

Acknowledgments

In the process of writing this book, I have obtained feedback from a myriad of friends and scholars in Canada, the US, and China, especially Graham Sanders, J. Michael Farmer, and David Chai. I deeply appreciate their advice, generosity, timely responses, and tremendous help. Graham Sanders, Dylan Suher, and Brian Khul proofread my writing at different stages. Their cooperation and hard work ensured the readability of this book, though I am responsible for any deficiencies that remain. I will continue working on this topic and publishing my new findings in the future.

I have presented different parts of this book at various gatherings, including the Association for Asian Studies annual conferences and its regional (Midwest, Southwest, and New England) conferences, the American Oriental Society annual conferences and its Western Branch conferences, and the Southeast Early China Roundtable, as well as other events organized by universities in the US, Canada, and China, such as Harvard University, Columbia University, the University of Toronto, Beijing University, and the University of Hong Kong. I am grateful to the conference organizers and discussants, such as Peter K. Bol, Wendy Swartz, Atsuko Sakaki, Fu Gang 傅剛, Keith Knapp, Andrew Chittick, Hao Ji 郝稷, and Hu Qiulei 胡秋蕾, who provided me with opportunities to present my research and to obtain useful feedback and suggestions.

Parts of this book have been published in prior forms in academic journals, such as the *Journal of Oriental Studies*, copublished by the School of Chinese at the University of Hong Kong and Center for Chinese Language and Cultural Studies at Stanford University; *Frontiers of Literary Studies in China*, published by China's Higher Education Press; the *Journal of Chinese Humanities*, published by Brill; and *China Review International*, published by University of Hawai'i Press. The publication information can be found

in the bibliography section. I am grateful to the editors of these journals, such as Isaac Yue 余文章, Weng Limeng 翁立萌, Benjamin K. Hammer, and Roger T. Ames, for publishing my articles, and to the journals for permitting me to include material from these articles in this book. My appreciation also goes to the anonymous reviewers, who presented detailed critical and constructive comments.

This book has been supported by several research grants, notably a five-year PhD fellowship from the University of Toronto, a Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation Doctoral Fellowship, a Start-up Research Grant (SRG2019-00197-FAH) and a Multiple-Year Research Grant (MYRG2020-00018-FAH) from the University of Macau, a Friends of the Princeton University Library Research Grant, and a Florence Tan Moeson Fellowship from the Library of Congress. In addition to these research grants, the Young Scholars Visiting Scheme, sponsored by the CUHK-CCK Foundation Asia-Pacific Center for Chinese Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and the Fudan University Visiting Fellowship, sponsored by the International Center for Studies of Chinese Civilization, provided me with both intellectual and financial resources to work on this book. I thank Lai Chi Tim 黎志添 of the Chinese University of Hong Kong for accepting my application and offering an effective and fruitful research environment. I sincerely appreciate the mentorship and friendship from Dai Yan 戴燕 and Chen Yinchu 陳引馳 of Fudan University. Other funds were also very helpful for making this book possible, including various internal grants from the University of Toronto, Valparaiso University, and the University of Macau, such as the Julia Ching Memorial Fellowship, the Ting Fang Chung Scholarship, the Kwok Sau Po Scholarship, summer fellowships, research travel grants, and conference grants, as well as external grants from several libraries of major research universities, such as Harvard University, Stanford University, the University of Chicago, and the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor.

During the final stage of my manuscript revision, I joined the Department of Chinese Language and Literature at the University of Macau, and I am also affiliated with its Institute of Advanced Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences. Both the department and institute have provided me with an encouraging, warm, interdisciplinary atmosphere to discuss and improve my work. Many thanks go to my colleagues, particularly Xu Jie 徐杰, Zhu Shoutong 朱壽桐, and Tang Chon Chit 鄧駿捷.

I am grateful to the State University of New York Press, particularly associate director and editor in chief James Peltz, series editor Roger T. Ames, senior production editor Ryan Morris, senior marketing manager Michael

Campochiaro, and former senior acquisitions editor Christopher Ahn, who were very generous in providing their expertise and guidance throughout the long process of bringing this work to fruition.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest thanks to my family members in China and the US. They have unstintingly given me their strong support, patience, and understanding. They shouldered many of my family responsibilities to provide me with the time and care necessary for me to engage in scholarly activities. With my highest respects and gratitude, this book is dedicated to them.