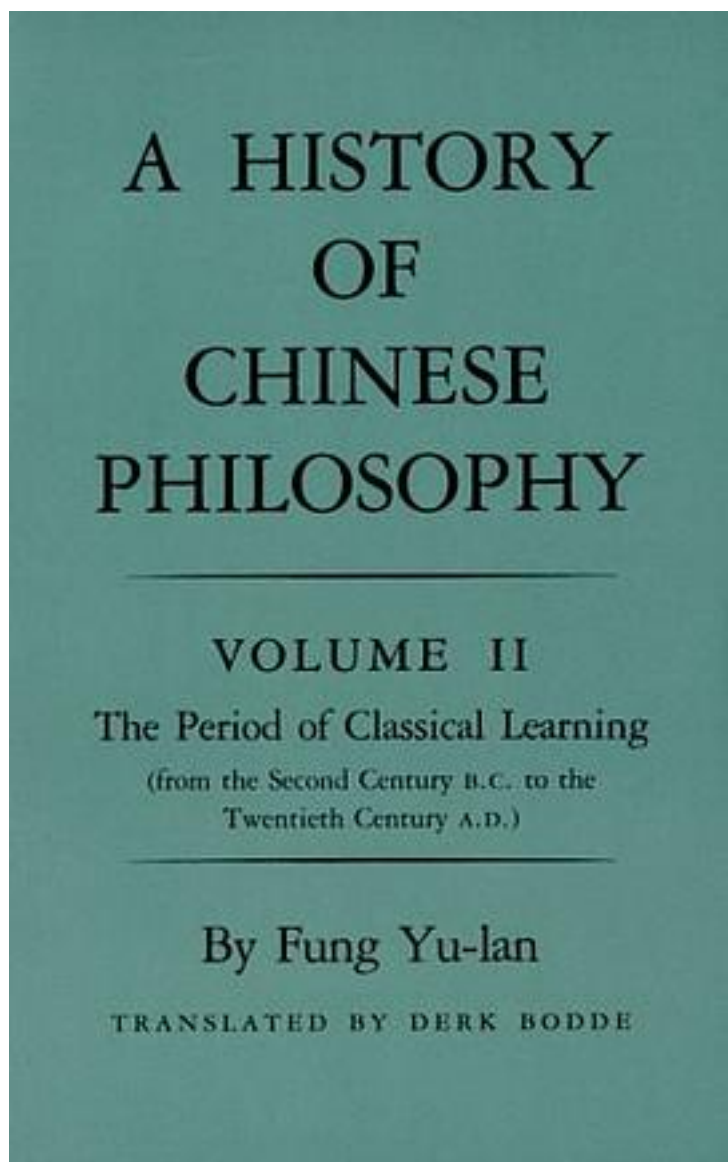


A History of Chinese Philosophy, Vol. 2



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Since its original publication in Chinese in the 1930s, this work has been accepted by Chinese scholars as the most important contribution to the study of their country's philosophy. In 1952 the book was published by Princeton University Press in an English translation by the distinguished scholar of Chinese history, Derk Bodde, "the dedicated translator of Fung Yu-lan's huge history of Chinese philosophy" (New York Times Book Review). Available for the first time in paperback, it remains the most complete work on the subject in any language.

Volume I covers the period of the philosophers, from the beginnings to around 100 B.C., a philosophical period as remarkable as that of ancient Greece. Volume II discusses a period lesser known in the West--the period of classical learning, from the second century B.C. to the twentieth century.

This book is a massive accomplishment several times over. First of all, Fung Yu-lan has taken more than 2000 years of Chinese philosophy and synthesized it into a coherent narrative, doing justice to several different systems of thought and also various philosophical differences and debates within those systems in the process. Second, Derk Bodde has translated all of this expertly into English, somehow managing to handle both Fung's scholarly modern Chinese as well as classical Chinese at several different stages in its development over the centuries as found in Fung's many and voluminous quotations and citations--not to mention dealing with a host of abstruse technical terms (the significance of which often shifts from thinker to thinker or from age to age). Third, back when this was originally written in the 1930's--actually, even when it was originally published as a paperback in 1953--almost no work whatsoever had been done on the philosophers in this book nor on their ideas; what we have here is a groundbreaking magnum opus, the foundation and inspiration for much of the fine scholarship that has followed since. Finally, the book itself is massive; this is a hefty tome, no mere pocket guide.

A word of warning, though. If you are looking for a casual, "summer reading" introduction to Chinese philosophy, this is not it. Do not, I repeat, do not take this book out to the beach intending to breeze through it while sipping a pina colada. Fung's exposition is clear and his prose straightforward, certainly, and wonderfully so, but the overall tone is extremely academic and scholarly and, well, downright dry. It's not afraid to make strenuous demands on the reader, and is clearly intended for serious students of this subject early in their investigations. But for anyone approaching this important book in that frame of mind, it'll prove immensely rewarding.

Considering that the book was originally written in the 1930's, it has aged extremely well, too. Fung's judgment is on the whole fair and objective, and the philosophers he includes are generally ones anyone today would still recognize as key figures in Chinese philosophy. That said, it gradually becomes clear that Fung generally favors the Confucianists over the Taoists and the Buddhists, and he has a sort of early 20th-century assurance of some stark, value-laden divide between "philosophy" and "superstition" or between "science" and "supernaturalism" (former "good" and latter "bad" of course) and will sometimes anachronistically nitpick his thinkers for not being scientific and rational enough by his standards. Given Fung's timeframe, though, this slight bias is perfectly understandable and can be taken with a grain of salt without really detracting from the book as a whole. In general, Fung does an excellent job of presenting the reader with a very reliable basic overview of Chinese philosophy.

To give some indication of the contents of the book, here's a rough breakdown by chapter:

Chapter 1: A kind of general overview and introduction

Chapter 2: Tung Chung-shu and the New Text School of Confucianism

Chapter 3: Prognostication texts, Apocrypha, and Numerology during the Han Dynasty (Fung gets really annoyed with this stuff)

Chapter 4: Yang Hsiung, Wang Ch'ung, and the Old Text School of Confucianism

Chapter 5: Neo-Taoism during the Disunity Period (especially Wang Pi)

Chapter 6: Neo-Taoism again (especially Hsiang Hsiu and Kuo Hsiang)

Chapter 7: Buddhism and its critics during the Disunity Period (especially Seng-chao and Tao-sheng)

Chapter 8: Buddhism during the Sui and T'ang Dynasties (especially Chi-tsang, Hsuan-tsang, and Fa-tsang)

Chapter 9: More Sui and T'ang Buddhism (the T'ien-T'ai and Ch'an schools)

Chapter 10: The Rise of Neo-Confucianism (mainly Han Yu and Li Ao)

Chapter 11: Chou Tun-yi and Shao Yung

Chapter 12: Chang Tsai and the Ch'eng Brothers

Chapter 13: Chu Hsi ('nuff said)

Chapter 14: Lu Chiu-yuan, Wang Shou-jen (better known as Wang Yangming), and Ming Idealism

Chapter 15: The Continuation of Neo-Confucianism in the Ch'ing Dynasty (Han learning vs. Sung learning, and Tai Chen)

Chapter 16: The New Text School at the end of the Ch'ing Dynasty (including K'ang Yu-wei, T'an Ssu-t'ung, and Liao P'ing)

Again, if you are seriously interested in Chinese philosophy and are willing to knuckle down and tackle the subject for real, then this book is for you. If you are a graduate student specializing in this subject, well, this is a foundational text in your field so you might as well get it and start reading already--chances are high it'll be on your qualifying orals exam anyway, so get a head start. And if you're a professor in Western philosophy, this would be a great way to really acquaint yourself with what folks outside of Europe were doing in the way of having a love for wisdom.

By the way, this is volume two of a set, of course. There is also a volume one covering all the major early philosophers of China, *A History of Chinese Philosophy, Vol. 1: The Period of the Philosophers (from the Beginnings to Circa 100 B. C.)*. There's also a more user-friendly digest version combining both volumes into a shorter overview, *Short History Of Chinese Philosophy*.

作者介绍:

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