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## *Hegel and/in/on Translation*

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## 2. EFFECTS OF TRANSLATION

### THE RECEPTION AND TRANSLATION OF HEGEL IN JAPAN

by Ayumi Takeshima\*

**Abstract.** *The translation of Hegel's philosophy into Japanese is inextricably related to its reception in Japan. Therefore, this paper gives an overview of how Hegel's work was received and translated in Japan. This paper divides the history of Hegel in Japan into the following four periods: 1) The early period (1878-1904); 2) Up to the great 1930s (1905-1930); 3) From the 1930s to World War II (1931-1945); and 4) From 1945 to the present. Due to space constraints, this paper will mainly focus on the first three periods and consider the relationship between Hegel's philosophy, Buddhism, Marxism, and the Kyoto School.*

**Keywords.** *Translations of Hegel; Reception of Hegel; Japan; Marxism; Kyoto School*

#### *Introduction*

The history of the reception of Hegel's philosophy in Japan begins at the end of the nineteenth century. Japan was the first country in Asia to receive Hegel's work, and the total number of Japanese works on Hegel now exceeds 5,000 publications<sup>1</sup>, including 415 Japanese translations of Hegel's texts published between 1878 and 2018<sup>2</sup>. Translating a philosopher's work into a foreign language means embracing the philosophy in its linguistic world,

\* Okayama University

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 for details.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 2 for details.

and thereby changing the original arrangement of the whole culture. The translation of Hegel's philosophy into Japanese, in particular, is inextricably related to its reception in Japan. Therefore, this paper considers Japanese translations of Hegel and traces the history of how Hegel's philosophy was received in Japan. In this paper, due to space limitations, we will mainly focus on the modern period in Japan from the Meiji Restoration to the end of World War II.

### 1. *The Early Period (1878-1904)*<sup>3</sup>

Western thought was imported into Japan on a large scale during the Meiji period (1868-1912), in the context of significant political change (spurred by the Meiji Restoration) and widespread modernization. Hegel's philosophy reached Japan during this period. In 1878, American orientalist Ernest Francisco Fenollosa (1853-1908) began his lectures on the history of philosophy and political economy at Tokyo University, Japan's first modern university. Fenollosa was a young American professor, who had studied philosophy and sociology at Harvard University, and was interested in Herbert Spencer's evolutionary philosophy and German idealism. He gleaned an elementary knowledge of Hegel's philosophy from his mentor Francis Bowen and through the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, the official organ of the St. Louis Philosophical Society. During his time at Tokyo University (between 1878 and 1885), Fenollosa mainly lectured on the history of Western philosophy from Descartes to Hegel and Spencer. He based his lectures on the research of Bowen and George Henry Lewes and on an English translation of Albert Schweigler's *Geschichte der Philosophie im*

<sup>3</sup> This section depends in large part on S. Kōsaka, *Kindai nibon testugaku ni oekuru 'bensyōhō' no juyō* [Reception of 'Dialectic' in Modern Japan], «Kinki daigaku kyōyōbu kiyō» [Bulletin of the Faculty of General Education, Kinki University], XVIII (1), 1986, pp. 83-104; S. Yamaguchi, *Hegel-Forschung in Japan (1878-2012)*, in *Hegel in Japan*, ed. by Y. Kubo, S. Yamaguchi and L. Knatz, Zürich, Lit, 2015, pp. 7-21; M. Fujita, *Nihon ni okeru doitu kannenron no juyō* [The Reception of German Idealism in Japan], «Riso», DCC, 2018, pp. 26-36. We are deeply grateful to these authors.

*Umriß* (*History of Philosophy in Epitome*). In 1881, Fenollosa lectured on the philosophy of Hegel and Spencer. At the end of his lecture, he stated that for all their apparent dissimilarities, Hegel's and Spencer's thoughts are related and that, if we could combine Spencer's theory of evolution with Hegelian philosophy, we would have a perfect philosophy<sup>4</sup>.

Three of Fenollosa's students – Enryo Inoue (1858-1919), Setsurei Miyake (1860-1945), and Manshi Kiyozawa (1863-1903) – later became the founders of modern philosophy in Japan. In his 1886 work *Tetsugaku Yōryō* (*Outline of Philosophy*), Inoue wrote, «the advantage of Schelling over Fichte is that he regarded the self and the other as the relatives while viewing both sources as the absolute. It is illogical, however, that he set the absolute outside of both»<sup>5</sup>. On the contrary, Inoue wrote, «Hegel described the whole of the absolute as the idea and considered the evolution of the physical and spiritual world within the whole as the evolution of the idea. It has evolutionary progress exactly in three stages. He called this evolutionary process *sandanronpō* (three-stage judgment)»<sup>6</sup>. Of note here is that Inoue knew and mentioned Hegel's 'dialectic' but used a different Japanese word to describe it than is commonly used today; 'dialectic' is now translated as *Benshōhō*, a term first used by Nakajima Rikizo (1858-1918) in 1890<sup>7</sup>.

In 1889, Miyake published *Tetsugaku kenteki* (*An Introduction to Philosophy*), the first full-scale history of modern Western philosophy in Japanese. He relied mainly on Schwegler and Kuno Fischer. He argued that the history of modern Western philosophy could be encapsulated in three positions: dogmatism, which includes empiricism (Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, etc.) and rationalism (Descartes,

<sup>4</sup> Y. Sakatani, *Fenollosa kōji "Tetsugakushi --hēgeru ron"* [Fenollosa's Lectures on the History of Philosophy: Hegel], trans. by S. Yamaguchi and T. Moritsu, «Studien zu Hegels Philosophie», XV, 2009, pp. 159-171.

<sup>5</sup> E. Inoue, *Tetsugaku yōryō* [*Outline of Philosophy*], vol. 1, Tokyo, Tetsugakushoin, 1886, p. 100.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>7</sup> R. Nakajima, *Hēgeru-shi benshōhō* [Mr. Hegel's *Dialectic*], «Tetsugakukai zasshi», 1890, p. 48.

Spinoza, Leibniz, etc.); skepticism (Hume); and criticism (Kant, German Idealism, and Hegel). He described Hegel's philosophy as pure criticism, stating that «Hegel really create the final stage of philosophy»<sup>8</sup>. He also introduced Hegel's dialectic in the name of *sandanbō* (three-theses judgment), which expresses his understanding of Hegel's dialectical structure, that is, thesis-antithesis-synthesis<sup>9</sup>. He thought that ideas similar to Hegelian dialectic could be found in Eastern philosophy, especially in Taoism and Buddhism; yet, he also observed that Eastern philosophical thought limited itself to commentaries on the words of the founders and had no systematic doctrine. However, by studying the methodology of Western philosophy, he thought, Japanese philosophers could achieve a synthesis of Eastern and Western philosophy. Through such a synthesis, he asserted, «Japan could become the center of the world of philosophy»<sup>10</sup>. This optimistic self-estimate seems to correspond with the rise of Japanese nationalism during this period.

Manshi Kiyozawa was a monk and reformer of *Jōdo Shinshū* (Shin Buddhism) and was considered the leading scholar of Western philosophy at that time. In his lectures on the history of Western philosophy at *Shinshu Daigaku-ryō* (the predecessor of the present-day Otani University) between 1890 to 1893, he followed Fenollosa's example and referred to histories of philosophy published by Schwegler, Bowen, and Lewes. However, he did not merely summarize these works; he added his own insights. His lectures valued Hegel's philosophy as much as Miyake did: «concerning Hegel's insights, it may take 1,000 years for his philosophy to develop and for its truth to be understood fully»<sup>11</sup>. Like Inoue and Miyake, he called 'dialectic' *sandanronpō* (three-stage

<sup>8</sup> S. Miyake, *Tetsugaku kenteki* [*An Introduction to Philosophy*], Tokyo, Bunkaidō, 1889, p. 287.

<sup>9</sup> Ivi, p. 239.

<sup>10</sup> Ivi, p. 37.

<sup>11</sup> M. Kiyozawa, *Seiyōtetsugakushi kōgi* [1890-1893] [Lectures on the History of Western Philosophy], in *Kiyozawa Manshi zenshū* [Writings of Manshi Kiyozawa], vol. 5, Tokyo, Iwanami shoten, 2003, pp. 305-306.

judgment) or *sandanbō* (three-theses judgment) and understood the concept as the 'law of the development of principles' and described it as the most important in Hegel's philosophy. However, his understanding of Hegel's dialectic was, like that of Inoue and Miyake, very schematic and formal. It is believed that this interpretation of Hegel's dialectic probably originated from the lectures of their common teacher, Fenollosa, and perhaps goes even further back, to Schwegeler's interpretation of Hegel<sup>12</sup>. Within such limits, Kiyozawa tried to use Hegel's thought to systematize Buddhist thought. He envisioned that, by applying Hegel's dialectic, philosophers could better understand the processes of Buddhist causal law: *in* (direct cause) -*en* (indirect cause) -*ga* (result)<sup>13</sup>.

At that time, there were no Japanese translations of Hegel except for perhaps a few short and abridged translations. Scholars would have to wait decades for full-fledged Japanese translations of Hegel to appear.

## 2. *Up to the great 1930s (1905-1930)*<sup>14</sup>

The first Japanese translation of an original Hegel work was published in 1905 when Tadayoshi Kihira and Ryotaro Odagiri published their translation of Hegel's *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* [*Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*] (up to § 126) in an academic journal<sup>15</sup>. The translators stated in the preface to the translation that they produced this translation «for those who learn philosophy in Japanese»<sup>16</sup>. In their view, it was «not too much

<sup>12</sup> Fujita, *Nihon ni okeru doitu kannenron no juyō*, pp. 33-35.

<sup>13</sup> Kōsaka, *Kindai nihon testugaku ni okeru 'bensyōbō' no juyō*, pp. 86-87.

<sup>14</sup> This section depends in large part on Kōsaka (1987), Yamaguchi, *Hegel-Forschung in Japan*, and M. Fujita, *Nihon ni okeru Hegeru-tetsugaku no juyō* [The Reception of Hegel's Philosophy in Japan], «Studien zu Hegels Philosophie», XIX, 2013, pp. 5-7. We are deeply grateful to these authors.

<sup>15</sup> *Hegeru-shi Taikēi: enchikuropedei* [Hegel's System: Encyclopedia], «Tetsugaku-zasshi» [Journal of Philosophy], trans. by R. Odagiri and T. Kihira, XXI (237), 1906, pp. 169-176.

<sup>16</sup> R. Odagiri and T. Kihira, *Honyaku jogen* [Preface to the Translation],

to say that the German language has shown its true value in philosophy through him [Hegel]. Moreover, it is surprising that he never neglects a single word in writing. Therefore, when reading this work, if one letter is neglected, the whole meaning will be either entirely buried in darkness or completely reversed», so «when we translated this, we were not afraid of the criticism that it was a literal translation, and we tried to be as faithful to the original as possible and not to add or subtract any word»<sup>17</sup>.

It seems that Kihira and Odagiri had difficulty selecting translations for philosophical terms. For example, they coined new Japanese terms specifically for their translation, including *Teiyū* (*Dasein*), *soku-ji* (*an sich*), *ko-ji* (*für sich*), among others. These efforts are also mentioned in the book's preface<sup>18</sup>. However, over the next quarter-century (from the Taisho era to the early Showa era), translations and study of Hegel in Japan declined – in part because, at the time, the Japanese philosophical community was strongly influenced by the rise of Neo-Kantianism and the retreat of Hegelianism in German and world philosophy.

Hegel's reception in Japan reached its first peak in 1931, on the 100th anniversary of Hegel's death. However, there were signs of revival already in the late 1920s (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2). This revival movement had three main features. First, it was caused in part by Hegelian revival – so-called neo-Hegelianism – which took root in Germany in the early 1900s and later spread to Japan through the Japanese translations of works by Dilthey, Croce, Lasson, Glockner, Hartmann, Fischer, and others in the late 1920s. Second, Japanese interest in Hegel grew alongside the rise of Marxism in Japan, which was closely related to the social situation at the time, the economic woes caused by the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 and the Shōwa Financial Crisis of 1927. Influential names in connection with this second point are Kiyoshi Miki and Jun Tosaka. Third, in contrast to the above, is the influence of philosophers of the Kyoto School, who approached

«Tetsugaku-zasshi» [Journal of Philosophy], XX (236), 1905, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> Ivi, p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> Ivi, pp. 3-4

Hegelian dialectic from their opposition to Marxism. Hajime Tanabe's interpretation is a representative example of this approach.

### 3. *From the 1930s to World War II (1931-1945)*

As mentioned earlier, the reception of Hegel surged in Japan around the 100th anniversary of Hegel's death in 1931, and published translations of his work first peaked in this period, 39 translations, to be precise<sup>19</sup>. Many of these translations represented the first time that Hegel's major works had been translated into Japanese based on the *Glockner* Jubilee edition of Hegel's works: *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *Logic*, *Encyclopedia*, *Lecture on Philosophy of History*, etc. Including translations, commentaries, and other materials, a total of 280 works related to Hegel were published in Japan between 1930 and 1939. Below, this first peak will be discussed in the context of the following two factors: the rise of Marxism and the influence of the Kyoto School.

Socialist and communist movements arose in Japan at the end of the nineteenth century and subsided after mass arrests for *Taigyaku Jiken* (High Treason Incident) in 1910, at the end of the Meiji period. However, these movements experienced a revival during the Taisho democracy (1912-1926) and developed anew. Kazuo Fukumoto (1894-1983) played an important role in this revival. When he returned home from Jena University, he brought the knowledge of Western Marxists such as Karl Korsch and György Lukács to Japan. He criticized the lack of dialectic and prevalence of dogmatic materialism in Japanese Marxism and emphasized the importance of dialectical materialism as a Marxist methodology. This 'Fukumotoism' had a strong influence on Japan's left-wing during this period.

Kiyoshi Miki (1897-1945) was strongly influenced by Fukumoto's work. He studied under Rickert at Heidelberg University and Heidegger at Freiburg University and returned to

<sup>19</sup> See Appendix 2.

Japan in 1925. As he studied, he went from being Neo-Kantian to following Heidegger, Dilthey, and Neo-Hegelianism and finally became an adherent to the Kyoto School and *Shinran* (Shin Buddhism). He viewed dialectic as the intrinsic principle of historical development and considered Marx's dialectical materialism superior to Hegel's dialectic. Thus, the reception of Hegel in Japan during this period was closely related to the reception of Marxism, especially the reception of Marx's dialectical materialism.

The Kyoto School also had an influence on the reception of Hegel in Japan. Hajime Tanabe (1885–1962) was the most interested in Hegel among the Kyoto School's thinkers. His interest in Hegel is incomprehensible without considering his connection to Marxism, which had a significant influence on Japanese thought in the 1930s. In his introduction to *Hegel's Philosophy and Dialectic* (1932), Tanabe stated, «My work on dialectic and Hegelology is directly motivated by its relationship to dialectical materialism»<sup>20</sup>. Early on in his career, however, in *Logic of Dialectic* (1927–29), Tanabe criticized the inadequacy of Hegel's dialectic from a Neo-Kantian perspective, but his attempt to criticize Hegel's logic of dialectic from the purely logical standpoint of Neo-Kantianism failed. Tanabe himself admitted later that his understanding of Hegel's dialectic at this time was external to Hegel; that is, he did not fully grasp the original meaning of Hegel's dialectic.

By the time of his 1931 papers, «Hegel's Philosophy and Dialectic», «Hegel's Absolute Idealism», and «Understanding of Hegel's Theory of Judgment», his understanding of Hegel's dialectic had changed considerably. The catalyst for this change was criticism from Miki, Jun Tosaka (1900–1945), and other Marxists, that Tanabe's 'dialectic logic' neglected dialectic in actions and practices. This idea that dialectic should be considered not only in logic but in action and practice as well, led Tanabe to further develop his understanding of dialectic. Here one can see his conception of 'absolute dialectic', which is «synthesized»<sup>21</sup> with

<sup>20</sup> H. Tanabe, *Tanabe Hajime zenshū* [Complete Works of Tanabe Hajime], vol. 3, Chikuma Shobo, 1963, p. 82.

<sup>21</sup> Ivi, p. 96.

both Hegel's and Marx's dialectic. Eventually, this idea led Tanabe to develop his own social ontology, the «Logic of Species». It attempted to construct a dialectical logic of genus-species-individual and to harmonize the conflicts between the universal and the individual in the society through the mediation of the species, which is the specific form of the genus. This idea also greatly influenced the philosophy of Kitaro Nishida (1870-1945), considered the most prominent of Japanese philosophers, and who was the founder of the Kyoto School.

After the mid-1930s, the rise of militarism and the intensification of ideological control meant that Japanese Marxism faced severe oppression and thus rapidly declined. Marxists, liberals, and democrats were suppressed and imprisoned. In this environment, Japanese academia and thought became increasingly dysfunctional, and academic publishing itself declined dramatically due to the ideological constraints on publishing and shortage of materials during wartime. The publication of Hegel-related literature was no exception.

#### 4. *From 1945 to the Present*

Japan's defeat in World War II and post-war reorganization led to the demise of militarism, the establishment of a new democratic constitution, and nation-wide economic growth. With these changes to politics and society came a new level of academic freedom and a new respect for science and enquiry. As a result, the study of Hegel experienced a revival; in the 1960s, translations of Hegel and other Hegel-related literature were published at a rate surpassing that of the 1930s.

Hegel's reception in Japan reached its second peak between 1970 and 1979. The bicentenary of Hegel's birth in 1970 stimulated Japanese research on Hegel again. This decade saw Iwanami Shoten publish an anthology containing most of Hegel's major works. During this period, Hegel's early writings were translated for the first time, as were new or revised translations of his *Logic*, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and *Philosophy of Religion*.

Hegel's reception in Japan reached its third peak in the late 1980s through the 1990s. During this period, many of Hegel's

drafts and lecture notes were translated into Japanese for the first time. Translations of Hegel's writings from his Jena period had a particular impact on the study of Hegel in Japan. By the 1990s, 65 of Hegel's works had been translated; the decade saw 1,132 works of Hegel-related literature published in all. One of the driving factors behind this third peak was the founding of Hegel-Forschungskreis, a society for Hegel-related research in Japan in 1986. This society evolved into the Hegel-Gesellschaft in 2005. This society has significantly contributed to the study of Hegel's philosophy in Japan, and its influence continues to this day as it holds research conferences and international symposiums and publishes the journal «Studien zu Hegels Philosophie».

## 5. Conclusion

Japanese research on Hegel continues to flourish in the twenty-first century. Between 2000 and 2018, 1,777 works of Hegel-related literature were published in Japan, including 98 translations. The publication of the critical Academy Edition of Hegel's work since 1968 has shifted the focus of Japanese research on Hegel to strict analyses of Hegel's texts and direct references to secondary literature in various languages other than Japanese. Hegel-Gesellschaft and the Japanese publisher Chisen-Shokan are currently in the midst of a major project to translate Hegel's complete works in 19 volumes. The author of this paper is a participant in this project and is currently translating Hegel's *Lecture on the History of Philosophy* (1820).

It is not an exaggeration to say that, today, Buddhism and the Kyoto School have little influence on Japanese research on Hegel, and that Marxism's influence on Hegel studies has declined as well. Translations are also less important to Hegel studies than they used to – in part because Japanese researchers now have access to research from Germany and other Western countries in real-time thanks to the internet and increased opportunities to study abroad and exchange research. Today, translations of Hegel's work are increasingly focused less on research purposes and more on

broadening the scope and applications of Hegelian studies by introducing Hegel to the general public.

In the future, Japanese researchers should situate Hegel within the long history of Western and world philosophy and consider Hegel's philosophy from a broader perspective. We hope that Japanese research on Hegel will expand and also include references to related research in non-European countries.

### *Appendix 1*

#### Hegel Literature in Japan, 1878-2018

Period	T	A	B	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
1878-1889	13	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	2	0
1890-1899	6	0	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	0
1900-1909	21	0	14	1	6	0	0	0	0	0
1910-1919	4	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0
1920-1929	106	1	14	1	61	25	3	0	1	0
1930-1939	280	2	46	24	133	68	0	6	1	0
1940-1949	73	0	16	20	31	4	2	0	0	0
1950-1959	216	0	24	13	158	5	15	1	0	0
1960-1969	314	0	31	16	240	10	12	2	0	3
1970-1979	870	6	65	65	595	65	38	9	3	24
1980-1989	1078	3	57	84	746	70	52	18	2	46
1990-1999	1132	4	48	94	786	73	71	33	11	12
2000-2009	1040	4	64	120	638	93	71	13	21	16
2010-2018	737	5	34	67	520	58	46	4	3	0

T: Total

A: Hegel bibliographies

B: Japanese translations of Hegel's texts

C1: Books

C2: Papers

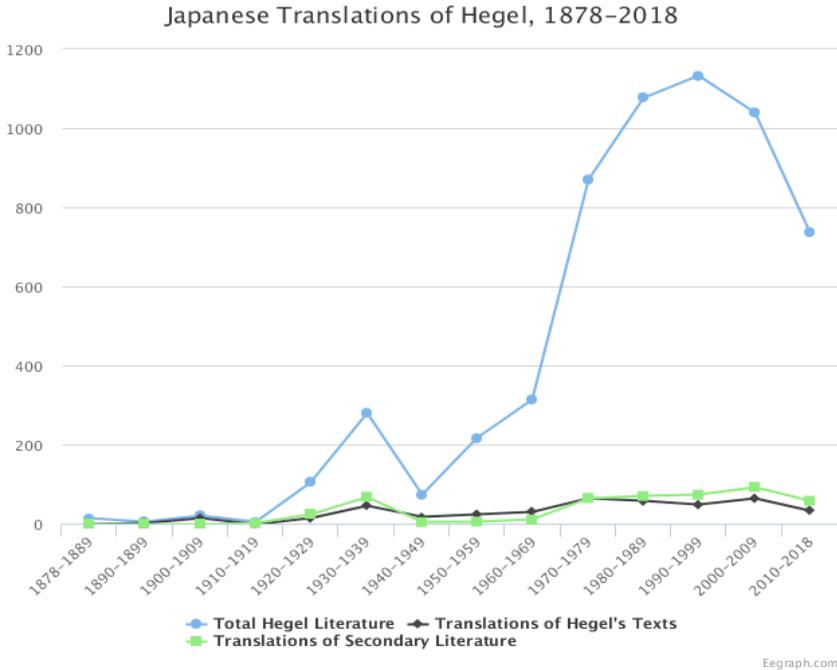
C3: Japanese translations of secondary literature

C4: Book reviews

C5: Surveys

C6: Other materials, including chronologies

C7: Encyclopedia articles

*Appendix 2*

The data for 1878-2001 are based on:

S. Yamaguchi & T. Okochi, *Die japanischsprachige Hegel-Rezeption von 1878 bis 2001: eine Bibliographie*, «Hegeliana», Bd. 23, Berlin, Lang, 2013, p. 33.

The data for 2002-2018 are based on the bibliographies in:

«Studien zu Hegels Philosophie», vol. 10-12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 25.

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