

李白

Li Bai

Collection of Critical Biographies of

Chinese Thinkers

(Concise Edition, Chinese-English)

著 者 / 周勋初

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译 者 / Curtis D. Smith





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General Preface

China is one of the cradles of world civilization, enjoying over five thousand years of history. It has produced many outstanding figures in the history of ancient thought, and left a rich philosophical heritage for both the Chinese people and the entire humanity. The fruit of these thinkers was to establish unique schools that over the long course of history have been continuously interpreted and developed. Today much of these thoughts are as relevant as ever and of extreme vitality for both China and the rest of the world. For instance, the ideal of "humaneness" and the concept of "harmony" taught by Confucius, the founder of Confucianism, have been venerated without ceasing by contemporary China as well as other Asian nations.

Ancient Chinese dynasties came and went, with each new dynasty producing its own scintillating system of thought. These rare and beautiful flowers of philosophy are grounded in the hundred schools vying for attention in pre-Qin times and the broad yet deep classical scholarship of Han and Tang times and in the simple yet profound occult learning of the Wei and Jin dynasties together with the entirely rational learning of Song and Ming Neo-Confucianism. The fertile soil of religious belief was Buddhism's escape from the emptiness of the sensual world and Daoism's spiritual cultivation in the search for identification with the immortals. The founders of these systems of thought included teachers, scholars, poets, politicians, scientists and monks they made great contributions to such disparate cultural fields in ancient China as philosophy, politics, military science, economics, law, handicrafts, science and technology, literature, fine arts, and religion. The ancient Chinese venerated them for their wisdom and for following moral paths, and called them sages, worthies, saints, wise men, and great masters, etc. Their words and writings, and sometimes their life experiences, constitute the rich matter of ancient Chinese thought distilled by later generations. The accomplishments of Chinese thought are rich and varied, and permeate such spiritual traditions as the harmony between humans and nature, the unification of thought and action, and the need for calmness during vigorous action, synthesizing the old and innovating something new.

Nanjing University Press has persisted over the last twenty years in publishing the 200-book series, *Collection of Critical Biographies of Chinese* Thinkers, under the general editorship of Professor Kuang Yaming, late honorary president of Nanjing University. This collection is the largest-scale project of research on Chinese thinking and culture undertaken since the beginning of the twentieth century. It selected more than 270 outstanding figures from Chinese history, composed their biographies and criticized their

中国是世界文明的发源地之一,有五千多年的文明史。在中国古代思想史上,涌现出了许许多多杰出的思想家,为中华民族乃至整个人类留下了丰富的思想遗产。这些思想成果独树一帜,在漫长的历史中又不断地被阐释、被发展,很多思想对于今天的中国乃至世界而言,仍然历久弥新,极具生命力。比如,儒家学派创始人孔子"仁"的理念、"和"的思想,不仅在当代中国,在其他亚洲国家也一直备受推崇。

古代中国朝代更迭,每一个朝代都有灿烂夺目的思想文化。百家争鸣的先秦诸子、博大宏深的汉唐经学、简易幽远的魏晋玄学、尽心知性的宋明理学是思想学术的奇葩;佛教的色空禅悦、道教的神仙修养是宗教信仰的沃土;其他如经世济民的政治、经济理想,巧夺天工的科技、工艺之道,风雅传神、丹青不老的文学艺术……都蕴涵着丰富的思想。这些思想的创造者中有教师、学者、诗人、政治家、科学家、僧人……他们在中国古代的哲学、政治、军事、经济、法律、工艺、科技、文学、艺术、宗教等各个文明领域内贡献巨大。古代中国人尊敬那些充满智慧、追求道德的人,称呼他们为圣人、贤人、哲人、智者、大师等,他们的言论、著作或被后人总结出来的经验构成了中国古代思想的重要内容,在丰富多彩中贯穿着天人合一、知行合一、刚健中和等精神传统,表现出综合创新的特色。

南京大学出版社坚持20余年,出版了由南京大学已故名誉校长匡亚明教授主编的《中国思想家评传丛书》,这套丛书共200部,是中国20世纪以来最为宏大的中国传统思想文化研究工程,选出了中国历史上270余位杰出人物,为他们写传记,

4 General Preface 3

intellectual accomplishments; all in all, it is a rigorous and refined academic work. On this foundation, we introduce this series of concise readers, which provides much material in a simple format. It includes the cream of the crop of great figures relatively familiar to foreign readers. We have done our best to use plain but vivid language to narrate their human stories; this will convey the wisdom of their thought and display the cultural magnificence of the Chinese people. In the course of spiritually communing with these representative thinkers from ancient China, readers will certainly be able to apprehend the undying essence of thoughts of the Chinese people.

Finally, we are deeply grateful for the support from Hanban/ Confucius Institute Headquarters, and the experts from home and abroad for their joint efforts in writing and translating this series.

Editors November, 2009 评论他们的思想成就,是严肃精深的学术著作。在此基础上推出的这套简明读本,则厚积薄发,精选出国外读者相对较为熟悉的伟大人物,力求用简洁生动的语言,通过讲述有趣的人物故事,传达他们的思想智慧,展示中华民族绚烂多姿的文化。读者在和这些中国古代有代表性的思想家的心灵对话中,一定能领略中华民族思想文化生生不息的精髓。

最后,我们衷心感谢国家汉办/孔子学院总部对本项目提供了巨大的支持,感谢所有参与此套丛书撰写和翻译工作的中外专家学者为此套从书所做的辛勤而卓有成效的工作。

编者 2009年11月 目录

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引言:一百四十年,国容何赫然

Introduction: One Hundred Forty Years / How Amazing the Empire Is

When speaking of classical Chinese poetry, one cannot pass over Tang poetry; when speaking of Tang poetry, one cannot pass over Li Bai.

Li Bai is a great poet of the Tang Dynasty (618—907). He was born in 701, during the reign of Wu Zetian, and died in 762, during the reign of Tang Emperor Daizong. He lived most of his life during the "High Tang" period, which was the strong Kaiyuan and Tianbao administrations of the reign of Emperor Xuanzong. Li Bai was an extraordinarily talented poet. His poems are full of emotion and fantastic imagination, using clear and fluent language to cover a broad range of topics. His descriptions are rich and dynamic, not merely recording his rich life and fascinating internal realm, but also expressing the spirit of the "High Tang," and the social and political changes he met. Li Bai is often associated with another great poet of the Tang Dynasty—Du Fu; they are known as "Li Du." These two poetic geniuses are often referred to as the two brightest stars in the brilliant heaven of Tang poetry.

There were many factors which contributed to Li Bai becoming a great poet, but it was mainly the social environment in which he lived, and especially the unique element of the High Tang society, which created this great poet. In the early years of the Tang Dynasty, the emperors were liberal and progressive, and the political atmosphere of the empire were unstrict. This contributed to the flourishing literary culture that cultivated great poets such as Li Bai.

In 618, Li Yuan unified China and established the Tang Dynasty, ending four hundred years of warfare and division. Nine years later, his son Li Shimin, known as Tang Taizong, assumed the throne. With this, Chinese history turned a new leaf.

Not only was Tang Taizong an outstanding military strategist, but also a liberal politician. He knew how to learn from history, and understood the Chinese proverb that "water supports the boat, but can also overturn the boat." The minds and hearts of the people are invaluable in maintaining long-lasting government and peace. With this understanding, many policies of the Tang government encouraged social development and benefited the prosperity of the people. Economic prosperity and military strength made the Tang into a great empire.

With social stability and economic prosperity, and especially convenient transportation, exchange and interaction between the Han People and surrounding ethnicities became increasingly frequent. As the Tang ruling 说起中国古典诗歌,就不能不说到唐诗;说起唐诗,就不能不说到李白。

李白是唐代伟大的诗人,生于武则天的长安元年(公元701);卒于唐代宗的宝应元年(762)。他的大半生经历的是"盛唐时期",即唐朝最为强盛的开元、天宝(唐玄宗的年号)年间。李白具有极高的诗歌创作天赋。他的诗歌,激情饱满,境界开阔,想象奇异,语言清新流畅,形象丰富生动,不仅记录了他丰富多彩的生活经历和微妙复杂的内心世界,而且也体现出当时的"盛唐气象"和他所遭遇的社会变化。李白与唐代另一位伟大诗人杜甫齐名,世称李杜。这两位大诗人,被人们称之为灿烂的唐诗星空中一对耀眼的双子星。

李白之所以能够成为一位伟大的诗人,有多方面的原因,但其中社会环境,特别是盛唐时代的社会特征造就了这位大诗人。唐帝国建立之初,皇帝颇有四海一家的胸怀,王朝的政治氛围相对宽松,这对促进唐代文学的繁荣发展、培育李白这样的大诗人确实起到了很好的促进作用。

公元618年,李渊统一中国,建立唐朝,结束了自汉末以来长达四百年之久的分裂局面。九年之后,其子李世民即位,后世称为唐太宗。自此,中国历史翻开了新的一页。

唐太宗不仅是一位出色的军事家,也是非常开明的政治家。他懂得吸取历史的经验与教训,深知中国传统所说的"水能载舟,亦能覆舟"的道理,懂得民心向背对于王朝长治久安的重大影响。基于这一出发点,唐朝当时推行的许多政策都比较有利于社会生产的发展,有利于百姓安居乐业。经济的繁荣、军事实力的加强,使唐帝国成为一个强大的国家。

社会相对稳定,经济繁荣,特别是交通便利之后,汉民族与周边民族以及海外的交流日益频繁起来。唐代皇室具有中国

family had ethnic minority heritage, Taizong encouraged the peaceful interaction between the Han People of the heartland and the ethnic minorities of Central Asia, which formed the harmonious relation known as "the family of Hun and Han." He respected the customs and religions of the minority groups, and permitted them to establish their own religious institutions within Tang borders. The foreign policies of the Tang were also relatively liberal, encouraging the assimilation of different ethnicities and interaction between the Chinese and foreign cultures. Throughout the Tang Dynasty, interaction of trade, culture, and arts between the various ethnic groups and the Han nationality was quite common. The various ethnic groups of the western regions, and even Asia and Europe, traded over both land and sea routes. At the time, the trade routes of Hunnish traders covered the whole empire, and temples and monasteries of Hunnish monks could be found in major cities such as Chang'an and Luoyang. Such trade not only brought Central Asian goods such as gold and silver to the Tang people, but more importantly, it introduced cultural treasures. Chinese literary culture absorbed foreign and exotic artistic qualities, giving it a fresh and interesting style. This was the fertile ground in which Tang literature, and especially poetry, flourished.

As society became prosperous during the "High Tang" period, along with the improvements in land and water transportation, it became convenient for poets to travel and gain experience. Most high Tang poets enjoyed traveling. It could increase their knowledge and expand their horizons. As for poetic composition, travel facilitated merging literary styles of different regions.

Tang poets were generally open to different artistic styles and cultural practices. Southern Dynasties literature was delicate yet weak; Northern Dynasties literary styles were strong and forceful, yet not subtle enough. Tang poets were able to avoid the shortcomings of styles in the Southern and Northern periods and synthesize the delicate Southern style with the strong Northern style. The "Four Masters of the Early Tang," Wang Bo, Yang Jiong, Lu Zhaolin, and Luo Binwang, were already able to combine the Northern toughness and Sourthern delicacy fairly well. After them, an important poet, Chen Zi'ang, continued experimenting in this direction, resulting in the new Tang style. In the High Tang period, the characteristics of the Northern and Southern style were combined even more effectively, resulting in a style unique to Tang poetry. The Southern and Northern intellectual and poetic styles combined to provide an extremely favorable climate for further development of cultural arts, especially