

《中国思想家评传》简明读本 - 中英文版 -

主 编 周 宪 程爱民



# 孟子

## Mencius

### Collection of Critical Biographies of Chinese Thinkers

(Concise Edition, Chinese-English)

Editors-in-chief: Zhou Xian, Cheng Aimin

著 者 / 徐兴无 Xu Xingwu

译 者 / David B. Honey



南京大学出版社  
Nanjing University Press

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# 总序

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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，



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丛书所做的辛勤而卓有成效的工作。

编者

2009年11月

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一 当今之世，舍我其谁——生平、抱负和著作

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Chapter I During the Present Age Nobody Can Achieve  
It, but I! Life, Aspirations, and Works

In ancient China the greatest persons were called “sages.” The original meaning of “sage” was clever. Only those who possessed the greatest wisdom and virtue, and who were able to invent culture, implements, and institutions or who were able to save the people in deep water were worthy of being called sages. In ancient Chinese records and legends, Fuxi, Nü wa, and Shennong were the so-called sages since the creation of the world, who were collectively termed the “Three August Ones.” Following them came Huangdi, Zhuanxu, Diku, Yao and Shun, known as the “Five Emperors.” Afterwards appeared Yu of Xia, Tang of Shang, and King Wen of Zhou, called the “Three Kings” and then Confucius, who lived between 551 B.C. to 479 B.C. He deeply felt the crisis in the ancient cultural tradition created by political turbulence and moral decay, and so self-consciously took upon himself the burden of assuming the tradition of moral governance transmitted since the times of Yao and Shun. His self-appointed task was thus to elucidate the civilization based on ritual and music that had been the legacy of King Wen of Zhou, King Wu of Zhou, and the Duke of Zhou. Confucius termed this tradition of civilization or culture of approximately 2500 years in duration “culture” (*wen*). He travelled all around the various kingdoms promoting his own positions. Once he went to a place called Kuang, where he was mistaken by the populace for a nobleman who had once pillaged the place. This led to him becoming besieged. Yet he was full of confidence as he spoke to his disciples, saying: “After the death of King Wen, hasn’t ‘culture’ fallen to me to transmit? If Heaven above desired to destroy ‘culture’, then why would it choose me to inherit it? If Heaven does not desire this to happen, then what could the people of Kuang do to me?” ●

Although Confucius was unable to become a sage king, his lifetime of itinerant teaching, education, and method of composition preserved the ancient writings, elucidated the ancient culture, and criticized the amoral government. He also founded private teaching and the Confucian school of thought; therefore he was venerated by later generations as a “sage,” and called “the Most Holy First Teacher.” The meaning of this title is the greatest sage and the earliest teacher. Because he was the explainer of culture to Chinese people, the ancients said: “If Heaven had not created Confucius, all time would have been one long night of darkness.” In world history, Confucius, together with Socrates who lived from 469 to 399 B.C., and Sakyamuni, who lived between 560 B.C. to 480 B.C. as well as Jesus Christ who lived later, from the turn of the era until 30 A.D., became four great philosophers who created models of

在中国古代，最伟大的人物被称为“圣人”。“圣”的原意是聪明。只有那些最有智慧和道德，并能发明文化、器物、制度或者拯救民众于水深火热之中的人才能被称为圣人。在中国古代文献或传说中所谓自天地开辟以来的圣人，有伏羲、女娲、神农，称为“三皇”；接着有黄帝、颛顼、帝喾、尧、舜，称为“五帝”；以后还有夏禹、商汤、周文王，称为“三王”。而生活在公元前551年至479年间的孔子，深切地感受到古代文化传统因为政治的动荡和道德沦丧而产生的危机，便自觉地承担起继承尧、舜以来的德治教化传统，以阐释周文王、武王及周公以来的礼乐文明为己任。孔子称这样一个具有2500年左右的文明或文化传统叫做“文”。他周游列国，推行自己的主张。一次走到一个叫匡的地方，被民众误认为是某个掠夺过当地的贵族，因而遭到围困。他却非常自信地对弟子们说：“周文王死了，‘文’不都承担在我的身上吗？如果上天想要灭绝‘文’，哪就不会选中我来承担它；如果上天不想这样做，这些匡地的民众能拿我怎样？”●

虽然孔子没有能够成为一个帝王，但他一生以游说、教育和著述的方式保存古代的文献，阐释古代的文化，批评不道德的政治，开创了私人讲学和儒家学派，因此被后人推尊为“圣人”，称之为“至圣先师”，意思是最了不起的圣人和最早的教师。因为他是中国人的文化启蒙者，所以古人说：“天不生仲尼，万古如长夜”。在世界史上，孔子与生活在公元前469年至公元前399年间的苏格拉底、与生活在公元前560年至480年间的释迦牟尼以及迟至公元元年至公元30年间的耶稣并称为四位

● 《论语·子罕第九》5章。按，本书引述古代文献，均译为现代汉语。

● *Analects*, "Zihan," 9.5. In this work all citations from ancient works will be translated into modern Chinese.



thought for humanity<sup>❶</sup>. From Confucius until the present, the Chinese cultural tradition has developed for another 2500 years. Despite several periods of transformation, compared to other world civilizations, the continuity of Chinese culture is quite obvious. Credit must be given to Confucius as the creative model. We may say, then, that Confucius was a cultural hero.

After Confucius, no other sage appeared in the Chinese historical record. Outstanding men have been called worthies in terms of their moral cultivation, meritorious achievements, and knowledge or intelligence, and the two appellations “sages and worthies” have often been employed together. Despite the historical use of the terms “sage king,” “sage ruler,” or “sage lord” by subjects to flatter their monarchs or emperors, they never lightly called them “sages.” Nevertheless, one man was greater than the general run of worthies, and approached being a sage himself. Therefore he was called a secondary sage<sup>❷</sup>. This man was none other than Mencius.

Mencius was the inheritor of Confucius as a cultural hero. Modern Chinese philosopher Feng Youlan said<sup>❸</sup>,

Confucius' position in Chinese history is similar to Socrates' position in western history; Mencius' position in Chinese history is similar to Plato's position in western history. Their clear, soaring styles are similar.

Modern Chinese archaeologist Li Ji further stated that<sup>❹</sup>

The primary contribution made to world civilization by China is her humanism. This was led primarily by Confucius and Mencius, who lived