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Editorial:

Innovation and Tradition in the Philosophy of the East and the West

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The current issue continues the exploration of patterns of narrative strategies that negotiate between tradition and innovation. The motivation for practitioners in a given sphere of practice to self-reflect and consciously define, advocate, and adopt a project can be a response to some dynamics within that sphere (for example, the style of neo-classicism in the sphere of painting or music can be understood to be against what is perceived as excessive experimentation); but no less often it can be a reaction to powers external to that field, such as geo-political pressure causing a crisis in cultural confidence, or economic factors leading to an adjustment of international policy. Needless to say, such processes are rarely, if ever, clearly classifiable as *only* tradition or *only* innovation; most of the time they are both. Agents who thought they were preserving tradition can turn out to be unwitting innovators; conversely agents rejecting tradition might only be evoking another part or aspect of tradition.

The papers published in this issue touch upon responses at different levels to political and socio-economic forces. Matthiew Felt's "Rehabilitating Tradition: Saigō Nobutsuna and Japanese Myths, 1945–1963" focuses on post-war Japan, whose intellectuals understandably suffered from some kind of cultural identity crisis and felt an urgency to properly define the relation to their past and history. Felt charts the literature scholar Saigō Nobutsuna's fascinating career, who went from trying to use tradition to achieve social and political goals (realising class con-

sciousness) to characterizing the Japanese past in a way that keeps it in a narrative space free from social and political changes, specifically the changes generated by capitalism and American imperialism. Saigō's relation to Western thought obviously evolved throughout his life. As Felt points out, Saigō's defense of Japan's past as a realm of myth and ritual, accessible through imagination, was inspired by English social anthropology. Saigō thus borrows from a Western, or at the very least a non-Japanese tradition, to make a case for opening up a space resistant to Western influence. Such an innovative take on Japanese past thus preserves at least a version of that past that survives Japan's identity crisis, an account whose effects––according to Felt––can be felt in the popular imagination, as well as attitudes and practices.

Rather complex is Jason M. Morgan's "'Humanism' in Two Acts: Motoori Norinaga, Lorenzo Valla, and the Competing Historiographies of Humanist Modernity." Morgan's paper does not focus on a single case, but compares two instances from seemingly very different times and places: Norigana from 18th century Japan and Valla from Renaissance Italy. According to his reading, we can identify a common pattern between these two intellectuals. Both aimed to reform language in order to get closer to the past (or their imagined past), and such a past had contemporary political significance. But aside from identifying a typical pattern where innovation is achieved by the effort to retrieve tradition, Morgan asks the further question as to why these two intellectuals have not received similar evaluations in Western scholarship: Valla is positively remembered as one of the founders of humanism, while Norigana occasionally even has been denigrated as the precursor of later Japanese fascist thinking. Morgan's investigation leads him to expose what he sees as implicit and questionable assumptions of superiority by Westerners. In this way, the theme of innovation and tradition also occurs on the level of Morgan's paper itself. The thesis that Valla and Norigana ought to be studied in similar ways and receive comparable evaluations performs an innovative intervention against the tradition of Western scholarship. The potential of comparative studies to invite us to probe into the hidden prejudices of scholarly tradition seems to be on display here and is worthy of further exploration.

Josie-Marie Perkuhn's "Contestation for Innovation: The Construction of Taiwan's New Southbound Policy" applies a role theory approach to examine the change of Taiwan's Southbound Policy during President Tsai Ing-wen's term. President Lee Teng-hui had begun Taiwan's Southbound Policy in 1990, in response to the new global reality in the post-Soviet era; while the policy more or less went on with the next two presidents (with a shift occurring during Ma Ying-jeou's term), the reasons for its continuation were changing. Perkuhn argues that a significant shift has occurred under Tsai because the cross-strait relation with China's PRC has forced the Taiwanese government to recalibrate and retool their strategy and stance in relation to South Asia. While with Lee the emphasis was laid on outgoing investment and establishing economic ties, with Tsai the accentuation was expanded to include incoming investment and establishing communal and cultural ties. According to Perkuhn's interpretation, under Tsai's leadership Taiwan has innovated its international role from a reliable economic partner to an innovator of goods and a non-aggressive and non-militaristic soft power. The policy itself has led to a transformation of Taiwan's projection of its image and also its self-understanding. This paper illustrates how changing geopolitical landscapes can motivate responses that build upon past strategies but generate new visions of one's own role in such a landscape.