한유(768~842년)는 하남 孟縣사람으로서 자를 퇴지(退之)라고 불렀다. 세 살에 부모를 여읜 그를 형수 정씨가 길렀다. 어려서부터 배움에 열중한 그는 25살에 진사 급제하고 변주관찰추관, 4문박사, 감찰어사 등 벼슬을 하였다.
정원 19년 그가 감찰어사로 있을 때 조정의 그릇된 정사를 견책하면서 한재가 든 관중(섬서) 지방의 백성들에게 부역과 부세를 면제해줄 것을 상주한 까닭에 양산령으로 강직되었다. 원화 12년에는 배도를 따라 회서의 오원제를 평정하는 데 공을 세워 형부시랑으로 승직되었다. 2년 후에 불사리를 맞아들이지 못하도록 간하는 바람에 헌종의 노염을 사게 되어 하마터면 목숨을 잃을 뻔하다가 배도의 주선으로 구원되어 조주 자사로 강직되었다. 목종이 즉위하자 다시 내직으로 옮겨져 병부시랑, 이부시랑으로 있다가 57세에 세상을 떴다. 그의 저작으로는 <창려선생집>40권이 있다.
한유는 유학을 숭상하고 유교 도통의 계승자로 자처하였지만 순수한 유교가는 아니었다. 그의 정치 사상과 세계관은 상당히 복잡하였다. 그는 환관들의 전횡을 반대하고번진들의 할거를 반대하였으며 당 왕조의 통일을 수호하였다. 그렇지만 그는 왕숙문 영정의 개혁을 찬성하지 않았다.
그는 유교의 인정을 제창하고 관리들이 백성들의 재물을 쓸어가는 것을 반대하였으며 봉건지배 계급들의 죄악을 폭로, 비판하였다. 그는 나라의 운명에 관심을 갖고 인민의 질고를 동정하였지만 인민에 대한 유교의 진압설을 선전하였다.
그는 유교의 도통을 수호하였지만 현실에 존재하는 구체적인 문제를 관찰할 때는 유교 도통의 테두리를 벗어났다. 그는 불교와 도교를 배척하고 인재를 억누르는 문벌 정치를 반대하였으며 젊은 인재들을 배양하는 데 힘을 기울였다.
한유는 당대 때의 가장 유명한 산문가로서 고문 운동의 이론을 산문 창작에 구현시켜 높은 성과를 얻었다.

Han Yu (768-842) was born in Heyang (present Mengzhou), he was also called as Toeji (in ancient times Asian people took name very seriously, so they often did not say it aloud, instead they pronounced "additional name", that they usually got after becoming adult). His parents died when he was three years old, so he was brought up by his aunt Jeong Ssi. From childhood Han Yu was really interested in studying and at the age of 25 he successfully passed the exam and became the master, also he got other ranks, such as Ph.D. in four different fields of science, emergency investigator, secret inspector and others.
In 803 Han Yu as the secret inspector, judging the imperial court policy, spent a lot of time at Gwanjung province (Seomseo) to help living there people suffered from drought by the special decree of mass production, which was designed to free people from bonded labor and taxes. In 817 Han Yu contributed to the suppression of the uprising in Owonje and was promoted to assessor of the department of executive power. However, then he almost lost his life by causing anger of Heon Jong Emperor, because Han Yu refused to accept the Buddhism. He managed to escape and remained faithful to Confucianism. Nevertheless, when Mok Jong Emperor took the throne, Han Yu was appointed to the position of assessor of the military department, as well as to the position of assessor of department, that governed the officers. He died at the age of 57. The "Collection of Mr. Chang Ryeo works" that Han Yu has wrote consists of 40 volumes.
Despite the fact, that he deeply respected Confucianism and was really well-versed follower of Confucianism, Han Yu was not orthodox Confucian. His political ideas and worldview were complicated. He was against the abuse of power in relation to eunuchs, as well as against assigning plots of land to border guards, at the same time, Han Yu was concerned about Tang dynasty unification. However, he did not accept the Wangsungmun reform, related to pictures of deceased.
Han Yu promoted the acceptance of Confucianism, he was against the officials that took away peoples’ property, at the same time, he criticized crimes and violence of ruling feudal lords. Han Yu was interested in fate of the county and sympathized with the suffering of people, but forcedly bended them to Confucianism.
He guarded the truths of Confucianism, but at the same time, while considering real existing problems, he put the Confucianism truths aside. Han Yu denied Buddhism and Daoism, he also was against the inheritance policy that interfered talented people to contribute to society, so Han Yu promoted and helped such young people without status.
Han Yu was the most popular writer during the rule of Tang dynasty, he achieved real success by representing the Classical Prose Movement.