Mozi And Han Feizi Rivalry And Similarities

Who is Mozi and Han Feizi

Mozi and Han Feizi were both Chinese philosophers during the Hundred Schools Thought period. Mozi's teachings emphasized inner reflection and that by reflecting on their individual wins and failures, they may understand their true inner self. He attempted to replace the strict cultural values of family attachment with those of "universal love" and "impartial caring" (Ivanhoe 2011). On the other end of the spectrum, Han Feizi was a philosopher of the Legalist school. He represented Chinese legalism as his ideas became incredibly influential in political theory and for dynastic Chinese rulers. His teachings were implemented state power, value systems for classes, and assertions that humans were irreparably evil. His views and teachings radically differed from many other Chinese philosophers during his time.

Differences between them

For the most part, Legalist and Mohism shared a rivalry, or rather differences, between both schools of thought. Mohists derived from "sub-elite" groups such as artisans and merchants (Fraser 2011). They collectively rejected the idea of traditional rituals and beliefs that were significant to Confucian ways of thinking. They thought of these beliefs as a waste of time and as a means of creating rifts within Chinese society. Their central belief was to promote and advocate for the welfare and wellbeing of all individuals. Their ideas arose from their frustrations with the war and exploitation of the vulnerable which resulted in their desires to "restore order to human society" (Fraser 2011). They understood humanity to be social and therefore their social abilities should also extend past the family sphere into the community. They sought to develop a systematic set of political ideals that would influence the growth of ethics, political theories, logic, and others. Mozi's contributions resulted in political and education systems which sought to teach individuals a "unified moral code" by the way of the respective wise and virtuous leaders. Their model of education stemmed from mirroring a model and practical leader who can distinguish right from wrong thereby teaching everyone else. This means of mirroring was reinforced by commending good behavior and doing the opposite for the negligence of such moral standards (Fraser 2011).

Chris Fraser (2011) explains that Han Feizi was particularly enraptured by the idea that the goal of government is to advocate the desires and needs of the ruler and the state itself. He further states that Han Feizi believed that the population under such a ruler would understandably be more successful than traditional Confucianism systems. The Legalist created an unprincipled logic to strengthen and empower the health and wealth of the state and its ruler. They comprised thoughts about how people were to behave, filtering out perceptions about how people should morally behave. Han Feizi was convinced that a ruler must have the freedom to propose customs and modifications due to constantly changing conditions as the populous increases in size and therefore different types of government is necessary to maintain control (Fraser 2011).

Commonalities between them

However, despite their obvious differences, the Legalists and the Mohists did share significant ideals and beliefs. Per Ivanhoe (2011), there are obvious precedents in the philosophies of Mozi in those of Han Feizi in terms of their political philosophies. Ivanhoe offers several examples in which both schools of thought employ similar ideals and values. For example, both insisted on the advancement and betterment of the state in contrast to the needs and desires of the individuals within those states. They also established the concept that to maintain a strong and fruitful state, an articulate, virtuous, and wise ruler needs to establish clear objectives that are promoted onto the populous. Furthermore, the search for qualified and articulate state officials led to duties and rewards which resulted in the civil service exam system, which sought to install a model-like government. Both Mozi and Han Feizi sought to ensure that the welfare and good of the state was upheld. The goal of Han Feizi was to acquire both wealth and prowess, while Mozi appealed to the belief of augmenting the structure of the state, their wealth, and the population. These concepts made them widely different from other thinkers (Ivanhoe, 2011).

What Mozi believe is the best way for a leader to lead – Using (Ivanhoe 2011), (Perkins 2014), and (Fraser 2014)

Nonetheless, Mozi had distinct means of differentiating itself from Han Feizi's legalism perspective. Mozi established that not only must the state benefit, the populous should also likewise benefit. He saw this as "two goals...intertwined and inseparable" (Ivanhoe, 2011). Mozi's notion of "impartial care" implicated the necessity of having rulers model adequate behavior.

Citations

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