

JEWISH STUDIES

犹太研究

第17辑

Religious Belief First or Virtue First: A Comparative Research on the Political Blueprints of Hebrew Prophets and Confucian Sages

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Abstract: Politics is an extension of religion in the secular sphere, which is especially notable in the ancient world. “Prophet” and “Sage” are considered as the important participator of political narration of ancient Judaism and early China. The political participation of the prophet has always launched around religious belief, believing in God is the starting point, dependence as well as the purpose of the prophet’s political participation. While the “Sage” and the concept within political power such as “sage ruler”, “rule of virtue” and “frank criticism”, are all related to the concept of “respecting the morality”. From the perspective of transcendent faith to inquire the origin and legitimacy of a regime, the concept of “prophet” and “sage” shows tremendous similarity, both of them aim at looking for a transcendent value source for the secular political order; the difference is that the Hebrew Prophets have always carried out the rule of “faith first”, whereas Confucian Sages have raised a new rule of “the supremacy of moral value”, which paved a humanistic foundation for Confucianism. Religious Belief First and Virtue First are different approaches of the Political Blueprints of Hebrew Prophets and Confucian Sages.

Key words: Hebrew Prophets, Confucian Sages, religious belief, virtue, politics