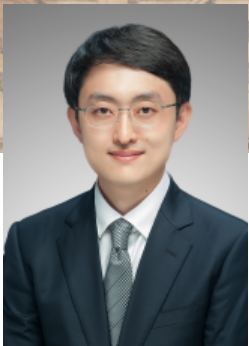


The Diagram of the Heavenly Mandate: How Early Chosŏn Confucians Understood Heaven and Human Beings

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in Korean

Abstract

This talk explores how Chosŏn Neo-Confucians understood the relationship between Heaven and human beings by focusing on the Diagram of the Heavenly Mandate (*tianmingtu* 天命圖), a conceptual schema of the Confucian moral universe. In the 16th century, Chosŏn Neo-Confucians paid special attention to the concept of the Heavenly Mandate (*tianming* 天命), such as the Great Ultimate (*taiji* 太極), *yin-yang* (陰陽), and coherence/principle (*li* 理), leading to a renewal of the orthodox interpretation of the *Doctrine of the Mean* provided by Zhu Xi and its formalization in the Diagram of the Heavenly Mandate. This talk thoroughly examines three diagrams created by three prominent Korean Confucian scholars—namely, Chŏng Chiun (1509-1561), Kim Inhu (1510-1560), and Yi Hwang (1501-1570). Based on their distinctive readings of the *Doctrine*, they crafted different versions of the Diagram and thereby laid the normative foundation for Neo-Confucianism, at the heart of which lay a direct link between Heaven and human beings. The Diagram highlights the creative, distinct character of Chosŏn Neo-Confucianism, which expounds on and further develops Zhu Xi's philosophy.

About the Speaker

Kyung-hyun Kang is Assistant Professor of Korean Philosophy at the College of Confucians and Eastern Philosophy at Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea. He earned his doctoral degree from Yonsei University with a dissertation titled “A Study on T’oegyŏ Yi Hwang’s Philosophy of ‘Li.’” His primary research area includes early Chosŏn philosophy and Neo-Confucianism and he has published many research articles on these topics. His first monograph, 퇴계 이황의 리 철학 [*T’oegyŏ Yi Hwang’s Philosophy of Li*] (Hyeon 2022), received the 30th Yong Jae Academic Award for Early Career Researchers, a prestigious award conferred for outstanding academic work in Korean studies.