Acknowledgments

This book was initially conceived when I held a visiting scholarship post (2013–2014) at Cardiff University, UK, where I learned incalculable amounts from the thought-provoking talks I had with Professor David Boucher and Professor Andrew Vincent. As celebrated experts of British idealism, they greatly inspired my Hegelian reading of New Confucianism. Their kindness and care, too, remain an abiding memory of my stay.

I would like to extend my appreciation to the Ministry of Science and Technology, Taiwan, for its generous support of this book project through the Renwen Xingyuan Scholarly Monograph Grant (人文行遠 專書寫作計畫). I am more than pleased to express my overwhelming thanks to Professor Stephen C. Angle, Professor Ming-Huei Lee (李明 輝), Professor Norman Y. Teng (鄧育仁), Professor Kuan-Min Huang (黄冠閔), Professor Yuan-Tse Lin (林遠澤), Professor Chia-Ming Chen (陳嘉銘), Professor Alvin Chen (陳禹仲), Professor Sungmoon Kim (金聖 文), Professor David Elstein, and Professor Max Lin (林子立), who have contributed extraordinary academic insights and comments throughout my writing process. I am, as well, thankful to Professor Chin-Shing Huang (黃進興), Professor Carl Shaw (蕭高彥), Professor Joseph Chan (陳祖為). and Professor Wing-Cheuk Chan (陳榮灼), for their conversations. All of them are exemplary academics in their own right, and I have been immeasurably fortunate to learn from them. My deep gratitude also goes to my colleagues at the Research Center for Humanities and Social Sciences, Academia Sinica, especially the director of the Center for Political Thought, Professor I-Chung Chen (陳宜中). I am extremely indebted to the brilliant group of political theorists in Taiwan; many of them have steered my philosophical thinking further than I could imagine.

Hsiao-Chun Wang (汪曉君), Claire Wang (王慧瑀), I-Fu Chao (趙 翊夫), and Stella Chan (詹乃潔) have been loval readers, and I honestly appreciate their keen editorial assistance. I truly thank editor Kent M. Suárez for his major help. Special thanks to my students, Chia-Hao Hsu (許家豪), Brian Chen (陳建綱), James Liu (劉佳昊), Adan Shen (沈明 璁), and Wayne Lee (李煒) for their sincere friendship. I also would like to show my heartfelt thanks to SUNY editor of Chinese Philosophy and Culture Series, Professor Roger Ames, and SUNY Press codirector James Peltz, who work with artistry and commitment and whose guidance has been indispensable. For their supportive feedback and advice, I am grateful to the two anonymous reviewers of the manuscript.

Most importantly, without the unfailing support from my family, this book never could have been written. In gratitude and love, I dedicate this book to my wife, Nadia (殷齊), and to my son and daughter, Elliot (假理) and Claire (恪理). Much more should be said here.

In closing, I may have accumulated more debts than it is possible to enumerate in a short note, and I hope for a chance to thank everyone in person.



Many thanks as well for permission to republish revisions of previous publications:

An earlier version of chapter 2 appeared as "Revisiting Mou Tsungsan's Idea of Moral Religion: A Dialogue with Hegel and T. H. Green," in Intellectual History 4 (2015): 168-223.

An earlier version of chapter 3 appeared as "The Endless Pursuit of Self-Perfection: A Hidden Dialogue between Mou Zongsan and F. H. Bradley," in Philosophy East and West 69, no. 3 (2019): 828-48.

An earlier version of chapter 6 appeared as "Political Meritocracy versus Ethical Democracy: The Confucian Political Ideal Revisited," in Philosophy and Social Criticism 46, no. 9 (2020): 1033-52.

Substantial changes have been made to an earlier version of chapter 8, which appeared as "The Idea of Freedom in Comparative Perspective: Critical Comparisons between the Discourses of Liberalism and Neo-Confucianism," in Philosophy East and West 66, no. 2 (2016): 539-58.