

Zhu Xi and his Efforts for Renewal: Innovation, Social Reform and Epistemology 朱子知識論與社會革新

Call for Papers

Trier University (Germany), July 11–12 2015

The emergence of *daoxue* Confucianism in the 11th and 12th centuries is a pivotal point in the history of Chinese thought, often considered to be the beginning of a new era (as the controversial term “Neo-Confucian” illustrates). During the second half of the 20th century, scholars have profoundly explored the new approach of Zhu Xi and others of his era toward ethics, self-cultivation and metaphysics. In more recent times, the horizon has been further enlarged by significant studies of the social efforts by members of the *daoxue* fellowship.

Zhu Xi’s endeavors for social reform involve more than a mere historical issue, since they have special relevance for contemporary China. Current discussions about the Confucian revival in the PRC take place not only within ideological circles close to the Communist Party, but also in a broader public; furthermore, some public intellectuals are striving to reshape Zhu Xi’s ideas (such as his family rituals) to fit the needs of modern civil culture.

In spite of the potential applicability of Zhu Xi’s thought, he tended to avoid emphasizing that he was championing something “new”, stating that his ideas truly conformed to the original ideas of Confucius. Therefore, it is worthwhile to closely examine philosophically the implementation of the idea “reform” or “renewal”, which – for example – is manifested in the epistemological perspective of “extending knowledge” (*zhizhi* 致知), or the idealistic notion of “renewing the people” (*xinmin* 新民).

Our conference seeks an historically comprehensive approach, bringing together all the above mentioned aspects as they evolved over the course of history, but particularly during Zhu Xi’s own Song era and also in Chinese modernity.

In order to strengthen contacts between the community of “Zhu Xi studies” from China with European and American scholars, we will use both English and Chinese as conference languages.

We welcome papers on a broad range of topics, such as the following:

- *Daoxue* scholars and the “origins” of Confucianism
- Zhu Xi’s epistemology
- Zhu Xi and the renewal of the people (*xinmin* 新民); Zhu Xi and social change
- Zhu Xi’s relation to the “new learning” (*xinxue* 新學) of Wang Anshi
- Zhu Xi’s thought in the context of reshaping modern Chinese society
- Zhu Xi’s rituals in modern China

Scholars interested in participating are kindly asked to send their paper title and a (preliminary) abstract of about 150 to 300 words no later than **November 20 2014** via e-mail to: Prof. Dr. Christian Soffel <soffel@uni-trier.de> .

Sincerely yours,

The Organizers

Christian Soffel (Trier University)

Hoyt Cleveland Tillman (Arizona State University)