INTRODUCTION

The Journal of Japanese Philosophy is the first international medium of research in English focusing on the field of “Japanese philosophy.” No scholarly journal specializing in Japanese philosophy has ever existed before our journal outside Japan. Scholars today are enjoying an undeniable worldwide expansion of their communities of research. We may consider the timely inauguration of this journal as symbolic of a series of movements and developments that can stimulate the research of Japanese philosophy. The project came to fruition through the foresight and tenacity of two members of the editorial team, Kevin Lam and Ching-yuen Cheung. Furthermore, we owe a lot to the understanding and patience of SUNY Press.

“What is Japanese philosophy?” This question is directly related to another question: “What is philosophy?” However, as Deleuze and Guattari remark, “It was asked before; it was always being asked, but too indirectly or obliquely; the question was too artificial, too abstract. Instead of being seized by it, those who asked the question set it out and controlled it in passing” (Qu’est-ce que la philosophie? [Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 2005], 7). It certainly is difficult to define “philosophy” and succeed in eradicating all of its ambiguities. For differences in language, culture, or tradition inevitably determine the direction of philosophical thought. As for Japanese philosophy, we need to acknowledge here that both Japanese and non-Japanese pioneers in the field have repeatedly cast serious doubt on the attitude that would support the predominance of Western philosophy over non-Western philosophy. Moreover, they have attached great importance to the necessity of intercultural dialogue among philosophers.

I have no intention to answer the above question, or define “philosophy” or “Japanese philosophy” here now, because the definition of this discipline needs to be reconsidered all the time. Instead, the editorial team expects the contributions of each issue to continue revealing to us new aspects of Japanese philosophy. In the contemporary situation where dialogue not only between Japanese and Western scholars but also between Japanese and East Asian...

According to James. W. Heisig’s experience (*Japanese Philosophy Abroad*, ed. Heisig, [Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, 2004], 280–81), to study Japanese philosophy outside of Japan was, until very recently, an extremely difficult endeavor. But that period may have passed and we may now be in a better state. The editors hope to publish research taking different approaches and on different themes by authors coming from different backgrounds in language, culture, or career. Furthermore, this international journal will positively support interdisciplinary research as well as monographs. Needless to say, however, the quality of papers will be rigorously examined for selection so that the journal’s academic level can be maintained under the system of peer review.

The first issue, without being confined to a specific subject, carries five essays, by Fujita Masakatsu of Japan, Lin Shaoyang of Hong Kong, Graham Parkes of Ireland, and Bret W. Davis and John C. Maraldo of the United States, as well as a book review by Leah Kalmanson of the United States. Each of these scholars contributes to a subtle dialogue from his or her own unique standpoint on the issue of Japanese philosophy. Through engaging this dialogue, we hope that the reader will find his or her philosophical horizons expanded.

The editors of this journal include five members, John Krummel and Curtis Rigsby from the United States, Kevin Lam and Ching-yuen Cheung from Hong Kong, and myself from Japan, to constitute an international team. Nourished by our dissimilar backgrounds and perspectives, we have taken up a collaborative posture for the common purpose of *philosophia*, that is, “love for wisdom,” and to investigate the issue of Japanese philosophy.
The editors would like to cordially acknowledge and thank Nancy Ellegate and the rest of the production team at SUNY Press for their generosity and kindhearted correspondence. The Journal of Japanese Philosophy would not be possible without their interest and help.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the authors and reviewer, and all the colleagues who have expressed their support for the journal in many and various ways.

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