THE NEO-CONFUCIAN MOVEMENT DURING THE LATER IMPERIAL PERIOD

Southern Song, 1127-1279; Yuan (Mongols), 1264-1368; Ming, 1368-1644

Cheng Yi/Ch’eng I (1033-1107)  Zhu Xi/Chu Hsi 1130-1200  Wang Yang-ming 1472-1528

I Neo-Confucianism as a Philosophy

Cheng Yi/Ch’eng I’s account of human nature and its natural grounds
- li (principle, coherence) and qi/ch’i (material force, energy-matter)
- “investigating things” and “becoming fully conscious of their coherence”

Learning as self-cultivation:
- Zhu Xi/Chu Hsi’s view of the mind (or "mind-and-heart")
- Heaven’s Principles vs. Human Desires
- the "Mind of the Way" vs. the "Mind of Man"

The political implications of locating moral authority in the self

II Neo-Confucianism as a Movement

The social program
- private academies, shrines, community covenants, charitable granaries, and family rituals

The intellectual program
- New vocabulary, ways of teaching, texts, and goal
  - the Four Books: Analects, Mencius, Great Learning, Doctrine of the Mean

III The Question of Orthodoxy

Zhu Xi/Chu Hsi and "the investigation of things"
Wang Yangming and "the rectification of things"

The innate ability to know what is good
The unity of knowing and acting
the later Wang Yang-ming school

Orthodoxy in theory, pluralism in practice?
Self, Self-cultivation, and the Four Books as a Neo-Confucian legacy

"The ancients who wished to manifest their innate virtue to the world would first bring order to their states. Those who wished to bring order to their states would first regulate their families. Those who wished to regulate their families would first cultivate their personal lives. Those who wished to cultivate their personal lives would first rectify their minds. Those who wished to rectify their minds would first make their wills sincere. Those who wished to make their wills sincere would first extend their knowledge. The extension of knowledge depends on the investigation of things."

-- from the Great Learning

"What Heaven imparts to man is called human nature. To follow our nature is called the Way. Cultivating the Way is called education. The Way cannot be separated from us for a moment. What can be separated from us is not the Way.... Before the feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy are aroused is called equilibrium (= centrality, the "mean"). When these feelings are aroused and each and all attain due measure and degree, it is called harmony. Equilibrium is the greatest foundation and harmony is the surest path."

-- from the Doctrine of the Mean
Diagram of the Neo-Confucian view of the "Mind" -- from a 12th-century book