

Translations of Aristotle in Modern Japan

It was in the mid-nineteenth century that Western ideas and translations flooded the newly opened Japan and spread over East Asia. The earliest scholars of enlightenment, particularly Nishi Amane 西周 (1829–1897), clearly recognized the fundamental significance of Greek philosophy for the full understanding of Western Civilisation, and he translated a number of philosophical and other technical terms into Japanese — often by tracing back to their Greek or Latin origins — above all, *tetsugaku* 哲学 (philosophy).¹ Thus, Ancient Greek Philosophy has played a crucial role in Modern Japan. However, it was not until Rafael von Koeber (1848–1923, born in Russia, studied in Germany) came to Japan to teach Western philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University 東京帝国大学 (1893–1914) that Japanese scholars translated the original Greek texts. While teaching German philosophy, he encouraged students to learn classical philosophy and literature in the original Greek and Latin languages. Kubo Masaru 久保勉 and Abe Jirō 阿部次郎, two loyal pupils of Koeber, translated Plato’s *Apology of Socrates* and *Crito* for the first time from the original Greek texts in 1921. However, during this period, most people still learned Greek philosophy through modern European translations.

Although Plato’s works were all translated by Kimura Takatarō 木村鷹太郎 from Benjamin Jowett’s English translation in five volumes in 1903–1911, Aristotle started to be translated a little later. After Aoki Iwao 青木巖 translated the *Politics* from Greek into the title of *Kokka-gaku* 国家学 (Daiichi-Shobō 第一書房, 1937), the translation series of Aristotle’s works was planned and partly published from Kawade-shobō 河出書房. *Shinrigaku: Seishin-ron* 心理学：精神論 (*De anima*) was translated by Takahashi Chōtarō 高橋長太郎 in 1937, *Nicomachean Ethics* by Takada Saburō 高田三郎 in 1938, *Shinrigaku, Shōronshū* 心理学：小論集 (*Parva naturalia*) by Soejima Tamio 副島民雄 in 1939, *Keizai-gaku* 経済学 and *Athenian Constitutions* by Murakawa Kentarō 村川堅太郎 in 1939, and *Topics* by Yamauchi Tokuryū 山内得立 and Taga Zuishin 多賀瑞心 in 1944.

It was in 1968–73 that the first *Complete Works of Aristotle* アリストテレス全集 were edited by Ide Takashi 出隆 and Yamamoto Mitsuo 山本光雄 and published in 17 volumes from Iwanami-shoten 岩波書店. They are now being replaced by *The New Complete Works of Aristotle* in 20 volumes, edited by

¹ For an introduction to the word *tetsugaku*, see Kanayama Yasuhira’s article “The Birth of Philosophy as 哲學 (*Tetsugaku*) in Japan”, in *Tetsugaku* Vol. 1 (2017), 169–183.

Uchiyama Katsutoshi 内山勝利, Kanzaki Shigeru 神崎繁 and Nakahata Masashi 中畑正志 from 2013.

Besides the two *Complete Works*, several works of Aristotle were translated in different forms. For example, the *Nicomachean Ethics* has five editions: Takada Saburō (revised in Iwanami Bunko 岩波文庫 in 1971) and Katō Shinrō 加藤信朗 in the *Complete Works* in 1973, Park Il-Gong 朴一功 in *Western Classics Series* 西洋古典叢書 of Kyoto University Press in 2002, Kanzaki Shigeru in the *New Complete Works*, and Watanabe Kunio 渡辺邦夫 and Tachibana Kōji 立花幸司 in Kōbunsha Koten-shinyaku-bunko 光文社古典新訳文庫 in 2015–2016.

The following articles are written by the leading scholars of Aristotelian studies in Japan. They discuss the philosophical problems in translating Aristotle for the *New Complete Works of Aristotle*.

NOTOMI Noburu