Preface to the Special Section:
Philosophy of Science in East Asia

Tetsuji ISEDA*

This special issue is a result of recent cooperation among philosophers of science in Asian countries, especially Japan, Korea and Taiwan. As a participant of this activity, let me first summarize the recent interactions among East Asian philosophers of science.

To my knowledge, this international cooperation was fostered by Korean philosophers of science. Korean Society for Philosophy of Science (KSPS) is a relatively young organization established in 1995, but (or probably because of that) it has been very active in fostering international relationship among neighboring countries.¹

Its fifth president, In-Rae Cho gave a presentation at the annual meeting of PSSJ (Philosophy of Science Society, Japan) in 2006. He invited back professor Nobuharu Tanji (the president of PSSJ at that time) in 2007. This exchange was developed into regular invitations from Korea; professor Fu Dawie of National Tsing-Hua University (2008) from Taiwan and professor Soshichi Uchii (2009) and myself (2010) from Japan were successively invited to annual meetings of KSPS.

The next step in the international interaction was joint conferences. A preliminary bilateral conference between Japanese and Korean philosophers of science was held in Kyoto in February 2011, organized by myself and sponsored by Department of Philosophy and History of Science, Kyoto University. As is mentioned I was invited to give a talk at KSPS annual meeting in 2010, and found that there are many philosophers of science in Korea who share similar interests as Japanese colleagues. That is why I decided to invite five philosophers each from Korea and Japan to begin collective interactions.

The idea of multinational workshop on philosophy of science was taken up by professor Sang Wook Yi, who was the host of my talk at KSPS and an invited speaker of the Kyoto workshop. He decided to make it a conference series and also decided to expand it to include Taiwanese colleagues. The result was the first East Asian Philosophy of Science Workshop (EAPSW), held as a satellite event to the KSPS annual meeting in July 2011. Professor Szu-Ting Chen, one of the contributors of current issue, was the participant of the first EAPSW and has been an active participant.

* Graduate School of Letters, Kyoto University
¹ KSPS website http://philsci.or.kr/eng/index.asp
and organizer of the subsequent conferences. By the way, there is no organization specific to philosophy of science in Taiwan, but there are several internationally and interdisciplinarily active philosophers there, which makes Taiwan a kind of focal point in international interactions.

Professor Yi made it sure that this workshop is the official event of KSPS, and professor Young E. Rhee, the current president of KSPS and one of the contributors of current issue, took over the management of Korean side of the conference series.

At the time of writing this introduction, six conferences have been held in this series, and one is scheduled. Professor Rueylin Chen and his former Ph.D. student Hsiao-Fan Yeh, authors of the third contribution to this special issue, took part in this conference series from the third event in 2013, and are going to host the 7th event in December 2017. The list of conferences is the following:

1. The First East Asia Philosophy of Science Workshop
   Hanyang University, Seoul, Republic of Korea, July 2, 2011

2. The Second East Asia Philosophy of Science Workshop
   Miyazaki Station KITEN Building, Convention Room, Miyazaki-shi, Miyazaki, Japan, November 12, 2012 (a satellite event for the annual meeting of Philosophy of Science Society, Japan)

3. The Third East Asia Conference on the Philosophy of Science
   National Tsing-Hua University, Hsinchu, Taiwan, October 3–4, 2013

4. The Fourth East Asia & Southeast Asia Conference on the Philosophy of Science
   2014
   Institut Latihan Islam Malaysia (ILIM), Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia, November 5–6, 2014
   Main theme “Indigenization of Knowledge and Intercivilizational Dialogue”

5. The Fifth East-Asian and Pacific Conference on Philosophy of Science
   Seoul National University, Seoul, Republic of Korea, August 25–26, 2015
   Main theme “The Philosophy of Science and the Science-Technology Civilization in the 21st Century”

6. The 6th Asia-Pacific Conference on Philosophy of Science
   Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan, September 10–11, 2016

7. The 7th Asian-Pacific Conference on Philosophy of Science
   National Chung Cheng University, Chayi, Taiwan, December 2017 (scheduled)

---

2 More detailed information on the first five conferences is available at East-Asian and Pacific Conference on Philosophy of Science (EAPCPS) website maintained by KSPS
http://philsci.or.kr/eng/html/sub04_01.asp
For more on the sixth event, see the following booklet.
http://www.cape.bun.kyoto-u.ac.jp/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/APCPS2016booklet.pdf
The changing name of the conference series signifies the expansion of the circle of philosophers of science. Philosophers from Malaysia were invited to the third conference, and became the host of the fourth of the conference. In the sixth conference, philosophers of science from the People’s Republic of China were invited for the first time in the series.

This conference series is not alone in terms of fostering international interactions among philosophers in East Asia. There is another conference series, called Conference on Contemporary Philosophy in East Asia (CCPEA), running alongside. This conference series has a wider scope including other fields of contemporary philosophy and especially so-called ‘analytic Asian philosophy’, i.e. attempts at integrating insights from Asian traditional philosophies into analytic philosophy. CCPEA conferences have been held in Taipei (2012), Kyoto (2014) and Seoul (2016).\(^3\) Philosophers of science who got to know one another also take part in CCPEA conferences, which means that we have chance to meet in person more than once a year. This seems to be quite a close interaction, especially given that such interaction was virtually non-existent ten years ago.

What is the purpose of such international exchanges among Asian philosophers of science? Why do we care about what colleagues in neighboring countries do? Naturally the answer is not simple, partly because participants have different motives in the first place. My own motives for organizing the prototype workshop between Japan and Korea were roughly the following. Philosophers of science in Japan and in Korea are in similar situations. They are relatively small in number; we are far away from the centers of research in this field. Maybe we can find someone with similar background and interest in the other country, i.e. potential research collaborators. I think my own prototype workshop and the subsequent conferences strongly confirmed my expectations, not just between Japan and Korea, but also among East Asian countries in general.

One thing I keep feeling sorry about this series of conferences is that the exchanges are entirely in English. This is a shame given that we share a lot of cultural backgrounds, especially Chinese characters (kanji). I hope that the conference series becomes the starting point for deeper interactions including learning one another’s language. In the mean time, there is a bright side about this English environment. Because English is nobody’s first language, younger researchers can practice English without feeling much pressure.

The three contributions to this special issue, one from Korea and two from Taiwan, will give you some idea as to what issues other philosophers in East Asia are interested in, and how they approach those issues. This is of course just a small

\(^3\) The last two events of this series have their own websites.
http://www.cape.bun.kyoto-u.ac.jp/ccpea2014/
http://www.ccpea2016.kr/
sample of research in philosophy of science in this region. I hope the readers are stimulated to look for potential collaborators by themselves.

(Received 2017.5.29; Accepted 2017.5.30)