Shao Yung Encyclopedia Article

Shao Yung

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1011-1077

Chinese philosopher whose ideas later influenced Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) in his development of a binary arithmetical system—that is, one based on just two digits. Shao, who began as a Taoist and went on to embrace Confucianism and become one of the leading proponents of the neo-Confucianist school, first took an interest in Confucianism after studying the *I Ching,* or, (Book of changes). This book also influenced him to undertake numerological studies, and Shao Yung became convinced that the number 4 played a unifying role in existence. His idea that there is an underlying pattern for all that is—a pattern existent as much in the human mind as in the world of perceived experience—had an enormous impact on Confucian idealism.