



Wise Men Talking Series

XUN ZI

荀子说 Says

蔡希勤 编注



老子说
系列丛书



华语教学出版社
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老人家说

Wise Men Talking

俗曰：“不听老人言，吃亏在眼前。”

老人家走的路多，吃的饭多，看的书多，经的事多，享的福多，受的罪多，可谓见多识广，有丰富的生活经验，老人家说的话多是经验之谈，后生小子不可不听也。

在中国历史上，春秋战国时期是中国古代思想高度发展的时期，那个时候诸子并起，百家争鸣，出现了很多“子”字辈的老人家，他们有道家、儒家、墨家、名家、法家、兵家、阴阳家，多不胜数，车载斗量，一时星河灿烂。

后来各家各派的代表曾先后聚集于齐国稷下学宫。齐宣王是个开明的诸侯王，因纳无盐丑女钟离春为后而名声大噪。他对各国来讲学的专家学者不问来路一律管吃管住，给予政府津贴。对愿留下来做官的，授之以客卿，造巨室，付万钟；对不愿做官的，也给予“不治事而议论”之特殊待遇。果然这些人各为其主，各为其派，百家争鸣，百花齐放，设坛辩论，著书立说：有的说仁，有的说义，有的说无为，有的说逍遥，有

的说非攻,有的说谋攻,有的说性善,有的说性恶,有的说亲非亲,有的说马非马,知彼知己,仁者无敌……留下了很多光辉灿烂的学术经典。

可惜好景不长,秦始皇时丞相李斯递话说“焚书坑儒”,结果除秦记、医药、卜筮、种树书外,民间所藏诗、书及百家典籍均被一把火烧个精光。到西汉武帝时,董仲舒又上书提出“罢黜百家,独尊儒术”,从此,儒学成了正统,“黄老、刑名百家之言”成为邪说。

“有德者必有言”,儒学以外的各家各派虽屡被扫荡,却不断变换着生存方式以求不灭,并为我们保存下了十分丰富的经典著作。在这些经典里,先哲们留下了很多充满智慧和哲理的、至今仍然熠熠发光的至理名言,我们将这些各家各派的老人家的“金玉良言”编辑成这套《老人家说》丛书,加以注释并译成英文,采取汉英对照方式出版,以飨海内外有心有意于中国传统文化的广大读者。

As the saying goes, “If an old dog barks, he gives counsel.”

Old men, who walk more roads, eat more rice, read more books, have more experiences, enjoy more happiness, and endure more sufferings, are experienced and knowledgeable, with rich life experience. Thus, what they say is mostly wise counsel, and young people should listen to them.

The Spring and Autumn (770–476 BC) and Warring States (475–221 BC) periods of Chinese history were a golden age for ancient Chinese thought. In those periods, various schools of thought, together with many sages whose names bore the honorific suffix “Zi,” emerged and contended, including the Taoist school, Confucian school, Mohist school, school of Logicians, Legalist school, Military school and Yin-Yang school. Numerous and well known, these schools of thought were as brilliant as the Milky Way.

Later representatives of these schools of thought flocked to the Jixia Academy of the State of Qi. Duke Xuan of Qi was an enlightened ruler, famous for making an ugly but brilliant woman his wife. The duke provided board and lodging, as well as government subsidies for experts and scholars coming to give lectures, and never inquired about their backgrounds. For those willing to hold official positions, the duke appointed them guest officials, built mansions for them and paid them high salaries. Those unwilling to take up official posts were kept on as advisors. This was an era when “one hundred schools of thought contended and a hundred flowers blossomed.” The scholars debated in forums, and wrote books to expound their doctrines: Some preached benevolence; some, righteousness; some, inaction; some, absolute freedom; some, aversion to offensive war; some, attack by stratagem; some, the goodness

of man's nature; some, the evil nature of man. Some said that relatives were not relatives; some said that horses were not horses; some urged the importance of knowing oneself and one's enemy; some said that benevolence knew no enemy And they left behind many splendid classic works of scholarship.

Unfortunately, this situation did not last long. When Qin Shihuang (reigned 221–210 BC) united all the states of China, and ruled as the First Emperor, his prime minister, Li Si, ordered that all books except those on medicine, fortune telling and tree planting be burned. So, all poetry collections and the classics of the various schools of thought were destroyed. Emperor Wu (reigned 140–88 BC) of the Western Han Dynasty made Confucianism the orthodox doctrine of the state, while other schools of thought, including the Taoist and Legalist schools, were deemed heretical.

These other schools, however, managed to survive, and an abundance of their classical works have been handed down to us. These classical works contain many wise sayings and profound insights into philosophical theory which are still worthy of study today. We have compiled these nuggets of wisdom uttered by old men of the various ancient schools of thought into this series *Wise Men Talking*, and added explanatory notes and English translation for the benefit of both Chinese and overseas readers fond of traditional Chinese culture.

荀子说

XUN ZI SAYS

荀子，姓荀名况，字卿。战国末期赵国人。他是孔门儒家的杰出传人，是一位先进的思想家、政治家和文学家。

他五十岁始游学齐国，三为稷下祭酒，齐襄王尊为师。后遭诽议，去齐之楚，任兰陵令，后定居兰陵，著书授徒，李斯、韩非皆出其门下。他曾西游入秦，对秦首相范雎说：“佚而治，约而详，不烦而动，治之至也。”

他认为人性皆恶，不以礼义矫正之，则不能为善。只有多积善缘，才能成就功德。

他主张学者著书立说，应该推陈出新，向前发展。“君子曰：学不可以已。青取于蓝，而青于蓝；冰生于水，而寒于水。”

Xun Zi's given name was Kuang, and the name of courtesy, Qing. Xun zi was a native of the State of Zhao during the late Warring States Period (475 - 221BC). He was a pioneering thinker, statesman, and writer.

目录

CONTENTS

百乐者，生于治国者也〔2〕

Pleasures are born in properly governed states.

不积跬步，无以致千里〔4〕

A journey of one thousand miles requires every step of the journey.

不闻，不若闻之〔6〕

Not having heard is not as good as having heard.

不知则问，不能则学〔8〕

Ask when something is beyond one's knowledge; study when something is beyond one's ability.

材性知能，君子小人一也〔10〕

In nature and intelligence, neither the gentleman nor the petty man is superior to the other.

聪明君子者，善服人者也〔12〕

A wise governor knows well how to convince his people.

川渊深而鱼鳖归之〔14〕

Deep water invites fishes and turtles.

道存则国存，道亡则国亡〔16〕

Tao lives and the country exists. Tao dies and the country disappears.

道虽迩，不行不至〔18〕

Near as a destination is, one cannot reach it without the exertion of traveling.

道者，非天之道，非地之道，人之道也〔20〕

The Tao of the sage kings is neither the Tao of Heaven nor the Tao of Earth.

德必称位，位必称禄〔22〕

One should possess virtues proportional to one's position . . .

One's position must be deserving of its payment.

德厚者进而佞说者止〔24〕

(Good governance should guarantee that) those with virtue are promoted and flatterers are dismissed.

凡得胜者，必与人也〔26〕

Those who want to win a victory must depend on the people.

凡奸人之所以起者〔28〕

The rise of evils and vices is rooted in . . .

凡人有所一同〔30〕

People all share common traits.

凡用兵，攻战之本，在乎壹民〔32〕

The wholehearted support of the people is essential for the command of an army in wartime.

非我而当者，吾师也〔34〕

Those who justifiably criticize me are my teachers.

夫贵为天子，富有天下〔36〕

To be crowned as the emperor and hold a whole country's wealth . . .

父有争子，不行无礼〔38〕

In fathering an outspoken son, one will not breach etiquette.

公生明，偏生暗〔40〕

Impartiality breeds clarity and partiality obscurity.

古之学者为己，今之学者为人〔42〕

A gentleman studies for self cultivation; a petty man studies for self aggrandizement.

国危，则无乐君；国安，则无忧民〔44〕

When a state is threatened, no monarch can be at ease; when a state is at peace, its citizens will be without suffering.

国无礼，则不正〔46〕

Without etiquette there can be no orderly country.

积土成山，风雨兴焉〔48〕

Pile up the earth to make a mountain, which is conducive to the formation of the wind and rain.

坚甲利兵不足以为胜〔50〕

Protective armors and sharp weapons alone cannot guarantee the defeat of enemy.

见善，脩然必以自存也〔52〕

Seeing goodness, one should examine oneself and emulate such goodness.

君人者，爱民而安〔54〕

For a monarch, love for one's people will build a stable state.

君人者欲安，则莫若平政爱民矣〔56〕

If the monarch wants a turmoil free state, then nothing is more important than ruling with fairness and caring for the people.

君子隘穷而不失，劳倦而不苟〔58〕

In poverty, a gentleman will not lose his integrity; exhausted, he will be still committed to his work.

君子耻不修，不耻见污〔60〕

A gentleman will be ashamed of not cultivating himself, instead of feeling humiliated by others' insults.

君子崇人之德，扬人之美〔62〕

A gentleman will promote others' good deeds and compliment others' merits.

君子耳不听淫声，目不视女色〔64〕

A gentleman should not listen to licentious music, or stare at attractive beauties.

君子居必择乡，游必就士〔66〕

If a gentleman wants to settle down, he will certainly choose a good neighborhood in which to do so; if he is on a journey, he will surely stay close to men of insight and virtue.

君子宽而不慢，廉而不刿〔68〕

A gentleman has poise but will not indulge in idleness; he is

impartial and fair but will not allow justice to inflict unwarranted harm upon others.

君子能为可贵，不能使人必贵己〔70〕

A gentleman has virtue and abilities worthy of appreciation, but he cannot claim others' recognition.

君子贫穷而志广，富贵而体恭〔72〕

In poverty, a gentleman will not be deprived of vision and an open mind; with wealth and power, he will remain polite and courteous.

君子贤而能容罢，知而能容愚〔74〕

Virtuous and able, a gentleman is able to tolerate the less able; intelligent, he is able to tolerate the less enlightened.

君子行不贵苟难，说不贵苟察〔76〕

Even if an unseemly action requires skill and ability, gentlemen will not value it; even if an indecorous doctrine contains insight, gentlemen will not appreciate it.

君子养心，莫善于诚〔78〕

As to a gentleman's self cultivation, nothing outweighs his sincerity and truthfulness.

君子役物，小人役于物〔80〕

A gentleman makes use of worldly objects, while a petty man is burdened by them.

君子易知而难狎〔82〕

A gentleman is approachable but not easy to behave towards in an indecorously familiar way.

力不若牛，走不若马〔84〕

(Man's) strength cannot match that of the ox and a man cannot outrun a horse.

良农不为水旱不耕〔86〕

A good peasant will not lay farming aside because of flood or drought.

流丸止于瓿臿，流言止于知者〔88〕

A rolling pellet stops in a depression; a rumor will be dispelled by a wise person.

马骇舆，则君子不安舆〔90〕

If the carriage horses are frightened, gentlemen in the carriage cannot ride safely.

明主尚贤能而飨其盛〔92〕

A wise monarch respects the noble and entrusts the able, and hence can share their achievements.

明主有私人以金石宝玉〔94〕

A wise monarch may bestow gold and jewelry in private . . .

木受绳则直,金就砺则利〔96〕

A timber can be made straight using the ink mark left by an unbent line; metal instruments can be made sharp through whetting.

目不能两视而明,耳不能两听而聪〔98〕

Eyes do not see clearly when trying to focus on two points; ears do not hear clearly if tuned to two sounds.

N

能当一人,而天下取〔100〕

If a worthy person is appointed to office, the state will be ruled properly.

P

蓬生麻中,不扶而直〔102〕

If fleabane grows up in the midst of straight hemp, it will stand erect without support.

Q

强本而节用,则天不能贫〔104〕

Encourage farming and frugality, and Heaven will spare people from poverty.

轻田野之税，平关市之征〔106〕

Lower the agriculture tax, and exempt the trading tax.

R

人生而有欲〔108〕

Men are born with desires.

人无法则恣恣然〔110〕

Without laws and rules, people will behave arrogantly.

人无礼，则不生〔112〕

Those who ignore etiquette will not survive.

人之情，食欲有刍豢〔114〕

It is common for people to want to have meat for food.

仁义德行，常安之术也〔116〕

Beneficence and morality is the path to long-lasting peace.

仁人之兵，所存者神，所过者化〔118〕

The army headed by a benevolent and righteous person will make
where it stays a well-governed place and influence all other places
it traverses.

荣辱之大分，安危、利害之常体〔120〕

The fundamental difference between honor and disgrace lies in
people's attitudes towards danger and interest.