

PREFACE

The contributions to this volume grew out of papers presented at an international conference *Individual, Community & Society: Bioethics in the Third Millennium*, held in Hong Kong, Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, between 25-28 May 1999. The conference was organized by the Centre for Comparative Public Management and Social Policy, and Ethics in Contemporary China Research Group, in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the City University of Hong Kong.

The conference brought together scholars from east and west to investigate the challenges to caring and to traditional moral authorities that would confront bioethics in the third millennium. They explored the implications of moral loss and moral diversity in post-traditional and post-modern societies, and how these would shape the character of medical care and bioethics discourse in the new era. A proceedings volume under the same title of *Individual, Community & Society: Bioethics in the Third Millennium*, was published in May 1999 for the conference meeting.

The present volume is based upon papers selected from the conference collection. They have all been substantially revised on the basis of comments from commentators and reviewers. Together they explore one of the most searching questions in the field of global bioethics, namely: whether global bioethics is possible in the new century. The book assembles voices from China, including Hong Kong and Taiwan, Japan, Germany and the United States, and makes available deep reflections from diverse cultural and philosophical perspectives. The exploration took some of the papers into debating fundamental issues in moral philosophy at the normative and the meta-ethical level. They included issues about the universality of ethics, the meaning and justifiability of ethical claims, the nature of moral reasoning and the very idea of morality. There were also papers which focused on establishing a moral discourse to strike a balance between the challenge to universalize and generalize on the one hand, and the need to preserve entrenched particularistic moral conceptions and individual or group commitments on the other.

In many ways, the book is a rich, cross-cultural dialogue on global bioethics. The contributors have drawn on important insights from east and west, from both traditional and modern resources, to offer interpretations which are highly diverse, original, and inspiring. Together they have raised some fundamental questions about global bioethics. They serve to affirm the importance of nurturing the conditions under which moral diversity can flourish, since diversity is key to sustaining an on-going, fruitful global dialogue on global bioethics.