

An Aspect of Historical Studies about Pre-Chin Thought,
A Trial Study about the Formation
of Mencius's Ren-I theory

by Takio SAWADA

Confucius advocated Ren (仁), and Mencius advocated Ren-I (仁義). Why did Mencius emphasize Ren-I (仁義)? In this study I investigated some reasons why Mencius's Ren-I theory (仁義說) came out, by considering the circumstances of the world of thought in those days.

At that time, Mo-zi (墨子) School insisted on philanthropism, which seemed to neglect family morals. On the other hand, Yang-zhu (楊朱) School insisted on Ego-Centrism, which seemed to neglect the relation of ruler and subject. Mencius regarded the fundamental idea of these two schools as Li (利), that is, the calculation of gains and losses. These two schools, together with Confucian (儒家) School Mencius belonged to, led the world of thought then. Mencius thought that if we acted on the basis of Li (利), the family relationship and the relation of ruler and subject would be impaired and that we would not be able to keep the social order. So, rejecting Li (利), he emphasized that Ren (仁) (the fundamentals of family morals) and I (義) (the fundamentals of morals of ruler and subject) were the most important.

It has been said that Mencius laid emphasis on Ren (仁) against Yang-Zhu school, and I (義) against Mo-zi School. I think it is only a conjecture and a mistake. On the contrary, he insisted on Ren (仁) against Mo-zi School and I (義) against Yan -Zhu School. I dealt with these points positively in this study.