



The Religious Thought of Chu Hsi

Julia Ching

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Recognized as one of the greatest philosophers in classical China, Chu Hsi (1130-1200) is known in the West primarily through translations of one of his many works, the Chin-ssu Lu. In this book, Julia Ching offers the first book-length examination of Chu Hsi's religious thought, based on extensive reading of both primary and secondary sources.

Ching begins by providing an introduction to Chu's twelfth-century intellectual context. She then examines Chu's natural philosophy, looking in particular at the ideas of the Great Ultimate and at spirits and deities and the rituals that honor them. Next, Ching considers Chu's interpretation of human nature and the emotions, highlighting the mystical thrust of the theoretical and practical teachings of spiritual cultivation and meditation. She discusses Chu's philosophical disputes with his contemporaries in particular Lu Chiu-yuan and examines his relationship to Buddhism and Taoism. In the final chapters, Ching looks at critiques of Chu during his lifetime and after and evaluates the relevance of his thinking in terms of contemporary needs and problems. This clearly written and highly accessible study also offers translations of some of Chu's most important philosophical poems, filling a major gap in the fields of both Chinese philosophy and religion.

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