Abstract

The main purpose of this honours thesis is to compare the views of Xun Zi (荀子) and Han Fei Zi (韩非子) on Law (法), Statecraft (术) and Power (势). Xun Zi and Han Fei Zi are the leading figures of Confucianism (儒家) and Legalism (法家) respectively during the Warring States (战国 BC475-BC221). Han Fei Zi was a student of Xun Zi, but he later branched into the school of Legalism. There are few studies on how Han Fei Zi may have been affected by Xun Zi’s views on Law, Statecraft and Power. Hence, this study hopes to bring attention to scholars of Xun Zi and Han Fei Zi that there are relations between both of them on these three areas.

Firstly, a comparative study was done on Law, the rule or body of rules established in a community, enjoining or prohibiting certain actions. Then, comparative study was undertaken on Statecraft, the method or art of conducting affairs and handling man. Thirdly, a comparative study was carried out on Power, the authority or the ability or right to enforce obedience. Eventually, a summary was made on comparing all the three components, so as to see how Han Fei Zi absorbed Xun Zi’s views and improved on them.

The study reveals there are similarities and differences between the views of Xun Zi and Han Fei Zi on Law, Statecraft and Power. The latter probably made improvements on Xun Zi’s views. This study thus implies Han Fei Zi’s views on Law, Statecraft and Power were influenced by Xun Zi.