Exploring the Translation Patterns of "Ren": Insights into Translation Practice from a Cross-Cultural Perspective

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Abstract

The concept of rén is a central aspect of traditional Chinese political thought, with various translations in English literature. This study examines the translations of rén in Lectures on Traditional China's Political Thoughts and analyzes the statistics and trends among these translations. The findings reveal a lack of uniformity in the translations of rén, indicating that different translators interpret the concept in various ways. Furthermore, the parts of speech used in the translations differ, reflecting the unique perspectives of local and overseas scholars. Through etymological interpretations, this study explores the meanings behind typical English translations of rén such as virtue, benevolent, morality, humanity, good, kind, love, compassion, authoritative, man of skill, perfect man, and gentleness. These interpretations shed light on the diverse understanding of rén in traditional Chinese political thought. Overall, this study provides a comprehensive overview of the translations and interpretations of rén, highlighting the complexity and richness of this fundamental concept in Chinese philosophy.

1. Introduction

Ever since the launch of the Chinese Academic Translation Program by the National Social Science Foundation in 2010, more and more Confucian classics have been making their way onto international communication platforms. The word "仁" (Rén), representing the fundamental concept of Confucian teachings, is a crucial term for translators. The search for a proper English translation rule for "仁" (Rén) is key to accurately conveying and promoting Confucian ideology and culture abroad. This is essential for fostering academic exchanges between China and other nations, expanding the influence of Chinese scholarship, improving international academic discourse, and aiding global understanding of Chinese philosophy and social sciences. While some attention has been given to the English translation of "仁" (Rén), existing studies have yielded differing translation rules and insufficient etymological research. This study aims to address these issues by analyzing the English translations of "仁" (Rén) in Xv D.'s Lectures on Traditional China's Political Thoughts alongside the etymological interpretations of its corresponding English concepts. Ultimately, this research seeks to offer valuable insights for accurately translating "仁" (Rén) in English-language communication channels.

2. A Review of the English Translations of Rén

The author meticulously reviewed the English translations of the Chinese concept "仁" (Rén) from 1984 to the first half of 2021, studying works by 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), and Hu, C. (2020). Over the years, researchers have held differing opinions on how best to translate and interpret the essence of "仁" (Rén).

Chen (1984) disagreed with translating "仁" (Rén) as "good," arguing that "仁" (Rén) encompassed the entirety of virtue in Confucianism, whereas "good" only captured a portion of it. Western sinologists like Waley (1938) often viewed "仁" (Rén) and its counterpart "礼" (Lǐ) as passive and unchanging. Hao and Roger (1996) rejected the translation of "仁" (Rén) as benevolence, believing it made the concept too individualistic and devoid of its sociological significance.

Cheng (2002) identified Legge's translation of "仁" (Rén) as "perfect virtue" as stemming from Neo-Confucianism, specifically citing the influence of the *Four Books Annotations*. Wang (2008) proposed translating "仁" (Rén) as "humanity" instead of "perfect virtue/benevolence/morality," criticizing Legge's interpretation for not capturing the core of moral and ethical teachings in The Analects of Confucius. Wang emphasized that "仁" (Rén) represented the highest level of personal cultivation with profound humanitarian implications, which is why Confucianism was often referred to as the study of "仁" (Rén).

He believed that "perfect virtue" or "benevolent actions" were aspects of "virtue", just one of the many meanings encompassed by "仁" (Rén) (such as honesty, loyalty, forgiveness, filial piety, kindness, love, warmth, kindness, courtesy, thrift, tolerance). Wang, D. disagreed with Gu, H.'s translation of "仁" (Rén) as "morality/a moral life", arguing that this interpretation

was limited and did not capture the full essence of "仁" (Rén). Wang, D. proposed using "humanity" as a translation for "仁" (Rén), citing definitions from the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English to support his argument. Meanwhile, Yang, P. (2008) concluded that transliteration was the most effective way to translate "仁" (Rén) after evaluating various translation methods.

He believed that the various translation methods of "仁" (Rén) served their purpose, but many of them only offered a simplified explanation of the deep Confucian philosophy. Yang, P. disagreed with Wang, D.'s suggestion of translating it as "humanity," arguing that this term was influenced by Western Christian ideas of humanitarianism and did not accurately capture the essence of Confucius' "仁" (Rén). According to Confucius, achieving "仁" (Rén) required hard work and dedication, as seen in his statement "仁者先难而后获" (Rénzhě xiān nán érhòu huò) (*The Analects of Confucius: Yong Ye*), which emphasized the importance of overcoming challenges. Yang, P. believed that the true meaning of "仁" (Rén) was distinct from Western humanitarianism.

Western humanitarianism originally referred to the ideal of personality and good humanity rooted in Christianity and the Renaissance. It emphasized universal love that emanated from within and was based on familial ties and social status. On the other hand, Confucius' concept of "仁" (Rén) embodied elements of love, loyalty, forgiveness, and humanism, but Chinese Confucianism traditionally interpreted it through the lens of etiquette. The main goal was to cultivate individuals with noble aspirations who were well-educated and rational, while also upholding the hierarchical structure of the clan-based ruling system and restoring order to a society disrupted by the collapse of "礼乐" (Lǐ yuè) – etiquette and music.

In his discussion of translation principles, Liu, B. (2011) proposed the idea of "harmonious translation" – using Chinese pinyin alongside annotations to convey meanings accurately. For example, "Ren" could be translated as a combination of virtues such as benevolence, goodness, kindness, love, humanity, and generosity.

Wang, F. (2013) suggested using transliteration and comprehensive annotation to translate key words from ancient classics, aiming to establish a Chinese cultural discourse system in cultural exchanges between China and the West and to reduce the Western cultural misinterpretation of China. He argued that the improper translation of "仁" (Rén) had led to distortion, deformation, and misreading of the core concepts of Confucianism and the image of Confucius in the West, and advocated for an alienation translation strategy as the way forward. Cai, X. (2020) was a trailblazer in the English translation of "仁" (Rén), rejecting translations such as benevolence, humaneness, and morality.

He recommended consulting the English translation of Aristotle's "reflection" and Heidegger's "globalization" for further understanding. He proposed that the Chinese term "仁" (Rén) could be translated as "man-manning" to emphasize the people-centered concept of "仁" (Rén) in Confucianism and to elucidate the idea of "harmony between heaven and man" in Confucian cosmology. He argued that conventional interpretations of "仁" (Rén) as moral virtue or other terms fail to capture the essence of the concept, which is rooted in the notion of embodying the "ideal personality" and reflecting the original goodness of the mind.

The term "仁" (Rén) is derived from the saying "Tiān xíng jiàn, jūnzǐ yǐ zìqiángbùxī" (translating to "The way of heaven runs round and round, never ending, and no one can stop it") from the Yi Jing, implying continuous self-improvement in alignment with the natural order. 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 differences in thinking between the source language and the target language are completely opposite, showing the colonial nature of cultural exchange in modern times. The target language tends to gradually absorb and ultimately erase the distinctiveness of the source language, resulting in the distancing of Confucius' style. Hu, C. (2020) supported translating "仁" (Rén) as "virtue" and opposed the translation of "仁" (Rén) as "benevolent". She argued that this misunderstanding stemmed from foreign translators' failure to distinguish between "special virtue" and "full virtue", as they did not recognize the central importance of "仁" (Rén) in Confucianism or reflect on the viewpoints of later Neo-Confucians.

Contrary to the early Catholic missionaries who rejected Zhu, X.'s Neo-Confucianism, Legge, J. primarily used the annotated version of Zhu, X.'s Neo-Confucianism as a reference. He focused on Zhu's concept of "仁" (Rén), understanding it as "the full virtue of the heart". Legge often translated this as "perfect virtue/true virtue" or "virtuous", especially evident in his translation of 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." (*The Analects of Confucius: Yong Ye*). However, in certain chapters and passages where the concept of "the full virtue of the heart" was clearly emphasized, Legge translated it as "benevolence/benevolent".

For example, in translating "孝弟也者，其为仁之本与?" (Xiàodì yě zhě, qí wèi rénzhī běn yǔ?) from The Analects of Confucius: Xue Er, he rendered "仁" (Rén) as "benevolent" in his version "Filial piety and fraternal submission! — Are they not the root of all benevolent actions?" Similarly, "仁" (Rén) was translated as "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. discovered additional evidence in the Oxford Concise English Dictionary (2000) regarding the Latin meaning of "benevolence" as well-wishing, which appears to align with "loyalty and forgiveness." However, he noted that the English translation of "benevolence" primarily emphasizes kindness and goodness of the heart and may not fully capture the essence of "仁" (Rén) as described by Confucius. Rather than focusing solely on performing good deeds, Confucius' concept of "仁" (Rén) highlights the importance of observing proper etiquette. Lv, P. (2021) highlighted the contrasting orientations in A. Waley's and H. Gu's English translations of "仁" (Rén) - one towards alienation and the other towards domestication - which are influenced by linguistic and cultural factors as well as personal

interpretation. In light of the various perspectives on the English translation of "仁" (Rén), the author aims to identify common features by examining different translation approaches in depth and determine the most suitable translation method for "仁" (Rén) in contemporary times by combining etymological interpretations.

3. Statistics and Analysis of Representative Translations of "仁"'s quotations in

Lectures on Traditional China's Political Thoughts

The pre-Qin period in Chinese history was a time of great philosophical and political development, with thinkers such as Confucius, Mozi, Han Feizi, and Laozi laying the groundwork for traditional Chinese political thought. Xv (2016) provides a valuable summary of the thoughts of these influential figures, presenting a comprehensive overview of the essence of traditional Chinese political thoughts.

One of the key strengths of Xv's book is its inclusion of a large number of classical quotations from traditional Chinese culture, totaling 262 according to the author. These quotations offer valuable insights into the political and cultural concepts of the time, providing readers with a deeper understanding of the values and beliefs that shaped ancient Chinese society.

In translating these quotations into English, the author faced the challenge of accurately conveying the nuances of Chinese ideological and cultural terminology. To ensure a consistent and faithful translation, the author consulted a number of classic Chinese cultural translation works and parallel texts in foreign languages. This process of centralized sorting and analysis allowed the author to reach a final solution that maintained the integrity of the original quotations.

By drawing on the Chinese ideological and cultural terminology library as part of the "Chinese ideological and cultural terminology dissemination project," the author was able to access a wealth of resources that helped facilitate the translation process. This project plays a crucial role in promoting the understanding and appreciation of traditional Chinese culture on a global scale, allowing for the dissemination of key concepts and beliefs to a wider audience.

Xv's book serves as an important contribution to the study of traditional Chinese political thought, offering readers a comprehensive overview of the key figures and ideas that shaped the philosophical landscape of the pre-Qin period. The inclusion of classical quotations and the meticulous attention to detail in the translation process demonstrate the author's dedication to preserving and promoting the essence of traditional Chinese culture. By engaging with this text, readers are able to deepen their understanding of ancient Chinese philosophy and gain valuable insights into the cultural and political values that continue to influence Chinese society today.

The study mentioned provides an interesting analysis of the term "仁" (Rén) as found in various Chinese philosophical texts. By selecting 16 quotations containing this term from different sources such as *The Analects of Confucius*, *Laozi*, *Menzi*, *Mozi*, and others, the

author delves into the nuanced interpretations of this concept. It is noteworthy that the author consulted a diverse range of translators for these texts, including Legge, Gu, Waley, Roger, Collie, Zhao, Lai, Wang, Blakney, Dwright, Henry, and others, which adds depth to the examination.

The diverse translations of the term "仁" (Rén) from different texts reveal the complexity and richness of this concept in Chinese philosophy. The fact that various translators have approached this term differently highlights the interpretive challenges involved in capturing the full essence of such a profound idea. Each translator brings their own background, understanding, and linguistic nuances to the table, leading to a varied portrayal of "仁" (Rén) across different texts. This diversity in translation underscores the flexible and multifaceted nature of Chinese philosophical concepts.

Furthermore, the author's investigation of 16 quotations and 23 representative translations related to "仁" (Rén) sheds light on the evolution and interpretation of this term over time. By examining texts from different periods and philosophical schools, the study provides a holistic view of how "仁" (Rén) has been understood and articulated in Chinese thought. This comprehensive approach allows for a deeper understanding of the nuances and subtleties of this concept, offering valuable insights into its significance in moral and ethical discourse.

Moreover, the inclusion of quotations from a wide range of texts such as *The Analects of Confucius*, *Laozi*, *Menzi*, *Mozi*, On the Shortcomings of the Qin Dynasty, *Zhuangzi*, *Han Feizi*, and *The Book of Rites* enrich the study by presenting a diverse array of perspectives on "仁" (Rén). Each of these texts offers a unique lens through which to explore the concept of benevolence, compassion, or humanity, shedding light on its various dimensions and applications in different contexts.

In conclusion, the study's meticulous examination of quotations and translations related to "仁" (Rén) provides a comprehensive and enlightening exploration of this fundamental concept in Chinese philosophy. By drawing on a wide range of texts, translators, and interpretations, the author offers a nuanced analysis that deepens our understanding of "仁" (Rén) and its philosophical implications. This study serves as a valuable contribution to the scholarship on Chinese thought and invites further reflection on the enduring relevance of moral ideals in contemporary society.

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	14	27%	7	Legge, J. (6); Zhao, Z. (1); Collie, D. (3); Wang, R.

	ruler/ benevolent/ benevolence				(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/ kind/ 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 interpretation and translation of the Chinese character "仁" provide a fascinating glimpse into the complexity and depth of Chinese culture and values. The modern Chinese dictionary (7th edition) by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences sheds light on the multiple meanings and nuances of this character, with a particular focus on the interpretation of benevolence and kindness.

The fact that there are three different interpretations of "仁" (Rén) highlights the richness of the Chinese language and the various ways in which a single character can be understood. The first meaning, benevolence and kindness, is a fundamental concept in Chinese philosophy and ethics, reflecting the importance of compassion, empathy, and moral integrity in interpersonal relationships and societal interactions.

The analysis of 52 translation samples provided by domestic and foreign scholars reveals the diverse approaches taken in translating "仁" into other languages. The 12 major categories of translation methods demonstrate the range of interpretations and the challenges involved in capturing the full essence of the term in a different linguistic and cultural context.

It is interesting to note the distribution of translations among the different categories, with benevolent action/rule, perfect virtue/practice, and the good ruler/man accounting for a significant proportion of the translations. This suggests that the idea of benevolence as encompassing virtuous behavior, moral excellence, and ethical leadership is a central theme in the understanding of "仁" across different cultures.

The involvement of both Western sinologists and native Chinese translators in the translation process indicates the global relevance and significance of "仁" as a concept that transcends linguistic and cultural boundaries. The variations in translation choices reflect the different perspectives and interpretations brought to bear on this complex term, enriching our understanding of its multiple dimensions and implications.

The analysis of the translation of "仁" offers valuable insights into the cultural values and philosophical foundations that underpin Chinese language and thought. By exploring the diverse interpretations and nuances of this character, we gain a deeper appreciation for the moral ideals and ethical principles that have shaped Chinese society for centuries. As language and culture continue to evolve and interact in an increasingly interconnected world, the study of terms like "仁" provides a window into the shared human values that unite us across diverse linguistic and cultural traditions.

3.2 Translations of Rén by the Same Translator are not Uniform

The lack of a consistent translation of the Chinese character "仁" (Rén) by even the same translator, as highlighted in the analysis of James Legge's translations, underscores the complexity and nuances of language and interpretation. Legge's varying translations of "仁" into terms such as "perfect virtue", "benevolent actions",   "benevolent ruler", "benevolence", "the virtuous", and "the man of skill" reflect the multifaceted nature of this concept within the Chinese philosophical tradition.

The fact that Legge used different translations for "仁" in different texts and contexts within *The Analects of Confucius* reveals the challenges of finding an exact equivalent in English for a term deeply rooted in a specific cultural and philosophical context. This variety in translation also suggests that there may not be a one-size-fits-all approach to rendering complex terms like "仁" in another language.

While some may argue for the importance of consistency in translation, Legge's approach demonstrates the flexibility and adaptability required to capture the richness and depth of a term like "仁." Each translation choice made by Legge offers a unique perspective on the meaning and significance of "仁", allowing readers to explore different facets of this concept through the lens of his translations.

The fluidity in Legge's translations of "仁" also speaks to the evolving nature of language and interpretation. Just as the meaning of a word or concept can shift depending on its context, so too can the translation of that word vary based on the translator's understanding and interpretation. In translating a term like "仁", which carries moral, ethical, and social connotations, it may be unrealistic to expect a single, definitive translation that captures all of its complexities.

Ultimately, the diversity in Legge's translations of "仁" emphasizes the importance of engaging with multiple translations and interpretations in order to fully grasp the depth and richness of a concept like "仁". By exploring different translations and considering the nuances of each, readers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of this term and its relevance in Chinese philosophical thought.

In conclusion, the variations in James Legge's translations of "仁" highlight the challenges and complexities involved in translating concepts across languages and cultures. Rather than seeking a singular, fixed translation for a term like "仁", it may be more fruitful to embrace the diversity of interpretations available and engage with the different nuances and meanings that emerge from each translation choice.

3.3 Parts of Speech of Translations of Rén are Different

The analysis of the diversity of parts of speech in translations brings to light the intricacies and nuances involved in translating texts from one language to another. The examples provided demonstrate how different translators choose to render certain terms based on their understanding of the original text and the context in which the words are used. This variation in the choice of parts of speech not only reflects the individual style and preferences of each translator but also sheds light on their interpretation of the underlying meaning of the text.

In the case of the translations of benevolent action/benevolent rule/benevolent/benevolence, the varying use of the noun form "benevolence" versus the adjective form "benevolent" highlights the subtle differences in emphasis that each translator may choose to prioritize. While some may prefer to focus on the quality or characteristic of benevolence, others may choose to emphasize the action or practice of benevolence. This variation in choice can have a significant impact on how the text is perceived and understood by the reader.

Similarly, the translations of perfect virtue/virtuous practice/the virtuous further illustrate the range of interpretations that can be derived from a single term. The use of the noun form "virtue" versus the adjective form "virtuous" can convey different connotations and nuance, influencing the reader's understanding of the text. By choosing to emphasize either the quality of virtue or the practice of virtuous behavior, translators can shape the reader's perception of the text and the values it espouses.

The example of Waley, A.'s translation of The Analects of Confucius also highlights the dynamic nature of translation and the flexibility required to capture the essence of a text in a different language. Waley's use of both noun and adjective forms throughout the text demonstrates his sensitivity to the context and meaning of each term, adapting his choice of parts of speech to best convey the intended message. This conscious decision to vary the parts of speech used indicates a deep engagement with the text and a commitment to faithfully representing its meaning in English.

The analysis of the diversity of parts of speech in translations serves as a reminder of the artistry and skill involved in the process of translation. Each translator brings their unique perspective and interpretation to the text, making deliberate choices in how to render certain terms based on their understanding of the original work. By considering the implications of these choices, readers can gain a deeper appreciation for the complexity and richness of translated texts, encouraging a more nuanced understanding of the original work and its cultural context.

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

The analysis of the translation methods of the Chinese term "仁" (Rén) into English provides interesting insights into the diverse approaches taken by translators, both domestic and foreign. The fact that "benevolent action/benevolent rule/benevolent/benevolence" was chosen by 27% of the translators examined, including a mix of both local and overseas scholars, highlights the complexity of translating cultural concepts between languages. The even distribution of this translation method among local and overseas scholars suggests that the choice of translating "仁" as "benevolence" cannot simply be attributed to the personal background or beliefs of the translator.

Furthermore, the translation of "仁" as "humanity/humaneness" by Watson, B. and Wang, R. demonstrates that there are multiple valid interpretations of the term within the English language. This challenges the assumption that western scholars may have a preference for translating "仁" in a way that aligns with their own cultural connotations, as Chinese scholars also had the opportunity to select this translation method. This highlights the importance of considering the context and intended meaning behind a term when translating it into another language, rather than solely relying on personal biases or assumptions.

Overall, the analysis of the various translation methods used for "仁" underscores the complexity and subjectivity involved in cross-cultural translation. It is important for translators to approach their work with an open mind, considering multiple interpretations

and perspectives in order to accurately convey the nuances of the original text. By acknowledging the diversity of approaches taken by both local and overseas scholars in translating cultural concepts, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the richness and complexity of language and cultural exchange.

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

The evolution of the word "virtue" from its Latin root "vir" meaning manliness or valor to its current meaning of moral excellence is truly fascinating. It is interesting to see how language reflects societal values and ideals over time. The concept of virtue encompassing qualities such as high character, goodness, bravery, and courage highlights the importance placed on these attributes throughout history. Additionally, the association of virtue with chastity and sexual purity in women from the 1590s shows how gender roles and expectations have shaped the meaning of the term.

The division of virtues into natural (justice, prudence, temperance, fortitude) and theological (hope, faith, charity) categories further emphasizes the multifaceted nature of moral excellence. The phrase "by virtue of" carrying the alternative Middle English sense of "efficacy" adds another layer to the complexity of the word's meaning.

Overall, the history and etymology of the word "virtue" provide valuable insights into the values and beliefs of different time periods. It serves as a reminder of the importance of striving for moral excellence and goodness in our actions and conduct.

4.2 Etymological Interpretation of Benevolent

The etymology of the word "benevolent" sheds light on its intrinsic meaning of wishing well and exhibiting kindness towards others. Originating from Latin and Old French roots, the term captures the essence of goodwill and positive intentions. The combination of "bene" meaning well and "volent" meaning to wish, exemplifies the core values of benevolence - a genuine desire for the well-being and happiness of others. The evolution of the word over time reflects a universal recognition of the importance of benevolence in human interactions.

Understanding the history behind "benevolent" enhances our appreciation for the concept of kindness and goodwill. It serves as a reminder of the power of positive intentions and the impact they can have on relationships and communities. Practicing benevolence not only benefits others but also contributes to our own sense of fulfillment and well-being. In a world often characterized by negativity and discord, embodying benevolence can serve as a beacon

of hope and a catalyst for positive change. Let us be inspired by the etymology of "benevolent" to cultivate a culture of kindness and compassion in our daily lives.

4.3 Etymological Interpretation of Morality

The concept of morality has been a crucial aspect of human society since the late 14th century, as evidenced by the various definitions and interpretations that have evolved over time. The word "morality" encompasses not only the idea of virtuous conduct and thought but also encompasses moral qualities, ethical duties, and good character. Its roots can be traced back to Old French and Late Latin, reflecting its longstanding presence in our cultural and philosophical discourse. The evolution of the term mirrors the evolution of society's ethical standards and values, highlighting the ever-changing nature of morality.

In today's complex world, where moral dilemmas are constantly being debated and reevaluated, understanding the concept of morality remains as important as ever. It serves as a compass for our actions and decisions, guiding us towards what is considered right and ethical. By delving into the historical origins and meanings of morality, we can gain a deeper appreciation for its significance in shaping human behavior and society as a whole. Ultimately, the concept of morality is not static; rather, it is a dynamic force that continues to influence and shape our lives.

4.4 Etymological Interpretation of Humanity

The concept of humanity has evolved over centuries, encompassing various meanings and interpretations that reflect our understanding of what it means to be human. From kindness and graciousness to philanthropy and good breeding, humanity involves not only how we treat others but also how we view ourselves as part of the human race. The Latin roots of the word "humanity" speak to our innate nature as humans and our capacity for compassion and understanding. As we navigate the complexities of life on earth, it is important to remember the essence of humanity and the importance of showing empathy and kindness towards others. In a world that can often feel divided, embracing our shared humanity can be a powerful force for unity and connection. Ultimately, humanity is about recognizing the inherent worth and dignity of every individual, and striving to create a world where all people are treated with respect and compassion.

4.5 Etymological Interpretation of Good

The etymology of the word "good" reveals all the positive connotations associated with it. Originally meaning "that which is good, a good thing," the word has evolved to encompass various meanings such as goodness, advantage, benefit, gift, virtue, and property. The notion of "the good side" further emphasizes the positive qualities that the word denotes. The phrase "for good" implies permanence and finality, reflecting the idea of something lasting indefinitely. This evolution of the word "good" over time demonstrates how society has valued and cherished the concept of goodness and virtue. The existence of phrases like "for good and all" and "for good nor ill" highlights the importance of the word in expressing different nuances of meaning. Overall, the etymology of "good" paints a picture of a word that is deeply ingrained in our language and culture, representing all things positive and

desirable. It is a reminder of the timeless value placed on goodness and virtue throughout history.

4.6 Etymological Interpretation of Kind

Ælfric's gecyndboc, a rendition of "the Book of Genesis" in Old English, sheds light on the evolution of language and the concept of kind. The use of the prefix "ge-" in gecyndboc became obsolete between 1150-1250, but its influence can still be seen in modern English in the form of adjective endings such as mankind or godcund. The word "kind" has no exact cognates beyond English, but its historical meanings of "character, quality derived from birth" and "manner or way natural or proper to anyone" provide insight into the ancient understanding of the term. It is fascinating to see how languages evolve over time, shedding old prefixes and adapting new suffixes to convey nuanced meanings. The roots of words like kind connect us to our linguistic past, offering a glimpse into the ways in which our ancestors viewed the world around them. Ælfric's gecyndboc serves as a testament to the enduring power of language to shape our understanding of ourselves and the world we inhabit.

4.7 Etymological Interpretation of Love

The word "love" has a rich and diverse history, with roots in Proto-Germanic and connections to various other languages. It encompasses feelings of affection, attraction, friendliness, and even the love of God. The etymology of the word reveals its deep connection to concepts such as joy, praise, and care. This highlights the multifaceted nature of love and the various forms it can take in different contexts.

The Proto-Indo-European root *leubh- from which "love" is derived indicates a sense of caring, desire, and deep emotional connection. This suggests that love is not just a fleeting emotion, but a profound and enduring bond between individuals.

The evolution of the word "love" across different languages and cultures reflects the universal human experience of seeking and expressing love in its many forms. Whether it is romantic love, platonic love, familial love, or love for a higher power, the concept of love transcends linguistic barriers and resonates with people across the world.

4.8 Etymological Interpretation of Compassion

Compassion is a powerful and universal human emotion that allows us to connect with others on a deep level. The etymology of the word "compassion" reveals its roots in the idea of "suffering with another", highlighting the fundamental human experience of shared empathy. The notion of feeling sorrow or tenderness for someone who is suffering or facing misfortune is a timeless and cross-cultural concept that has been expressed throughout history in various languages. The Latin roots of "compassion" emphasize the idea of coming together with others to share in their suffering, underscoring the importance of solidarity and support in times of distress. In essence, compassion is not simply about feeling sorry for others, but rather about actively engaging with their pain and offering comfort and understanding. The evolution of the word "compassion" from its Old French and Latin origins to its

contemporary usage reflects the enduring significance of empathy and human connection in our shared experience of life's joys and sorrows.

4.9 Etymological Interpretation of Authoritative

The evolution of the term "authoritative" from its Latin roots to its current connotation of authoritarianism is fascinating. The idea that authoritative originally meant "having due authority, entitled to credence or obedience" in the 1600s reveals a shift in our understanding of power and influence over time. It is interesting to see how language reflects societal changes and attitudes towards authority.

In the context of the discussion on ancient Chinese language and the Analects of Confucius, the notion that language serves a greater implementation function rather than a descriptive one is thought-provoking. The idea that Confucius emphasized normative rather than descriptive language, especially when discussing etiquette, suggests a focus on action and behavior rather than mere definition.

The translation of "仁" (Rén) as "authoritative conduct" by Roger Ames highlights the active and process-oriented nature of human activities in ancient Chinese philosophy. It sheds light on the dynamic relationship between language, culture, and behavior, showing how words can shape our understanding of the world around us. It is through these translations and interpretations that we can uncover deeper meanings and insights into different cultures and philosophies.

4.10 Etymological Interpretation of Man of Skill

The etymology of the word "skill" sheds light on the evolution of its meaning over time. Originating from Old Norse, it initially denoted knowledge and wisdom, later shifting to encompass discernment and sound judgment. This progression reflects a deeper understanding of the concept of skill, which is not merely about practical ability but also about the ability to differentiate, discern, and understand. The link to the Proto-Germanic root *skaljo- further emphasizes this aspect of separation and division, highlighting the intellectual component of skill.

James Legge's translation of "仁者" as "the man of skill" adds another layer to this understanding, equating skill with insight and correction. This implies that true skill goes beyond mere practical knowledge; it requires a profound ability to perceive nuances, make distinctions, and make adjustments accordingly. As such, skill is not just about proficiency in a particular task but also about a deeper understanding and wisdom that allows for effective decision-making and problem-solving. This broader perspective on skill challenges us to cultivate not only our practical abilities but also our intellectual and discerning faculties.

4.11 Etymological Interpretation of Perfect Man

The etymology of the word "perfect" is fascinating as it highlights the evolution of its meaning over time. Originally stemming from the Latin word "perfectus", meaning completed or accomplished, the term has undergone various shifts in definition throughout history. In Middle English, "perfect" was used to describe something flawless or ideal,

eventually evolving to also connote completeness and lacking no way. This reflects how the concept of perfection has become associated not only with flawlessness but also with being comprehensive and whole. Furthermore, the term has been utilized as an intensive in English, emphasizing the idea of completeness or entirety. The grammatical use of "perfect" to denote a verb tense indicating completion emerged around the 16th century, demonstrating how language can adapt and expand in nuanced ways. Overall, the etymology of "perfect" offers insights into how words can evolve in meaning while retaining core elements that resonate across time.

4.12 Etymological Interpretation of Gentleness

The concept of being gentle has a long and intricate history, stemming from Latin and evolving over time to encompass various meanings and associations. Initially tied to noble birth and high social status, the term "gentle" denoted qualities such as courage, valiance, and grace. Over the centuries, the definition expanded to include characteristics like kindness, politeness, and charm. The evolution of the word reflects changing societal norms and values, as well as shifts in language usage.

In modern times, being gentle is often associated with being mild, tender, and not harsh. This applies not only to how individuals interact with each other but also how animals and things are perceived. The idea of gentleness extends beyond just manners and behavior; it encompasses a broader sense of approachability, warmth, and sensitivity.

It is fascinating to see how a term rooted in notions of noble birth and elite status has transformed into a quality that is valued for its universal appeal and inclusivity. The multifaceted nature of being gentle speaks to the complexity of human relationships and the importance of kindness in our interactions with others.

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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