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## An Editorial Note

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***Harry Harootunian and Hyun Ok Park***

The essays assembled in this special issue were first presented at a workshop held at New York University in March 2002, sponsored by the Program of East Asian Studies and the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. They do not, in any way, represent an agreed-upon line or singular method but rather offer only a number of different possibilities that might be productively pursued. If there is any informing theme, it is the conviction that the vocation of comparability must always account for the temporal dimension and follow a more modest agenda. In this respect, the more empirically oriented papers show how the compass of comparability might be constrained by constructing and comparing two different moments within the unit of national space, a unit already mediated by the processes of capitalist modernization. In this regard, the essays stage only a variety of suggestive silhouettes of comparison, rather than a determined program of typologies, and strive to open up possibilities accompanied by a willingness to always recognize limits and limitations. We want to thank New York University and all those who made the workshop a worthwhile endeavor, and the editorial board of *boundary 2* for their enthusiastic support.