

On This Topic

Confucian Meritocracy and Tongdong Bai's *Against Political Equality*

Guest edited by Bradford Cokelet*

In his provocative book, *Against Political Equality*, Tongdong Bai challenges widespread western assumptions about the value of democratic egalitarian political structures and practices and proposes a creative Confucian alternative—a Confucian “mixed-regime” that melds Confucian meritocratic ideas with Western liberal ones. His discussions of concrete proposals for governmental structures, his creative cross-cultural philosophic arguments, and his sensitivity to domestic and international political issues yield an ambitious political vision that promises to challenge both liberals and meritocrats, east and west, and that bridges the divide between ideal and non-ideal theory. The book is primed to invigorate cross-cultural debates in philosophy and political science that are intellectually and practically relevant.

This special issue brings together four incisive critics who press Bai to develop and defend his views while situating them in cross-cultural philosophic context. The papers will be of use to scholars studying Bai's impressive book, but they will also be of interest to anyone who is thinking about the value of democratic egalitarianism, the nature and appeal of meritocracy, or how to understand and defend human rights in a cross-cultural context. The issue as a whole, including Bai's response, provides us with an excellent example of charitable but critical cross-cultural philosophic dialogue and are offered to inspire and enrich further work in the same vein.

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