

# Book Symposium on Tao Jiang's *Origins of Moral-Political Philosophy in Early China*

**Date:** 4 February 2022 (Friday)

**Time:** 09:00 am (HKT)

**Venue:** Online (via Zoom)

**Moderator**

- Sungmoon Kim

*City University of Hong Kong*

**Discussants**

- Karyn Lai

*New South Wales University*

- Hui-chieh Loy

*National University of Singapore*

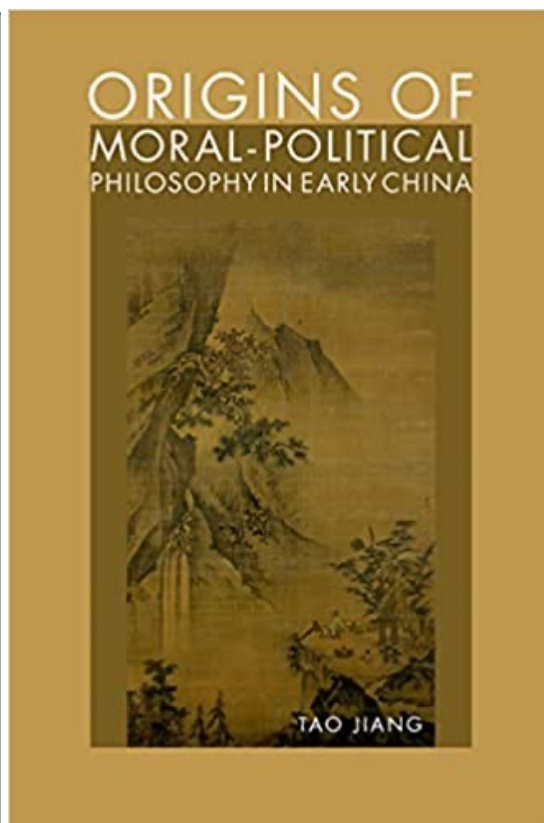
- Hagop Sarkissian

*City University of New York*

**Respondent**

- Tao Jiang

*Rutgers University, New Brunswick*



## Introduction

Tao Jiang's *Origins of Moral-Political Philosophy in Early China* (Oxford University Press, 2021) rewrites the story of classical Chinese philosophy with an emphasis on the normative dimensions of the early texts. The book makes three key points. First, the central intellectual challenge during the Chinese classical period was how to negotiate the relationships between the personal, the familial, and the political domains when philosophers were reimagining and reconceptualizing a new sociopolitical order, due to the collapse of the old order. Second, the competing visions can be characterized as a contestation between impartialist justice and partialist humaneness as the guiding norms of the newly imagined moral-political order, with the Confucians, the Mohists, the Laoists, and the so-called *fajia* (Legalist) thinkers being the major participants, constituting the mainstream intellectual project during this foundational period of Chinese philosophy. Third, Zhuangzi and the Zhuangists were the outliers of the mainstream moral-political debate during this period who rejected the very parameter of humaneness versus justice in the mainstream debate. Zhuangzi and the Zhuangists were a lone voice advocating personal freedom.

## Author Biography

Tao Jiang is a scholar of classical Chinese philosophy and Mahāyāna Buddhist philosophy. He is Chair of the Department of Religion and Director of the Center for Chinese Studies at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, US. He co-directs the Rutgers Workshop on Chinese Philosophy and co-chairs the Neo-Confucian Studies Seminar at Columbia University.

**Registration is required. Please email: [joonglee@cityu.edu.hk](mailto:joonglee@cityu.edu.hk)**