

JAPANESE PHILOSOPHY: A SOURCEBOOK

THE STORY BEHIND THE PROJECT

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Spring 2011 saw the publication of "Japanese Philosophy: A Sourcebook," the culmination of years of collaboration with scores of scholars from around the world. Behind its 1,360 pages lies a tale that rightly belongs to the history of the internationalization of Japanese philosophy. What follows is no more than the briefest of tellings.

WITHIN A few weeks *Japanese Philosophy: A Sourcebook* will have rolled off the presses, bringing to a close a project that began seven years ago. Those of us involved in the production felt from the start that it was never just about publishing a book, and that how we got there would be at least as important as the printed result. That feeling turned out to be more right than any of us could have known at the time. The story of how the *Sourcebook* came to take on a life of its own belongs to a much wider history of philosophy in the making, as faint and unpredictable as its outlines may still be. It was the excitement of being part of that history, more than anything else, that rewarded our efforts at every step of the way.

The Birth of the Idea

The original idea dates back to 1980 when Tom Kasulis was assistant professor of philosophy at the University of Hawaii. At the time, Chinese and Indian philosophy were the dominant non-western traditions, and Japanese philosophy was still struggling for recognition. Already in 1957 Princeton University Press had published *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy*, edited by Sarvepalli Radhakrishna and Charles A. Moore, which was followed in 1963 by Wing-Tsit Chan's *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*. Plans for a third volume on Japanese philosophy never materialized, but the gap had been partially filled by *Sources in*

Japanese Tradition compiled by Tsunoda Ryūsaku 角田柳作, Wm. Theodore de Bary, and Donald Keene and published by Columbia University Press in 1958. Kasulis's dream, as I learned from a series of conversations we had in the 1980s, was to produce an anthology focused more directly on philosophical thought. Meantime, during that decade the Nanzan Institute, under the direction of Jan Van Bragt, published a series of eight volumes of translation and commentary on the philosophy of the Kyoto School, which attracted the attention of younger scholars and helped reinforce the desire for a more wide-ranging *Sourcebook*.

The growing interest in Japanese philosophy was reflected in fifteen international conferences known as "The Kyoto Zen Symposia." Under the inspired direction of Hirata Seikō, abbot of Tenryū-ji in Kyoto, along with Horio Tsutomu, Nishitani Keiji, Ueda Shizuteru, and Minamoto Ryōen, these gatherings involved 66 scholars from abroad and 37 from within Japan in concentrated discussions of Zen philosophy and related questions. The most frequent foreign participant was John Maraldo, Professor of Philosophy at the University of North Florida, who attended no less than six of the symposia. The proceedings were published locally under the title *Zen Buddhism Today*, except for the 1994 Symposium, which was hosted by John in New Mexico and whose papers were subsequently published with the University of Hawai'i Press in 1995 as *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School, and the Question of Nationalism*.

When Tom Kasulis and I met in Kyoto at the 1990 Symposium, the question of a *Sourcebook* was raised again and received the encouragement of other participants, especially the Japanese. Over the following years the subject came up frequently, each occasion adding further refinement to the dream. In 1994 we drew up a prospectus for completing the work by 1997, but it did not take us long to realize that the plan was unworkable and that the editorial task was too much for the two of us to manage on our own. We asked John Maraldo to join us, and his eager acceptance was the stimulus we needed to get more serious about taking the first step.

The First Step

In 2003 we decided to run a preliminary conference at the Nanzan Institute to clarify the rationale, to think more concretely about what is involved, and to solicit advice from scholars in the West who had distinguished themselves in the field. A sample design of two entries, one from classical and one from modern philosophy, was decided on. The Institute agreed to sponsor the event as its 12th Biannual Symposium.

The next step was to approach Pat Crosby, chief editor at the University of Hawai'i Press, who not only responded favorably but reminded us that it had been a full ten years since we had first broached the subject with her. In the



“Japanese Philosophy Abroad” Symposium, Nanzan, June 2004

initial exchange of letters it was agreed that we would aim to produce a volume of about 800 pages, priced reasonably enough to be accessible to students of philosophy.

With all that in mind, we invited 13 scholars from Europe and the United States to the Institute in June 2004. The presentations gave participants an overview of the study of Japanese philosophy abroad, its reception, and its future prospects:

<i>French-speaking world</i>	{	Frédéric Girard Bernard Stevens Jacynthe Tremblay
<i>English-speaking world</i>	{	Thomas P. Kasulis Arisaka Yōkō
<i>Spanish-speaking world</i>	{	Raquel Bouso Lothar Knauth
<i>Italian-speaking world</i>	{	Matteo Cestari Tiziano Tosolini
<i>German-speaking world</i>	{	Rolf Elberfeld Gereon Kopf Matsudo Yukio
<i>Chinese-speaking world</i>	{	Cheung Ching-yuen

Rounding out the regional presentations, Bret W. Davis, John C. Maraldo, and I examined the overall question of just what sort of philosophy “Japanese philosophy” is. The papers were edited and published in their original five languages two months later, with the aid of a grant from the Mutual Aid Corporation for

Private Schools in Japan, under the title *Japanese Philosophy Abroad*. A Japanese translation appeared in 2006 with Sekaishisōsha in Kyoto as 『日本哲学の国際性——海外における受容と展望』.

Over those three days as we debated the idea of “philosophy” it began to dawn on us that the variety of approaches was due to more than a difference of idiom. To quote from the Foreword to the published volume:

The very connotations of the term *philosophy* and the cultural expectations that surround it are far from uniform, even among the countries of continental Europe. Thus, for example, the inclusion of Buddhist thought is self-evident in some linguistic frameworks and largely ignored in others. Or again, the same postmodern modes of thought that give certain trends in Japanese philosophy a foothold in one country serves to cast a shadow of political suspicion over those trends in another. These differences aside, there is one crucial point on which all the essays seem to be in fundamental agreement: the convention of drawing the contours of philosophy contiguous with the contours of classical western philosophy, while dominant within Japan, is unacceptable to scholars of Japanese philosophy abroad.

Ironically, at the time we were holding our symposium, Nanzan University was hosting the 63rd annual meeting of the Philosophical Association of Japan, all of whose papers had to do with western philosophy, none of them on Japan.

The final day of the symposium was held in collaboration with the Philosophy Department of Kyoto University, where Fujita Masakatsu 藤田正勝 and Keta Masako 気多田雅子 had arranged for a two-hour discussion with a number of local scholars on the meaning of Japanese philosophy today. Yata Miho 矢田美穂 later held a tea ceremony for the group at the house of her grandfather, the late Nishitani Keiji.

The Techny Workshops

In 2005, Okuyama Michiaki 奥山倫明, a permanent fellow of the Nanzan Institute, helped apply for an Aid for Scientific Research grant from the Japanese government. By the time the grant of some \$200,000 had come through the following spring, the three editors had hammered out a rough draft of the contents:

Part I: MAJOR JAPANESE SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

Buddhist Schools

Esoteric Traditions

Shingon

Tendai

Kamakura Exoteric Traditions

Pure Land

Zen

Nichiren

Buddhist-Based Academic Traditions

Confucian Schools

Neo-Confucian

Kogaku

Shintō Schools

Bushidō Schools

Modern Academic Schools

Kyoto School

Watsuji School

Psychology and Phenomenology-based Philosophies

Part II: PHILOSOPHICAL THEMES IN JAPANESE THOUGHT

- ☐ Nature 自然 (cosmologies, natural philosophy, metaphysics)
- ☐ Mind and Body 心身 (psychologies, epistemologies, philosophical anthropologies)
- ☐ The World Beyond 異界・天 (transcendence, the Gods, philosophy of religion)
- ☐ Language and Truth こと (logic, rhetoric)
- ☐ Morality and Cultivation 道・和・仁・自修・学 (ethics, harmony, social order)
- ☐ Aesthetics 美学

No sooner did we have the structure laid out before us on paper than it became obvious that there were serious overlaps in the two parts. Since we wanted the *Sourcebook* to be more than a mere collection of translations, we needed to identify important themes and find a way to link them to the major traditions of thought. We just were not sure how. At the same time, the task of selecting whom to include and what passages from their writings to select loomed menacingly on the horizon. The grant allowed us to think the editorial process on a grander scale, and that meant rethinking the entire project one step at a time.

First of all, it seemed to us that the most efficient way to decide on what to include was to gather together a small number of specialists familiar with the texts in each area, and ask them to identify material that they consider representative *and at the same time* of interest to philosophers and students not familiar with Japanese intellectual history. We began with a workshop on an area in which we felt most in need of help: “Philosophical Sources in Japanese Confucianism.” Five scholars were invited to join the three editors in March 2006 at a conference center in the town of Techny located in the northern suburbs of Chicago:

Peter Nosco, *University of British Columbia*
 Janine Sawada, *University of Iowa*
 Mary Evelyn Tucker, *Yale University*
 John Tucker, *East Carolina University, Greenville*
 Samuel Hideo Yamashita, *Pomona College*
 Michael Marra, *University of California, Los Angeles*

For two and a half days, the group sat locked in intense discussion, at the end of which we had a rich fare from which to choose, a workable list of translators, and most important of all, a sense that as editors we were headed in the right direction. But it was also obvious that we had grossly underestimated the space to be allocated to Confucian thought. Our plans for an 800-page volume were beginning to look unrealistic and the division of themes in Part II unworkable, both matters that later workshops would confirm.

At the end of the first Techny workshop, the editors were in agreement that each of the major traditions of thought would need a special editor. Funds would be set aside to invite these persons to Japan to assist at a later stage in the organization and verification of the translations, in the preparation of a Glossary of technical terms, and in the composition of a section Overview.

One year later, in March 2007, a second Techny workshop was held on the theme “The Interface of Science, Philosophy, and Religion in Japanese Intellectual History” with the aid of a special grant from Sanda Ichirō’s project on Science and Religion funded by Force & Co., Japan. Participating scholars included historians of science, philosophers, and specialists in religious thought:

Nathan Siven, *University of Pennsylvania*
 Willi Vanderwalle, *Katholieke Universiteit Leuven*
 Nagatomo Shigenori 長友繁法, *Temple University*
 Andrew Goble, *University of Oregon*
 Matsumaru Hisao 松丸壽雄, *Dokkyō University*
 Nakayama Shigeru 中山 茂, *Kanagawa University*
 John A. Tucker, *East Carolina University, Greenville*
 Peter Nosco, *University of British Columbia*

Our aim was to locate texts, from the earliest recorded material up to the twentieth century, that show the links between science, religion, and philosophy. Since the distinction of the three only dates from the early years of the Meiji era in Japan, we felt that older texts would tend to show the close relationship among the three. This contrasts with contemporary thought in which they represent separate academic specializations.

In the end, it was decided to weave the selected material into the current structure of the *Sourcebook* and not to treat science as a special section, except

for an interpretive essay on present-day Japanese bioethics. But insofar as much of the discussion focused on the “integrated” approach as more faithful to Japanese philosophy as a whole, the identification of the themes singled out for treatment in Part II of the original structure came up for critical discussion. In the aftermath, it took several weeks of correspondence among the editors to decide to rethink the themes completely.

Six weeks later, from 27 to 29 April, the editors gathered again at Techny, this time for a workshop on “Philosophical Resources in Japanese Buddhism.” Seven specialists in various aspects of Buddhism were invited to join us:

Paul Swanson, *Nanzan Institute for Religion & Culture*

David Gardiner, *Colorado College*

Paul B. Watt, *DePauw University*

Dennis Lishka, *University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh*

Mark Blum, *State University of New York, Albany*

Mark Unno, *University of Oregon*

Janine Sawada, *University of Iowa*

In the course of discussing the contents and relative importance to be given to the selections, the matter of translation and technical apparatus surfaced again and again. The editorial decision to remove all sinographs, as well as all but absolutely essential Japanese words, from the body of the volume to the reference material at its end, did not prove as difficult a hurdle as we had anticipated. The elimination of textual glosses, translator’s interpolations, and the minimization of footnotes was something else. Insistence on the nature of the



Techny Workshop on “Philosophical Resources in Japanese Buddhism,” April 2007

Buddhist selection as *philosophical resources* and on the intended audience as those with minimal knowledge of Buddhist texts, however, eventually brought the group to agreement on the matter.

It also gave us the chance to raise the question of the literary quality we were aiming at in the translations. This was a question we would have to contend with all along the way to publication. In the end, of the 322 excerpts selected for the entire volume, more than two-thirds were first or new translations.

By the end of the Buddhist workshop, the proportions of the *Sourcebook* had undergone a radical change as we realized that a great deal more space would have to be allocated to premodern thought in order to include a wider range of texts than we had originally anticipated. In addition, consensus among Buddhist and Confucian scholars on the status of *bushidō* thought persuaded us to relegate it to a short treatment in Part II. A further consultation with James Ketelaar of the University of Chicago was further stimulation to give ampler space to Shinto traditions.

The challenge of “Modern Academic Philosophy” presented its own problems, both in terms of the sheer volume of material and in the intermingling of western philosophical influences with more traditional resources. A fourth Techny workshop was organized in March 2008 to take up these matters with six additional scholars invited to attend:

Nakajima Takahiro 中島隆博, *Tokyo University*
 Yusa Michiko 遊佐道子, *West Washington University*
 Matsumaru Hisao 松丸壽雄, *Dokkyō University*
 Bret Davis, *Loyola College, Maryland*
 Gereon Kopf, *Luther College*
 Sueki Fumihiko 末本文美士, *Tokyo University*

As before, the participants were asked to prepare selections of texts for consideration, and the discussions centered on whom and what to include. At the beginning of each workshop, the editors presented for critical review an overview of the project in three parts: Tom Kasulis laid out the historical perspective and the notion of “philosophical resources”; John Maraldo presented the rationale for a working definition of philosophy; and I explained the technical apparatus, textual cross-referencing, and principles of translation. Once again, we were made aware of oversights and forced to rethink the design in the light of the readership. In this workshop, it became clear that we would have to separate out the story of the origins of modern academic philosophy from its later flowering in the twentieth century. The former would need to include reference to parallel histories in China and Korea, and the latter would have to take care to concentrate on the distinctively Japanese contribution to modern philosophy as it is commonly understood.

The Frontiers Symposia

Parallel with the Techny workshops, another series of symposia were being conducted with the aim of bringing scholars of Japanese philosophy from the West, especially the younger generation, into dialogue with their Japanese counterparts. As far as possible *Sourcebook* grant funds were used to help subsidize the symposia and their publication into a series of volumes known as *Frontiers in Japanese Philosophy*, published at the Nanzan Institute:

1. *Frontiers of Japanese Philosophy*, October 2006, Humboldt-Universität, Berlin. Published 2006, ed. by J. W. Heisig, 313 pages.
2. *Neglected Themes and Hidden Variations*, March 2007, McGill University, Montréal. Published 2008, ed. by Victor Sōgen Hori and Melissa Anne-Marie Curley, 261 pages.
3. *Origins and Possibilities*, June 2008, Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture. Published 2008, ed. by J. W. Heisig and Uehara Mayuko, 304 pages.
4. *Facing the Twenty-First Century*, December 2008, Hong Kong. Published 2009, ed. by Lam Wing-keung and Cheung Ching-yuen, 304 pages.
5. *Nove granice japanske filozofije*, ed. by Nevad Kahteran and James W. Heisig (Sarajevo: Nanzan and Šahinpašić, 2009), 240 pages. Selections from earlier volumes in the series, aided by a grant from the Japan Foundation.
6. *Confluences and Cross-Currents*, June 2009, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona. Published 2009, ed. by Raquel Bouse and J. W. Heisig, 383 pages.
7. *Classical Japanese Philosophy*, Tallinn University, Estonia. Published 2010, ed. by J. W. Heisig and Rein Raud, 355 pages.





Frontiers Symposium on “Japanese Philosophy: Origins and Possibilities,” Nanzan, June 2008

All the material from the above volumes is available on-line and free of charge for downloading in searchable PDF files (<http://nirc.nanzan-u.ac.jp/publications/EJPhilosophy/EssaysInJapanesePhil.htm>)

In all, 111 papers were delivered by 67 persons over 6 years of the *Frontiers* symposia. At several of them discussions were held on the *Sourcebook* with valuable feedback on making the book more useful for students and teachers of Japanese philosophy. In particular, the symposium held at Nanzan gave useful advice on the treatment of women philosophers. Several of the participants were later tapped to contribute translations or help with historical information.

The Editorial Process

As the Techny workshops and Frontiers symposia were going on, translations were pouring in, hundreds and hundreds of pages that needed line-by-line attention for consistency of vocabulary, cross-referencing, and checking. At the same time, the subjects to be taken up as themes in Part II were finally settled on in 2008, with essays to be included on these five topics:

Culture and Identity, Thomas P. Kasulis

Samurai Thought, Oleg Benesch

Women Philosophers, Yusa Michiko 遊佐道子
and Kitgawa Sakiko 北川東子

Aesthetics, Michael Marra

Bioethics, Hayashi Yoshihiro 林 貴啓

Although many of the editorial tasks could be handled electronically at a distance, between 2005 and 2009, John Maraldo and Tom Kasulis spent several months at the Nanzan Institute, where all the original texts for the *Sourcebook* were archived and where the typesetting of the volume was in progress. During that time they also prepared drafts of the essays on *Culture and Identity* and *Modern Academic Philosophy* respectively.

As noted earlier, the Techny workshops convinced us of the need for the assistance of “section editors” to oversee the major traditions treated in Part I and compose Overviews. We were fortunate to find the best collaborators we could have hoped for, each of whom spent four to six weeks at the Institute working closely with the editors and communicating with the translators over a myriad of details:

John Tucker, *Confucian Traditions*, June 2007

Marcus Teeuwen, *Shinto and Native Studies*, November 2008

Mark Blum, *Buddhist Traditions*, January 2008, January 2009

Yusa Michiko 遊佐道子, *Women Philosophers*, September 2009

I doubt they realize fully that without their help we would still be floundering about in unfamiliar waters.

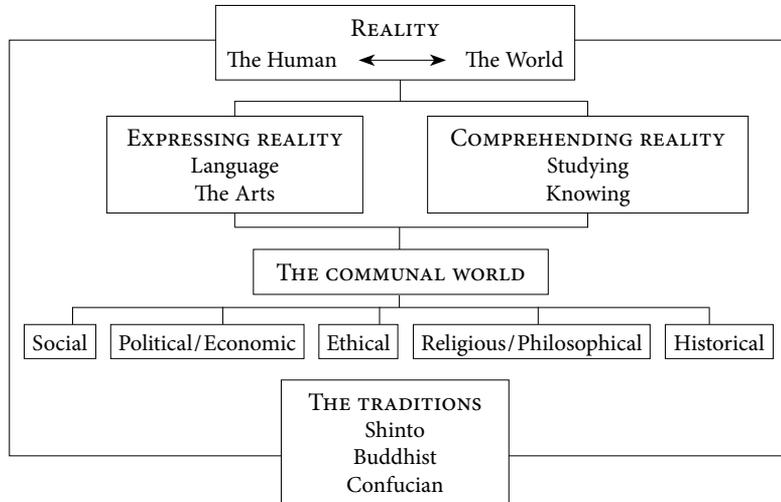
In 2009 we were introduced to a local artist, Ukebe Kanako 浮邊加奈子, who agreed to make a series of drawings for major figures in the *Sourcebook*. Working often from the haziest of originals, she was able to produce pen-and-ink portraits that add a special touch to the finished volume.

Once all the material was typeset and the approval of the authors secured, we had begun an initial proofreading of the entire book. A graduate student of Tom Kasulis, Wamae Muriuki, helped in the early stages, but the task was too demanding and there were too many details to decide on without proper discussion among the editors. We needed a concentrated period of time together, in a location far away from the duties of our everyday lives, to do a proper job of it. We found such a place northwest of Barcelona, an idyllic mountain villa called La Serra de Pruit, and set aside a week in July 2010 to gather there. The Roche Foundation of Chicago offered to pay the expenses and David White, an editorial assistant at the Nanzan Institute, agreed to put his proofreading expertise at our disposal for the duration.

By the time we arrived in Spain, we were convinced that the book was nearly ready and needed only a leisurely finesse of the details. Little did we realize how valuable that week of 12-hour workdays would be. Hour by hour inconsistencies that had escaped our attention surfaced one after the other for debate and final decision. During discussions over dinner on how to organize the Glossary and Index, the question of the “themes” came up again. We were haunted by the feeling that in the process of narrowing the focus of the thematic essays something

had been lost. It was not enough that we had “flagged” the technical terms of the Glossary throughout the book. The original themes needed to be identified more systematically than a simple Index could handle.

In the end, we agreed that a more comprehensive Thematic Index was called for, one in which the entire content of the *Sourcebook* would be organized around guiding ideas more native to the Japanese tradition than the ruling categories of Western philosophy. The main outlines of the Thematic Index were set down, but it was not until Tom Kasulis returned to Nanzan in November to work out the details that it would take final shape:

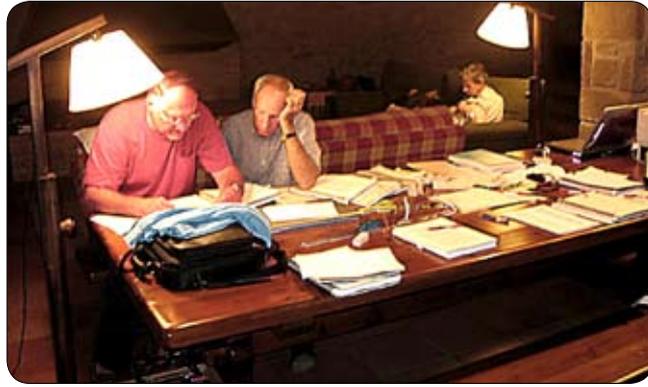


Throughout our week in Catalunya, the custodians of La Serra de Pruit, Jordi Serch and Elisabet Ibañez, fed us like kings and gave us the space and freedom to work in the kind of uninterrupted luxury we could hardly have dreamed possible. Surrounded by fields and mountains as far as the eye can see, high enough to escape the summer heat, and with only the bleating of the sheep to fill the silence, we slipped into a rhythm of an intensity I don’t recall having known before or since.

Although we had internet access to contact the section editors for help

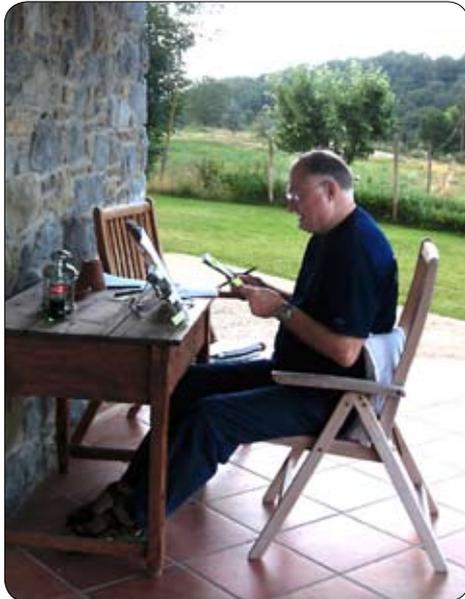


on one or the other fine point, we were left finally with a sizeable list of questions that only consultation with the original texts could settle. The high-pitched nature of our collaboration allowed us to rely on memory for many things with-



out having constantly to stop and make notes for future reference. At the same time, the process of making our way methodically through more than 1,300 pages of text and checking each other's work meant that there would be a fair share of work left for later. We had to smile to each other, again and again as the days wore on, about how naive we had been in underestimating the enormity of the labor involved.

The fourth day we took lunch in the small town of Tavertet, about 6 kilometers away as the crow flies but nearly an hour by car. I had personal reasons for the excursion: to say farewell to an old friend, the Catalan philosopher and theologian, Raimon Panikkar. The preceding January he had sent around a notice that he was retiring from all public activities. This meant that he would no longer be able to receive visitors regularly in his home as he had for over twenty years. Failing health at ninety years of age had obliged him to the decision. Still,



he agreed to receive us and we passed a memorable half hour with him in his study, surrounded by the kilometer of books that has been the love of his life. Raimon was quieter and more distant than I can ever remember, but he was quick to recognize John from a conference in Oxford ten years ago when they had met briefly. He spoke in his usual mixture of Catalan and English, but seemed strangely detached. When I passed him greetings from friends in Barcelona, he replied quietly, "Everyone and everything is the same to me now."

I kissed him *adéu* on the forehead, knowing it would be the last time. It was. He died two weeks later.



For me this last visit was not a mere interlude from the *Sourcebook* project. Raimon had composed an introduction to a book I wrote on sabbatical in Barcelona, *Filósofos de la nada*, and had often discussed with me his conviction that *philosophia* was only one way to love wisdom with

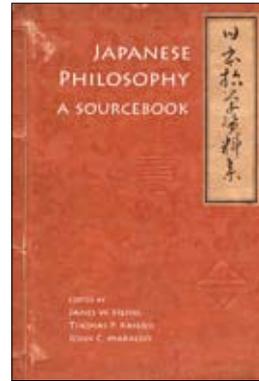
intellectual rigour. Opening paths to the riches of the East had been the passion of his life, a passion that he inspired in others through his prodigious output and the irresistible charm of his person. I felt a deep pride and sense of completion at being able to bring my coworkers to the villa Can Felo where I had enjoyed so many memorable hours discussing things that matter over a bottle of wine.

After taking leave of Jordi and Elisabet, the four of us headed back to Barcelona where we dined with Victoria Cirlot and Amador Vega, colleagues from the Universitat Pompeu Fabra who had often collaborated in arranging for public events having to do with Japanese philosophy, including lectures by Ueda Shizuteru 上田閑照 of Kyoto University. We also had occasion to have dinner with Raimund Herder, chief editor at Herder Editorial in Spain. During the meal we broached the idea of a Spanish translation of the *Sourcebook*. Raimund expressed his interest and immediately began to rattle off names of possible collaborators.



A few months after returning to Japan we received the news that a grant of \$7,400 from the Suntory Foundation to aid the University of Hawai'i Press in the production of the book.

In hindsight, working with so many different translators and adjusting their principles and idiosyncrasies with our own was not as trying as we had imagined. Of course, there were disagreements galore and compromises had to be made at every step of the way. But as tough as the scrimmaging got, it was no match for the overall support and cooperation we received from the community of students and scholars of Japanese philosophy from around the world. In fact, we had the sense that the *Sourcebook* project took significant strides towards broadening the base of that community and strengthening contacts between scholars young and old in Japan and the West. The *Sourcebook* will have to stand up to critical review on its own merits, but the process that led to its publication after so many years of gestation has already reaped an abundant harvest of its own.



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