

# WISDOM of LAOZI

## 老子 智慧故事

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Wisdom of  
Ancient Chinese Sages

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# 前言

2000多年前的春秋战国时代，是中国各种思想流派百花齐放的时期，涌现了孔子、孟子、老子、庄子、墨子、荀子、孙子、韩非子等思想家、哲学家，他们开创了儒、道、墨、法等各具特色、影响深远的思想派别，后世称为“诸子百家”。“诸子百家智慧故事”是一套介绍先秦诸子经典的汉英对照系列丛书，将先秦诸子的生平事迹、哲学思想、格言警句、哲理寓言以及与他们有关的历史故事串联成启迪智慧的短小故事，既能满足中国读者的普及型阅读需求，又照顾到国外读者的文化特点，让大家在轻松愉快的阅读氛围中走近春秋战国时代“百家争鸣”的先哲们。

为了让世界更好地了解中国的经典文化，“诸子百家智慧故事”在编写上突出了以下三个特点：

**轻松阅读**——本系列每本书中文不过七八万字，每个故事就是一个相对独立的阅读单位，仅几百字的内容十分钟就能读完，在当今信息爆炸的快节奏时代，这种文本便于读者随时取出翻阅。

**经济阅读**——中国的文字特别是古文字常常是外国人阅读中国经典的障碍，本丛书采取汉英双语对照，中文是浅显易懂的白话体，配以通顺晓畅的英语译文，读者无须钻研艰深的典籍，就能了解先哲的智慧。

**趣味阅读**——本丛书通过一个个短小生动的故事以及古意盎然的插图，为读者深入浅出地解读诸子经典。

先秦诸子经典是中国的宝贵精神财富，至今在中国乃至全世界都有广泛的影响。希望本丛书能够引起广大中外读者对先秦诸子百家的兴趣，并能通过书中的故事体会到博大精深的中国智慧。

编者

2009年9月

# Preface

Over two millennia ago, China experienced a boom of ideas and philosophies in the form of “100 Schools of Thought”. Confucius, Mencius, Laozi, Zhuangzi, Mozi, Xunzi, Han Feizi, Sun Tzu ... These are the stellar names behind the philosophical schools like Confucianism, Taoism, Mohism, Legalism, etc. in the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period (from 770 BC to 221 BC). The classics of these ancient sages contain great wisdom and have exerted profound influence on Chinese history and thought. While the classics themselves may seem difficult to understand today, you can find lucid and accessible explanations of the ancient philosophies in the books of *Wisdom of Ancient Chinese Sages*. With the help of a collection of short and interesting stories, you can get to know the lives and thoughts of the ancient sages, the axioms and allegories they employed to illustrate their ideas, and some facts about the historical era they lived in.

With the aim of presenting the ancient Chinese classics to the world audience, *Wisdom of Ancient Chinese Sages* boasts three advantages:

Easiness — Each book in the series is comprised of only a few dozen stories, each of which has no more than 2,000 words and can be glanced through in a 10-minute coffee break. Even

in your busy life, you can always snatch some time to enjoy a story of wisdom and gain some spiritual nourishment.

Efficiency — The classics may seem a little obscure today since they are written in the ancient Chinese. In this Chinese-English version of *Wisdom of Ancient Chinese Sages*, however, the classics are rendered in simple, everyday English. Without having to tax your brains, you can readily comprehend the profound wisdom of the ancient sages.

Attractiveness — With all the short but lively stories accompanied by beautiful illustrations, *Wisdom of Ancient Chinese Sages* explains to you the ancient philosophical ideas in a friendly and agreeable way.

The ancient philosophical classics in the “100 Schools of Thought” are an important spiritual heritage of China and impose great cultural reverberations beyond the Chinese borders. We hope that the series may let the readers develop an interest in the ancient Chinese sages and their philosophies, and appreciate the quintessential Chinese wisdom that may prove useful in present day.

Editors

September 2009

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老子生平  
**The Life of Laozi**



# 老子

大约生活在公元前六世纪到公元前五世

纪间，是春秋末期的哲学家、思想家。老子姓李，名耳，又称老聃。传说他出生的时候，头发、眉毛就全白了，因此号称“老子”。也有人说“老”和“李”在古代是同一个姓，因此“老子”就和当时的“孔子”、“墨子”一样，“老”代表姓，而“子”是别人对他的尊称。不过老子究竟是谁，到现在还没有定论，西汉著名史学家司马迁也说得含含糊糊，说他还可能是与孔丘同时代的老莱子，也可能是后孔丘 129 年的太史儋。据《史记·老子列传》记载，老子曾经担任周王朝的守藏史，相当于国家图书馆的史官，因此阅读了大量的史书，熟悉古代的典章制度，孔子也曾向老子请教礼制的问题。

老子主张修养道德，崇尚自然无为，司马迁说他是一位隐居的君子。一般认为，他的思想和孔子代表的儒家思想很不一样，因此学习老子学说的人常常排斥儒学，儒学的崇尚者也排斥老子。其实这不就是所谓的“道不同不相为谋”吗？也就是说，思想不同，也就不会互相合作了。事实上，道家 and 儒家的思想并不是完全对立的，特别是两种思想在后代的传播过程中，都被中国人所接受，很多人甚至儒道两家兼修并用。

老子生前并没有留下很多史料，去世后却受到相当大的关注。东汉时期产生了中国土生土长的宗教——道教，道教修习黄老之学，也就是老子和中国上古时代的一位君主——黄帝的学说。老子被道教尊为祖师爷，称为“太上老君”，老子的著作《老子》也被认为是道教的经典。唐代的皇帝姓李，尊老子为祖先，把道教定为国教。尽管老子代表的道家 and 道教并不是一个概念，但足以反映老子在历史上的影响。

道家思想和儒家思想是中国传统文化的两大主流，



儒道互补是中国传统思想文化的基本格局。老子和孔子作为并驾齐驱的两位先哲，对中国人的精神世界产生了深远的影响。同时，老子的思想又具有自己的特点，他的视野更广阔，不仅关注人，更关注天地万物的起源和发展变化。老子创立了中国哲学的很多基本概念，为中国哲学的发展奠定了基础。