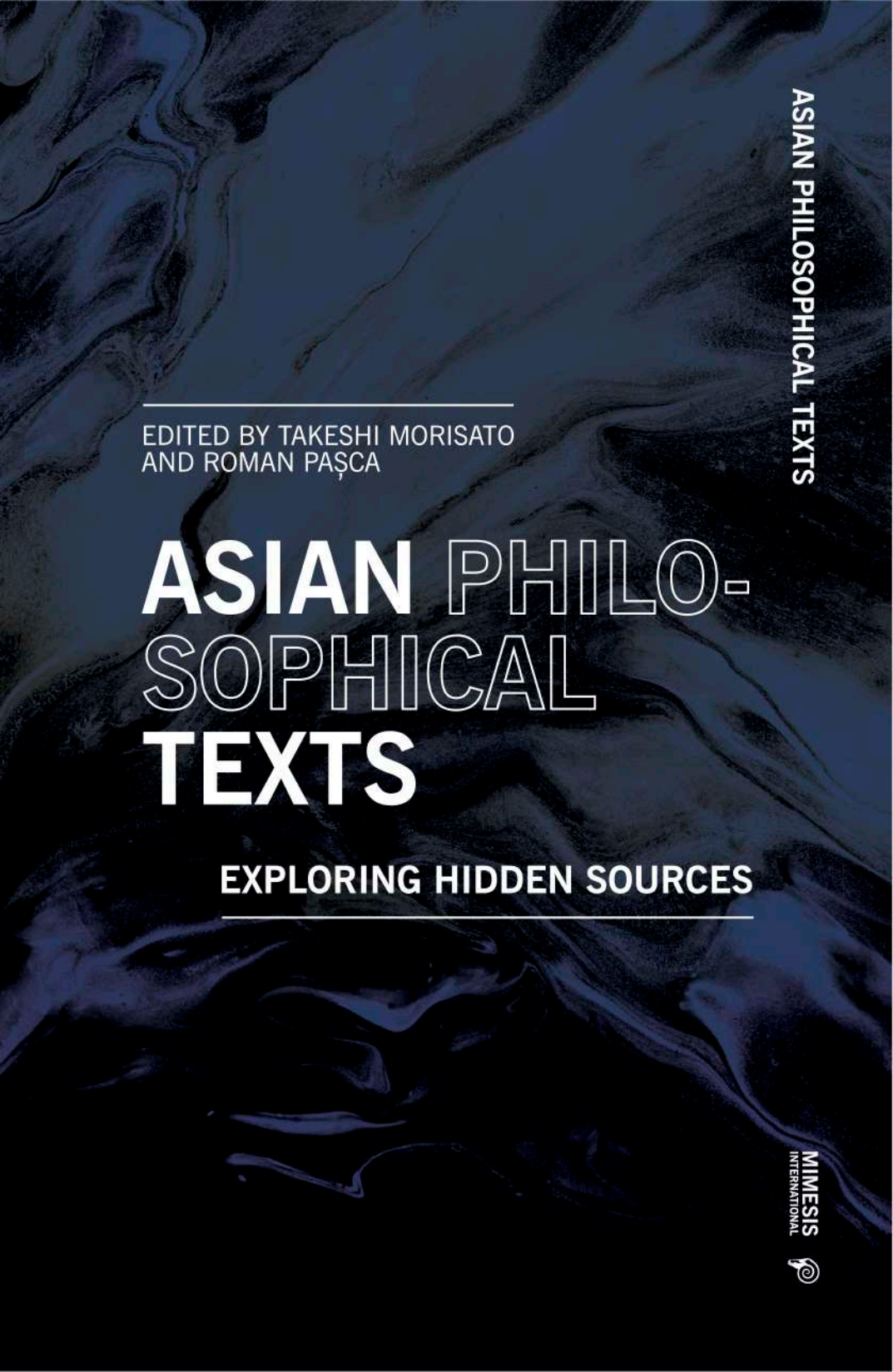
ASIAN PHILOSOPHICAL TEXTS
EDITED BY TAKESHI MORISATO
AND ROMAN PAȘCA
ASIAN PHILO-
SOPHICAL
TEXTS
EXPLORING HIDDEN SOURCES
MIMESIS
INTERNATIONAL

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ASIAN PHILOSOPHICAL TEXTS

No. 1

Book series edited by Roman Paşca (Kyoto University, Japan) and Takeshi Morisato (Sun Yat-Sen University, China)

Editorial Board

ASIAN PHILOSOPHICAL TEXTS

Exploring Hidden Sources

Edited by

Takeshi Morisato and Roman Pașca

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Takeshi Morisato (Sun Yat-Sen University)
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INTRODUCTION

A small "opinions" corner in an evening news can occasionally thrust us into profound self-reflection, or at least help us to set forth a more dramatic self-interpretation of life in academia than many of the headline news. It was probably the *News Watch 9* at NHK in Japan (or perhaps one of the other similar programs from the commercial television companies in the Kanto area) that conducted such an interesting survey. The reporters from the show interviewed one hundred Chinese students enrolled at a private university in the suburb of Shanghai. At the same time, they managed to talk to another set of one hundred students at a private university in a suburb of Tokyo. They asked a single question to two hundred college students and it concerned something our students would usually be very good at answering: Who are the most famous people that you know? A twist in this questionnaire for the East Asian undergraduates was that they were only allowed to list the names that are supposedly famous in the other country.

The finding was quite shocking to those who lived in Japan. Chinese students listed not only so-called "celebrities" like Japanese actors, musicians, and J-pop idols, but also many of the leading authors that literary critics would categorize under the label of "contemporary Japanese literature." One of the famous names in the top twenty in the ranking (made by the Chinese students) received the Akutagawa Prize the year before the survey was conducted. This certainly highlighted the fact that his book was immediately translated into Chinese, which led to a series of guest lectures at several universities in Shanghai. (The NHK did another documentary about the Chinese reception of his book and his discussion with literature stu-

dents was occasionally carried out in Japanese!) The list of Japanese celebrities that the Chinese students created was more or less what Japanese students of the same generation at another campus would create if they were asked to tell us about their own country.

What was shocking about this survey to the Japanese viewers was the contrast. Japanese students failed to name any of the contemporary Chinese celebrities, artists, musicians, or writers, but as the news anchor remarked *en passant* with a bitter smile, "almost all of the top twenty in the list of the famous Chinese names come from China before the common era...." China and Japan have been neighboring countries for centuries and their historical development certainly enjoys a great degree of mutual influence. If one looks at any sentence written in these languages, one can immediately recognize their cultural and intellectual proximity. This is more obvious to those who can read classical Chinese and classical Japanese philosophical texts. However, this simple survey from a TV show in the twenty-first century, which was conducted at a very superficial level, is enough to demonstrate that there is a great discrepancy in our mutual, cross-cultural understanding of ourselves in East Asia today.

As specialists of comparative and Asian philosophy, the editors of this book cannot help but imagine the possible findings from conducting a similar survey in our own domain of philosophy. What would be the honest result if we ask contemporary philosophers in Europe, North America, and Asia: "Who are the famous thinkers in the history of humanity?" If we ask the same question to philosophy scholars in Asia and any other parts of the world that are currently (mis)labeled as representing "non-western" intellectual traditions, would their answers demonstrate a well-balanced, mutual understanding? We think that the results of these surveys would be far more devastating than the one given to two hundred students in China and Japan. If most philosophy scholars in Europe or North America were asked to name famous thinkers from China, their answers might not be any more different from the answers that the Japanese undergraduates gave to the news program about Chinese celebrities. In fact, we would be impressed if a philosophy scholar or student from anywhere in the world could name ancient Chinese names, such as Confucius, Laozi, Zhuangzi, Sunzi, Mencius, etc., in a proper chronological

order. But what about a list of Chinese thinkers who developed philosophy in the common era? Are there any contemporary Chinese thinkers worthy of our critical engagement in relation to the ongoing philosophical discussions? Many of us may be inclined to say "No" to these questions, but our general ignorance about Asian philosophical traditions only generates a somewhat embarrassing silence.

We are not here, however, just to criticize the ways in which academic programs are set up across the field of philosophy (not only in Europe and North America, but also Asia). We do not think that the language of "institutional racism" is any longer effective to install a change in our life as academics.[1] What we would like to ask us in face of this catastrophic one-sidedness, the quantitative and informative discrepancy between our scholarship on the topic of western and non-western philosophies (which is simply unthinkable in other disciplines like history, anthropology, cultural studies, and religious studies), is to think about their differences in terms of the material and the efficient cause. What are, in other words, the ways in which we think of the list of European philosophers? Why is it easier for us to list them as being from ancient, medieval, modern, or contemporary historical periods with a relatively coherent narrative that clearly demarcates them as philosophers? What do we have here that is missing in our process of squeezing out Chinese or Japanese names from our Eurocentric brains? Our answer to these questions is simple: a number of monumental and yet accessible book series in western languages.

When we think about ancient and medieval philosophy in the European context, we can easily think about the "Loeb Classical Library" in their Christmas color coordination. As for Renaissance philosophy, the "Tatti library" stands out in any bookshelf with the glow of its stylish light blue exterior. "Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy," "Cambridge Editions of Kant," or affordable Hackett paperbacks would immediately come to mind when we talk about the primary sources that we often use for our courses in modern philosophy. Post-modern philosophy is, of course, expectedly a bit all over the place. However, there are many signature series for notable

1 Brian Van Norden, *Taking Back Philosophy: A Multicultural Manifesto* (Columbia University Press, 2017), xix. Jay L. Garfield makes this remark in his "Foreword" to this volume.

thinkers like Kierkegaard in "Kierkegaard's Writings" at Princeton University Press or recent publications of the Nietzschean corpus at "Oxford World Classics." It is not difficult to imagine that most of our readers may own a couple of copies from the "SUNY Series in Contemporary Continental Philosophy" or Polity's "Key Thinkers in Contemporary Philosophy." The thickness and the diversity of the layers in the publication infrastructure for European and North American philosophy, which can be seen as the material and the efficient cause of our intellectual discussions about ideas in these works is simply second to none.

To raise the status of Asian philosophical traditions to the level of the so-called "western philosophy" in academia, we certainly have to go through a structural change, where we can offer more courses on relevant topics for undergraduate and graduate students. However, this is only feasible when philosophy instructors (who probably lack the fluency requisite for working with primary sources in multiple Asian languages) have access to a number of reliable books that give a coherent narrative of the field of comparative and Asian philosophy. Our students, too, must have access to a great number of affordable and critical translations of these texts. What is required from specialists of Asian philosophies, then, is no longer to prove (to the Eurocentric part of our brains and to our colleagues) that there can be a philosophy outside the European and North American context, but rather to create a robust intellectual infrastructure in which we can produce scholarly representations of ideas and conceptual schemes available in these hitherto relatively unexplored traditions. Without creating more publication venues that match the quality and the productivity of those in western philosophy, most scholars and students cannot easily identify (or sensibly challenge) Asian philosophical texts as a part of the world philosophical narrative.

This is precisely our intention in launching this series, "Asian Philosophical Texts," at Mimesis International. Our goal is to provide a space in which we can explore a number of intellectual traditions originating from this vast continent of Asia, to introduce leitmotifs that are both historically and conceptually unique to them, and to steadily grow the library of primary sources in English translations. Our hope is that in a few decades (if not in centuries), philosophical

readers can visualize our series as something like an Asian version of the Loeb Classical Library and recollect the spines of our books in their university or personal bookshelves as a way to answer the following question with more confidence: Who are the famous thinkers from China, India, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and any other fertile intellectual soil from the Asian continent?

At the same time, we hope that the books published in this series will also contribute to the ongoing debate about what philosophy actually is. Do we understand philosophy to be solely the practice that was carried out under the banner of *philosophia* in the Greco-European tradition, or do we open up the definition to make it more accommodating for non-Western traditions? If the *enjeu* of philosophy is the search for truth, for the meaning of human existence, for the intricacies of the life and death debate, for ethic postulates or for aesthetic principles, then perhaps we can find clues to all these issues in the notions and concepts put forth by philosophers in the Asian traditions of thought. We believe that Dao, the Confucian *Analects*, or the whole plethora of comments to the Buddhist scriptures encapsulate numerous hints that might help us rethink our understanding of philosophy, of its practice and of its purpose.

This inaugural volume, as a starting point of this ambitious project, carries multiple blueprints of future monographs outlined by great scholars in the field of comparative and Asian philosophy. The volume is structured in two parts, with six original essays in the first part and three translations from original sources in the second part. All of the articles engage with philosophical texts, concepts, and notions from the Asian continent, from China and India to Japan and Vietnam.

In "'White Horse is Not [a] Horse': How the Translation Creates the Paradox," Yijing Zhang discusses the *White Horse Discourse* (*Bai ma lun*, 白马论) by Gongsun Long (公孙龙, 323–250 BCE), one of the most widely discussed Chinese philosophical texts in European and North American academia. After observing that in general there are two types of scholars who have commented on the text (Sinologists and logicians), Zhang attempts to problematize certain presuppositions that these scholars have been taking as starting points when approaching the text. The purpose of the article is to challenge and deconstruct these presuppositions by showing that they rest princi-

pally on misunderstandings motivated by the translation of the Chinese text; thus, the author clarifies her position as subscribing to the linguistic relativism of von Humboldt—where language is considered as conveying a worldview—and then moves on to identify and discuss in detail the three main problems that are responsible for the most widespread and serious misunderstandings of the white horse discourse. Zhang's conclusion is that, by ignoring the underlying linguistic and philosophical differences between the two intellectual traditions, scholars end up overlooking the authorial intent and that, in order to avoid misinterpretations, we need to properly understand the cultural and linguistic differences between the Chinese and European intellectual traditions.

In her article, "Philosophy for Children: Globalization and the Translation of a Neo-Confucian Text," Margaret Chu analyzes the *Yangzheng leibian* 養正類編, a text included in the *Zhengyi tang quanshu* 正誼堂全書 ("Collectanea of the Hall of Correctness and Principle") by Zhang Boxing 張伯行 (1652–1725), first published in the eighteenth-century. The text, which is meant for young children and ordinary folk, especially in remote or isolated areas in imperial China, covers a wide variety of topics, from pedagogical theories and children's rites to historical anecdotes of exemplary behavior and definitions of philosophical concepts. Starting from the observation that one of the features of Chinese philosophical discourse is the apparent absence of a formal argument, Chu provides detailed comments on all the sections of the text and then discusses some of the most problematic philosophical concepts, such as *qi* 氣 and *hun po* 魂魄. Asking rhetorically whether the text is indeed for children only, Chu concludes with several remarks on the role of translation in philosophy, suggesting that the inclusion of conceptualizations from an entirely different paradigm enriches the dialogue and broadens horizons.

In her article, "The Holism of Guanxue in the Song Dynasty," Na Song discusses the belief in holism in traditional Chinese thought by focusing on the local school of Guan (*Guanxue*, 關學), formed in Guanzhong around the second half of the eleventh century and centered on the work of Zhang Zai (張載, 1020–77). Song first describes holism as the cohesive whole that is believed to contain cosmic order, political legitimacy, as well as the moral order of society,

and then discusses its two dimensions: the fact that it was considered to be a cosmic–political–ethical system/program serving as the root of morality, cultural identity, and political legitimacy; and the fact that it also refers to the wholeness of the human order (actual world) and of the cosmos (the world beyond). She presents the interactions between Guanxue and other Daoxue modes in the Song dynasty in an attempt to investigate how Guanxue holism was shaped by the local and national sociopolitical context. In her conclusion, Song suggests that exclusive emphasis on Zhang Zai's cosmology does not do justice to the whole image of the cosmology of Guanxue, and that this school is not merely a regional Neo-Confucian school, as its tenets are also relevant for mainstream Chinese thought; last but not least, she puts forth the idea that the issue of the modernization of China should perhaps be understood as a path to rethink modernity and to explore the multiple possibilities of world history.

In "Concerning Aesthetic Attitudes: Kant and Confucius on Emulation and Evaluation," Cody Staton examines Confucian and Kantian accounts of aesthetic experience. The aim of the article is to show that reading the one philosopher through the other allows us to approach contemporary intercultural issues: thus, Staton shows that, although Confucius is often regarded as a moral philosopher, he considers a meaningful life to be an ongoing aesthetic activity, an attitude that one pursues throughout the course of life. When discussing Kant, he adopts Makkreel's distinction between emulation and evaluation in an effort to demonstrate the Kantian point that one cannot defer to tradition. For Confucius, an aesthetic attitude likewise develops taste in all facets of life, but taste here is rather emulative. As Staton shows, however, far from advocating that one should blindly follow rules, the Confucian notion of emulation makes it clear that self-development is an outcome of aesthetic self-reflection. The key is to understand how, in the give and take of our relationships with others, emulation is about recognizing the appropriate response required in each context. For both Kant and Confucius, the enjoyment of both art and the beauty of nature teaches us how to develop emulative and evaluative aesthetic attitudes.

In "Contradiction and Recursion in Buddhist Philosophy: From *Catuṣkoṭi* to *Kōan*," Adrian Kreutz starts from three questions about

the notion of *catuṣkoṭi* (i.e., the view that any claim can be true, false, both true and false, or neither true nor false): what is its role in Buddhist philosophy? What is its logical form? What is its historical position? He suggests that a fruitful treatment of the three questions (and, therefore, a fruitful philosophical analysis of the *catuṣkoṭi* itself) cannot be had by answering the questions in isolation (as the research literature suggests), but only in correlation. He argues that the *catuṣkoṭi* plays a distinctive soteriological role in practiced Buddhism and should be considered a schema for *upāya* (skillful means). To back this hypothesis, Kreutz extrapolates the *catuṣkoṭi* from the writings of Jízàng and consequently advocates the idea that the *Kōan* of the Zen tradition can be deemed an "abbreviated" *catuṣkoṭi*, playing the same (*upāya*) role as its historical precursors. The article thereby uncovers underexplored connections between South Asian and East Asian Buddhist texts. What ties the discussion together is the attempt to formalize the practitioner's path towards enlightenment (and beyond). The *catuṣkoṭi*, as it turns out, is of paramount importance in this endeavor.

In her article, Maitreyee Datta examines how classical Indian dialectics is used in order to refute the reality of temporal passage in two important texts: the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* by second-century Buddhist philosopher Nāgārjuna, and the *Khandanakhandakhādya* by twelfth-century neo-Advaitin philosopher Śrīharṣa. Datta's analysis is an attempt to shed some light on the contradictions and paradoxes that result from the logical and philosophical inquiries into the reality, perception, and experience of the passage of time, i.e., the move between the different tenses of past, present, and future. What both thinkers discussed here have in common is their critique of the realists' position concerning time, which leads them to conduct an examination of the concept and, eventually, to argue for its unreality. Datta shows that both philosophers refute the reality of the tenses by determining that no accurate account of them is actually possible: Nāgārjuna does so by interpreting *real* as *unconditional* and claiming that the past is conditioned, therefore unreal; Śrīharṣa, on the other hand, interprets *real* as *non-contradictory*, and suggests that all tenses involve circularity or contradiction and, as such, cannot be real.

The three texts in the last part are as follows: Đoàn Minh Huyên's *Esoteric Tradition of Venerable Master Buddha of Western Peace*, translated with commentary by Quảng Huyền; Kurata Hyakuzō's *Looking for One's Self in the Opposite Sex*, translated with commentary by Richard Stone; and Tanabe Hajime's *Requesting the Guidance of Professor Nishida*, translated by Richard Stone with Takeshi Morisato. These are all texts that have never been translated into English before, and as such we hope that they make a significant contribution to the corpus of Asian philosophy available in translation.

The first text belongs to Đoàn Minh Huyên (1807–56), known as "Master Buddha" to his followers, who lived on a "water frontier" between the northern and southern tributaries of the Mekong River in southern Vietnam; as such, he interprets Buddhist teachings in terms of water metaphors, speaking, for example, of the receding tide of dharma that leaves in its wake a "shallowed world." In the second text, Kurata (1891–1943) gives a very personal account of his meeting with Kyoto school philosopher Nishida Kitarō's philosophy and the spiritual and ethical benefits that it offered for him. To be more specific, Kurata outlines the way in which Nishida's philosophy helped him overcome his solipsistic tendencies that had come about during a highly stressful period of his high-school life. The third text represents an extensive and thorough commentary by Tanabe Hajime (1885–1962) of Nishida's *The Self-Aware System of Universals*, in which Tanabe, while expressing his admiration and respect for "Professor Nishida," discusses very rigorously his ideas and points out some of the shortcomings and inconsistencies that he finds in Nishida's writing.

Lastly, the compilation of this edited volume would not have been possible had we not been able to organize two international conferences under the title of "Asian Philosophical Texts" at the Research Centre for East Asian Studies (EASt) at Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB) in October 2018 in Belgium; and at the Research Institute for Japanese Studies (RIJS) at Kanda University of International Studies (KUIS) in September 2019 in Japan. We would like to thank Pierre Bonneels at ULB-EASt and Taisuke Ueno at KUIS-RIJS for providing us a place to share our research findings, translation projects,

and the idea of this book series with a number of great scholars from around the world. Additionally, we would like to thank both EASt and RIJS for covering a significant portion of the publication subsidies for this project. We hope to continue organizing this APT conference as a way to introduce more scholars to our new series and, by supplying more books for discussion, to pursue the polyvocal depth of Asian philosophical traditions.

ESSAYS

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