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Heidegger and East Asian Thought

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Notes

I want to thank Richard Garner for his help in improving earlier versions of this review.

- 1 – In *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 9, no. 12 (2010): 481–485.
- 2 – He mentions Hegel, Charles Taylor, Niklas Luhmann, and Drucilla Cornell.
- 3 – See <http://www.cpb.org/aboutcpb/cpbethicsguide.pdf>.
- 4 – Moeller seems to recognize this when he says, in another place, “most of our distinctions between good and bad are non-ethical or amoral” (p. 5).
- 5 – A. C. Graham, *Chuang-tzŭ: The Seven Inner Chapters and Other Writings from the Book Chuang-tzŭ* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981), p. 81.
- 6 – http://www.innocenceproject.org/Content/DNA_Exonerations_Nationwide.php.
- 7 – Moeller isn’t opposed to or in favor of the death penalty because of his own moral convictions since he claims to have none. On the other hand, he thinks it is cruel to kill someone who does not want to die.
- 8 – The philosophers he is referring to are Ernest van den Haag, Walter Berns, Herbert Morris, and Tom Sorrell.
- 9 – Not believing that someone deserves to live, of course, is not the same as wanting him or her to die.
- 10 – <http://www.latimes.com/news/nation/nationnow/la-na-nn-cleveland-kidnapping-death-penalty-20130509,0,7028097.story>.
- 11 – <http://abcnews.go.com/US/jodi-arias-death-penalty-trial-begins-shocking-photo/story?id=26353695>.
- 12 – On page 1 Moeller says, “This book does not say, Abolish morality!” Hopefully, he will comment further about how his views on the persistence of morality line up with recent calls to abolish it. See Richard Garner, “Abolishing Morality,” in *A World without Values: Essays on John Mackie’s Moral Error Theory*, ed. Richard Joyce and Simon Kirchin (Springer, 2010). Also see Joel Marks, *Ethics without Morals: In Defense of Amorality* (New York and London: Routledge, 2013).

Heidegger und das Ostasiatische Denken (Heidegger and East Asian thought). Edited by Alfred Denker, Shunsuke Kadowaki, Ryôsuke Ôhashi, Georg Stenger, and Holger Zaborowski. Heidegger-Jahrbuch 7. Freiburg and Munich: Verlag Karl Alber, 2013. Pp. 475. €48, ISBN 978-3-495-45707-8.



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The *Heidegger Jahrbuch* series professes that it “delivers ground-breaking contributions to discussion with Heidegger’s thought, makes new sources accessible and

accompanies the actual research in a critical way."¹ Each new volume in the series focuses on a specific theme, and consists of a documentation part that seeks to give readers access to a variety of new and previously published material on that theme, and an interpretation part where a number of scholars engage critically with the theme. As such, the *Jahrbuch* has previously focused on Heidegger's relation to other thinkers (Aristotle, Nietzsche, and Husserl), and two of its volumes have dealt with the thorny topic of 'Heidegger and National Socialism.'

Now, the seventh volume of the *Heidegger Jahrbuch* has set itself the goal of exploring the theme 'Heidegger and East Asian Thought.' *Heidegger und das Ostasiatische Denken*, edited by Alfred Denker, Shunsuke Kadowaki, Ryōsuke Ōhashi, Georg Stenger, and Holger Zaborowski, starts off with an introduction by Ryōsuke Ōhashi, who takes his cue from the 'and' in the title of the book. He proposes to see this 'and' in three different ways: first as the 'between' of the conversation between Heidegger and East Asian thought, second as the synthesizing force of globalization where the 'and' would signal a narrowing or even an end to the distance between different ways of thought, and lastly as the 'and' of the problematic of language and translation. Ōhashi suggests that we can find these three topics back in the contributions of the various authors.

Next is the Documentation section, containing letters that Heidegger's East Asian students and colleagues directed to him, letters that Heidegger sent to his East Asian students and colleagues, and various other writings including a transcript of a colloquium Heidegger held with a Japanese colleague (Shinichi Hisamatsu) on art, and Tomio Tezuka's two writings concerning his dialogue with Heidegger, which at least partly occasioned the publication of "A Dialogue on Language" in *On the Way to Language*. In this part the current volume repeats a lot of the material already available to readers of German through Hartmut Buchner's 1989 book, *Japan und Heidegger*.²

Four sections with articles follow. The first section is on Heidegger and East Asian thought, the second on Heidegger and Japanese philosophy in modernity, the third on current Heidegger scholarship "from an East Asian perspective," and the last a documenting of the Heidegger reception in Japan and Korea. A number of the articles have previously appeared in other languages, and as such this is a good way to introduce German speakers to scholarship around the world.

Individually the contributions of the various scholars are generally of high quality throughout, but overall the book leaves some things to be wished for. The section themes are confusing. If section 2 is about Heidegger and Japan, then one would not expect articles on Heidegger and Japan in section 1 or 3, but there are such. If section 3 is about scholarship from East Asia, why are there only Japanese contributors to this section? We touch here on the major weakness of this volume: it is largely focused on Japan; Heidegger's critical engagement with China is very much subordinated to Japan. The volume presents fourteen Japanese scholars, six Western, one Chinese, and one Korean. Thus, the theme 'Heidegger and East Asia' seems largely truncated to 'Heidegger and Japan.' But even then, one has to wonder about the fit into the

theme 'Heidegger and East Asia' of articles (by Tetsuya Sakakibara, Shunsuke Kadowaki, and Takashi Nakahara) that have nothing to do with East Asia except for the fact that they were written by Japanese scholars. This only shows that there are Japanese (and other East Asian) scholars who study Heidegger, but not much more. Do these contributions in fact show an 'Asian' perspective? Nothing of the sort comes to the fore in these otherwise valuable contributions. Worse, do not such inclusions reinforce the idea that Japanese philosophy is already present when Japanese scholars practice Western philosophy, an idea that Heidegger was adamantly against? It is well known and even documented a number of times in the present volume that Heidegger thought that East Asian thinkers should critically engage their own tradition rather than that of the West—and that surely includes Heidegger himself as well.

A related shortcoming of this volume is that of all the articles only two are fully about Heidegger's engagement with classical Chinese thought, with another two partly including early Chinese Zen (Chan) Buddhism. As such, the volume betrays a very one-sided approach, and one that is curious, since the Japanese connection to Heidegger has already been well documented, with a number of volumes related to 'Heidegger and Japan' available in a variety of languages.³

Thus the seventh volume of the *Heidegger Jahrbuch* is really not exactly groundbreaking and new. Kōichi Tsujimura's contribution is more than thirty-five years old, much of the correspondence in the documentation part has been known since Buchner's 1989 book, and many of the papers in the other sections, being Japan focused, rehearse Heidegger's "A Dialogue on Language" in much the same way, pointing to the differences in language that Heidegger focused on, the 'single source' of thought, and Heidegger's perceived (lack of) interest in East Asia.

In section 4 the Heidegger reception in Japan and Korea is documented, but, again, not in China or Taiwan. This raises some interesting questions. Does this mean that there is no Heidegger reception in these countries? Even if there was only little work done on Heidegger in China and Taiwan, would that not also merit inclusion in this volume?

Such exclusions render the book one-sided. Are there no other scholars (Western or Asian) who deal with Heidegger's approach to Asia and who are capable of writing in German, or whose work (like the article included by Zhang Xianglong) would merit translation in this volume? Curious, too, is the inclusion of one single English-language article in this otherwise German-language book. Although Bret W. Davis' contribution is excellent in itself, surely if the aim was to include Heidegger scholars who do comparative work, many more such-English language articles should have appeared (in English or translated into German), and a more balanced approach to and picture of 'Heidegger and East Asia' would surely have resulted. A bigger implication that should set all comparative philosophers thinking is that in this volume very little mention is made of books in English, aside from Graham Parkes' *Heidegger and Asian Thought*. Of course, those working in the English language are also not exactly known for their citations of German scholars, but this suggests that comparative philosophy may still be somewhat provincial itself.

Overall volume 7 of the *Heidegger Jahrbuch* introduces us to German, European, and American, but mostly Japanese scholars working on Heidegger, and as such it is a valuable introduction to Japanese engagement with Heidegger, but not much more.

Notes

- 1 – http://www.verlag-alber.de/jahrbuecher/uebersicht_html?k_onl_struktur=1375123, accessed 15/01/2014.
- 2 – Hartmut Buchner, *Japan und Heidegger: Gedenkschrift der Stadt Messkirch zum hundertsten Geburtstag Martin Heideggers* (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1989).
- 3 – Two examples include Buchner, *Japan und Heidegger*, and Bret W. Davis, Brian Schroeder, and Jason Wirth, eds., *Japanese and Continental Philosophy: Conversations with the Kyoto School* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011).

Confucius, Rawls, and the Sense of Justice. By Erin M. Cline. New York: Fordham University Press, 2013. Pp. xiii + 354. Hardcover \$65.00, ISBN 978-0-823-24508-6.



Reviewed by **Sungmoon Kim** City University of Hong Kong

Erin Cline's *Confucius, Rawls, and the Sense of Justice* makes a timely contribution to the fields of comparative philosophy and Confucian political philosophy, not least because of its unique interpretations of Rawls' and Confucius' philosophical thought and its sophisticated cross-cultural philosophical comparison, but also because of how it addresses misunderstandings of Rawls' political philosophy that are prevalent among students of Chinese philosophy. At the heart of such misunderstandings are the failure to distinguish the later Rawls from the earlier (particularly as the author of *A Theory of Justice*) and, more fundamentally, the complete dismissal of the Humean elements in Rawls (especially in his earlier works), namely his profound interest in moral psychology, particularly moral motivation and moral development. Echoing (though without citing) recent Humean reinterpretations of Rawls' political philosophy,¹ Cline not only revisits one of the most neglected areas in Rawls' political philosophy but also reinterprets and further reconstructs Confucius' thought with special attention to his unarticulated idea of a sense of justice. What makes this book really interesting is that it also explores a way to improve Rawls' idea of moral development from the Confucian perspective of self-cultivation.

Cline successfully forestalls one possible criticism of her attempt to investigate the sense of justice in the *Analects*, the objection that there is no term in the text that directly corresponds to "justice," by focusing on "the capacity for a sense of justice, or the capacity to feel or perceive what is fair" (p. 18) instead of a particular conception or theory of justice. More specifically, Cline, following Rawls, distinguishes