

A Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

What is the meaning of life? That is the question that has plagued intellectuals since the discovery of fire. Many have searched inside the human psyche to find the answer to this enigmatic question. Others have believed that looking into the past was the easiest way to answer the questions of the present.

It is safe to say that none of these men did discover a universal answer to the question. However, a few significant historians and philosophers have been able to provide snippets of answers to this expansive question. Confucius revealed the importance of education and relationships to life. Lao Tzu saw the prominence of nature in life. Iris Chang discovered the significance of sympathizing with tragedies.

In this edition of the Youth Workshop, we expose the journeys and discoveries of important philosophers and historians. We learn that historians and philosophers are not fundamentally different: they have the same goal, just different ways of reaching it. They all just want to understand the world better by looking either into the past or inside their minds to find “the answer”.

Maybe through examining these men, we can learn a little more about “the answer” as well. By looking at their lives, we act as historians and philosophers. Perhaps through this reading, we too will reach an epiphany about life.

Sincerely,
May Zhang
Editor in Chief
Youth Workshop

Thank you to all the members of my staff. Even though I had to beg almost all of you for help, you have all surpassed my expectations and been *perfect* writers. I appreciate your dedication and hard work. I love you all!

Assistant Editor:

Ariel Wen

Staff Writers:

Shery Bai	Judy Chen	Kevin Escudero
Nicole Fung	Stephanie Hsu	Eric Huang
Bernice Ngo	Steven Sun	Lily Xia



We've all gotten the customary Confucius proverb in our fortune cookies. In inexplicably choppy English, the fortune often reads "Confucius say he who speaks without modesty will find it difficult to make his words good." Confucius's words are universally accepted as proverbs and higher truths. However, Confucius's ideas were not always held in such a high place. He actually experienced much hardship during his life. For example, he did not turn to teaching philosophy until he had failed in all his other endeavors. It is important to know about his life and mortality in order to truly understand his ideas.

Confucius was born in 551 B.C. in the Lu state to a poor descendant of a deposed noble family. His mother raised and educated him by herself after his father died when Confucius was only three years old. From an early age, Confucius showed an extraordinary love of learning and respect for ancient Chinese traditions. He was orphaned by his mother at age seventeen, and married two years later. However, his marriage was short lived as he divorced his wife four years later. He wanted more time to study and perform public duties in his life and didn't feel fulfilled by marriage.

Confucius's era was a time of moral chaos in which common values were widely rejected or disregarded. Crime was increasing, murder was becoming a serious problem, the gap between rich and poor was growing, and government was disintegrating. Confucius tried to better society by spreading his political views and enlisting his administration services to different princes. Nevertheless, the majority of the royal courts rejected Confucius, and nobles did not appreciate his efforts. In many instances, Confucius was persecuted, imprisoned, or nearly starved. Losing hope of correcting society in his lifetime, Confucius returned in poverty to his native state and spent his last years writing literary works, hoping to change future ideas. He also devoted energy to education and became the first man in the history of Chinese education to start a private school. He and his students created the Confucius School, an independent school of thought, which impacted feudal China for thousands of years and transformed Chinese society's values.

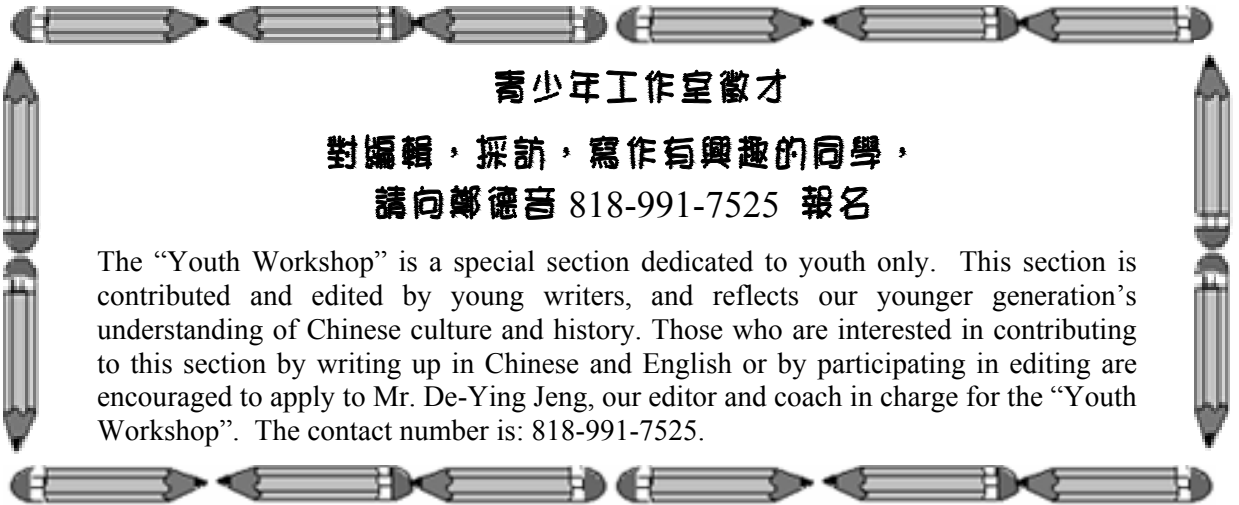
Confucius had a different approach to education because he stimulated his students to think by posing questions and having informal conversations. He thought that developing personality was one of the most important aspects of education,



so he modified his teaching methods to each of his students' needs. He also thought that combining reading with thinking was the only way to achieve progress. Confucius covered the classics and philosophy, including his views on government reforms. He also taught ancient ceremonies, poetry, and music. His teachings were guides to appropriate personal behavior and good government, stressing self-discipline and generosity. Unlike other teachers of the time, Confucius believed that all who had the depth and desire to learn should be able to have a formal education. For this reason, his birthday is celebrated as Teacher's Day in China.

Confucius instructed his countrymen about morality, showing the virtue he taught in himself as well. He wanted men to conduct themselves honorably and prudently in life. Furthermore, he preached the importance of loving others. Confucius loved music, believing that it helped mold kindness and good character. He collected songs of the people while traveling through the states to use in his teaching, compiling *The Book of the Songs*.

At the height of Confucius's popularity, about three thousand young men came to study under him, and seventy-two of his brightest students became known as his disciples. Confucius's disciples were mostly middle-aged, respectable men who occupied important public situations. Zi Lu was the most devoted disciple and Yan Hui carried out Confucius's ideas most faithfully. When Confucius died at the age of seventy-three, some of his disciples put up huts next to his grave and lived next to his grave for three years, mourning the death of their teacher. Today, visitors to Confucius's grave can visit a small cottage on the site, where Zi Gong mourned Confucius for six years.



青少年工作室徵才

對編輯，採訪，寫作有興趣的同學，
請向鄭德音 818-991-7525 報名

The "Youth Workshop" is a special section dedicated to youth only. This section is contributed and edited by young writers, and reflects our younger generation's understanding of Chinese culture and history. Those who are interested in contributing to this section by writing up in Chinese and English or by participating in editing are encouraged to apply to Mr. De-Ying Jeng, our editor and coach in charge for the "Youth Workshop". The contact number is: 818-991-7525.

The Great Reformer

The story of Meng Zi

By Steven Sun

Meng Zi, or Mencius, as he is called by the Western world, was a great Chinese philosopher and follower of the teachings of Confucius. Although little was known about him prior to the 11th century, today Meng Zi is widely considered to be one of Confucius' foremost disciples. He took Confucius' moral teachings to the rulers of China in an appeal for reform, arguing that these ideas could be compatible with the strength of Chinese government.

Meng Zi was born in mid 4th century B.C., in the ancient Chinese state of Cho, where the Shandong province resides today. When he was young, his father passed away and his mother reared him for most of his childhood. When he grew up, he noticed the dreadful conditions that many Chinese peasants lived in. This motivated him to appeal to the rulers of the many Chinese states, calling for reform in the way the government treated the people. Meng Zi believed that the ruler of the land was responsible for the welfare of the subjects. He felt that if a ruler fails to heed the needs of the people, then he should be deposed and be replaced with a new ruler who is more sympathetic to the people.

Little is known about Meng Zi's life. Most of what we know about him comes from his only written text, *The Book of Meng Zi*, which was translated in 1861 by James Legge. This book is a collection of his moral philosophy, and sheds light upon the basis of Meng Zi's life work.

Meng Zi's political philosophy was that the ruler must uphold goodness and kindness, or else it could be deposed. When one ruler asked Meng Zi how such a ruler could benefit his state, Meng Zi reprimanded him and said that the cause of all political strife was selfishness. Officers, and peasants alike all sought to benefit themselves. However, as soon as people begin to do what is right and what satisfies their own desires, then the state shall be at peace.

Another ruler asked Meng Zi what kind of man could unify a nation. Meng Zi replied that only a man who is known for bloodshed and arbitrary punishments, then he would hate him and flee his country. However, a ruler known for his kindness and mercy would be sought after by all people, and his subjects would love him so much as to lay down their lives for his kingdom. According to Confucius' teachings, one of the six essential relationships of life was between subjects and their ruler. Meng Zi demonstrated that the relationship went both ways: the subject must serve his ruler, and the ruler must also show compassion for the subject. Underlying all of Meng Zi's political philosophies was the notion that mankind is inherently good. Just as water is inclined to flow downward, so is human nature inclined to do what is right. Furthermore, it is the government's responsibility to foster this inclination.

Meng Zi's teachings on the nature of government foreshadowed the basis of Western political thought. His ideas of the right to overthrow an unworthy government were revolutionary for his time. Meng Zi was truly an exceptional philosopher who helped make Confucianism viable for all forms of government.



government fittingly informed the Rulers, themselves, instead of at peace. is capable of detests ruler were his subjects who was after by all lay down their

Reviving Confucianism

The story of Zhu Xi

By Nicole Fung

Born in Yuzi, Fujian Province during the Song dynasty, Confucian scholar Zhu Xi (1130-1200) left a significant impact upon the culture of both ancient and modern-day China. Zhu Xi served as a philosopher, scientific thinker, classical commentator, and historian during his time, and is most well known for his work concerning the distinction between “li” and “qi”.

Teaching for some time at the famous White Deer Grotto Academy, Zhu Xi served as a leader in nationalist wing of the neo-Confucian school that developed during the 10th Century. His commentaries on early Confucian thought were published in 1190 as the *Four Books*, which were the *Great Learning*, the *Analects*, the *Book of Mencius*, and the *Doctrine of Mean*. Although not widely recognized during Zhu Xi’s lifetime as standard commentaries on the Confucian classics, these writings were later accepted and made the basic text in school education for nearly 600 years.



According to Zhu Xi, all things are brought into being by two universal elements, which were discussed by Confucius and Mencius: the forces of “qi” (physical) and “li” (rational). Li, which is also known as Tai Ji or Tai Chi (meaning “Great Ultimate”), causes “qi” movement and change in the physical world, which in turn causes the division of the world into two energy modes (yin and yang) and the five elements (wood, water, fire, earth, and metal).

Zhu Xi’s theory states that every physical object and person contains aspects of “li”. The Great Ultimate is in fact the human soul, mind, or spirit, and serves as the supreme regulative principles and work in each being. The fundamental nature of man, he argued, was morally good; even those who performed immoral acts still possessed a good supreme regulation principle.

He did not believe in the traditional ideas of God or Heaven, nor did he promote the worship of spirits and offering to images. Zhu Xi did practice some forms of ancestor worship, but did not agree that the souls of ancestors existed. Rather, he saw the process of worship as one of remembrance and gratitude. The family rituals that he formulated still serve as models for many Asian social customs.

Zhu Xi’s method of daily meditation focused upon quiet introspection in order to balance the various aspects of one’s personality, and allowed for inward thought and concentration. In an attempt to bring humanity closer to harmony, Zhu Xi emphasized the use of reason and immersion in harmony to become at one with the universe.

Zhu Xi’s theories would continue to dominate Confucian thought for nearly two and a half centuries.

The Father of Daoism

The story of Lao Tzu

By Eric Huang

Perhaps one of the most important philosophers in Chinese history is Lao Tzu, meaning Old Master. Although there has been no concrete factual evidence regarding his place of birth and childhood, historians do know that his original name was Li Erh

Legend has it that Lao Tzu once worked at the imperial court, maintaining the archives. It is

believed that Lao Tzu then, on a black ox, separated himself from society and set out to find the unknown.



As he wandered around China looking for the unknown, Lao Tzu came upon a gatekeeper, Yin Xi, in Western China who told Lao Tzu to write down all of his thoughts. Lao Tzu complied with the gatekeeper's request while continuing his quest. This writing, which contained 5,000 characters, later became known as the Daodejing or *The Way and Its Power*. It taught the fundamentals of Daoism, the belief in living a simple honest life and not interfering with the natural course of events in life.

Daodejing serves as the foundation for Daoism and contains all of the basic beliefs which the Daoists follow. In Daodejing, Lao Tzu encourages individuals not to try hard and stress about doing something, but rather allow life to progress naturally. He believed that people should live good, serene, and respectful lives and be guided by instinct and conscience.

After he was commended for his writing, Lao Tzu disappeared and was never heard from again. For thousands of years, Lao Tzu has had a great impact on the Chinese society by showing the public how they should live their lives. His impact has been so great that Daodejing, along with the Bible, became the world's most translated text.

Harmonious in Nature

The story of Chuang Tzu

By Judy Chen

Chuang Tzu was not only one of the most influential Chinese philosophers of his time, but also a brilliant, pioneering Taoist and talented prose writer. Born in Meng, he held a small administrative post during his adulthood. However, he was a recluse for most of his life, finding solitude in the beauty of nature.

Chuang had a very unique and original writing style, which utilized satire and paradoxes. Chuang was also greatly influenced by Lao Tzu, as shown in Chuang's work. Lao's doctrines appeared in character personalities in many of Chuang's published writings. Chuang even developed Lao's philosophy by pushing it into a more transcendental perspective. Chuang also criticized Confucius and his followers through satire.



Believing that life was dynamic and transitory, Chuang felt that seeking all the material items in life such as wealth was fruitless and only prevented those who did from understanding the world. The only way a person could be content was by connecting with Tao, the principle of nature. Chuang was also preoccupied with the seemingly transposable nature of appearance and reality. He wondered how one could be positive of what one was seeing and speculated that one could be dreaming even when awake.

Little is known about Chuang's personal life because of the scarcity of documents about him. However, it is evident that he played a significant role in the development of Taoism, Chinese philosophy and literature.

The Double Edged Sword

The story of Si Ma Qian

By Stephanie Hsu

It is a rare achievement to be recognized as a knowledgeable philosopher. It is even rarer to gain fame as a historian. However, even under these odds, Si Ma Qian was able to accomplish both tasks and much more. Qian was the first historian to write down China's full history and popularized forgotten philosophies. Embodying the scholar of his era, Qian was a true Renaissance man.

Si Ma Qian (145-86 BC) served under Wu Di during the Han Dynasty. He worked as the Grand Historian, a job he succeeded from his father. Qian wrote a history book called *Shi Ji* or "Historical Studies". This was also a task he took on from his father, whose goal was to write the first full account of Chinese history. Although the book was a great literary work, it was not officially sanctioned and Qian was imprisoned for writing it.

Half of *Shi Ji* was written before Si Ma Qian was thrown into jail in 99 BC. A portion of the second half of *Shi Ji* was written while Si Ma Qian was serving his sentence in the prison, while suffering agonizing pain and shame. He was pardoned in 96 BC and was welcomed back to an even higher position in the imperial court of an equally strong-minded emperor, Han Wu Di.

The book covered the Zhou (BC 1134-250), Qin (BC 221-206) and Former Han (BC 202 – AD), and eight dynasties up to Wu Di (BC 141-101). The book is not divided in chronological order, but by particular subjects like music, ceremonies, and biographies.

In *Shi Ji*, Si Ma Qian identified six major schools, Yin-Yang School, School of Names, Mohism, Legalist School, Taoism, and Confucianism, among hundreds of schools of philosophy in the broad history of China. In this book, there are 130 chapters and 52,650 words.

The Ying-Yang School was where the theory of the fundamental opposites, *yin and yang*, was developed. Later adopted in all Chinese thought, the Yin-Yang School ceased to be a separate entity. Ming Chia, School of Names, contained a variety of thinkers who were concerned with issues of language, logic, and meaning.

Mo Chia was a school of Mo Tzu (479-381 BC), an early critic of Confucius. Although Confucius teaches righteousness, Mo Tzu believed there was too much emphasis on duty and too little on love. Mo Tzu advocated a kind of Utilitarianism, called Mutual "Profitableness". He saw society as a matter of producing "the greatest good for the greatest number."

The Legalist School, *Fa Chia*, rejected the Taoist and Confucian ideas that government must be based on morality and that good government must foster moral dispositions in the people. The Legalists thought that government was simply a matter of laying down laws and regulating people, whose highest duty is to obey the law.

Tao-Te Chia (Taoism) was the philosophical beginnings of Taoism and developed into one of the three major classical schools of thought (the "Three Ways") in China. Taoism picked up many popular, especially magical beliefs (like the Chinese practice of *feng shui*, the art of discovering auspicious positions and orientations for homes, furniture, businesses, graves, etc.), monastic practices from Buddhism, and especially a body of alchemy research whose purpose was to bring about immortality.

Ju Chia was the school of the Literati or Confucianism. Confucius (551-479 BC) was the dominant Chinese philosopher both morally and politically. Confucius thought that a ruler who had to resort to force had already failed as a ruler. During the Tang Dynasty, the canon of Confucian Classics



became the basis for the great civil service examinations that henceforth provided the magistrates and bureaucrats for the Chinese government.

Qian also studied astronomy and organized the Chinese calendar. However, it is his works as the Grand Historian that made him famous. His extensive records demonstrated his great prose, detailed research and dedication to his work. His classification of Chinese philosophy brought Confucianism back into society. Even though Qian lived more than two millenniums ago, he still remains the greatest historian in Chinese history.

A Family Tradition

The story of Ban Gu

By Kevin Escudero



A historian during the early years of the later Han Dynasty, Ban Gu was born in 32 AD. His father, Ban Biao, brother, Ban Chao and sister, Ban Zhao, were all scholars but did not attain very high positions., Ban Gu was the most famous one in the family.

Gu's father, Ban Biao, compiled 65 volumes of history in an attempt to produce a sequel to *Shiji* written by Sima Qian. Ban Gu inherited that challenge after his father's passing. Gu unfortunately fell victim to slander and was imprisoned and subsequently set free because of the efforts of his brother, Ban Chao.

After this ordeal, Ban Gu was appointed by Emperor Ming as an official editor within the Imperial Library, later receiving an official sanction to complete his father's unfinished task. The main difference between Sima Qian and Ban Gu's works was that Sima Qian wrote a general history of several dynasties, while Ban Gu wrote the history of only one dynasty, the Western Han.

Covering a history of about 230 years, Ban Gu's books start with the first emperor of the Western Han and end with the emperor who usurped the throne of the last emperor of the dynasty. Like Sima Qian's records, Ban Gu's contains tables, biographies and also deals many aspects of social change and natural phenomena. Because Ban Gu dealt only with the history of one dynasty, he was able to give more detailed accounts and records than those of Sima Qian.

During the last years of his life, Ban Gu was extremely close to a powerful member of the Court. This man, however, was disloyal to the reigning emperor and committed suicide following the failure of his plan to kill the emperor. Many of this man's assistants and friends, including Ban Gu, were punished. Ban Gu was thrown into prison and passed away at the age of 61 in 92 AD, after enduring the hardships of old age. The legacy of Ban Gu was finally carried out by his sister, Ban Zhao, at the request of the emperor.

The Chinese in America

The story of Iris Chang

By Bernice Ngo

Made infamous by her narrative of the forgotten holocaust of World War II, *The Rape of Nanking*, Iris Chang was one of the most promising journalists and historians of the 20th century. A passionate historian who really cared about her subjects, Chang was so immersed in her writing that her life eventually mirrored the tragedies that she wrote about.



Chang was born on March 28, 1968 in Princeton, New Jersey. While growing up in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, her parents, Shau-Jin and Ying-Ying Chang, taught her about Chinese heritage and history. They enlightened her about the massacre, rape and anguish of thousands of Chinese civilians in the former capital of China, Nanking, during WWII. Chang was especially affected by this historical event because her grandparents actually escaped from Nanking at the time. Chang was determined not to allow history to repeat itself or let this horrendous annihilation of the Chinese people be forgotten by the world.

After receiving her bachelor degree from the University of Illinois, Chang began writing her first book, *Thread of the Silkworm*, a commended and enthralling study of how the Cold War influenced foreign policies of the United States. The book chronicles the story of Dr. Tsien Hsue-shen, who was branded a Communist and sent to China where he was able to transform the development of missiles to the point that it threatened the United States armed forces. She revealed that the imprisonment of Tsien Hsue-shen was parallel to U.S. mistreatment of Wen Ho Lee, a scientist accused of passing secret nuclear data to China.

The success of her first two books, *Thread of the Silkworm* and *The Rape of Nanking*, made her a prominent figure as a Chinese-American writer. Her latest work is an account of life as a Chinese American. Chang emphasizes the accomplishments Chinese people have brought to their adopted country and the individuals who have helped shape America.

Chang died on November 9, 2004, from what appeared to be a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Chang was working on a documentary about U.S. military veterans who had suffered as prisoners of war in Japan during World War II. Those who knew her understood that she “took things to heart” and was deeply troubled by what she learned from her interviews and research. She became emotionally involved in her work and her family believes that this was a reason for her suicide.

Throughout her career, Chang had taken on numerous causes to help bring light to injustice. Her stories have inspired others and her unique perspective of Chinese culture has revealed a different spotlight on what it means to be a Chinese-American.

諸葛亮

The story of Zhu Ge Liang

By Ariel Wen

諸葛亮是三國蜀漢著名的政治家和軍事家。他的老家在琅邪陽都，也就是今日的山東省沂水縣南。他少年的時候，父親就去世了，是他的叔父把他養大的。諸葛亮十三歲時，北方大亂，因此叔父諸葛玄就帶著諸葛亮和他的姐弟們去了襄陽。叔父去世後，諸葛亮就在附近的隆中臥龍崗居住了下來，自稱為臥龍先生。他在劉表辦的學堂讀起了書，先後認識了當時許多有名的政治家和思想家，經常和他們在一起討論天下大事。因為他勤讀書，善於交流，增長了知識和智慧。

當時，劉備和曹操在爭奪天下。劉備正在尋找一個好助手來當軍師，從徐庶那裏打聽到襄陽有一名臥龍先生，是個人才，便親自去拜訪諸葛亮。劉備帶著結拜兄弟關羽和張飛二人去見諸葛亮，可是諸葛亮早知道劉備要來拜訪他，就故意讓他們撲了個空，害得三人一直等到月亮出來也沒見到人影。劉備不灰心，記著徐庶的話，再去請。第一次請不到就第二次請，第二次請不到就第三次再去。最後，劉備在拜訪諸葛亮的第三次時，在門外等了大半天後，終於見到了諸葛亮。諸葛亮見劉備這樣虛心和真誠，就答應和劉備一起幹。這就是三顧茅廬。



諸葛亮當了劉備的軍師以後，就幫劉備策劃怎樣打天下。曹操見劉備反了，就發了八十萬大軍來追劉備。劉備見情況不妙，就向諸葛亮請教。諸葛亮建議劉備向長江東面的孫權求救，因為曹操的兵多是北方人，不會水戰，水一有顛簸，剛剛趕到江邊的北方兵就受不了。後來，曹操下令把船用鐵鏈連在一起，減少了顛簸。諸葛亮見情況，就出了個妙計。他借用隆冬十一月的東南風，將十條大船放了火，駕駛到曹操的水寨。曹操的船舶分離不開，多數的士兵被燒死或跳到江裏淹死。經過這場赤壁大戰的勝利，形成了三分天下的局面。

諸葛亮幫劉備打下了天下，可是因為扶不起的阿斗無能，諸葛亮死後，蜀漢的實力下降，最後被魏國吞沒。諸葛亮，以他的智慧和謀略，成為中國歷史上流傳千古的名人，直到今天他仍是聰明，智慧的象徵。

有好文章和千橡的朋友們分享嗎？
想試一試展示自己寫作的才能嗎？
《千橡》歡迎您來投稿



投稿請洽

劉月齡 818-879-0826

先秦儒學家-荀子

By Shery Bai

春秋戰國是中國歷史上最活躍的時期之一。在百家爭鳴中誕生了像孔子，孟子，墨子這樣著名的哲學家。作為儒家思想繼承者的荀子也是其中傑出的一位。荀子既通曉《詩》、《禮》、《易》、《春秋》諸經，支持建立“天下為一”的中央集權國家，又採納百家學術之長，建立起自己的理論體系。

荀子(約西元前 325-西元前 238)名況，尊號“卿”，故又稱“荀卿”。戰國末期趙國(今山西南部)人。荀子早年遊學于齊國，因博學深思，擔任齊國“稷下學宮”的祭酒，也就是學宮之長。西元前約 264 年，荀子應秦昭王之聘來到秦國。留在秦國期間，荀子很欣賞秦國淳樸的民風和穩定的社會秩序。他返回趙國後，又被戰國四君之一的楚國春申君所用，被任命為蘭陵(在今山東蒼水縣)令。荀子晚年主要從事教學和著述。他與其弟子著有《荀子》一書。

荀子的思想非常豐富。他的“性惡論”尤為著名。與孟子“人性本善”的理論截然相反，荀子認為人的本性生來是惡的。人的貪婪，自私，以及種種欲望都是“性惡”的表現。如果任人性自然發展，社會終會充滿暴力與爭奪。因此，人必須通過後天的教育感化，自身學習，以及禮儀規範來培養出善良的品質，進而建立一個有秩序、穩定的社會。在“性惡論”的基礎上，荀子還強調“禮”和“樂”的作用。禮就是法律與社會道德規範的總和。樂即音樂。荀子希望通過禮的約束和樂的薰陶，人性可以逐步由惡向善轉化。

荀子也非常重視教育與學習。在他著名的文章《荀子·為學》中，荀子指出學無止境，後來者居上。像“鍥而不捨，金石可鏤”這樣的箴言也出自此文。此外，荀子主張在農業耕作中，應規範人對自然的作用。他強調只有人與自然保持和諧的關係，社會才會正常發展。

作為先秦重要的儒學家、思想家，荀子的理論對後世影響頗深。他的學生韓非子和李斯均是法家的代表人物。雖然宋代以後，理學家往往抬高孟子而貶抑荀子，但他的思想還是對張衡、王充、柳宗元、王夫之、戴震以及近代的民主革命派有不同程度的影響。

通知

康谷華協及千橡中文學校
更改新的聯絡信箱
P. O. Box 6775
Thousand Oaks, CA. 91362

柏克萊與我



林子恒

像其他的中國家庭一樣，我的父母為我做進大學的準備，是從我有記憶以來就開始了。事實上，我一點也不驚訝，我的母親從她懷孕3個月時就已經做好了我進大學的計劃。當然，我的選擇只能是：哈佛、史丹福、耶魯、普林斯頓等那些長春藤學校。這樣，在我拿到學位以後，可以確定賺錢，足夠養活自己。我的父母說，只要我不進柏克萊大學，其他任何一個有聲望的學校他們都會很高興。

從小我就被勸說不用去申請柏克萊，那時他們總說柏克萊又髒又太“自由主義”。對一個七歲的小孩來說，我無法了解什麼是“自由主義”。直到我上了高中才慢慢的認識了柏克萊，才能領會到什麼是“太自由”的概念。

我獲悉柏克萊的成名史蹟，起源於1960年以越戰為軸心的年代。這是第一場可以由電視傳播的戰爭，那些暴力的槍戰，實況播放，掀起了大眾的激情。很快的學生們和其他各地的美國人都挺身出來表達“要求和平”的意念。而柏克萊的學生表現的最為強烈，它的名聲也因此而大噪。一派活躍的學生積極的參與各種激進的運動：自由言論、權力侵犯，以及反戰示威的抗議活動。一派反現狀的學生則創造了“嬉皮文化”，消極的抵制現實生活，以突出的奇裝異服，沉迷的音樂，吸抽大麻等來麻醉自己。這個美國校園自由、浪漫主義的搖籃就在柏克萊誕生了。

如今，我明瞭了柏克萊的真實背景。儘管這個校園裡擁有全世界一流的學術科技，擁有全國最多諾貝爾得主的大學，可是我的父母卻不情願我進這所學校。我現在知道那是因為太激進的校園生活和他們傳統、保守的理念有一段距離。

終究，我還是違背了父母當初的意願，選擇入學柏克萊。我必須承認，這裡和我成長的環境，那種恬靜、富裕、市郊外主流生活的型態顯然不同。縱使今日，柏克萊街頭充滿攤販，到處可見無業遊民，反體制的心態仍舊存在。然而柏克萊學術自由，創意革新的風氣，依然屹立。畢竟，一個思想開放的空間就是供給偉大“思想者”的廣大領域。

