This year marks the hundredth anniversary of the May 4th Movement, a watershed moment that sparked a cultural and political awakening for China and helped forge a new identity in dialogue with ideas from the West. To a certain extent, the May 4th Movement crystallized a debate which started more than four hundred years before, when Portuguese ships sailed to Asia for commerce, bringing with them a world-view, philosophy, and religion which challenged indigenous traditions. Today we are engaged in exploring new frontiers of philosophy, and in doing so it is worthwhile to reflect on the first encounter and confrontation between Asian and Western philosophies. The five papers presented here are ordered chronologically, covering a century of intellectual debates.

With regards to the early introduction of Western ideas in Japan, there is not much literature in English. This paper of Yoshimi Orii fills an important gap, presenting the fascinating figure of Fukansai Habian, a Japanese who converted to Christianity in 1583, and then joined the Jesuit order, becoming one of the first Asians to receive a thorough education in Western philosophy and theology. Orii conducts a critical analysis of two works by Habian which show his two opposing stances. In one work Habian sought to assert the supremacy of Christianity over local traditions, especially Confucianism, whereas in a later treatise composed after his apostasy he articulates his rejection of Christianity. What unites the two works is Habian’s confrontational approach in setting one tradition against the other. With this paper, Orii invites us to rethink the articulation between particular
philosophical traditions (may it be Asian, Western or others) and the horizon of a common and shared truth.

As is well known, Michele Ruggieri published in 1584 the first work of Western philosophy and theology in China, but his work has been largely overshadowed by Matteo Ricci’s *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* (*Tianzhu Shiyi* 天主實義). Daniel Canaris proposes here a ground-breaking analysis which gives a full appreciation of Ruggieri’s work, the *Tianzhu Shilu*. He shows in particular that Ruggieri was inspired by the rational approach developed by Alessandro Valignano in Japan, which led him to engage positively with the moral philosophy of Confucianism, an element which has been ignored by previous research.

Ruggieri expressed preliminary and tentative ideas towards an indigenized form of Christianity, but it was Matteo Ricci who brought those ideas to maturity, especially in his master work, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, which proposed a synthesis with Confucianism. Although there is already an abundant literature on *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, Michele Ferrero brings a fresh in-depth analysis of Ricci’s text and Western sources in light of a key philosophical issue, the motivation for action. As the author shows, Ricci shared with Confucianism a concern with morality, but he came to stress the key role of human will, which according to Ricci’s theology, is fundamentally shaped by the desire for God. For scholars today, as well as most of Ricci’s interlocutors at that time, his understanding and reading of Confucian moral philosophy may appear problematic, and yet Ricci succeeded to convince intellectuals like Xu Guangqi and Li Zhizao. Ricci’s insistence on the necessity of a theological foundation in moral life appears today a less pressing idea, but he also stressed that the present moral life is oriented towards a beyond, and this question of transcendence remains still very present today.

Among all the works of philosophy in Chinese, the *Mingli Tan* is one of the most arduous, and most people give up reading it after only a few pages. Francisco Furtado and Li Zhizao spent years on this work which translates Aristotelian logic into Chinese. In my contribution, I argue that its relatively poor reception was due to the fact that it was intended as a teaching manual. But how can people be trained in logic with only a teaching manual while lacking the pedagogical support of an instructor, a curriculum, a school?