

TRANSLATING RÉN FROM THE ETYMOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE: A CASE STUDY OF LECTURES ON TRADITIONAL CHINA'S POLITICAL THOUGHTS

Dan Yang

School of Foreign Languages, Yancheng Teachers University, Yancheng, China

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ABSTRACT

“仁” (Rén) is an important culture-loaded word in traditional Chinese classics and one of the essences of Confucianism. On the basis of reviewing the English translation researches of “仁” (Rén), this study examined the 52 English translations of 16 quotations containing “仁” (Rén) in Lectures on Traditional China's Political Thoughts¹ (Xv Datong, 2015). Results show that the English translations of “仁” (Rén) are unbalanced, the translation methods of “仁” (Rén) by the same translator are not uniform, and the parts of speech of “仁” (Rén) by different translators are different, the typical translations of “仁” (Rén) by native local and overseas translators are characterized by atypical distribution. Based on the etymological interpretation of the corresponding English concepts of “仁” (Rén), by exploring the rules of the English translations of “仁” (Rén), this study points out that the transliteration method “Ren” is an important way to enhance the international academic discourse right, helps the world understand “China in philosophy and social science”, and provides practical enlightenment for the proper translation of “仁” (Rén) in the mainstream communication channels of English-speaking countries.

Key Words: Ren; etymological interpretation; transliteration; Lectures on Traditional China's Political Thoughts; Xv Datong.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the initiation of the Chinese Academic Translation Program of the National Social Science Foundation (a category of “Chinese Fund for the Humanities and Social Sciences”) in 2010, more and more Confucian classics have been pushed to foreign mainstream communication channels. “仁” (Rén), embodying the core idea of Confucian classics, is an unavoidable word for translators. Finding the English translation rule of “仁” (Rén) is an important way to properly interpret and publicize the Confucian ideology and culture overseas, is the only way to deepen academic exchanges and dialogues between China and foreign countries, further expand the influence of Chinese academia, enhance its international academic discourse, and help the world understand China in philosophy and social sciences, which is of huge strategic significance. At present, although the study of the English translation of “仁” (Rén) has received some attention, the laws of its English translation inferred from previous studies are different, and the etymological study of its English translation is also relatively inadequate. For this reason, this study combines the parallel English translation analysis of the Confucian classic quotations “仁” (Rén) in Xv D.'s *Lectures on Traditional China's Political Thoughts* with the etymological interpretations of the

corresponding English concepts of “仁” (Rén), and tries to provide practical enlightenment for the proper translation of “仁” (Rén) in the mainstream communication channels of English-speaking countries.

2.A REVIEW OF THE ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF RÉN

The author combed the English translations of “仁” (Rén) from 1984 to the first half of 2021, including Chen, R. (1984), Hao, D., & Roger, A. (1996), Wang, D. (2008), Cheng, G. (2002), Yang, P. (2008), Liu, B. (2011), Wang, F. (2013), Cai, X. (2020), Hu, C. (2020). The researchers from 1986 to the first half of 2021 have varied opinions on the English translation of “仁” (Rén).

Chen, R. (1984) opposed the translation of “仁” (Rén) into “good” for the reason that “‘仁’ (Rén) embodied the whole virtue in Confucianism, while ‘good’ meant only part of it.” Western sinologists represented by Waley, A. tended to regard “仁” (Rén) and its external form “礼” (Lǐ) as static and passive forms (1938). Hao, D., & Roger, A. (1996) opposed the translation of “仁” (Rén) into benevolence. They argued that its result was to psychologize the concept of “仁” (Rén), which gave it the color of altruism, which thus lost the sociological significance of “仁” (Rén). Cheng, G. (2002) verified that Legge, J.’s translation of “仁” (Rén) into “perfect virtue” originated from the Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming Dynasties, and he argued that Legge, J. was based on the rationale of *Four Books Annotations*. Wang, D. opposed the translation of “仁” (Rén) as “perfect virtue/benevolence/morality”, and suggested that it be translated as “humanity” (2008). He was absolutely opposed to Legge, J.’s translation of “仁” (Rén) into “perfect virtue” or “benevolent actions”. He argued that “仁” (Rén) was the core of the moral and ethical system of *The Analects of Confucius*. The reason why Confucianism was called the study of “仁” (Rén) was that “仁” (Rén) was the highest level of personal cultivation and had profound humanitarian connotation. He believed that “perfect virtue” or “benevolent actions” belonged to “virtue”, which was only one of the connotations covered by “仁” (Rén) (such as honesty, loyalty, forgiveness, filial piety, kindness, love, warmth, kindness, courtesy, thrift, tolerance). Wang, D. also opposed Gu, H.’s translation of “仁” (Rén) into “morality/a moral life”. He believed that “morality/a moral life” was only one of the connotations of “仁” (Rén) and could not represent all the connotations of “仁” (Rén). Wang, D. suggested using “humanity” to translate the word “仁” (Rén). He also cited the definition of “humanity” and “human” in the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* as evidence: humanity is defined as the quality of being HUMANE or HUMAN; humane is defined as showing human kindness and the qualities of a civilized person (2014). Yang, P. (2008) concluded that the best way to translate “仁” (Rén) was transliteration by summarizing and analyzing the advantages and disadvantages of several translation methods. He believed that various translation methods of “仁” (Rén) had their reasons for existence, but most of them were explained from a certain angle, which simplified the profound Confucian thought. Yang, P. opposed the translation “humanity” in opposition to Wang, D.’s view. He believed that “humane” or “humanity” was derived from the interpretation of Western Christian humanitarianism, which was quite different from Confucius’ “仁” (Rén). Confucius’ saying that “仁者先难而后获” (Rénzhě xiān nán ér hòu huò) (*The Analects of Confucius: Yong Ye*) (Author’s translation: The man of Ren makes the difficulty to be overcome his first business, and success only a subsequent

consideration) shows that “仁” (Rén) can only be achieved through hard work. In Yang, P.’s view, the connotation of Confucius’ “仁” (Rén) was fundamentally different from western humanitarianism. Western humanitarianism mainly referred to the ideal personality and good humanity based on Christianity and the Renaissance. It was a kind of universal love derived from the inside out and based on patriarchal blood relationship and rank. Although the concepts of love, loyalty and forgiveness, and humanism in Confucius’ “仁” (Rén) thought had the original humanitarian spirit, interpreting “仁” (Rén) with etiquette was the basic position of Chinese Confucianism research (Li, L., 2021), and its purpose was to cultivate people with lofty ideals to be knowledgeable and reasonable, maintain the hierarchical order of the clan-based ruling system, and repair the social system of the collapse of “礼乐” (Lǐ yuè) (author’s translation: etiquette and music). Liu, B. (2011) discussed five translation principles together with their advantages and disadvantages, and put forward “harmonious translation” — the method of using Chinese pinyin plus annotation, namely, “Ren — a collection of all virtues including benevolence, Goodness, kindness, love, humanity and generosity”. Wang, F. (2013) proposed to use transliteration and comprehensive annotation to translate the core words of ancient classics, in order to gradually establish a Chinese cultural discourse system in the cultural exchange between China and the West, and reduce the cultural misreading of China by the West. He believed that the improper translation of “仁” (Rén) led to the distortion, deformation and misreading of the core ideas of Confucianism and the image of Confucius in the West to varying degrees, and pointed out that the alienation translation strategy should be taken as the guidance. Cai, X. (2020) was pioneering in the English translation of “仁” (Rén). He opposed the translation of “仁” (Rén) as benevolence/humaneness/morality. He suggested referring to the English translation of Aristotle’s “reflection” and Heidegger’s “globalization”, and he suggested that “仁” (Rén) be translated as man-manning, which could highlight the people-oriented idea of “仁” (Rén) in Confucianism and explain the concept of “harmony between heaven and man” in Confucian cosmology. He believed that the interpretation of “仁” (Rén) in a moral life and other translations could neither express the “ideal personality” nor reproduce the “Goodness of the original mind”, and completely made “仁” (Rén) static and abstract. “仁” (Rén) originated from the saying “天行健，君子以自强不息” (Tiān xíng jiàn, jūnzǐ yǐ zìqiángbùxī) (*Yi Jing*) (author’s translation: The way of heaven runs round and round, never ending, and no one can stop it. A gentleman should follow the example of the way of heaven, be self-reliant and self-improving, and keep striving), which is full of the vitality of humans, but the translations like a moral life and others no longer had the vitality of the original text and the dynamic process of Chinese. The orientation of the source language and the target language in the way of thinking is diametrically opposite, reflecting the “colonial characteristics” of “cultural exchange” since modern times: based on the way of thinking of the target language, its gradual assimilation and then elimination of the alienation of the source language is blocking the style of Confucius in the distance. Hu, C. (2020) supported scholars’ translation of “仁” (Rén) as “virtue”, and opposed the translation of “仁” (Rén) as “benevolent”. She believed that this translation originated from overseas translators’ failure to distinguish between “special virtue” and “full virtue”, whose root was that they did not recognize “仁” (Rén) as the center of Confucianism, or did not review the arguments of later Neo-Confucians. Unlike the early Catholic missionaries who abandoned Zhu, X.’s Neo-Confucianism, Legge, J. mainly referred to the annotated version

of Zhu, X.'s Neo-Confucianism, together with Zhu's "theory of 仁" (Rén), and realized that "仁" (Rén) was "the full virtue of the heart", so he used "perfect virtue/true virtue" or "virtuous" to translate it most of the time, which is especially reflected in the definition of "仁" (Rén) in "夫仁者，己欲立而立人，己欲达而达人。能近取譬，可谓仁之方也。" (Fū rénzhě, jǐ yù lì ér lì rén, jǐ yù dá ér dá rén. Néng jìn qǔ pì, kěwèi rénzhi fāng yě.) (*The Analects of Confucius: Yong Ye*) (Author's translation: Now the man of Ren, wishing to be established himself, seeks also to establish others; wishing to be enlarged himself, he seeks also to enlarge others. To be able to judge of others by what is nigh in ourselves; — this may be called the art of Ren.) In some chapters and sentences that are clearly defined as "the full virtue of the heart", Legge, J. translated it into "benevolence/benevolent". For example, in the translation of "孝弟也者，其为仁之本与?" (Xiàodi yě zhě, qí wèi rénzhi běn yǔ?) (*The Analects of Confucius: Xue Er*), he also translated "仁" (Rén) as "benevolent" in his version "Filial piety and fraternal submission! — Are they not the root of all benevolent actions?" In the same way, "仁" (Rén) was translated into "benevolence/benevolent" in "樊迟问仁" (Fán chí wèn rén) (*The Analects of Confucius: Yong Ye*) (Legge, J.'s translation: Fanchi asked about benevolence) and "欲仁而得仁" (Yù rén ér dé rén) (*The Analects of Confucius: Yong Ye*) (Legge, J.'s translation: When his desires are set on benevolent government, he realizes it). Hu, C. found further evidence from *Oxford Concise English Dictionary* (2000). The Latin meaning of "benevolence" is well-wishing, which seems to correspond to "loyalty and forgiveness". However, the English translation "benevolence" mainly refers to the kindness and goodness of the human heart, and cannot accurately express the true meaning of "仁" (Rén), because Confucius' "仁" (Rén) does not emphasize doing good deeds, but emphasizes more on the observance of etiquette. Lv, P. (2021) pointed out that Waley, A.'s English translation of "仁" (Rén) is oriented towards alienation, while Gu, H.'s English translation is oriented towards domestication, which is closely related to the translator's linguistic and cultural factors and his own subjective initiative. In view of the different attitudes of scholars towards the English translation of "仁" (Rén), the author tries to summarize as many universal features as possible by enumerating the different translation methods of "仁" (Rén) in detail, and find out the appropriate translation method of "仁" (Rén) in the new era by combining the etymological interpretations.

3. STATISTICS AND ANALYSIS OF REPRESENTATIVE TRANSLATIONS OF "仁" S QUOTATIONS IN LECTURES ON TRADITIONAL CHINA'S POLITICAL THOUGHTS

Xv's book briefly summarizes the thoughts of Confucius, Mozi, Han Feizi, Laozi and other representative figures in the pre-Qin period, which truly represent the essence of traditional Chinese political thoughts. The book contains a large number of classical quotations of traditional Chinese culture (the author counted 262), involving numerous traditional Chinese political and cultural concepts. In order to ensure the relatively uniform and smooth translation of the quotations in the English version of this Xv's book, the author attempts to refer to a number of classic Chinese cultural translation works and similar parallel texts in the original foreign versions, by relying on the Chinese ideological and cultural terminology library under the "Chinese ideological and cultural terminology dissemination project" to conduct a centralized sorting of the English versions of the quotations, to analyze them and reach a final solution.

This study mainly selects Legge, J., Gu, H., Waley, A., Roger, A., Collie, A., Zhao, Z., Lai, F., Wang, R., Blakney, R. B., Dwright & Henry, etc. The author sorted out 16 quotations containing the word “仁” (Rén) in Xv’s book, including 5 quotations from *The Analects of Confucius*, whose translators concerned Legge, J., Gu, H., Waley, A., Roger, A., and Collie, D., 4 quotations from *Laozi*, whose translators concerned Waley, A., Blakney, R. B., Dwright & Henry, and Legge, J., 1 quotation from *Menzi*, whose translators concerned Zhao, Z., Legge, J., Lai, F. and Collie, D., 1 quotation from *Mozi*, with 1 translation by Wang, R., 1 quotation from *On the Shortcomings of the Qin Dynasty* with 1 translation by Watson, B., 1 quotation from *Old Tang Book* with no reference translation method consulted, 1 quotation from *Zhuangzi* with 1 translation by Wang, R., 1 quotation from *Han Feizi*, with 1 translation by Liao, W. K., and 1 quotation from *The Book of Rites* with 1 translation by Luo, Z.. The author investigated the 16 quotations related to “仁” (Rén) in the book (the quotation from *Old Tang Book* hasn’t been translated, so it’s omitted), and has investigated 23 representative translations about “仁” (Rén).

Table 1 : A Collection of the Translations of the Quotation “仁” (Rén) in Lectures on Traditional China’s Political Thoughts

No .	Translations	Quantity	Percentage	Number of Translators	List of Translators
1	benevolent action/ benevolent ruler/ benevolent/ benevolence	14	27%	7	Legge, J. (6); Zhao, Z. (1); Collie, D. (3); Wang, R. (1); Dwright & Henry (1); Luo, Z. (1); Liao, W. K. (1)
2	perfect virtue/ virtuous practice/ the virtuous	9	17%	2	Legge, J. (4); Collie, D. (5)
3	a good ruler /Goodness/ the good man	7	12%	3	Waley, A. (5); Blakney, R. B. (1); Dwright & Henry (1)
4	moral life; morality	5	10%	1	Gu, H. (5)
5	authoritative conduct	5	10%	1	Roger, A. (5)
6	kindness/ human kindness	4	8%	3	Waley, A. (2); Blakney, R. B. (1);

					Dwright & Henry (1)
7	love	2	4%	2	Leonard A Lyall (1); Blakney, R. B. (1)
8	humanity/ humaneness	2	4%	2	Watson, B. (1); Wang, R. (1)
9	compassion	1	2%	1	Blakney, R. B. (1)
10	the man of skill	1	2%	1	Legge, J. (1)
11	the perfect man	1	2%	1	Waley, A. (1)
12	gentleness	1	2%	1	Waley, A. (1)

As shown in Table 1, a statistical analysis of the 52 translations identified in the 15 translations of “仁” (Rén) quoted in this book yields at least the following four findings:

3.1. English Translations of Rén are Uneven

The modern Chinese dictionary (7th edition) (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 2016) produced by the Commercial Press has three interpretations of “仁” (Rén): benevolence and kindness (such as benevolence and good management); respectful addressing, used to address the other respectful party; surname. The first meaning is taken here. According to 52 translation samples, domestic and foreign scholars have given 12 major categories of translation methods, each of which can also be subdivided into different translation methods of nouns, noun phrases, adjectives and adjective phrases. From the perspective of distribution, translations of benevolent action/benevolent rule/benevolent/benevolence account for 14, up to 27%, involving up to 7 translators (including 4 western sinologists and 3 native Chinese translators), which shows that the relative expression proportion of “仁” (Rén) translated into benevolent is relatively high; translations of perfect virtue/virtuous practice/the virtuous account for 9, up to 17%, involving two translators; translations of a good ruler/Goodness/the good man account for 7, up to 12%, involving 3 translators; translations of moral life/ morality account for 5, up to 10%, involving 1 translator; translations of authoritative conduct account for 5, up to 10%, involving 1 translator; translations of kindness/kind/human kindness account for 4, up to 8%, involving 3 translators; translations of love account for 2, up to 4%, involving 2 translators; translations of humanity/humaneness accounted for 2, up to 4%, involving 2 translators. In contrast, translations of compassion/the man of skill/the perfect man/gentleness only account for 1 respectively.

3.2. Translations of Rén by the Same Translator are not Uniform

Through investigation, it is found that even the same translator didn’t solidify the translation of “仁” (Rén), and different target versions, even the same target version, would deal with “仁” (Rén) in different ways. For example, Legge, J. was a prolific and influential translator. Among the 52 quotations examined, 10 were completed by him. In the target versions of *The Analects of Confucius*, *Menzi* and *Laozi*, he translated “仁” (Rén) into perfect virtue (3 times) /benevolent

actions (1 time)/ benevolent ruler (1 time) /benevolence (3 time) /the virtuous (1 time)/ the man of skill (1 time). It shows that even the same translator has different understandings of “仁” (Rén) for different texts and different contexts of the same text, rather than a one-term-fits-all translation method. From the perspective of the translations of the five quotations of “仁” (Rén) in the same text *The Analects of Confucius*, Legge, J. did not stick to the same translation method. He adopted “perfect virtue” three times, “benevolent action” one time, and “benevolent ruler” one time. The results of Legge, J.’s translation survey show that as far as the English translation of “仁” (Rén) is concerned, it is not possible to adopt a unified translation method for “仁” (Rén) in different or even in the same text.

3.3. Parts of Speech of Translations of Rén are Different

The diversity of parts of speech is more prominent in its translations. For example, for the 14 translations of benevolent action/benevolent rule/benevolent/benevolence, 3 of them have the adjective form “benevolent”, while 11 have the noun form “benevolence”. For another example, in terms of 9 translations of perfect virtue/virtuous practice/the virtuous, 2 of them have the adjective form “virtuous”, and 7 of them have the noun form “virtue”. For another example, for the seven translations of a good ruler/Goodness/the good man, three of them have the adjective form “good”, while four have the noun form “Goodness”. Such results show that different translators present diversity regarding parts of speech. Take Waley, A. as an example. In his English translation of *The Analects of Confucius*, he used noun form four times and adjective form one time, which shows that he does not stick to the same part of speech in the same text, but different parts of speech are used in different contexts.

3.4. Translators’ Typical Translations of Rén Show the Atypical Distribution Characteristics of Local Scholars or Overseas Scholars

It can be seen from Table 1 that the translators who translated “仁” (Rén) into “benevolent action/benevolent rule/benevolent/benevolence” accounting for 27% of the total translation methods examined, including 7 domestic and foreign scholars, namely, Legge, J. (5 times), Zhao, Z. (1 time), Collie, D. (3 times), Wang, R. (1 time), Dwight & Henry (1 time), Luo, Z. (1 time), and Liao, W. K. (1 time). It can be seen that the proportion of local scholars and overseas scholars choosing such a translation method is even, so the Christian benevolence can not be treated as the personal background of a translator, so as to be the reason for choosing the English translation of Christianity-related terms; similarly, the translators who translated “仁” (Rén) into “humanity/humaneness” include Watson, B. (1 time) and Wang, R. (1 time). From such a translation selection, we can’t see the analytical preference of western scholars for western humanitarian connotation, because Chinese native scholars have the same chance to choose it.

4. Etymological Interpretations of the Typical English Translations of Rén in *Lectures on Traditional China’s Political Thoughts*

The author tries to explain the main English translation items of “仁” (Rén) from the perspective of etymology on the Google website, in order to obtain the connotations of these English interpretation items from the perspective of etymology.

4.1. Etymological Interpretation of Virtue

C. 1200, vertu, “moral life and conduct; a particular moral excellence,” from Anglo-French and

Old French vertu "force, strength, vigor; moral strength; qualities, abilities" (10c. in Old French), from Latin virtutem (nominative virtus) "moral strength, high character, goodness; manliness; valor, bravery, courage (in war); excellence, worth," from vir "man" (from PIE root *wi-ro- "man"). Especially (in women) "chastity, sexual purity" from 1590s. Phrase by virtue of (early 13c.) preserves alternative Middle English sense of "efficacy". Wyclif Bible has virtue where KJV uses power. The seven cardinal virtues (early 14c.) were divided into the natural (justice, prudence, temperance, fortitude) and the theological (hope, faith, charity). To make a virtue of a necessity (late 14c.) translates Latin *facere de necessitate virtutem* [Jerome]. (<https://www.etymonline.com/word/virtue>) The word virtue comes from the Latin root *vir*, for man. At first, virtue meant manliness or valor, but over time it settled into the sense of moral excellence. Virtue can also mean excellence in general.

D.

4.2. Etymological Interpretation of Benevolent

Mid-15c., "wishing to do good, well-disposed, kindly," from Old French *benivolent* and directly from Latin *benevolentem* (nominative *benevolens*) "wishing (someone) well, benevolent," related to *benevolentia* "good feeling," from *bene* "well" (see *bene-*) + *volentem* (nominative *volens*) present participle of *velle* "to wish". (<https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=Benevolent>)

4.3. Etymological Interpretation of Morality

Late 14c., *moralite*, "moral qualities, virtuous conduct or thought," from Old French *moralite* (Modern French *moralité*) "moral (of a story); moral instruction; morals, moral character" (13c.) and directly from Late Latin *moralitatem* (nominative *moralitas*) "manner, character," from Latin *moralis* "of manners or morals; moral" (see *moral* (adj.)). Meaning "doctrine or system of ethical duties" is from mid-15c. Meaning "goodness, characteristic of being moral, virtuousness" is attested from 1590s. (<https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=Morality>)

4.4. Etymological Interpretation of Humanity

Late 14c., "kindness, graciousness, politeness; consideration for others," from Old French *humanité*, *umanité* "human nature; humankind, life on earth; pity," from Latin *humanitatem* (nominative *humanitas*) "human nature; the human race, mankind;" also "humane conduct, philanthropy, kindness; good breeding, refinement," from *humanus* (see *human* (adj.)). The sense of "human nature, human form, state or quality of being human" is c. 1400; that of "human race, humans collectively" is recorded by mid-15c. (<https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=Humanity>)

4.5. Etymological Interpretation of Good

Old English *god* (with a long "o"), "that which is good, a good thing; goodness; advantage, benefit; gift; virtue; property;" from *good* (adj.). Meaning "the good side" (of something) is from 1660s. Phrase for good "finally, permanently" attested from 1711, a shortening of *for good and all* (16c.). Middle English had *for good ne ylle* (early 15c.) "for good nor ill," thus "under any circumstance." (<https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=Good>)

4.6. Etymological Interpretation of Kind

Ælfric's rendition of "the Book of Genesis" into Old English came out *gecyndboc*. The prefix disappeared 1150-1250. No exact cognates beyond English, but it corresponds to adjective endings

such as Goth-kunds, Old High German-kund. Also in English as a suffix (mankind, etc., also compare godcund “divine”). Other earlier, now obsolete, senses included “character, quality derived from birth” and “manner or way natural or proper to anyone.”

(<https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=Kind>)

4.7. Etymological Interpretation of Love

Old English lufu “feeling of love; romantic sexual attraction; affection; friendliness; the love of God; Love as an abstraction or personification,” from Proto-Germanic *lubo (source also of Old High German liubi “joy,” German Liebe “love”; Old Norse, Old Frisian, Dutch lof; German Lob “praise”; Old Saxon liof, Old Frisian liaf, Dutch lief, Old High German liob, German lieb, Gothic liufs “dear, beloved”). The Germanic words are from PIE root *leubh- “to care, desire, love.”

(<https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=love>)

4.8. Etymological Interpretation of Compassion

“Feeling of sorrow or deep tenderness for one who is suffering or experiencing misfortune”, mid-14c., compassioun, literally “a suffering with another,” from Old French compassion “sympathy, pity” (12c.), from Late Latin compassionem (nominative compassio) “sympathy,” noun of state from past participle stem of compati “to feel pity,” from com “with, together” (see com-) + pati “to suffer” (see passion). Latin compassio is an ecclesiastical loan-translation of Greek sympatheia (see sympathy). Sometimes in Middle English it meant a literal sharing of affliction or suffering with another. An Old English loan-translation of compassion was efenðrowung.

(<https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=Compassion>)

4.9. Etymological Interpretation of Authoritative

C. 1600, “dictatorial” (a sense now restricted to authoritarian), earlier auctoritative (implied in auctoritaveli “with official approval or sanction”), from Medieval Latin auctoritativus, from Latin auctoritatem (see authority). The meaning “having due authority, entitled to credence or obedience” is from 1650s; that of “proceeding from proper authority” is from 1809. Related: Authoritatively; authoritativeness.

(<https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=Authoritative>) Roger Ames and others believe that the implementation function of ancient Chinese is greater than its description function, and the language in *The Analects of Confucius* is normative rather than descriptive. Therefore, when Confucius talked about etiquette, he did not tell us what etiquette was, but advised us to “follow the etiquette”. Therefore, Roger Ames and others translated “仁” (Rén) into “authoritative conduct” to emphasize that it is essentially a process of human activities rather than the quality of the way of life.

4.10. Etymological Interpretation of Man of Skill

Early 12c., “knowledge, divine wisdom”; late 12c., “power of discernment, sound judgment; that which is reasonable”, senses all now obsolete, from Old Norse skil “distinction, ability to make out, discernment, adjustment”, which is related to skilja (v.) “to separate; discern, understand”, from Proto-Germanic *skaljo- “divide, separate” (source also of Swedish skäl “reason”,

Danish *skjel* “a separation, boundary, limit”, Middle Low German *schillen* “to differ”, Middle Low German, Middle Dutch *schele* “separation, discrimination”; from PIE root **skel-* (1) “to cut”). The sense of “practical knowledge and ability, cleverness” is recorded by early 13c.

(<https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=Skill>) James Legge translated “仁者” into “the man of skill”, highlighting a man’s insight of differentiation and correction.

4.11. Etymological Interpretation of Perfect Man

Early 15c. classical correction of Middle English *parfit* “flawless, ideal” (c. 1300), also “complete, full, finished, lacking in no way” (late 14c.), from Old French *parfit* “finished, completed, ready” (11c.), from Latin *perfectus* “completed, excellent, accomplished, exquisite”, past participle of *perficere* “accomplish, finish, complete”, from *per* “completely” (see *per*) + combining form of *facere* “to make, to do” (from PIE root **dhe-* “to set, put”). Often used in English as an intensive (perfect stranger, etc.), from the notion of “complete”. Grammatical sense, in reference to verb tense describing an action as completed, is from c. 1500. As a noun, late 14c. (“perfection”), from the adjective. (<https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=Perfect>)

4.12. Etymological Interpretation of Gentleness

Early 13c., *gentile*, *gentle* “well-born, of noble rank or family”, from Old French *gentil/jentil* “high-born, worthy, noble, of good family; courageous, valiant; fine, good, fair” (11c., in Modern French “nice, graceful, pleasing; fine, pretty”) and directly from Latin *gentilis* “of the same family or clan” in Medieval Latin “of noble or good birth”, from *gens* (genitive *gentis*) “race, clan”, from root of *gignere* “beget”, from PIE root **gene-* “to give birth, beget”, from PIE root **gene-* “give birth, beget”, with derivatives referring to procreation and familial and tribal groups. Sense evolved in English and French to “having the character or manners of one of noble rank or birth”, varying according to how those were defined. From mid-13c. in English as “gracious, kind” (now obsolete), manners prescribed for Christian or chivalrous nobility. From late 13c. as “courteous, polite, well-bred, charming”; c. 1300 as “graceful, beautiful”. Meaning “mild, tender; easy; not harsh” (of animals, things, persons) is from 1550s. Older sense remains in *gentleman*, and compare *gentile* (adj.), an alternative form which tends to keep the Biblical senses of the Latin word (though *gentle* in Middle English sometimes meant “pagan, heathen”), and *genteel*, which is the same word borrowed again from French. From 1823 as “pertaining to the fairies”. (<https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=gentle>)

5. DISCUSSION

From the perspective of etymological interpretations, “virtue” emphasizes the excellent qualities of human beings that are different from beasts (such as bravery, excellence, and masculinity); “benevolent” emphasizes the charity and kindness of those in power; “morality” emphasizes moral qualities; “humanity” emphasizes humanitarian charity; “good” emphasizes excellent quality; “kind” emphasizes friendship, especially the love between relatives; “love” emphasizes the love of God; “compassion” emphasizes the ability to feel the misfortune of others. It can be considered that these corresponding English terms explain the connotation of “仁” (Rén) from one aspect, but none of them can accurately grasp the word “仁” (Rén) in Chinese Confucianism from the perspective of Confucian philosophy.

The concept “仁” (Rén) at least contains the following four connotations (Lv, F., 2020). Firstly, immanence cannot be separated from transcendence; Confucianism believes that human nature is inherently good, but inherent good intentions are not enough, and they must be influenced by examples, inspired by ideals, nourished with 礼乐 (Lǐ yuè) (author’s translation: ritual and music), to promote a perfect personality; therefore, Confucians attach importance to 尽心 (Jìnxīn) (author’s translation: to do one’s best for others, wholeheartedness) and 养心 (Yǎng xīn) (author’s translation: to reduce all kinds of desires and achieve inner spirituality) internally while externally focus on 礼乐 (Lǐ yuè) (author’s translation: ritual and music). 克己复礼 (Kèjǐ fù lǐ) (to subdue himself and restore propriety) can achieve “仁” (Rén). Secondly, the existence of things must accord with duality, and “仁” (Rén) means interpersonal duality; 克己复礼之仁 (Kèjǐ fù lǐ Zhī rén) means the duality between individuals can achieve “仁” (Rén); 天人合一之仁 (Tiān rén hé yī Zhī rén) (author’s translation: harmony between man and nature) means the duality between man and heaven can achieve “仁” (Rén). Thirdly, “仁” (Rén) means Yin and Yang interaction, dynamic and static cycle. Under the guidance of the way of Yin and Yang, the world worlds, the thing things (万物生生) (Wànwù shēngshēng). Fourthly, “仁” (Rén) means the realm of existence of self-return; 天道之仁 (Tiāndào zhī rén) (author’s translation: the beginning of everything) and 人道之仁 (Réndào zhī rén) (author’s translation: to cultivate the mind and practice Ren) combine into each other to merge into the universe so as to achieve Ren.

Based on the analysis of the English translations of “仁” (Rén) listed in Xv’s *Lectures on China’s Traditional Political Culture* and the etymological sources of twelve English-translated terms, by sorting out benevolent/morality/virtue/good/love/kind/humanity/compassion/authoritative conduct/man of skill/perfect man/gentleness, the paper finds out that the typical advantage of such translation methods are to avoid the contradictions and conflicts between Chinese and English languages, which is convenient for target language readers’ understanding and acceptance. The translation would be closer to the target readers/society, but the disadvantage of these translation methods is that the translation may be farther away from the author/source text, because it cannot cover the Chinese cultural characteristics and all cultural connotations of “仁” (Rén), which is not conducive for “仁” (Rén), as a unique concept of Chinese culture, to be recognized well overseas.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In view of the above analysis, when conducting cross-cultural translation, we will no longer rely on the way of thinking of the target language, search for ready-made substitute words in the target language, and then try to assimilate and finally replace the strangeness and alienation of the source text. Instead, we will excavate the connotation of the source language culture, interpret it appropriately, and make our own cry as “the other”; secondly, we need to adhere to the way of “仁” (Rén), which means that when translating classics, we need to ensure that the word in the target language is full of life and vitality, and it is the communication and cooperation between lives. Only in this way can translation keep its vitality, avoid the Western dilemma of being static and conceptualized, and renew its original vitality in the target language culture; furthermore, the translation process of the translation of “仁” (Rén) should not be limited to finding the replacement of ready-made words in the target language, but should exert the power of Confucianism and adopt the connotative cross-cultural processing method of being “dynamic and static, abstract and

concrete, sensible and rational”, in order to reproduce the righteousness of Confucian classics. Otherwise, the thoughts of Confucianism will be unobtainable after all.

Finally, if we do not investigate Confucianism in accordance with Confucian ways, and start the translation of Confucian classics from the standpoint of purely readers, it will lead to the fact that the original purpose of the translated scriptures cannot be faithfully corresponded to. Therefore, in the past, the English translations of classics were mostly assimilated in the Western way of thinking. Restoration and transmission as it should be in another language and culture is extremely important. Therefore, it is a better solution to use the transliteration method for “仁” (Rén), which can be used as an independent concept. Using the transliteration method “Ren” to tell about its stories with Chinese elements will be well received by foreign readers, because target readers will be helped to understand the real Chinese culture from a Chinese perspective.

Note

1. Professor Xv D.'s (1928-2019) *Lectures on Traditional China's Political Thoughts* was published in 2015. It is an important work of the project “Popularized Readers of Humanities and Social Science” Sponsored by the Ministry of Education. Mr. Xv, D. introduced the thoughts in plain language in a simple way. His theoretical insights of fundamental issues on traditional China's political thoughts are elucidated from 10 angles, including political thoughts and their basic characteristics, clues and features of the history of ancient China's political thoughts, focuses of ancient China's political thoughts, different political ideological systems in China and the West, intellectuals in China's traditional society, Confucius' governance philosophy through Ren, De and Rites, Mo Di's social and political philosophies of universal love, mutual benefits, identification with superiors, exaltation of the virtuous, frugality in expenditures and simplicity in funerals, Laozi's south-facing governance philosophy of “Dao following nature”, honoring De and Dao, and a small country with few inhabitants, Pre-Qin legalists' governance philosophies of authority, law, and statecraft, cultural genes of the Chinese people in rejecting liberalism and accepting communism, which starts from the basic definition and characteristics of political thought. He summarized Chinese political thought tradition, made a comparative analysis of Chinese and Western political thoughts, and discussed the relationship between political thought tradition and today's political and ideological situation. In particular, the interpretation of the political thoughts of Confucianism, Mohism, Taoism, and Legalism in the pre-Qin period fully demonstrates the author's strict and standardized academic training and profound academic skills.

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Notes on Contributor

Dr. *Dan Yang*, an associate professor in Yancheng Teachers University, has published three publications on English translation (*China under Empress Dowager Cixi, Dusk of Idols, Research*

on the Reform and Innovation of English Translation Teaching in Universities). She's presently hosting the project "Lectures on China's Traditional Political Thoughts" (English version) funded by "Chinese Fund for the Humanities and Social Sciences", and the project "Up to the North" (English version) funded by International Classic Translation Project, both of which are to be published overseas in 2024.

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