

Editor's Introduction

The value of insight in philosophy, as in many other fields, is determined by two things: (1) an intuitive moment that confronts us with the possibility of shifting paradigms in our modes of thought, and (2) the subsequent unnamed, often uncredited, and yet equally important work of concretizing the significance of that turning point. The American philosopher Robert Wood provides a good image of this process in a lecture on “The Liberal Arts and the City” delivered at the University of Dallas in 2011.¹ As history books tell us, the Wright brothers’ first powered flights in 1903 completely changed human discourse in terms of our relation to the sky. Current appreciation of the significance of their invention—often devoid of any knowledge of advanced physics or engineering—is expressed unwittingly each time we take a flight. But even when the image of the Wright brother comes to mind, it is accompanied by gross forgetfulness. We hardly ever pay attention to the series of incredible inventions and breathtaking ingenuity that followed and surpassed the miracle of those famous inventors. Nevertheless, the unnamed achievements that carried forward the “immense coordination process”² that led us to where we are today are crucial to an account of the full discourse on aviation that ultimately came to define the meaning of that first flight more than a hundred years ago.

With no less ambition, the editors of this journal were among a small group of colleagues to form the European Network of Japanese Philosophy

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHtMVaj7xmg#t=26m36s>

2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHtMVaj7xmg#t=45m46s>. Wood talks about how Liberal Arts Education enables us to appreciate the immensely complex invention of the institutions that grounded the “coming to be” of human civilization. Here we are using his example in a much more restricted sense to refer to the “coming to be” of our own academic network.

in 2014. At the time, we had no doubt that we would leave a mark on the philosophical map. After all, the wind was at our backs and things were moving more quickly than any of us could have anticipated. In the intervening years since its inauguration, the ENOJP organized two international conferences on Japanese philosophy, the first at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona (2015) and the second at the Université Libre de Bruxelles (2016). These two events combined to draw over 150 participants from across the world to make presentations on their work. Discussions on the intellectual history of Japan in general and on a wide variety of engagements with particular Japanese philosophical texts fueled our intellectual enthusiasm and broadened the horizons of our initial dream. It seemed only natural for the ENOJP to direct its energies towards the launch of its own academic journal. In summer of 2016 the *European Journal of Japanese Philosophy* was born.

Perhaps the time has come to think about directing our efforts toward the second part of philosophical insight. The first volume of the *EJJP* was a kind of the euphoric first flight. The sheer excitement of having the finished journal in our hands, after so much preparation and the help of so many collaborators, was its own reward. The warm encouragement that reached us from so many quarters helped keep that exuberance alive, and with it the dream that what began as a small coterie of scholars working at the fringes of academia was destined to outgrow its origins. The preparation of the second volume of the journal has had a sobering effect as the challenge of keeping up the pace and the standards we had set ourselves began to sink in. The ideal of harnessing the selfless dedication and unacknowledged cooperation of young academics from so many different language groups was bound to run head-on into the increasing demands that their own careers pile on them. Happily, at this critical juncture new faces stepped up to lend a hand and carry us over from the resounding overture into the more measured advance of an annual publication.

Many members of the ENOJP members hold this volume in their hands for the first time at the 3rd ENOJP Conference scheduled to be held in Paris from 2 to 4 November at INALCO and Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne. Many of us imagined it would take a decade and more for Sorbonne to open its doors to a major conference on comparative and non-western philosophy. But here we are, *EJJP* in hand, preparing to hold discussions with representatives from the French capital of continental philosophy.

Others will join me in the surprise that our maiden flight has lasted this long, certainly longer than any of us could have anticipated. Perhaps it is that more and more philosophers and their students in France are ready to embrace the plurality of philosophical thinking reaching the halls of traditional Western academia from around the world. Whatever the reason, the hard truth remains that without the orchestra in the wings, the dancing on stage would quickly come to a halt.

For the journal to continue its course and for the network to gain a foothold in academia, we will have to count on a consistent number of volunteers from our ranks—established scholars as well as those still in the bud—keeping their heads down and shoulders to the wheel. Editorial work like this may go by and large unacknowledged, but for many of us it is an essential part of what it means to live out one's philosophical vocation in collaboration with other scholars. Without the kind of conviviality that has kept us going so far, not only future issues of the journal but future conferences of the ENOJP will simply not be possible. And, to return to where we began, the value of our whole project has drifted away from its initial inspirations and now rests in the hands of those who can enhance it by making it concrete.

In closing, the editors are pleased to announce that with this second issue we are now in a position to begin submitting the *EJJP* to scholarly search engines (like the Philosopher's Index) and online distribution services (like J-Stor and Pro-Quest). We have no doubt that there is much in these pages that merit the attention of a wider audience. As always, your support and encouragement in spreading the work of the Network and the ideas of the journal have our gratitude.

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