

James Legge: The Man Who Introduced China to the West

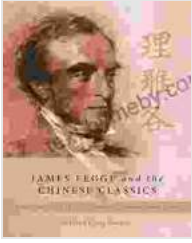


James Legge and the Chinese Classics

by Marilyn Laura Bowman

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English



File size	: 3867 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 1465 pages



James Legge (1815-1897) was a Scottish missionary, scholar, and sinologist who played a pivotal role in introducing Chinese classics to the Western world. His extensive work on translating and interpreting Chinese texts had a significant impact on Western scholarship and understanding of Chinese culture and thought.

Early Life and Education

James Legge was born in Huntly, Scotland, in 1815. He showed an early interest in languages and studied Greek and Latin at King's College, Aberdeen. After graduating, he pursued theological studies at the University of Glasgow and was ordained as a minister in the Church of Scotland.

Missionary Work in China

In 1843, Legge arrived in Hong Kong as a missionary with the London Missionary Society. He quickly realized the importance of learning Chinese for effective communication and began studying the language and culture. Legge's proficiency in Chinese enabled him to interact with local scholars and gain insights into Chinese thought and literature.

Translation of Chinese Classics

Legge's most significant contribution was his work on translating Chinese classics into English. He believed that making these texts accessible to Western readers would foster greater understanding and appreciation of Chinese civilization. Between 1861 and 1893, Legge published a series of eight volumes titled "The Chinese Classics," which included translations of the Confucian Analects, the Great Learning, the Doctrine of the Mean, the Mencius, the Book of Rites, the Book of Poetry, the Book of Documents, and the Spring and Autumn Annals.

Legge's translations were highly accurate and meticulously annotated, providing valuable insights into the historical, cultural, and philosophical context of the texts. They became essential resources for scholars and students of Chinese studies in the West.

Scholarly Recognition

Legge's work gained widespread recognition and acclaim. In 1876, he was appointed Professor of Chinese at Oxford University, becoming the first holder of that position. He also served as President of the Royal Asiatic Society and was awarded honorary degrees from several universities.

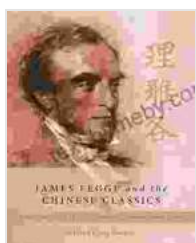
Legacy and Impact

James Legge's contributions to Sinology were immense. His translations of Chinese classics opened up a new world of knowledge and understanding for Western scholars and the general public. Through his work, he helped to dispel misconceptions and stereotypes about China and its culture.

Legge's legacy continues to influence the study of Chinese language, literature, and philosophy today. His translations remain widely used as

primary sources for research and teaching. He is widely regarded as one of the most important figures in the history of East-West cultural exchange.

James Legge was a pioneering sinologist whose work had a profound impact on Western understanding of Chinese classics and culture. His meticulous translations and scholarly insights laid the foundation for modern Sinology and continue to inspire and inform scholars and enthusiasts alike.



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