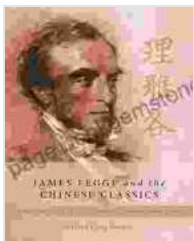


James Legge and the Chinese Classics: A Legacy of Scholarship and Translation

James Legge (1815-1897) was a Scottish missionary and scholar who made groundbreaking contributions to the study and translation of Chinese classics. His meticulous research and comprehensive translations played a pivotal role in introducing Western academia and the general public to the rich tapestry of Chinese literature, philosophy, and history. This article explores the life, work, and enduring legacy of James Legge, a towering figure in the field of Sinology.



James Legge and the Chinese Classics

by Marilyn Laura Bowman

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 3867 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting: Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 1465 pages



Early Life and Missionary Work

James Legge was born in Huntly, Scotland, in 1815. He received a rigorous education in classics, mathematics, and theology at King's College, Aberdeen. In 1843, Legge was ordained as a minister in the London Missionary Society and embarked on a missionary journey to China. He spent over two decades in Hong Kong and Malacca, actively engaging in

missionary work, social reforms, and the study of Chinese language and culture.

Encounter with Chinese Classics

Legge's initial interest in Chinese classics was sparked during his missionary work. He recognized the importance of engaging with Chinese intellectuals and scholars on their own terms, which led him to delve into the vast corpus of Chinese literature. Legge immersed himself in the study of Confucian classics, including the *Analects*, *Mencius*, and *Great Learning*, which profoundly influenced his understanding of Chinese history, ethics, and social philosophy.

Groundbreaking Translations

Legge is best known for his groundbreaking translations of Chinese classics. From 1861 to 1893, he published a comprehensive series of translations entitled "The Chinese Classics." This eight-volume work included translations of the *Four Books* (*Great Learning*, *Doctrine of the Mean*, *Analects*, and *Mencius*), the *Five Classics* (*Book of Odes*, *Book of History*, *Book of Rites*, *Book of Changes*, and *Spring and Autumn Annals*), and other important historical and philosophical texts.

Legge's translations were meticulously researched and annotated, and they quickly became authoritative references for Western scholars. His work introduced a wide range of Chinese thought and literature to the West, fostering a deeper understanding of Chinese civilization and its contributions to global history.

Sinological Achievements

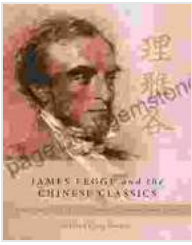
Beyond his translations, Legge made significant contributions to the field of Sinology. He published numerous scholarly articles, critical editions of Chinese texts, and comprehensive dictionaries. Legge also played a leading role in establishing the Peking Oriental Society and the Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. Through these platforms, he facilitated学术交流 and collaboration between Chinese and Western scholars.

Legacy and Impact

James Legge's legacy in the field of Sinology is immense. His translations of Chinese classics continue to be widely used and cited by scholars and students alike. His work laid the foundation for the modern study of Chinese literature, philosophy, and history in the West.

Legge's scholarship also had a profound impact on Chinese intellectuals and reformers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. His translations and interpretations of Chinese classics helped spark a reassessment of Chinese traditions and values, contributing to the emergence of new intellectual movements and social transformations.

James Legge was a pioneering scholar whose meticulous research and comprehensive translations of Chinese classics revolutionized the study of Sinology in the West. His work opened up a window to the rich tapestry of Chinese literature, philosophy, and history, fostering cross-cultural understanding and shaping our appreciation of global civilizations. James Legge's legacy continues to inspire scholars and students alike, ensuring that his contributions will continue to enrich the field of Sinology for generations to come.



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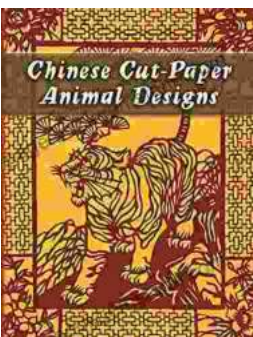
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