

... FOREWORD ...

ONE OF THE HOPEFUL SIGNS in these otherwise hectic times in which we are living is the long-overdue realization of the need for mutual understanding between the peoples of the East and those of the West. Genuine understanding of people who are separated from us by great distances or who differ from us in language, in way of life, in social custom, is difficult to achieve, even for those who are sincerely dedicated to this task.

Such understanding is vital—humanly, intellectually, practically—but it cannot be achieved through any superficial assessment of words or actions which are often unrevealing or possibly even misleading. It can be achieved only through a searching and serious study of the dominant ideas, the motivating beliefs that have, down through the ages, shaped the "mind," or over-all philosophy, of a race or a nation.

In getting at this basic philosophy, the only procedure available to the outsider is to study the thought of the intellectual leaders, the molders of the thought of the culture as a whole. And the only way to reach these great minds is through their own words. No amount of second-hand explanation or description or interpretation can assure the student that he is getting at the real mind of the thinker. Studying the original (even in translation), with the aid of knowledgeable guides where necessary—this alone can make for clarity of comprehension and assurance of authenticity.

This Source Book is devoted to the purpose of providing such a basis for genuine understanding of Chinese thought (and thereby of Chinese life and culture, since the relationship between the two is probably more pronounced in China than in any other country). It brings to English-speaking Westerners the basic materials for serious work in Chinese philosophy, which in its profundity and its long historical development is probably less adequately understood than that of any other great civilization in the world today. By virtue of misguided selection of only ancient texts, or popular texts, or texts which are primarily literary rather than technical, the Chinese philosophical tradition has been distorted out of all proportions. The Western philosopher, if he would be a true philosopher in considering all the experiences, insights, and systematic intellectual speculation of mankind as data for his comprehensive philosophical thinking, can no longer remain blind to the important insights of the great Chinese minds of history. The Chinese philosophers have much to contribute in many areas of the broad quest for truth, and it is high time that we in the West overcome our basic ignorance of this field, or at least

FOREWORD

attempt to correct the limited and possibly distorted interpretations that we now have.

This Source Book is indeed a milestone along the complex and difficult road to significant understanding by Westerners of the Asian peoples, and a monumental contribution to the cause of philosophy. It is the first anthology of Chinese philosophy to cover its entire historical development. It provides substantial selections from all the great thinkers and schools in every period—ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary—and includes in their entirety some of the most important classical texts. It deals with the fundamental and technical as well as the more general aspects of Chinese thought. With its new translation of source materials (some translated for the first time), its explanatory aids where necessary, its thoroughgoing scholarly documentation, this volume will be an indispensable guide for scholars, for college students, for serious readers interested in knowing the real China.

I must take this opportunity, on behalf of all who are seriously concerned about the development of greater understanding of Asian philosophy, to thank Dr. Chan for producing this significant volume. Dr. Chan has taught Chinese philosophy in both China and the United States and, as far as I know, is the only Chinese philosopher who has taught in the United States in this one field continuously for more than 25 years. He knows thoroughly the needs and problems of students of Chinese philosophy—and, as a public lecturer, he is also well aware of the interests of the educated public. He brings to this work the valuable benefits and advantages of this unique background and experience. The task he has undertaken has been stupendous. Few scholars could have—or would have—undertaken it; no one else could have handled it so well.

As mentioned by Dr. Chan in the preface, this volume is the second in a series of Source Books in Asian philosophy. The first volume, *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy*, edited by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan and myself, was published by Princeton University Press in 1957 and was reissued in 1959. "A Source Book in Buddhist Philosophy," intended as a third volume in this series, is now in preparation.

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