp criticism, quick-witted responses and eloquence. It proves a good read due to the soul-stirring effect and has a significant influence on the prose writing in later ages.

The author of this book has characterized his Chinese modern version and English translation by its fluency, concision and accurateness. And the paraphrase at the end of each chapter reflects his rigorous academic views that are more placid than many of their kind, and we believe they will be well received by the readers at large. We hope that in reading the English version and the relevant paraphrases, readers at home and abroad will share the feeling that they have gained something from both.

词语解释

TERMINOLOGY

下列为儒学常见的核心概念词，谨请读者阅读此书前先行认识。

The following are some Chinese terms that reflect the core value of Confucianism. Readers are well advised to read the explanation of them before starting to read this book.

1. 仁 benevolence, perfect virtue, perfectly virtuous, moral excellence, human goodness

“仁”是本书乃至整个古代中国人文社会最重要的一个词，它本指人与人之间相互友爱、互助、同情等，后来演化为古代一种含义极广的道德范畴。孔子第一个把“仁”提升为最高的道德标准和道德境界，形成了包括孝、弟（悌）、忠、恕、礼、知（智）、勇、恭、宽、信、敏、惠等内容的伦理思想结构。孔子在《论语》中多次谈到“仁”，却没有给它下过确切的定义，这正好表明仁的博大和内涵丰富。他说过“仁者爱人”，表明“仁”是一种人间的大爱。“仁”的英译主要是 benevolence，但它无法涵盖上述所有的中文含义，而仅仅是一个翻译符号，读者看到它，应该联想到那个意蕴特别深的“仁”字。另外，由于“仁”代表人之所以为人的最高思想道德境界，所以我们有时也把它译成 perfect virtue、perfectly virtuous、moral excellence、human goodness 等。这些用在没有注释的语境可能更有利于读者理解该文句的含义。

Benevolence is a special term that represents the highest moral criterion and top-most realm of thought in ancient China. Confucius strengthened the moral implication of benevolence by making it the summation of all virtues, and it has since become the core of Confucianism. Confucius did not give a unique definition of “benevolence”, but one of its common paraphrases is that benevolence is love of men, and he kept encouraging people to do everything good to be up to such a grand love.

“Benevolence” is not an accurate translation, so it is hoped that readers who see it in this book will relate it to the very extensive moral concept as is mentioned above. Also, as “benevolence” is a term belonging to the moral category, it is often translated it into “perfect virtue, perfectly virtuous, moral excellence, human goodness, etc”, especially in a context where no annotation is available.

2. 仁政 benevolent governance

“仁政”是本书出现率极高的一个词，是孟子学说的核心。纵观孟子一生的政治活动，可以看出他总是在推动这位或那位国君去实行仁政，他在书中的大部分言行都跟这个有关。孟子的仁政思想是他的民本思想的最佳体现，而民本思想是孟子最重要的政治思想之一。他主张国君应该重视民众的生计，给他们分配足够的土地，以确保他们有恒产而有恒心。他警告统治者不要违背农时征调民力，不要横征暴敛导致饿殍遍野。他敦促他所接触的国君要爱民、保民、富民、教民。

Benevolent governance is a most frequently-used term in the *Works of Mencius*. It is the core of Mencius' doctrine. All through his political activities Mencius was trying to push one or another state ruler to exercise “benevolent governance”, and most of the words and deeds recorded in his works are related to this. Mencius' ideology of benevolent governance best reflects his people-oriented thought. He held the view that the sovereign of a state should love his people and guarantee their livelihood by allotting them enough farm land. He warned the state rulers not to requisition labor force in the farming season and not to cause the people to die of starvation by imposing severe requisitions and taxes on them. He urged the state rulers he met to love and protect the people and try to enrich them and educate them.

3. 王 to be a unifier (of the entire kingdom)

“王”在这里读第四声，作动词，是称王的意思。战国时期，天下大乱，民不聊生。孟子到过几个诸侯国进行活动，劝说这些国家的国君实行他提倡的以“仁政”为核心的政治理念，希望某位国君能通过爱民和行仁政来达到“王天下”的目的，以重新统一早已分崩离析的周王国，给国家和人民带来和平和安宁。按他的说法，只要哪一位国君能爱护民众，以仁政临民，坚持社会公义，就不但可以治理好自己的国家，而且能成为王天下的仁君。他一直盼望这样的仁君早日出现，以便结束社会动乱，实施仁政以救民于倒悬。然而遗憾的是，孟子终其一生也没有盼到这样的仁君。

To be a unifier of the entire kingdom was what Mencius hoped one of the many

state rulers would do to end the great turmoil of the kingdom and exercise benevolent governance to save the people from the sufferings. According to him, a state ruler who loved his people, ruled them with benevolent policies and stuck to social justice could not only be a good ruler of his own state, but could also become a unifier of the entire kingdom. He wished almost day and night that a truly virtuous king would arise for this great mission, but he was sorry that no such king was to arise in his time.

4. 礼 the rules of propriety, rite, ritual, ceremony, etiquette

“礼”是本书中重要性仅次于“仁”的一个词，指等级社会中对各种礼节的规定。“礼”与“乐”密切结合，构成等级社会的礼乐制度，成为中国古代社会的典章制度、道德规范和最高行为准则，用以调节人与人之间的各种社会关系和权利义务。“礼”的施行，使贵族阶层不同地位的人的行为得体、礼貌，符合个人身份和地位。它用来维持等级社会尊卑贵贱的人际关系，达到社会和谐和国家稳定的目的。“乐”主要用于祭祀等仪式，更有教化社会、敦淳民风的功能。“礼”还是古代法律的渊源，合称礼仪法度。“礼”在本书英译为 *the rules of propriety*，即关于礼节的各种规定，这个意义的“礼”的主要功用体现在国家制度方面。“礼”还有另外两个功用：（1）各种典礼、仪式。这时的“礼”指古代社会祭祀祖先和天地等各种神祇以及各种婚丧喜庆的典礼。这类“礼”有成文的规定，比如《仪礼》就记载着周代的冠、婚、丧、祭、乡、射、朝、聘等各种礼仪。这类“礼”英译为 *rite, ritual, ceremony* 等。（2）平时的礼貌。英译为 *etiquette, courtesy* 等。

The rules of propriety were a set of rules and regulations of proprieties prescribed by social convention and the authority in ancient China to guarantee that all members of the upper society conduct themselves or associate with each other courteously, appropriately and, above all, in accordance with their corresponding statuses. They were a special term regarded as the topmost code of conduct to regulate people's behaviors and direct them to do things right without going to extremes. It also functioned like laws to substitute the legal system yet to develop then. The rules of propriety and music together formed the state institution that functioned something like modern constitution. When it was used on sacrificial events, “rite” and “ritual” are used to replace “the rules of propriety”. When speaking of daily good manners, we use the word “etiquette” instead. “Rite”, “ritual” and “etiquette” are part of the rules of propriety.

5. 义 righteousness, righteous, justice, what is right

“义”的最早解读是“宜”，也就合适的事。在先秦时期，一切遵礼而行，所

以符合礼就是符合义，故“义”逐渐用来指合乎道德规范的、符合公理和社会正义的行动，成了“仁”在行动上的具体体现。

Righteousness is a special term to mean moral correctness and appropriate act. It is used to describe something or some behavior that accords with social norms, that is justifiable to do, and that those who do it will thus be raised to a higher moral level. This word embraces a more profound significance than can be covered by “righteousness” itself. It is also translated into “justice” or “what is right”. While “benevolence” was regarded as the highest realm of thought, “righteousness” was the reflection of “benevolence” in people’s specific actions.

6. 君子 a superior man, a man of perfect virtue, a gentleman

西周初期，周天子分封诸侯，建立诸侯国。诸侯国国君的儿子称为君之子，即君子。因君子普遍受到良好的教育，文化品位和修养水准高，故后世也将道德水准和品德修养很高的男性称为君子，将其视为道德楷模。“君子”在现代汉语中几乎总是指道德完美的或有绅士风度的男性，但在孔子之前，它更多地指“有位者”，即居于官位的贵族，而正是孔子，创造性地更多地赋予它道德意味，让它成为古代中国社会的人格典范，甚至一直影响到今日，成为普通人追求道德修成的目标。在孟子时代，君子也常指官员。本书的“君子”的英译是：(1) a superior man, 指“有位者”，是当时主要的治国力量，也往往因受过良好的教育而具有优良的品格。superior 兼有上级和优秀的含义，比较符合他们的身份和受到过的教养。(2) a man of perfect virtue, 这是孔子心目中道德完美的人，是最佳的人格典范。(3) an official, 指官员。(4) a gentleman, 指有绅士风度的男人。

Superior man was a special term originally referring to a high-ranking official of aristocratic origin. Later, as Confucius strengthened its moral implication, it referred quite often to a man of perfect virtue. In Mencius’ time it also referred to an official.

7. 小人 an inferior man, an commoner, a mean man, a base man, virtueless man

“小人”在现代中文中几乎总是指道德低劣的或行为猥琐的男性，但在先秦时期除了这一含义外，它更多地指地位低下者和普通百姓。同样也是孔子，更多地赋予它道德含义，并经常对后者进行批评和贬抑，使之与君子形成强烈的反差，对后世有着持久而强烈的警诫作用。本书的“小人”的英译是：(1) an inferior man, 指地位低下的人。(2) a commoner, 指普通百姓。(3) a mean man, a base man, a virtueless man, 指无德之人。孔子在(1)(2)两种情况下提到“小人”不带贬义；在(3)的情况下才带贬义。

Inferior man was a special term originally referring to a man in low official position. It also referred to a commoner. Later, as Confucius strengthened its moral implication, it referred quite often to a mean man, a base man or a virtueless man.

8. 齐国 the State of Qi

此条以“齐国”为例说明本书是如何英译当时的诸侯国名称的。

“齐国”在本书译成 the State of Qi, 在前后文明确的情况下则简称为 Qi, 但不可译成 the Country of Qi。State 是指当时的诸侯国 (princely state); country 一般用来翻译周王国这个包含众多诸侯国的、表面上统一的国家。周朝建立的时候, 周王分封他的子侄叔伯 (princes) 及少数大功臣为诸侯, 建立诸侯国。这些诸侯国奉周王国为宗主国。本书中还可以看到诸多这样的国名, 如鲁国 (the State of Lu)、楚国 (the State of Chu)、吴国 (the State of Wu)、秦国 (the State of Qin) 等。

The State of Qi here serves as an example to show how the many princely states in Mencius' time were translated in this book.

Mencius was born in the State of Zou, in the Warring States Period which was part of the Kingdom of Zhou. When the kingdom was founded, the first two kings conferred more than a hundred vassalries on their princes or some distinguished high-ranking officials and made them hereditary rulers of such vassalries. A vassalry was then an independent state, and the State of Qi was one of them. The Kingdom of Zhou was the suzerain and the many princely states were a state group, something like the Commonwealth of Nations in our modern world.

There were tens of other states like the State of Lu, the State of Chu, the State of Wu, the State of Qin, etc.

9. 梁惠王 King Hui of Liang

此词条以梁惠王为例说明战国时期诸侯国君的称呼。春秋时期, 诸侯国国君奉周天子为宗主, 周天子才是“王”, 诸侯国国君不能称“王”(楚国除外)。到了孟子所处的战国时期, 许多诸侯国国君都称“王”, 即在他们去世后追谥为某某王, 可见周天子的统治已经式微。

梁惠王是战国时魏国国君 (公元前 400—前 319), 惠是他的谥号。在他即位九年后, 魏国首都由安邑 (今山西夏县北) 迁至大梁 (今河南开封西北), 所以他又被称为梁惠王。

King Hui of Liang here serves as an example to show how a sovereign of a princely

state was called by the later generations.

King Hui of Liang was the sovereign of the State of Wei, which was one of the seven powerful states in ancient China's Warring States Period (475 BC—221 BC), the last quarter of the Zhou Dynasty. He was so called because he made Liang another capital city of Wei, and Hui was his posthumous title.

King Hui was only the head of a princely state and was not entitled to be called “king” which belonged exclusively to kings of the Kingdom of Zhou, the suzerain of all the princely states. Such excess of authority indicated that the Kingdom had decayed.

10. 道 the Way, the doctrine, the truth, the principle, the law of Heaven / nature

“道”在现代汉语中多指“道路、方法、原理”，但在本书的不同场合会有多种不同的解读，而英语的翻译也得照顾到这些不同。当孔子感叹他的“道”得不到接受和实行时，他指的是他的“学说”（the doctrine），也就是他的治国理念和方法；当有人说他一生都在追求“道”时，他是在追求“真理”（the truth）；当有人提到“治国之道”时，他指的是治理国家的原则和方法（the right principle and way）；当他说“天道”的时候，他指的是主宰着天下万物的法则（the Law of Heaven）或自然规律（the law of nature）。有人把上述种种都译成 the Way，只是如果没有注释或明确的前后文就不好理解。

The Way is one of the many translations that are all boiled down to one Chinese word: Dao, which is a very important Chinese philosophic term, and is the way in which everything in human society and in nature function. Most often “the Way” is a good translation but there are others as follows:

When Confucius complained that his “Dao” was not accepted by the state ruler, he referred to his “doctrine”; when someone says that he is pursuing “Dao” all his life, he refers to “the truth”; when he says “Dao” prevails in the state, he refers to “the right principle” of governance; when speaking of “Heaven’s Dao”, we refer to “the law of Heaven” or “the law of nature”.

11. 士 scholar

在汉朝及其以后的封建社会里，“士”逐渐成为对知识分子的称呼，这些人相当于现代的学者，所以译成 scholar 是比较准确的，但用 scholar 来翻译孔子和孟子所处时代的“士”是不准确的，只是因为英语中没有对应的词，只好借用它。不过，“士”必须通过读书来成为知识分子，从这点看倒有点像 scholar。

周代的士属贵族的最低阶层。先是大夫的长子得以继承爵禄，余则多为