

孟子「性善」說芻議

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摘要

「人性」，一直是傳統中國哲學中熱烈探討的議題之一；孟子「性善」說的提出，在中國人性論史上是別開生面且影響深遠的。迄今很長的一段時間中，論者對於孟子「性善」均視為「人性本善」，明顯是受到以朱熹學思為首的理學思維影響。如今，我們必須跳出理學氛圍，直探《孟子》文義本真。

《孟子》書中明白指出，「性」常與「心」對舉，如「存心」與「養性」、「動心忍性」，「性」是需要「養」，需要「忍」的。因此，孟子所論之「性」當非論者所宣稱是固著不動的本質實體。孟子言：「君子所性，仁義禮智根於心。」君子所表現出的人之性，便是將仁義禮智「根」植於人心之中。基於此，對於「仁義禮智，非由外鑠我也，我固有之」的「固有」，本文立於時賢所見之上，認為當作「堅持掌有」，而不應作為「本來即有」。又既將仁義禮智等視為人性當充滿之內容，因此人性的展現必然為「善」，至於「惡」則是另外層面的議題。

總之，當我們跳脫理學式的心性之路，擱置朱熹「人性本善」的論點，便會發現孟子「性善」說的能動性與活潑性。從孟子的「性善」觀點看，作為一個「人」，是否展現人之「性」，全在於其自身是否具備正確認識且願意為之而已。

關鍵字：孟子、朱熹、性善、心

Some Observations on the Mencius' Theory of the Goodness of Human Nature

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Abstract

Human nature has been one of the major topics in traditional Chinese philosophy. Mencius' theory on the goodness of human nature opened up a new perspective within this debate and exercised a continuous influence on this debate. For a very long time the interpretation of the Mencius' theory on the goodness of human nature has been along the lines of Chu His(Zhuxi), who first proposed to be understood the goodness of human nature in the Mencius as meaning that human nature was inherently good. To understand the true meaning of the *Mencius*' theory it is necessary to free oneself from the influence of this tradition and to go back to the text.

In the *Mencius* nature (xing) and heart (xin) are often mentioned as corresponding terms, as in the phrase “to move the heart and restrain human nature” (dong xin ren xing). It is also necessary “to keep the heart” (cun xin) and “cultivate human nature” (yang xing). Accordingly human nature (xing) is not the fixed entity, as is being claimed. This has repercussions for the reading of some key passages in the *Mencius*. The famous passage concerned with the nature (xing) of the virtuous man (君子之所

性，仁義禮智根於心) has to be rephrased as meaning: “The human nature as embodied by the virtuous man consists of rooting (gen) benevolence, righteousness, ritual behavior and wisdom in one’s heart.” Accordingly human nature is good (shan) as long as it follows this path of filling one’s heart with those virtues.

To sum up, only when we leave the frame of thought rooted in the tradition of Chu His, we can appreciate the potential of the Mencius’ theory on the goodness of human nature. From a Mencius’ point of view it is up to us, if we live up to our potential as human beings and fulfill our nature (xing).

Key Words: Mencius, Chu His(Zhuxi), the Goodness of Human Nature (Xing Shan), heart (Xin).