Abstract

An analytical study of Han Fei’s Political thought

Han Fei (韩非, 281 BC - 233 BC) was the leading figure of the legalistic school in the history of Chinese philosophy. This academic exercise is a detailed study of Han Fei’s political thought. Although much work has been done in this area, Han Fei’s theory in the history of Chinese political ideas continues to fascinate scholars.

This academic exercise is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter begins with the aims and methodology of this study. This is followed by a brief biographical background and analysis of the historical origins of Han Fei’s theories. The third chapter explores the theoretical foundation of Han Fei’s thought. The fourth chapter emphasizes the important instruments of the ruler to control his ministers, officials and the people, that is Fa (法), Shih (势), Shu (术). The following chapter describes and traces the relationship between Han Fei’s policies and Hsun Tzu (荀子), Lao Tzu (老子), Mo Tzu (墨子) and Yin Wen Tzu (尹文子). The sixth chapter examines the views and critics of other scholars on Han Fei’s school of thought. In addition, final assessment and evaluation of its strengths and limits are also discussed. The last chapter concludes the analysis of Han Fei’s political belief. A re-appraisal of Han Fei’s school of thought provides us with a better understanding of and a greater insight into Han Fei’s political thought.