

WAY TO
Chinese

Wise Men Talking Series

LAO ZI
老子说 Says 蔡希勤 编注



老子说
系列丛书



外语教学出版社
SINOLINGUA

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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.

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.

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。老人家是中国历史上的文化巨人，他们留下的千古名篇是人类文明的共同遗产。

我们将各家各派的老人家的至理名言编辑成这套《老人家说》丛书，加以注释并译成英文，采取汉英对照出版，以饕海内外有心有意于中国传统文化的广大读者。

老人家说

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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，对各国来讲学的专家学者不问来路一律管吃管住，享受政府津贴，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、书及百家典籍一把火烧个精光。到西汉武帝时,董仲舒又上了个折子,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,却不断变幻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,采取汉英对照出版,以飨海内外有心有意于中国传统文化广大读者。

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The Spring and Autumn (722 – 481 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 empress. 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 – 206 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.

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