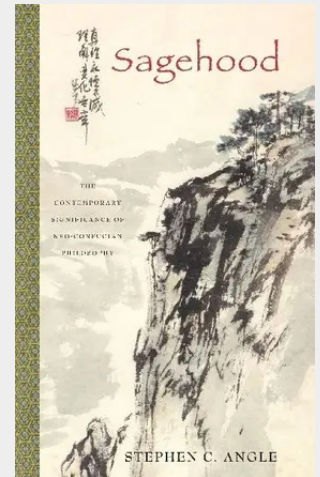


Sagehood

The Contemporary Significance of Neo-Confucian Philosophy

Neo-Confucianism is the sophisticated revival of Confucian theorizing, responding to challenges from Buddhism and Daoism, which began around 1000 C.E. and came to dominate the Chinese intellectual scene for centuries thereafter. What would happen if we took Neo-Confucianism and its central ideal of sagehood seriously as contemporary philosophy? Sagehood represents supreme human virtue: a flawless, empathetic responsiveness to every situation in which one finds oneself. How could this be possible? How might one work toward such a state? According to Neo-Confucians, we should all strive to become sages, whether or not we ultimately achieve it. Taking neo-Confucianism seriously means to explore the ways that its theories of psychology, ethics, education, and politics engage with the views of contemporary philosophers. Angle's book is therefore both an exposition of Neo-Confucian philosophy and a sustained dialogue with many leading Western thinkers--and especially with those philosophers leading the current renewal of interest in virtue ethics. The book's significance is two-fold: it argues for a new stage in the development of contemporary Confucian philosophy, and it demonstrates the value to Western philosophers of engaging with the Neo-Confucian tradition.

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