Textual Notes
to
Mengzi: with Selections from Traditional Commentaries

These notes (which can also be used with my abridged translation, *The Essential Mengzi*) are primarily intended for those who can read the original Chinese text and wonder why I have made certain translation choices. I try to avoid repeating points in these notes that I have already made in my commentary, so I encourage those interested in textual issues to read both. (See, for example, my discussion of "best knowledge" [良知] and "best capability" [良能] in my commentary on 7A15.) These notes also include a few additional interpretive comments that I thought were too esoteric for the published commentary.

In understanding the language of the *Mengzi*, I have found particularly useful the following works:

- Jiao Xun, *Mengzi zhengyi* ("The Correct Meaning of the Mengzi"). Reprinted in *Zhuzi jicheng*, edited by Cai Shangsi, vol. 1. Shanghai: Shangai shudian, 1986.
- Lau, D. C., "Some Notes on the Mencius." 1969. Reprinted in *Mencius*. Rev. ed. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2003, 391–415.
- Lau, D. C., "The Text of the *Mencius*," Appendix 3 of *Mencius*. New York: Penguin Books, 1970, 220–22.
- Legge, James, trans. *The Works of Mencius*, 1895. Reprint, New York: Dover Books, 1970.
- Nivison, David S., "On Translating Mencius," 1980. Reprinted in *The Ways of Confucianism*. La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1996, 175–201.
- Sun Shi, *Mengzi zhushu* (Shisanjing zhushu ed.).
- Zhao Qi, *Mengzi zhu* ("Commentary on the Mengzi"). In Jiao, *Mengzi zhengyi*. (vide supra).
- Zhu Xi, *Mengzi jizhu* (Sibu beiyao ed.).

Notes to Book 1A

1A1.3: 亦有仁義而已矣: Translators disagree over how to render this line and the similar line in the final verse. As much as I respect him, I feel that Legge must be wrong with "What I am provided with, are counsels to benevolence and righteousness, and these are my only topics." (Legge seems to see Mengzi as echoing the king's question: "Surely you must have . . ." "No, I have only . . . .") I'm not quite sure what Ware is doing with "Really, the only problem is manhood-at-its-best and propriety." But Hinton seems to

be following him with "It's Humanity and Duty that matter." I think Lau is closest to getting it right with "All that matters is that there should be benevolence and rightness." But how does he get to that meaning? The kernel sentence here is 有仁義 "There is benevolence and righteousness," but it is embedded in 亦・・・而已矣. The latter is an exclamatory construction, but it has different nuances in different passages. It can be descriptive, as in 6B6.2: 君子亦仁而已矣 "Gentlemen are simply benevolent!" But it can also be imperative, as it surely is in 6B2.4: 亦為之而已矣 "Simply do it!" It is this imperative use that I think we see in 1A1.3 ("Let there simply be benevolence and righteousness.") and in the similar line of the final verse (1A1.6): 王亦曰仁義而已矣 "Let Your Majesty speak only of benevolence and righteousness." (Consider also the similar but not identical construction in 1B14.3: 彊為善而已矣 "You should strive simply to do good.")

1A3.1: Zhu Xi says that the term I have rendered "Our" (literally, "little person") "is a title the various lords call themselves. It means person of little Virtue." Zhu Xi thus takes the title to be a ruler's polite expression of humility. An alternative possibility is that it means "this solitary person" (reflecting the august and aloof position the ruler occupies).

1A3.4: "It has never happened that someone fails to become King when . . ."; Zhu Xi observes that, "In general, when someone has the world and people call him a 'king,' it is pronounced with a level tone; when he is called a 'king' based on his own coming to oversee the world, it is pronounced with a departing tone." (The contemporary convention is to pronounce the character wáng when it is a noun and wàng when it is a verb.)

". . . and the black-haired people are neither hungry nor cold": The standard dictionary definition of *límín* 黎民 is "the mass of people." 黎 is "black," and the suggested etymology is "the black (haired) people." Both Zhu Xi and Sun Shi (*Mengzi zhushu*, Commentary on 1A3) understand it this way. However, Philip Ivanhoe has made the intriguing suggestion that the sense here is "young people," i.e., black-haired as opposed to "those whose hair has turned gray," mentioned earlier in the verse (correspondence of January 22, 2005).

1A3: Cheng Yi said, "In the time of Kongzi, although the house of the Zhou dynasty was almost gone, the world still knew that it was righteous to respect the Zhou. Hence, the *Spring and Autumn Annals* regarded respecting the Zhou as the root. When we get to the time of Mengzi, the Seven Major States battled, the world no longer appreciated the Zhou, and the suffering of the teeming people was already at its apex. At

this time any of the various lords could become King if he could put into effect the Kingly Way. This was why Mengzi encouraged the rulers of Qi and Liang. The King is the righteous leader of the world. And what is the heart of a sage or worthy? He looks at whether the Mandate of Heaven has changed or not."

1A4.5: An anonymous referee helped me to see that Mengzi implicitly distinguishes three cases: (1) an animal eating its natural prey, like a fox eating a rabbit or a human eating a pig (which is natural and unobjectionable); (2) animals cannibalizing others of their kind, like the way some rats will eat others when approaching starvation (which is unnatural and disgusting); and (3) animals eating humans, which is a violation of the natural order of things (and hence the most abhorrent). In this verse, Mengzi is contrasting the second and third cases.

1A5.1 "We are ashamed of it . . .": In his commentary on this verse, Zhu Xi glosses 比 as 為, but D. C. Lau follows an interpretation suggested by the well-attested meaning of the 比 as "close to," and reads it as "about to," as in "As someone so old that he is about to die. . . ." This is an intriguing possibility. See Lau, "Some Notes on the *Mencius*," in *Mencius*, rev. ed. (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2003), 394–97.

1A5.3: Notice that, in the *Mengzi*, area is measured in "leagues square" (方里), not "square leagues." So a state of "a hundred leagues square" is one with an area equivalent to a square with sides of a hundred leagues each, which means it would be 100 x 100 or ten thousand square leagues.

1A6: Su Che said, "The doctrines of Mengzi are more than just grand. But if you do not profoundly follow his meaning to its source and carefully search out its substance, you will not fail to become abstruse. When I consider how, from the time of Mengzi, the Emperors Gaozu (founder of the Western Han dynasty) and Guangwu (founder of the Eastern Han dynasty), as well as Taizong of the Tang dynasty and Emperor Taizu of our own (Song) dynasty, were able to unify the world—these four rulers all did it by not having any taste for killing people. As killing people increases, so does chaos in the world. The Qin (221–202 B.C.E.), Jin (265–420 C.E.), and Sui (581–618 C.E.) dynasties were able to bring together the world through strength, but the fondness for killing did not cease. Hence, they may have brought it together, but then it became divided, or resulted in destroying the state. Is it just an accident that this is what Mengzi teaches?"

1A7.5: In this part of his commentary, Zhu Xi observes that 愛, which usually means "to love," here means 吝, "to be stingy." He is quite right, and we see another example of 愛 used in this sense in *Analects* 3.17.

1A7.6: Zhu Xi understands this phrase differently: "There genuinely was something like what the commoners said."

1A7.8: As Jiao Xun notes (*Mengzi zhengyi*, Commentary on 1A7), the phrase "gentlemen keep their distance from the kitchen" is found in the *Record of Rites*, Book 11, "Yu Zao," and in other canonical ritual texts. However, these texts were composed in the Han dynasty, so they may very well be quoting Mengzi.

1A7.11: "To collect kindling . . ." is literally "to break a branch for an elderly person," presumably to collect kindling or to clear a path for them so they do not stumble. I translate according to Zhu Xi, but other commentators (including Zhao Qi) take the phrase to refer to massaging the stiff joints of a sore or arthritic older person.

1A7.24 (commentary by Zhu Xi): "Enlightened" 悟 is another Buddhist term that never occurs in the *Four Books* themselves.

Notes to Book 1B

1B1.1: Regarding the phrase 曰好樂何如. Normally, we would expect it to mark a change of speaker, but that doesn't seem to make sense here, since Mengzi doesn't reply until the next sentence. There are at least three possibilities for handling the 曰: (1) It is an interpolation and should just be ignored. (2) It marks an embedded quotation. "(If the King) says . . ." (This is how I have taken it.) (3) It marks an additional comment by Zhuang Bao: "Then Zhuang Bao also said . . ." (This last option seems highly unlikely to me, but it is how D. C. Lau takes it, and his opinion is generally worth taking seriously.)

1B4.7: It seems odd that Yanzi would gloss his own words. Three possibilities: (1) verse 6 is a poem or saying that is being quoted (D. C. Lau's solution); (2) verse 7 is part of some ancient commentary, no longer extant, that has been interpolated into the text; and (3) verses 7–9 might be Mengzi's comment on what Yanzi said, rather than part of Yanzi's speech to the duke. (I have followed this third possibility.)

1B5.3: The Chinese text says that King Wen ruled "Qi," but this is misleading when transliterated into English. Qi (岐) was the old state of the Zhou people. It is not the same as the state Qi (齊) of King Xuan.

1B9.2: Notice that the word 今, which normally means "today," is here a modal particle, meaning "suppose that." This is a fairly common use in the *Mengzi* (e.g., 2A6.3).

1B10.1 (commentary): Zhu Xi's recommendation that we read 2B8, 1B10, 1B11, and 2B9 in that order may be found in his commentary on 2B9.4.

1B10.2: Zhu Xi comments, "Regarding the conquest of Yan as an event of the reign of King Xuan is completely at variance with the *Records of the Historian* and various other works." See my Preface for more on this.

1B13.2: On the expression "if you insist," see Book 1A7.2.

1B16.2 "audience": Zhu Xi says 見 is here read like 現. I think he says this only because it does not have a direct object.

1B16.3 "was coming": 為 here makes the verb imperfect. Without it, the sentence would mean "The ruler came to see you."

Notes to Book 2A

2A2.1 "It would not be surprising . . .": Zhao Qi and some others read this sentence differently, and think it is just part of the following sentence. The whole verse would then mean, "Suppose that you, Master, were to be appointed Prime Minister in Qi and were able to put the Way into practice there. If, even so, there were no difference (in the ruler's actions) between a Hegemon and a King, would this perturb your heart or not?" In other words: suppose Mengzi got a position of authority, and despite his best efforts the ruler ended up acting like a Hegemon anyway, would this perturb his heart? Nevertheless, I translate according to Zhu Xi, who is almost certainly right. The construction in this passage is XY不異. But when Mengzi wants to say "X is not different from Y," he writes X 無以異於 Y.

2A2.2: In "Even Gaozi, though he did not understand the Way, had an unperturbed heart before I," the middle clause is a gloss taken from Zhu Xi's commentary on the passage. Although I think Zhu Xi has the underlying meaning right, I have left the clause out in *The Essential Mengzi*. (My thanks to Jorg Schumacher for asking about this verse in correspondence of December 15, 2008.)

2A2.5: "Opposing army" is 三軍. Originally, this term referred to the "three armies" that the ruler of a state is permitted to field (the King can field six), or to the armies of the center, left, and right flanks. However, it came to be a generic expression for "the army" as a whole. See Ralph D. Sawyer, trans., *Sun Tzu: Art of War* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 75–76, 274n164.

2A2.7: What this sentence seems to mean at first glance is, "If I examine myself and am not upright, even though a man in rags (is all that opposes me), I would not be frightened by him." But it is not clear why the Master would say this (since a man in rags would not normally intimidate anyone anyway). (i) Zhu Xi thinks that the verb 惴 is transitive ("to make afraid"), so the point is that, if one is not upright, a genuinely courageous person will defer to even a man in rags, and not try to intimidate him. This still seems a bit forced, though, especially since it is unclear how the final 焉 functions on this reading. (ii) Another possibility is that the sentence is a rhetorical question: "If . . . would I not be frightened by him?" But what aspect of the syntax marks it as a rhetorical question? I'd like to say that the 焉 is equivalent to something like 之乎, but unfortunately I know of no evidence that this is possible. (iii) D. C. Lau suggests that the 不 is equivalent to 必, giving the sense, "If . . . I would definitely not be afraid of him." See Lau, *Mencius*, rev. ed. (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2003), Appendix 6, 402–403, for more discussion.

2A2.16a: Regarding the grammar of these lines, Zhu Xi notes, "'One must work at it, but do not assume success': Zhao Qi and Chengzi take these words as one complete sentence. In recent times, some have read it with the following 'heart' as part of the same sentence [so that the meaning is 'One must work at it, but do not presume about the heart: one should not forget it, nor help it grow']. This also makes sense . . . . But if we take it as 'do not presume about the heart,' the meaning is the same. Naturally, the meaning of this expression 正心 ('presume about the heart') here is different from what is called 正心 ('correct the heart') in the *Greater Learning*."

2A2.18: Clearly, some part of this verse is another comment/question by Gongsun Chou, but the expression 曰 "says" has dropped out of the text, so it is not obvious when Mengzi stops talking and Gongsun Chou starts up again. Zhu Xi comments, "Lin Zhiji regards this whole verse as Gongsun Chou's question," and follows him. (The same applies to verse 20.) Zhu Xi and Lin are probably right.

2A2.27: D. C. Lau follows Zhao Qi in reading all of this verse as a description of Kongzi's insight: "Through the rites of a state he could see its government; through its music, the moral quality of its ruler. Looking back over a hundred generations he was able to appraise all the kings, and no one has ever been able to show him to be wrong in a single instance."

2A6.4: Zhu Xi offers a detailed but speculative analysis of each of the hearts: "'Compassion' (*ce-yin*) is the sharpness of ache (*ce*) and the depth of pain (*yin*) over the suffering of others. 'Disdain' (*xiu-wu*) is being ashamed of one's own failure to be good (*xiu*), and hating that others are not good (*wu*). 'Deference' (*ci-*

rang) is to decline being relieved of a responsibility (*ci*), and to grant things to others (*rang*). 'Approval and disapproval' (*shi-fei*) is when you understand that something is good and regard it as right (*shi*), or when you understand that something is bad and regard it as wrong (*fei*). What makes up a person's heart does not go beyond these four. Hence, he enumerated all of them after discussing compassion. The verse means that if a person lacks these, then he is not worth calling a 'human,' and by means of this making clear that one must have them."

2A6.5: School of the Way Confucians like Zhu Xi were puzzled as to why Mengzi did not mention "faithfulness" *xìn* 信 along with the other four virtues in this passage. In early Confucianism, faithfulness is a virtue that is primarily concerned with honesty in words and loyalty to friends. However, in Chinese Buddhism, "faith" becomes a crucial virtue, perhaps *the* crucial virtue, and consists in believing the right things in the right way—i.e., with unwavering conviction. The School of the Way picked up this concept and used several different terms, with varying emphases, to refer to it: 信, "faith" as a personal virtue, 誠, "Genuineness" as the metaphysical state of being faithful to one's true nature, and 實, "genuine" as what is real in contrast with what is empty 空 or artificial 偽. (On 信 see A. C. Graham, *Two Chinese Philosophers*, 1958, reprint [La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1992], 54–56). Consequently, they struggle to find an explanation for why Mengzi does not mention faithfulness in 2A6. The explanation offered by Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi is that faith is simply the state of having the other virtues with firm conviction. In addition, in his commentary on this passage, Zhu Xi draws an analogy between faith, thus understood, and Earth among the Five Phases. The Five Phases are not elements, but are phases or aspects of things. A multitude of phenomena from cooking (the five tastes) to astronomy (the five planets visible with the unaided eyes) can be correlated with these phases. When a correlation with four items is needed, as in correlating phases with the Four Seasons or four compass directions, Earth becomes the phase that mediates between the other four. It is, in a sense, the background against which the other phases operate.

2A6.5: I render *duän* 端 as "sprout," but Zhu Xi glosses it as follows: "'Tip' is an endpoint. By following the expression of the feelings, one can succeed in seeing the nature at root. It is like when there is a thing inside a box and the endpoint of it is visible outside." This is ingenious, but it is dependent on Buddhist-influenced metaphysics in a way that distorts Mengzi's original picture. The character can mean "endpoint," but given Mengzi's fondness for agricultural metaphors, it is much more likely to mean "sprout" here. Zhu Xi would have us envision the four hearts as the "tips" (the manifestations) of a

completely formed virtuous nature that is obscured by selfish desires. But for Mengzi, the hearts are merely incipient virtues that must be gradually cultivated, like the sprouts of plants, until they grow to maturity. For Zhu Xi, becoming virtuous is a process of stripping away selfishness; for Mengzi, becoming virtuous is a process of developing virtue. For more on Mengzi's interpretation of this passage, see Van Norden, *Virtue Ethics and Consequentialism in Early Chinese Philosophy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 216–18.

Notes to Book 2B

2B2.1: 識 . . . 乎 is a sentence pattern: "I wonder whether . . . ?" Compare the same pattern in 6A4.3 (where the final interrogative particle is 與).

2B2.2: The character I render "excused" here and in the next verse is one of the terms Mengzi associates with "the feeling of propriety" in 2A6.

2B2.3: "Under the weather" is how I have rendered what is literally "had trouble gathering firewood," which Zhu Xi says is an idiom for being too weak to do even menial tasks.

"Discreet expressions" (權辭) is an echo of Mengzi's notion of "discretion" (權), the ability to weigh circumstances and know when to suspend ordinary rules. See 4A17.

2B2.5: I have amplified what Mengzi says, based on the complete passage from the *Rites*, which Zhu Xi cites. As the quotation reveals, there is a slight difference in tone between 諾 and 唯, although both have the basic meaning of "Yes." 唯 is more compliant and respectful. Hence, Zengzi uses it in replying to Kongzi in *Analects* 4.15. (In his commentary on that passage, Zhu Xi observes that this is Zengzi "answering him quickly and without doubt.") 諾 is more like a grudging concession. Hence, Duke Ping of Lu uses it in *Mengzi* 1B15.1 after being persuaded by a subordinate to give up his intention to visit Mengzi.

2B2.6: Zhu Xi's first comment is, "'Dissatisfied' (慊) is hating or feeling a loss. In some texts it is written 嗛. The character 嗛 was (originally) written as (a picture of) something savored in the mouth. So the meaning of 慊 too depends upon what one's heart savors. Whether one is happy, satisfied, angry, or at a loss depends only on the differences between one's activities and what one's heart savors."

In other words, 慊 can mean either "satisfied" (as it did in the expression 不慊, "unsatisfied," in 2A2.15) or "dissatisfied" (as it does in this passage). Zhu Xi's explanation for the ambiguity is that the original meaning of the term is "something held in one's mouth." (He suggests that an alternative form of the character is, in fact, a complex ideogram showing the mouth holding something.) Consequently, whether the term means "satisfied" or "dissatisfied" depends on the significance of what the object of the heart's attitude is.

2B7.4: Zhu Xi glosses 比 as 為, "for (those transforming)." However, D. C. Lau follows an alternative reading, related to the established sense of 比 as 近, "close to," giving the sense, "of those *about to* transform." That is an intriguing possibility. See Lau, *Mencius*, rev. ed. (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2003), 394–97.

2B10.3: In his conversation with Shizi, the king refers to himself as 我, rather than as 寡人. Perhaps this is because Shizi is an intimate confidant.

2B10.5: The sense of this part of Mengzi's reply is clear, but it is hard to bring it out in English in a manner that is both faithful and readable. The 然 is functionally much like the Japanese, "Aa, soo," or the English "I see." (This latter is how Lau renders it, and I avoided that only because it suggests a visual metaphor absent from Mengzi's comment.) The 夫 could be either the grammatical particle that marks slight topic changes (sometimes translatable as "Now . . ."), or the demonstrative pronoun, "This Shizi . . ." (i.e., someone of Shizi's ilk). (Zhu Xi's gloss is ambiguous between the two.) I translate with the latter sense, but it doesn't make much difference if I'm wrong. And the sentence is a question, which we could more literally render as, "How could someone like Shizi understand that this is unacceptable?" But I worry that this English sentence makes it sound as if it has already been established in the conversation that Mengzi finds this unacceptable, whereas the Chinese sentence is Mengzi's way of *introducing* this point.

2B11.2: This sort of small table (called a *kyoosoku* in Japanese) may still be found in traditional décor. It is very low and mainly serves as an armrest for a person sitting on the floor. It makes it easier to sit (and, obviously, sleep) by taking some of the weight off of one's back.

2B13.2: My translation is based on Philip J. Ivanhoe's reading, which is close to that of Zhao Qi. See Ivanhoe, "A Question of Faith: A New Interpretation of *Mencius* 2B.13," *Early China* 13 (1988), 153–65. (Ivanhoe is working on a puzzle first identified in English by David S. Nivison, "On Translating

Mencius," in *The Ways of Confucianism* [Chicago: Open Court, 1996], 188–89.) Zhu Xi interprets the line as "When I spoke was one context; this is another context." Zhu Xi thus takes the point of the passage to be that Mengzi *is* sad about the current state of the world (and this is what Gongsun Chou is noticing); however, he is not bitter toward Heaven, because he has faith that it will ultimately bring the world to order. In my opinion, Zhu Xi's interpretation gives a more natural reading of the grammar of the individual verse, but the Zhao Qi-Ivanhoe reading makes the passage more coherent overall.

Notes to Book 3A

3A1.4: Zhu Xi suggests that the sense of Gongming Yi's comment is this: "The Duke of Zhou said, 'King Wen is my teacher.' How could the Duke of Zhou mislead me in saying this?"

3A2.2: The quotation that Mengzi attributes to Zengzi is attributed to Kongzi himself in *Analects* 2.5. Zhu Xi suggests that Mengzi learned the saying from Zengzi, hence he attributes it to him. However, the *Analects* as we know it had not coalesced as a text in Mengzi's lifetime, so something actually said by Zengzi could later have been attributed to Kongzi.

3A2.3: In *The Essential Mengzi* I corrected my mistranslation of this sentence. In verse 1, is the name of the deceased duke; however, he is obviously not the one who is mourning in verse 3. in this verse is a verb: "to decide upon." So the line should read something like "(The heir) decided to do three years of mourning." I follow Zhao Qi in taking the final sentence of this verse as the Heir's reply to his advisers. However, it is also quite plausible to take it as part of the advisers' comments to the Heir: "Furthermore, the *Records* say, 'In funeral and sacrifice, one follows the practices of one's ancestors.' They added, 'We have authority for what we do.'" (D. C. Lau, *Mencius*, rev. ed. [Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2003], 103) The grammar of the final sentence is also interesting: 吾有所受之也. Because of the 之, we know that the 所 is not replacing the direct object of the verb 受, so what is it doing? It is replacing the *indirect* object of the verb. The "kernel sentence" 吾受之於聖 "I received it from a sage" is transformed into the nominal phrase 所受之 "that from which I received it." (We have the same grammatical construction in 7A35.4 and a similar one in 2B2.9.) As both Zhao Qi and Jiao Xun (Mengzi zhengyi, Commentary to 3A2) note, the word ("Records") could refer to a variety of texts.

3A2.5 "The officials and travelers . . .": Something is clearly wrong with the last part of this sentence as it stands in the received text. At the least, 可謂曰知, ". . . can be said to say wise," should be amended to 曰

可謂知, ". . . said he can be said to be wise." Zhu Xi states, "Here I suspect there is a lacuna in the text. Some suggest it should be, 'All said the Heir had understanding of the rites (皆謂世子之知禮也).'"

3A3.7: Zhao Qi says of Longzi (quoted in this verse) only that he is "an ancient worthy." Jiao Xun (*Mengzi zhengyi*, Commentary on 3A3) suggests that he may be the same "Long Shu" quoted in *Liezi* 4, "Zhongni," but the latter figure says things far too "Daoist" in tone for him to be someone Mengzi thought worth quoting.

3A3.12 "If you energetically . . .": Mengzi addresses the Duke as 子, which is unexpected. We would normally address him as 君 or 公. Zhu Xi explains in his commentary that this is what the various lords are called when they are "not yet of age."

3A4.1: 褐 refers to some kind of coarse cloth. Legge gives "haircloth" while Lau gives "unwoven hemp." Since neither of these terms means much to contemporary readers, I loosely translate it as "animal pelts" to evoke a vivid image of someone dressed in an archaic fashion. For some of the grammatical difficulties raised by this chapter, see David S. Nivison, *The Ways of Confucianism* (Chicago: Open Court Press, 1996), 185–87.

3A4.2: With endearing pedantry, Zhu Xi informs us that the two-character expression that (for Mengzi as much as for Zhu Xi's contemporaries) means "plow," is composed of the terms for "that by means of which one turns up the earth" and "its handle."

3A4.5: Zhu Xi has a grammatical note on how to read the 舍 in this passage. He reads it as "stop" (as in "and stop at getting everything from his own household to use"), but says that some read it as going with the previous clause as meaning "the place where one acts as a potter or blacksmith (as in "Why does Xuzi not make a pottery or foundry, and get . . . ?"). The general sense is about the same either way.

3A4.8: Zhu Xi takes 后稷 as a title, "Minister of Agriculture," but it is often treated as being functionally equivalent to the name of a particular individual who was the ancestor of the Zhou people.

3A4.8: The text attributes the quotation ("Work them, draw them . . .") to "Fang Xun," which is often taken as an alternative name for King Yao. However, the context suggests that this must be something Shun said (perhaps to Xie).

3A4.12: "Our culture" here and below is how I have rendered 夏, the name of the first Chinese dynasty, which even in modern Chinese is sometimes used as synecdoche for the entire cultural tradition.

3A4.12: In the Warring States era, 中國 meant "central states," as opposed to the outlying barbarian states and tribes. Later, it came to mean *the* Central State (or "Middle Kingdom," as it is sometimes rendered).

3A4.16: The ode literally says, "Jing and Shu he punished," but Zhu Xi comments, "'Jing' was the original name for Chu. Shu was near Chu." He adds, "Because this ode is a hymn about Duke Xi, but Mengzi takes it as describing the Duke of Zhou, this is a case of appropriation of meaning." On "appropriation of meaning" as a technique in citing the *Odes*, see Steven Van Zoeren, *Poetry and Personality: Reading, Exegesis, and Hermeneutics in Traditional China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 25–51.

3A4.18: Literally, "As for the inequality of things, this is what things are inherently." This is the first occurrence in the *Mengzi* of the term *qíng* 情 ("what something is inherently," "what something genuinely is"). The *qing* of something is what it genuinely is in itself, which may differ from its superficial appearance or reputation. Thus, in 4B18.3, Mengzi says, "gentlemen are ashamed to have their reputation exceed *what they are inherently*." In 6A8.2, he compares a human who has lost his sprouts of virtue to a mountain that has been denuded of its vegetation, remarking, "Others see that he is an animal, and think that there was never any capacity there. But is this what a human is like inherently?" In 6A6, Mengzi specifies that his claim about the goodness of human nature means only that "As for what they are inherently, they can become good" (where the sprouts of virtue are part of what humans have inherently). Since human emotions seem to be part of what we "genuinely are," they became increasingly associated with 情, until the term eventually came to mean simply "passions." This latter sense is how Zhu Xi primarily understands it. My own interpretation *qing* is close to that of Dai Zhen, *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng* § 30; A. C. Graham, "The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature," in *Studies in Chinese Philosophy and Philosophical Literature* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 7–66; and Kwong-loi Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 183–86, 214–15. For a challenging alternative understanding, see Michael Puett, "The Ethics of Responding Properly: The Notion of *Qing* in Early Chinese Thought," in Halvor Eifring, ed., *Love and Emotions in Traditional Chinese Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 37–68.

3A5.2: The received text here says, "I can see him today." However, this does not make sense because Mengzi never actually sees Yi Zhi. The entire conversation is conducted using Xu Bi as an intermediary. This oddity is not noted by Zhao Qi, nor by Jiao Xun (*Mengzi zhengyi*) or Zhu Xi (either in the *Sishu jizhu* or in the *Zhuzi yulei*). James Legge did notice that something was amiss and cites one of the more

obscure commentaries, according to which the general sense of the verse is "I can see him today. [However,] if he is not set straight [about funeral practices], the Way will not be evident [to him]. So I shall [first] set him straight about that [before allowing him to meet me face to face]." (This is my paraphrase of Legge, *Mencius*, 257–58, note to verse 2, who is himself paraphrasing the 新增四書補註附考備旨 of 杜定基 [1779]; Legge discusses this work in his *Confucian Analects*, 1893, reprint [New York: Dover Books, 1971], 129–30.) This is ingenious, but such hermeneutic heroics are unnecessary. The simplest explanation is that a "not" has dropped out of the text, so that it should read, "Today I can*not* see him, but if I do not set him straight . . . ." This is how I have amended the text.

Notes to Book 3B

3B3.5 "Liang is a state . . .": In the Chinese text, Zhong Xiao refers to the state as Jìn 晉. However, Jìn had already been partitioned into Wei (also known as "Liang," after its capital city), Zhao and Han. Consequently, I refer to the state as "Liang" to make the reference more perspicuous to English readers. A similar use of the name "Jìn" is found in 1A5.1.

3B4.5: Yu Yue suggests that the meaning is, "Suppose there were a [carpenter] who cracked your roofing tiles, or a [wheelwright] who tore your wagon cover."

3B5.5: Almost everyone interprets *yǒu yōu* 有攸 as "there were some who," reading 攸 as 所. This is quite possible. However, as David S. Nivison points out, D. C. Lau may also be correct in thinking that 攸 is the name of a particular state. (See Nivison, "On Translating Mencius," 189–90.)

Notes to Book 4A

4A12: Verses 1 and 2 of this chapter are a very close paraphrase of the *Mean*, Chapter 20.17–18, where it is attributed to Kongzi, not Mengzi. Zhu Xi thinks the explanation for this is that Mengzi is simply quoting Kongzi without attribution. In addition, Zhu Xi attributes the authorship of the *Mean* to Zisi, Kongzi's grandson, and believes that Mengzi studied under Zisi (or at least disciples of Zisi), and hence learned the saying from him. However, there are three reasons it is more likely that 4A12 is simply an interpolation. (1) Mengzi usually identifies the sources of his quotations. (2) This passage and 7A4 are the only two in the *Mengzi* that emphasize "Genuineness" (*Chéng* 誠), a virtue important in later Confucianism. (In

other *Mengzi* passages *cheng* is used as an adverb meaning "genuinely" or "truly.") (3) Passage 7A4 is suspicious for additional reasons (see the textual note on it), so the commonality between it and 4A12 casts doubts on the latter passage.

4A13.1: In the original text, King Wen is referred to as the "Count of the West," which was his title during his lifetime. "King Wen" is his posthumous title.

4A14.1: "Character" here is 德 *de*, which normally means "ethically good Virtue." Here we have an unusual (but not unique) use in which it refers to the distinctive character of a thing, whether good or evil.

4A20: I have translated *gé* 格 as "to get past" to reflect the fact that the term has the sense of both "to correct" and "to reach." Zhu Xi exploits this sense in his commentary on the *Greater Learning*, where he glosses it as "exhaustively reaching the Pattern of things, desiring to get fully to the ultimate point" (Classic, commentary on verse 4). Here in his commentary on the *Mengzi*, Zhu Xi cites Zhao Qi, who said, "'To get past' is to correct," and Xu Du, who said, "'To get past' is to select what is correct in things." (Part of 4A20 is repeated in 4B5.)

4A24.1: In the Chinese text, Wang Huan is referred to by his style, "Zi-ao."

4A25: In the Chinese text, Wang Huan is referred to by his style, "Zi-ao."

4A26.2 (commentary by Fan Zuyu) "The discretionary cannot be used unless it embodies the Way": Fan Zuyu is invoking the metaphysical distinction between substance (體, "embodies") and function (用, "be used"). On these terms, see A. C. Graham, *Two Chinese Philosophers*, 1958, reprint (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1992), 39–40, 63–65.

Notes to Book 4B

4B5: Zhang Zai said, "This chapter is a repetition (4A20). But in the earlier book it stresses that ministers should be urgent to correct their rulers. This chapter directly warns rulers. There is a slight difference in meaning."

4B10: The Chinese text refers to Kongzi by his style, "Zhongni."

4B17: Zhu Xi comments, "Some say this means that 'No words that are genuine are inauspicious. Only benighted "worthies" are genuinely inauspicious.' Others say this means that 'Words that are not genuine

are inauspicious. Hence, benighted "worthies" are genuinely inauspicious.' These two explanations are different, but we cannot know which is right. I suspect that perhaps there is text missing."

4B18: This is a good illustration of how 情 is used in the *Mengzi* to mean "what something genuinely is." Interestingly, Zhu Xi glosses 情 here as 實, instead of 性之動, "feelings," as he usually would (6A6.5).

4B20.5: "These Kings" is actually "three Kings," counting King Wen and King Wu as essentially one "Kingship" since they were both of the Zhou dynasty.

4B22.2: Li Yu regards "was improved by" as an expression in a regional dialect.

4B24.2: Regarding the 之 in "Yugong zhi si" and "Yingong zhi tuo," I have found only Zhu Xi's terse comment that 語助也. This is such a distinctive usage in the *Mengzi* that I suspect something more interesting is going on here, but I don't have a good suggestion about what.

4B26: My interpretation generally follows Zhu Xi, including his gloss of 利 as 順. However, I interpret as Graham does ("The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature"). In *The Essential Mengzi* I added the following comment: "The meaning of the word I have here rendered 'primordial' is disputed. I am taking it to mean something like the original direction (or even 'trajectory') of something active." I think Zhu Xi's gloss of the word 故 as 其已然之跡, "the traces of what has already occurred" (or "phenomena," as Legge renders it) betrays again the influence of Buddhist metaphysics.

4B27.3: In the original Chinese, Wang Huan is referred to by his style, Zi-ao.

4B28.7: I follow what I take to be Zhao Qi's interpretation of the final sentence: "The gentleman puts into effect benevolence and righteousness. Fundamentally, he does not encounter anxiety. If there should be a morning's anxiety that, on the contrary, does come, it is not his fault. Hence, the gentleman still does not regard it as an anxiety." (Part of what makes this line so puzzling in English is the ambiguity of 患 between "anxiety" [a mental state] and "calamity" [something that induces anxiety, at least in most people].)

4B33: As Zhu Xi notes, "Mengzi said . . ." seems to have dropped out of the beginning of this passage.

Notes to Book 5A

5A4.1 "Could this actually be so? . . .": 不試・・・乎哉 is a pattern. Cf. 6A4.3.

5A6.5: Zhu Xi cites both the commentary of Zhao Qi, which I have followed in my translation, and that of Cheng Yi, who said, "The ancients referred to 'age' as 'years.' So when Tang had passed away, Wai Bing

was two years of age and Zhong Ren was four years of age. Only Tai Jia was of age, so he was promoted to the throne." Zhu Xi concludes, "We cannot know which explanation is correct."

5A7.2: 有 X, where X is the name of a state, can be an idiom meaning "the ruler of X." Zhu Xi recognizes this, because he identifies the name of the state as "Xin" and not "You Xin." (But contrast "Youbi," which does seem to be a place name, in 5A3.)

5A7.4: 與・・・豈若・・・哉 is a sentence pattern meaning "Instead of . . . wouldn't it be better to . . . ?"

Notes to Book 5B

5B1.5: I have left out of my translation an extraneous "Mengzi said" found in the Chinese text at the beginning of this verse.

5B4.4: "This teaching . . . down to the present." Zhu Xi regards these two sentences as an interpolation, but I don't see any reason for this.

5B4.7: "With Duke Xiao of Wei . . ." Zhu Xi comments, "Duke Xiao is not mentioned in either the S*pring and Autumn Annals* or the *Records of the Historian*. I suspect that this is a reference to Duke Chu." Surprisingly, Zhu Xi also states, "In my humble opinion, the meaning of the passages in this chapter is often incomprehensible. One need not work too hard to explain it."

Notes to Book 6A

6A4.3 "Elderliness is different from whiteness": This sentence is, at the least, elliptical. Zhu Xi cites Zhang, who says "I suspect that the first two characters 'is-different from' are an interpolation." This would result in the verse beginning with the following sentence: "The whiteness of a white horse is no different from the whiteness of a gray-haired person." Zhu Xi also cites Li Yu, who says, "Perhaps there is text missing." My suggestion is that the missing (or implied) topic of the "is-different from" is 長人之長, resulting in "The elderliness of an elderly person is different from the whiteness of a white horse," which I simplified to the translation given in the text. Although this verse presents textual difficulties, the basic sense is fairly clear: Mengzi wishes to draw a distinction between the manner in which we treat something white as white and the manner in which we treat something (or someone) elderly as elderly.

6A5.1: Jiao Xun, *Mengzi zhengyi*, reprint, *Zhuzi Jicheng* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), commentary on 6A5.1, argues that "Meng Jizi" is not a relative or follower of Mengzi.

6A6.5: See the textual note on 3A4.18 on 情 or what something "genuinely is."

6A7.4: On Longzi, see my textual note to 3A3.7. "What is it that hearts prefer in common? I say that it is order and righteousness": Contrast D. C. Lau's translation of this line: "What is common to all hearts? Reason and rightness." Lau's translation betrays the influence of Zhu Xi in rendering *lǐ* 理 as "reason." However, as Dai Zhen demonstrated long ago, the early meaning of *li* was simply "orderly pattern." (For the argument, see Dai Zhen, *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng* §1.) A classic illustration of the early sense of *li* may be found in *Zhuangzi* 3, "The Key to Nourishing Life" (*Readings*, p.225), where the butcher says that he follows the *tiän l* ("Heavenly patterns") of the muscles and bones of the ox as he carves it up.

6A8.2: See the textual note on 3A4.18 on 情 or what something "genuinely is."

Notes to Book 6B

6B3.5: This verse seems out of place to me. I suspect that it is an interpolation. However, it doesn't change the sense of the passage or express anything inconsistent with Mengzi's view.

6B4.2: Zhao Qi says, "The scholar is older than he. Hence, he calls him 'venerable sir.'"

6B4.5–6: I was unjustifiably inconsistent in my translation here. In verse 5, I render 三軍之師 as "the commanders of their armies," but in verse 6 I give simply "their armies." In addition, in verse 5, I translate 三軍之士 as "their armies," while in verse 6 I render the same phrase "the officers of their armies." It is possible that 三軍之師 is synecdoche for 三軍 (so it would effectively mean "their armies" in both verses). However, I now think that Mengzi is drawing a parallel between the relationship of 師 to 士 and that of 君父兄 to 臣子弟. So it should be ". . . the kings of Qin and Chu will set aside the commanders of their armies because they delight in profit. This is for the officers of their armies to delight in being set aside because they delight in profit." Verse 6 should be the same, *mutatis mutandis*. (See the textual note to 2A2.5 on 三軍.)

6B10.4: "Hog millet" is 黍 *shu*, which I take to be *Panicum miliaceum*, also known as proso millet, broomcorn millet, common millet, and white millet. Zhu Xi comments, "The northern region (where the Mo live) is cold, so they do not grow all of the five grains. But hog millet matures quickly, hence they grow

it." Wikipedia claims that this variety of millet "first appears as a crop in both Transcaucasia and China about seven thousand years ago, suggesting that it may have been domesticated independently in each area. . . . Proso is well adapted to many soil and climatic conditions; it has a short growing season, and needs little water. The water requirement of proso is probably the lowest of any major cereal. It is an excellent crop for dry land and no-till farming" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proso_millet, accessed March 4, 2008).

Notes to Book 7A

7A4.1: D. C. Lau, following Zhu Xi, renders this line, "All the ten thousand things are there in me." Lau's translation is syntactically possible, but what would it mean for "the ten thousand things" to be within a person? This would make sense for Neo-Confucians like Zhu Xi, who hold that each human being is born with a complete, innate moral sense that is ultimately identical with the Pattern (*li*) of the universe. However, Mengzi held that humans are born only with a capacity to become virtuous. Consequently, this portion of 7A4 (whether it is an interpolation or not) probably is better translated as, "All the ten thousand things are brought to completion by me," meaning that sages, through their moral insight, are capable of caring for and organizing both humans and their natural environment so that everything realizes its potential in a harmonious fashion. See also the textual note to 4A12.

7A36.1: Mengzi seems to think that merely having a certain social rank transforms one's aura, while cultivation (including, perhaps, both physical and moral cultivation) beautifies one's physical appearance. As Philip J. Ivanhoe observes, this is another area of disagreement between Mengzi and Zhuangzi: "Zhuangzi's examplars do not . . . accept conventional standards of physical beauty. . . . Zhuangzi's exemplars often are the lowly, the deformed, the ugly, criminals who have lost limbs or been otherwise mutilated by punishment, and yet these very people have perfected their personal 'virtue' (*de*). For examples, see chapter five of the *Zhuangzi*." (Ivanhoe, *Ethics in the Confucian Tradition*, p. 187n34.)

7A26.3: About all we know regarding Zimo, beyond what Mengzi tells us here, is that he was (according to Zhao Qi) "a worthy person from Lu."

7A35.4: Mengzi's disciple asks about a hypothetical case in which Shun's father murders someone. Would Shun have forbidden Gao Yao, his Minister of Crime, from arresting his father? In this verse, Mengzi replies, "How could Shun have forbidden it? Gao Yao had a sanction for his actions."

The second sentence in this verse is 夫有所受之也. Literally, "He [i.e., Gao Yao] had that from which he received it." More expansively, this means, "Gao Yao received the law regarding murder from a higher authority." (The implication is that no public official may interfere with Gao Yao in carrying out this law, even if it requires that he arrest the Sovereign's father.) The translation I give, "Gao Yao had a sanction for his actions," is my effort to express all this concisely and idiomatically. The same general sense is given to the passage by Jiao Xun (*Mengzi zhengyi*, Commentary on 7A35), Zhu Xi, Legge, and Lau.

The grammar of 夫有所受之也 is intriguing. The function of the 夫 is to suggest the change in grammatical subject from the previous sentence. But what is really unusual is the use of 所. This word normally replaces a direct object, but the verb here, 受, still has a direct object, 之. So what is 所 doing? It turns out that 所 is replacing the *indirect* object of the verb. (See the textual note to 3A2.3 for a similar construction.) In the kernel sentence 受X於Y ("he received X from Y") X is replaced by 之 and Y is replaced by 所, producing the nominal phrase 所受之 ("that from which he received it"). So what are the X and Y? As Jiao Xun's commentary suggests, the kernel sentence is something like 皋陶受法於舜 ("Gao Yao received the law from Shun"). He further explains, "To receive it from Shun is the same as receiving it from Heaven. What is received from Heaven is not explicitly mandated. This means that the law is simply what corresponds to the Heavenly pattern and is harmonious with the human heart" (ibid.).

However, a plausible alternative interpretation is offered by Zhao Qi. He takes the subject of this sentence to be the same as that of the previous sentence in this verse: Shun. He comments, "Shun received the world from Yao. If one brings order to the people on behalf of Heaven, the royal laws may not be perverted. So how could he forbid it?" Thus, according to Zhao Qi's interpretation, the kernel sentence is 舜受天下於堯.

Notes to Book 7B

7B38.4: The closing of this verse is difficult to interpret, and I have chosen a loose, evocative translation: "Yet where is he? Where is he?" In contrast, Lau gives, "Yet if there is no one who has anything of the sage, well then, there is no one who has anything of the sage," and Legge has, "In these circumstances, is there no one [to transmit his doctrines]? Yea, is there no one [to do so]?"