

## Introduction

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Volume 3 of the journal *Tetsugaku* is a special issue on “Japanese Philosophy” (*Nihon tetsugaku* 日本哲学). Until today, the Philosophical Association of Japan (日本哲学会) has not functioned as a space that was inclusive of scholars working within the field of “Japanese philosophy”. There appear to be scholars living abroad who misunderstand this association as a home for scholars applying themselves to the field of Japanese philosophy. It is my understanding, however, that the research activities of scholars who specialize in Western philosophy occupy the central position within this association rather than the activities of those involved in the field of Japanese philosophy. I believe that, in this sense, the present special issue can provide a fitting opportunity for introducing the latest information on their activities to the members of this association, among others.

In the inaugural and second volumes of this journal, the essays contained within the section “Philosophical Activities in Japan” have presented the current state of domestic philosophical research. However for this issue we have changed the section name to “Japanese Philosophy in the World”, to better convey the current state of research in Japanese philosophy. Two eminent scholars have contributed their essays to this section: emeritus professors John C. Maraldo and Thomas P. Kasulis, each of whom has been instrumental in pushing the field forward. We also have one report jointly written by the Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Japanese Philosophy* and the President of the International Association of Japanese Philosophy, and another by the President of the European Network of Japanese Philosophy. These reports help to convey the extent to which research in Japanese philosophy has developed in recent years.

This trend in Japanese philosophy within international circles is reflected in the present issue. A specialist journal focusing on this field did not exist until ten years ago. Today, there is now a global network of Japanese philosophy scholars, based in institutions such as the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, the University of Hildesheim, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Sun Yat-sen University, the State University of Campina (Brazil), and the National Autonomous University of Mexico, not to mention the aforesaid associations and journals. This

development is one of the aspects of the organic internationalization of Japanese philosophy, and its positive results are on display here in this third special feature for *Tetsugaku*.

The finally selected ten essays were almost entirely written by young scholars from Taiwan, Japan, Brazil, France and Germany, who are making their debut on the international stage of Japanese philosophy.

As the “Table of Contents” shows, theme sections have not been provided. The editors made this decision following the understanding that some of the subjects contained within these essays frequently cross over the limits of any clearly defined category, intersecting with one another. Nevertheless, I would like to attempt to briefly outline here what we may think of as the major themes that the authors have taken up.

First, we find that the problem of how we are to define “Japanese philosophy” occupies an important position within the papers contained in this volume. Alongside the two essays by J. C. Maraldo and T. P. Kasulis for “Japanese Philosophy in the World”, some of the special feature papers claim that it is necessary for us to radically probe the meaning and the identity of “philosophy”, rather than simply accepting a Eurocentric view based on a particular Greek tradition. If we consider the findings of our contributors, we can appreciate that modern Japanese philosophy, as established alongside the translation of the term “philosophy” (*tetsugaku*)—and no one would refute that this is particularly the case with Kyoto school philosophy—has in a certain sense functioned to sever the stream of thinking that stretches from before the modern period up until the post-war period. In other words, the recognition of Japanese philosophy in the modern period actually worked to create the discourse that no philosophy exists in pre-modern Japan. We can observe among our contributors an attitude to liberate Japanese philosophy from the fixed manner in which it has heretofore been related to western philosophy and pre-modern Japanese traditions. It is their hope that the scholarship called “Japanese philosophy” may have a new role to play within the world. Perhaps this effort to re-define Japanese philosophy may help to directly instigate a reconsideration of philosophy in general among the members of the Philosophical Association of Japan.

Another subject in this volume is Kyoto school philosophy, which all the authors integrate into the subject of redefining Japanese philosophy. Here, our readers will encounter two new approaches to this problem. One approach is research into the still unexplored field of “The Kyoto School’s Influence on Taiwanese Philosophy under Japanese Rule (1895-1945)”. Another approach is the

suggestion to situate Kyoto school philosophy within a project to re-consider the discourse of philosophical modernism. The proposal is that we may search for an answer to the overcoming of modernity by investigating the contributions that the Kyoto school has made to modern Western philosophy.

Besides the above consideration, this volume also provides six monographs dealing with specific philosophers: Miki Kiyoshi, Nishida Kitarō (two pieces), Tanabe Hajime, Kuki Shūzō (two pieces), and Ōnishi Hajime. As well as papers that examine foundational themes and ideas of these philosophers—for example, Miki’s concept of imagination, Kuki’s metaphysics conceived from the view point of the contingency, and Nishida’s understanding of the relation between the religious and the secular—we also have three challenging articles that delve into the theories of time advanced by Nishida, Tanabe and Kuki respectively, offering a suitable opportunity for comparison. Finally, our special feature ends with a paper which takes up for examination some of the philosophers of the Meiji period, such as Ōnishi Hajime, while inquiring into “the Role of Aesthetics in Assessing Religion Cross-Culturally”.

In summary, here we have a harmonious weaving together of a diverse range of subjects, resulting in an original anthology that differs in style and content from already published numbers of the JJP and the EJJP, or other collections of essays on Japanese philosophy. I would like to offer my deepest gratitude to the authors, to those individuals both within and without the Philosophical Association of Japan who offered words of advice for the editing of *Tetsugaku*, and also, to Tsuda Shiori, who has gone to great efforts to help with the editing process.