# Preface

I conceived this book on the basis of three convictions. The first is that metaethics could benefit from new developments in theories of truth, reference, and translation. Philosophers who gave us the established metaethical theories of the twentieth century, such as G. E. Moore, C. L. Stevenson, and R. M. Hare, formulated their analyses of moral language given a certain philosophy of language. The new philosophy of language forms part of the foundation of my argument for a new analysis of moral language and for the thesis that there is no single true morality. The second conviction is that mainstream moral philosophy suffers from an ignorance of the moralities of Eastern cultures. It is particularly important to remedy this ignorance in discussions on the issue of whether there is a single true morality. I begin the remedy by discussion of Confucianism and Taoism, two ancient Chinese philosophies. The third conviction is that the growing field of normative ethics needs some connection with a revived metaethics. I attempt to forge a connection between the metaethical thesis that there is no single true morality and normative issues such as abortion and the inequality of respect for human beings that exists in American society.

Analytic philosophers who have a basic knowledge of recent philosophy of language (who have a general idea of what Alfred Tarski, Donald Davidson, Willard Quine, Hilary Putnam, and Saul Kripke have done) should have no trouble with this book. Philosophers who have no such knowledge, and the general reading public, can get a general sense of what is hap-

pening in the sections on philosophy of language. The greatest portion of the argument for moral relativity and its implications should be completely accessible to them, and this book is intended for them as much as it is intended for specialists in ethics and those with knowledge of philosophy of language.